



SightSupport
Hull & East Yorkshire



Sight Support Hull and East Yorkshire

Helping blind and partially sighted people of all ages
to enjoy active and fulfilled lives

Annual Report 2021-2022

About Us

Who We Are

We are a UK registered charity with more than 150 years experience of providing support for people with sight loss in Hull and the East Riding.

OUR VISION

We believe no one in Hull and East Yorkshire should have to face sight loss alone and every visually impaired person can enjoy the same opportunities and quality of life as those who are fully sighted.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to improve and enrich the quality of life for local people at any stage of sight loss, through the provision of a wide range of support services, enabling them to reach their full potential and lead independent lives.

OFFICIALS

TRUSTEES

Chairman Debbie Rosenberg

Enid Adams

Anne Gray

Hollie Haeney

Eric Harrod

James Houston

David Longman

Ann Massam

Michael O'Grady

Malcolm Revell

Robin Russell

Carol Winter

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Sandra Ackroyd

PRESIDENT

HM Lord-Lieutenant of the
East Riding of Yorkshire
Mr James Dick OBE

VICE PRESIDENT

Valerie Wood

SOLICITORS

Gosschalks

AUDITORS

Streets Chartered Accountants

INVESTMENT ADVISORS

Investec Wealth & Investment Ltd



Chairman's Introduction

The mission of Sight Support Hull and East Yorkshire (HEY) is to improve and enrich the quality of life for local people at all stages of sight loss, through the provision of a wide range of support services, enabling them to reach their full potential and lead independent lives; we continue to be committed to this mission.

The period this annual review covers, April 2021 to March 2022, has again been a challenging year for the Charity due to the ongoing effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

Our offices and resource centre reopened in May 21 following the lockdown restrictions of the pandemic. We initially opened with limited staff and with additional COVID protection measures such as screens and hand sanitiser.

We continued to utilise the government flexible furlough scheme up to September 21 whilst we were still not in a position to provide all our services.

Our day group provision reopened during this time, initially with restricted numbers and ensuring social distancing was maintained and mask wearing was adhered to.

Other services restarted as they were able to do so and adapted services in the fresh air were encouraged; the tennis and walking group being the first groups to restart.

During this time we also developed our new 'Vaxi Taxi' service; providing free transport to assist people with visual impairments to access their COVID 19 vaccinations; which was used and appreciated by many.

Understandably some service users had lost confidence during the pandemic and long stays at home and some were cautious about restarting to mix with others.

As people started to venture out more, staff were encouraged to do COVID tests twice weekly to keep everyone safe.

This has been another financially challenging year with ongoing restrictions on our usual sources of community fundraising such as street collections and events. We are grateful to the National Lottery Community Fund for working closely with us, understanding the changing needs of the Charity and our service users during these exceptional times, and allowing us to work flexibly with funding they had allocated pre pandemic.

Our income generation and fundraising activity was negatively impacted for a second year running.

Our Board of Trustees have been working hard to ensure the Charity follows all appropriate governance recommendations and to ensure we continue to remain financially stable and we remain committed to ensure continued support for our service users in the future.

I extend sincere thanks on behalf of all Trustees to all our volunteers and staff team, ably led by Chief Executive Sandra Ackroyd who have continued to work tirelessly in difficult circumstances.

The pandemic continues to be ever present although with appropriate vaccinations life is slowly getting back to normal. We are delighted to be able to 'resume normal services' and continue what we do best; supporting people with visual impairments.

Debbie Rosenberg

CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chief Executive's Welcome

Welcome to our annual review of 2021/2022; this is our opportunity to reflect on our successes and challenges over the last twelve months.

Due to the ongoing effects of COVID 19 this has been another challenging year for us whilst we continue to deliver a mixture of virtual and face to face services, gradually returning to face to face services throughout the year as much as we could and in a gradual and safe way. However, our primary aim never differs – to continue to support people with visual impairments in the best way possible.

We were delighted to be able to return to face to face services and restart some of our day groups and home visits during this period; all of which was done with great caution and care to ensure we were meeting all COVID safe regulations and reassuring those who were concerned.

We restarted many of our services by ensuring we were out in the fresh air as much as possible and our tennis sessions for the visually impaired became very popular.

We also continued to work flexibly, and in partnership with our good friends FitMums and Friends who continue to support our service users with guided walking and in some cases guided running sessions. It's wonderful to see that this service, currently funded by the National Lottery Community Fund is having such a positive impact on people's mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Some members of the group have even progressed from walks to 5k guided runs on a regular basis which is fantastic.

Our art group in partnership with Artlink has continued to go from strength to strength following the reintroduction of face to face sessions which have proved very popular with some fantastic artwork being created by the members of this group.

At a Glance

2,258 people with sight loss supported

306 new people with sight loss referred to us for support

70 volunteers

24 members of staff

23 tenants supported

Understandably, some people felt apprehensive returning to face to face activities after COVID and this has had some impact on the attendance at some of our groups. We continue to assess and evaluate the sustainability of certain groups and make changes where appropriate to ensure groups are run cost effectively and to the benefit of those attending.

Financially it has been another difficult year due to continued restrictions on fundraising activities; however I am pleased to say the Charity remains financially stable.

Finally, I would like to thank our fantastic staff and volunteer team for all their hard work and dedication throughout the year.



Sandra Ackroyd
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Queens Birthday Honour Award

We were delighted and very proud when Sight Support Services Manager, Alison Stannard, was awarded a British Empire Medal in the Queens Birthday Honours!

Alison was recognised for her dedication and compassion in overseeing the charity's services, particularly in response to the coronavirus pandemic.



"When I got the email I was shocked and lost for words and I can tell you that doesn't happen very often; it is a real honour and I'm really happy to accept the award on behalf of everyone here at Sight Support" Alison

Moving Forward

We were really pleased to be able to restart our outdoor exercise classes as restrictions started to lift.



"Tennis was really difficult at first, I kept missing the ball! But I'm hitting returns now" Nobody has ever taken the time to teach me things in sport like they do at the tennis and keep fit sessions". Dan B



"I'd never had the opportunity to run before I came to the Fitmums/ SocialEYES group. Completing park run for the first time was such a buzz. Claire P

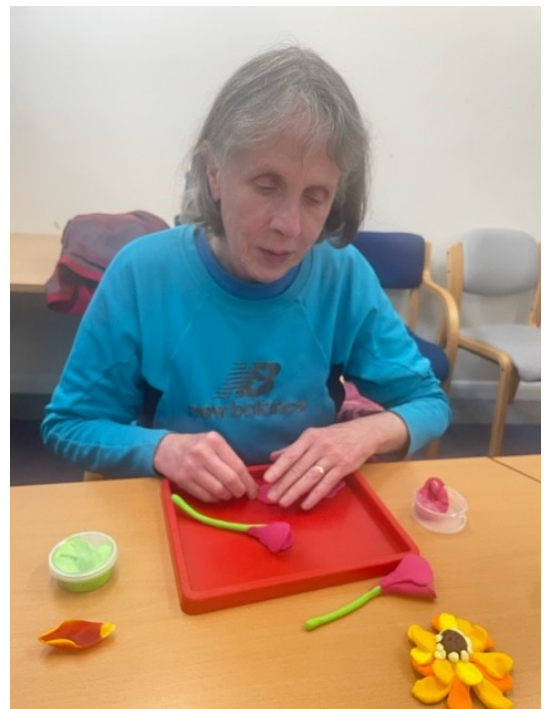
The Importance of Human Contact

One thing that the COVID pandemic showed us was just how important the need for human contact is. The need for friendships, partnerships and the opportunity to engage with others. Whilst grateful and appreciative of all that Sight Support did during the pandemic, our service users couldn't wait to return to face to face services. For some, especially those who live alone, our services are the only time in a long week they will have interaction with another person.



“When you’re diagnosed with an eye condition, you can feel shocked, frightened and alone. I wanted to hide away but I was lucky, someone from Sight Support came to see me and suggested I go to one of their Day Groups. I didn’t know whether to go or not, it was frightening to make myself go but I had no need to be worried. Everyone was so friendly and the drivers who pick you up are so kind and helpful. It was the best thing I did. I have friends there and I know that if I have a problem, the staff will help to sort it out. It’s lovely to have company and we have a really good laugh”. Val T

“I just wanted to let you know how my life has changed since you first spoke to me on 26 April 2021. I moved to Hull in March 2020 to be nearer my family which was nice. Sadly I lost my social life with friends in Cumbria. I started walking at Costello in April 2021 and found the freedom of walking around the track unimpeded was wonderful. It was so good to meet new people and chat. I am aware that since attending the fitness class I am so much fitter and have been motivated to do regular strengthening exercises at home. Not knowing the area, I have enjoyed going to Beverley and joining the walks especially the Beck walk and being able to chat and get to know so many people. SocialEYES has also given me the opportunity to do something that I never thought I would do and I am enjoying the challenge of the art class as I am not at all artistic by nature. So another challenge given to me by SocialEYES”. Linda D



Advice and Support

Community Advice Service

We know that without support sight loss can have a devastating impact on individuals and their loved ones.

Our Community Advice Officers (CAO's) offer individualised support and advice, whether the individual is newly diagnosed or an existing service user who requires assistance.

They can provide emotional and practical support to help people to live a more independent lifestyle including: assistance and advice on welfare and disability benefit applications, information and advice on low vision equipment and magnification assessments to identify the best lighting and tools for the home environment. There is no charge for this service.

As COVID restrictions started to ease in the Summer of 2021, our Community Advice Officers (CAO's) began to undertake more 'in person' home visits whilst still following mask wearing and social distancing procedures. To enable them to catch up with a backlog of benefit applications, a member of staff was unfurloughed for one day per week to carry out simple visits such as delivering equipment, allowing the CAO's to concentrate on new referrals and people with more complicated needs.

Regular monitoring of national and local Covid cases led to regular reviews of working practices. Throughout 2021/2022, the CAO team continued to gradually increase the number of visits taking place in service users homes, whilst still practising COVID measures such as pre-visit risk assessments and wearing PPI and sanitising.

By March 2022, the service was almost back to normal.

"Karen gave me hope to carry on with her support and kindness. I'm stunned that there are people like her around to help, it's wonderful"
Sheila B

At a Glance

3578 proactive telephone welfare calls made offering support and advice from our Community Advice Officers

1,351 people visited in their own homes to receive advice and support

164 referrals to other organisations for additional support

178 the number of benefit applications submitted by service users with assistance from our team



Advice and Support

Resource Centre

Our Resource Centre offers information, advice and demonstrations of a wide range of equipment such as daily living aids which customers can try before they buy.

Throughout the pandemic the centre was only able to open when COVID restrictions permitted. Visitors were required to book appointments and adhere to COVID safety regulations regarding sanitisation, social distancing and the wearing of face coverings.

Our resource centre opened, on an appointment only basis in May 2021 so that contacts within the day could be effectively managed; the opening hours were gradually increased during the period upto September 2021



At a Glance

157 visitors given help and advice

126 pieces of equipment ordered on behalf of service users

***"We've had excellent service from all departments, including the Resource Centre where you've been brilliant with arranging my talking watch repairs and advising on a new mobile phone."**Mr & Mrs Codd*

Supported Housing

Sight Support HEY manages Beech Holme Court; a housing complex of 23 homes primarily for active, visually impaired people of all ages who are independent and care for themselves.

Tenants can enjoy a secure building, with controlled entry and CCTV and a 24 hour remote support service as well as spacious gardens.

Social events are occasionally organised purely for Beech Holme Court tenants and their guests and all tenants can enjoy access to the regular groups and activities on offer at Sight Support.

A freshly cooked, healthy and affordable meal can also be purchased on site.

At a Glance

23 flats

23 tenants living independently with support



Advice and Support

Training and Technology

Significant recent advances in technology have created many new opportunities for people to overcome everyday problems and challenges associated with sight loss. From using a smart phone to a tablet, magnification software to screen readers, we can demonstrate how these can be of benefit to someone.

If you're blind using technology to stay connected to society, to shop and keep in touch with friends and family can be more difficult. Many people with visual impairments, particularly the elderly, need significant advice, training and support to use appropriate technology given the additional challenge of their sight loss.

At a Glance

113 telephone calls offering IT support to blind and partially sighted people

23 Talking Tech sessions held online

249 total attendees at Talking Tech Sessions

75 one-on-one technology tuition sessions



We have seen a significant increase in demand for our technology support services following the COVID pandemic. The pandemic and the various lockdowns really forced everyone to start to use technology more and for many this has been something they want to continue and develop further. Our Training Officer holds regular 1:1 sessions both at our premises on Beverley Road or, if required, in someone's own home to assist people to get started and/or develop their skills.

Assistance can be given with setting up voice activated systems such as Alexa for use by people with visual impairments which helps people feel connected and part of wider society.

Another element of the training we provide is visual impairment awareness training, this is to enhance the knowledge of those participating and ensure that the best support is provided for people with visual impairments. Participants of this type of training include various national stores, local authority premises and care settings.

During the period April 21 to March 22 we were kindly donated a large multipurpose screen by one of our Corporate partners; Ability IT.

This meant we could continue to deliver this type of training in a hybrid manner with some participants attending 'in person' and others attending 'virtually'; this was the case when delivering training for three Riverside 'Extra Care Facilities'

"I think Sight Support are an absolutely fantastic organisation, Vicky has helped me a lot and the technology training today with you Tracy has been a red letter day for me! I'm so thrilled. "

Mrs B

Advice and Support

Transcriptions

We offer a transcription service which can convert all types of print information into accessible formats including audio format, modified large print and Braille.

With more than two million people in the UK living with significant sight loss, there is an increasing need for businesses and organisations to provide accessible materials to meet the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act.

At a Glance

144 items transcribed into.....

61,309 words in large print, audio or Braille format

Leisure and Social Opportunities

Walking for Fitness

We are very happy to continue our partnership with local charity; Fitmums and Friends providing supported and guided walking and running opportunities for people with a visual impairment.

Sessions run in Hull at the Costello stadium and from Beverley Leisure centre.

Groups provide opportunities to make new friends and to socialise during and after walks.



Leisure and Social Opportunities

Day Groups

Sight loss can often mean isolation and spending long hours alone at home, but it doesn't have to. Our Day Groups can get people out and about, making new friends and new memories.

Sadly the COVID pandemic meant we were still unable to offer any Day Group sessions for the early part of the year. Instead our Driver/Activity Coordinator team continued to undertake regular telephone calls to Day Group members and made "doorstep visits" to others to continue engagement with these service users.

In April we began to assess the confidence and mobility levels of service users to ensure they were able to safely return once Day Groups restarted and in May we began taking service users out on short rides to build their confidence and get them used to going out again.

By June we were finally able to restart our Day Groups although on a reduced capacity and for shorter times before the groups returned to more normal schedules in September. Throughout this time we continued to adhere to COVID safety guidelines wearing masks whilst travelling and moving around and social distancing.

At a Glance

1899 Day Group Visits

4 Welcome back parties

5 Christmas parties

180 Christmas lunches served

"It was lovely to be around so many friendly people. I've been feeling very isolated and down the last few months in particular and this, along with the art, gave me a real lift"
Christine T



Welcome Back

In September/October we held a series of welcome back parties thanks to volunteer and Trustee Carol Winter who raised the funds for the parties.

December saw the return of our annual Christmas parties although these were quieter than usual due to the increasing COVID cases locally.

Following a strategic review, a decision was made to streamline our Day Group service and merge the Tuesday and Wednesday groups into one Tuesday group creating a more efficient and cost effective service.

"To Sight Support, I want to thank you all for your support and welcoming love". Lenny

Leisure and Social Opportunities

At a Glance

- 44** members active on a weekly basis
- 96** arts and crafts boxes delivered
- 23** tennis sessions organised
- 22** outdoor exercise sessions organised

SocialEYES

Here at Sight Support we firmly believe that sight loss should be no barrier to enjoying the same social and leisure opportunities as sighted people. Our SocialEYES leisure and activity programme aims to bring people with visual impairments together and provide opportunities for social interaction and the chance to organise and participate in a wide range of leisure activities and outings.

In line with the return to services road map introduced at the beginning of April, 2021 we were delighted to be able to restart some of our face-to-face activity in the Spring of 2021 including a walking group at Costello Stadium, and our VI tennis sessions, both thanks to funding from Sport England's Tackling Inequalities Fund. As well as our regular walkers returning, a number of newcomers joined the group and there are now over 15 participants attending each week.

As we returned to our full activity schedule in the Summer of 2021, we also introduced two new activity sessions: a second fitness walk based at Beverley, and a "Bootcamp" exercise session, both run in partnership with Fitmums. We are very grateful to Warners Fitness Centre in Hull who kindly offered us a suitable indoor exercise space free of charge.

October saw our first monthly outing since before the COVID pandemic. Members took a trip to the Ferens Art Gallery followed by lunch and were able to make use of the audio descriptions of some of the paintings provided by Vocaleyes. Further outings have included an audio described performance of 71 Coltman Street at Hull Truck, The Awakening and The Vigil both as part of the Freedom Festival.

The SocialEYES Christmas party held at Sight Support was a particular highlight of the year, as it brought together over 40 members, volunteers and group leaders. Members were treated to a 2 course dinner, entertainment including performances from our own singing group, and there was much laughter at the mock awards given out to various members for their exploits over the previous year.



Advice and Support

Telephone Befriending

Not having someone to talk to regularly can be lonely and isolating, particularly if you live alone and having a visual impairment makes this even more so. A friendly chat on the phone can make all the difference.

Our Telephone Befriending service allows trained volunteers to make regular calls to people. Although the service was already established, it was needed more than ever during the COVID pandemic due to the sudden and absolute isolation many service users experienced.

Most of the volunteer befrienders have continued to make their calls from home, offering them more flexibility to make the calls at a time to suit both the befriender and the befriended. Three of our befrienders however have chosen to return to befriending from the Sight Support Offices which highlights the benefits to the befriender as well as the befriended, who may also be feeling the effects of isolation.

This service is needed today more than ever and continues to be appreciated by those who use it, indeed one befriender/befriended partnership has been in place successfully for 7 years!

At a Glance

23 volunteers, calling

116 people regularly offering an understanding chat totalling

2,057 hours of talk time!



***"I enjoy being a volunteer befriender and bringing happiness to my befriendeds who live on their own. I know that for some of them, I'm the only person they speak to all week"** Alan F*

***"Stan is a heck of a nice guy and always very interesting to talk to. We have things in common and I always look forward to my call"** Doris W*

Esme's Friends

Visual hallucinations, sometimes known as Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS) can be quite distressing and may be linked to sight loss.

Esme's Friends is a monthly virtual Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS) Support Group which was launched to provide advice and support.

At a Glance

6 audio conference group meetings

122 engagements offering advice and support

Doris' Story

Arguably we could all do with a release. Something which absorbs us so much that for a while, we forget all the stresses and challenges of day-to-day life. Doris Wiles, 95, believes that, in the SocialEYES art classes delivered in partnership with Artlink, she has found hers.

"I just can't wait for Thursday to come round. I never thought I'd be able to do the clay moulding and other techniques."

During the pandemic, Doris had been taking part in the home-based "Artbox" project, where her kitchen table became her studio.

People were stunned by her own compositions from the monthly boxes she has since brought in to share with the group.

"I enjoy meeting people there. We have a good natter, but when we start working it's so relaxing. I get so stuck into things that when the session ends I don't want to go home."



"I've walked through wind, rain and hail to get here for the arts class. But I wouldn't miss it for the world, I'd sleep here and carry on all night if I could!"

Doris W



Volunteers

We rely on our dedicated volunteers to provide support in all aspects of our work. We would simply not be able to deliver the range of services for local visually impaired people that we do, or raise the vital funds we need, without them.

Volunteering comes in many forms and during the period April 21 to March 22 our regular volunteers continued to support as much as possible and as much as COVID restrictions allowed; with special emphasis on continued telephone befriending.

As restrictions began to ease we were grateful to develop a corporate volunteering partnership with Smith & Nephew who volunteered by supporting our abseil event in August and also by coming into Sight Support and wrapping numerous donated teddies which we can then utilise to fundraise at various events.

Fundraising

Generating income for the Charity is often difficult but these challenges have increased over the last couple of years due to the ongoing restrictions which COVID presented.

In August 21, we were delighted to be able to hold our first fundraising event in 18 months as pandemic restrictions lifted.

6 people were brave enough to abseil down the side of the K2 building in Hull City Centre to raise much needed funds for the Charity. A total of £2855 was raised in total from this event and a great time had by all.

Early in 2022 we were so pleased when our good friends from the All for One Choir could hold the long awaited concert for us, (which was originally planned for March 2020) to help raise funds for the Charity. It was well worth waiting for and was a fantastic concert whilst raising vital funds.

We were also delighted to be able to run our annual Craft Fayre in November 21 with some minor changes to adhere to ongoing COVID restrictions.

85p in every pound we raise goes directly to help blind or partially sighted people in Hull and East Yorkshire



Sight Support HEY is registered with the Fundraising Regulator to demonstrate our commitment to legal, open, honest, and respectful fundraising.

Fundraising



Trusts and Charitable Foundations

We would like to acknowledge the invaluable support we have received from the following Charitable Trusts and Foundations over the past financial year:

Arnold Clark Community Fund
Charity of FP Finn
Hull Aid in Sickness Trust
Joseph and Annie Cattle Trust
Liz & Terry Bramall Foundation
National Lottery Community Fund
Reckitt Benckiser
Sport England
The Joseph Rank Trust
The Schroder Charity Trust
The Sir James Reckitt Charity

Gifts in Wills

Leaving a Gift in your Will to Sight Support HEY enables us to continue our activities and helps us to develop new ones. Every penny donated will remain in Hull and East Yorkshire and will go towards ensuring a brighter future for blind and partially sighted adults and children.

Gifts in Kind

Whether it's donations of soft toys and unwanted gifts for tombolas or prizes for raffles your donations of goods can be just as important as cash. Such gifts help us to raise money.

Giving time is just as important and help with things like teddy wrapping all contributes towards increased income generation.

To find out more please contact us on 01482 342297

Thank you

We'd like to thank every one of our supporters. You make the difference in the lives of thousands of people with sight loss.

With your continued support we'd like to achieve even more in the future. Please contact us to get involved or **text SSHEY to 70085 to donate £5.**

For the price of a cup of coffee and a piece of cake, you can make a real difference in the life of a local child or adult with sight loss.

Thank you.

The Difference Your Support Makes



"I thoroughly enjoyed it, it was a really positive experience. Gail was marvellous and made me realise that I'm not as useless as I thought I was"
Jenny J



"Can I just say, you're all such a lovely bunch of people and I'm so happy I got involved." Lindsey S



"The fitness sessions have really helped me to take part in activities that I might not normally be able to do and have also given me an idea of things I might want to do in the future. The sessions are well tailored to everyone's abilities". Claire



"Without Sight Support I would be lost and lonely" Kevin N

Finances

Financial Review

Our income for the year has increased by 12% from £479,957 to £537,185, however, our income continues to be affected by the COVID Pandemic. The Charity has continued to receive support from the Government and furlough grants of £37,020 were received in the year (2021 - £86,754).

We have been able to restart some of our activities and although this has been very limited, the income from day groups and fund raising has increased from £7,802 to £35,793, however, this is still almost 50% lower than the previous year's average income, and it is anticipated that the Charity will continue to increase the regular services and income should improve in the next financial year.

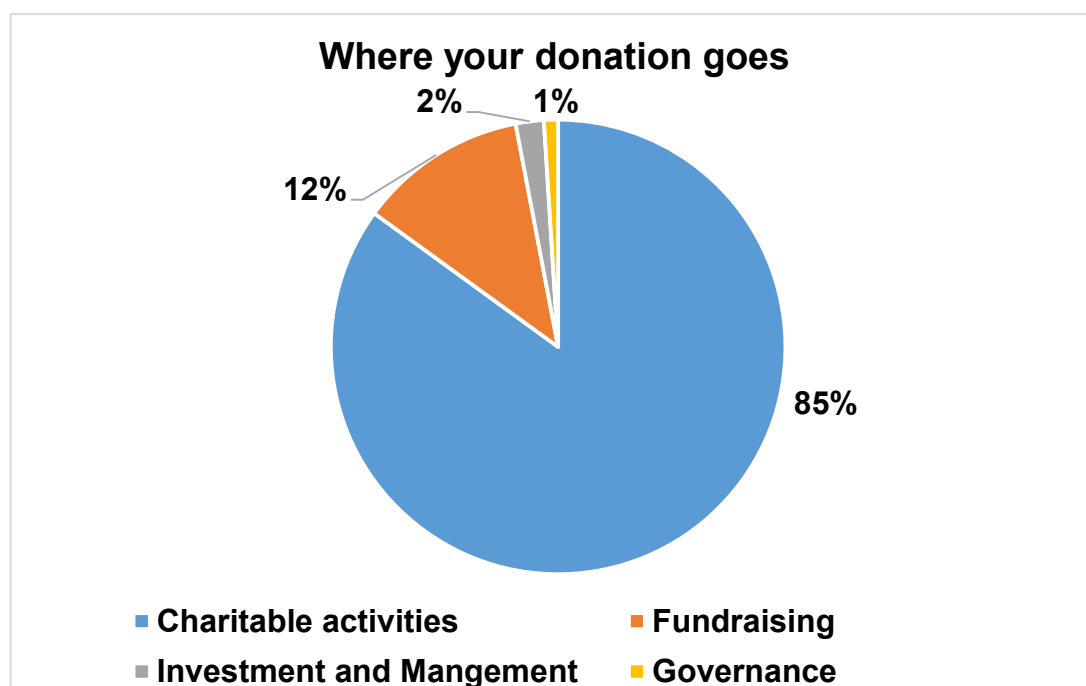
The main increase in income relates to legacies received in the year of £128,424 (2021 - £7,772), for which we are extremely grateful.

Beech Holme Court income decreased by 4% from £179,079 to £171,887, and expenditure reduced slightly, resulting in a net surplus of £4,217 (2021 - £9,990).

During the year the markets have recovered slightly from the Coronavirus Pandemic, but have been negatively affected by the war in Ukraine. There was a small increase in investment income, and also an increase in the portfolio value of £113,536 (2021 - £271,044). This increase in the portfolio value has reduced the deficit in the year of £129,185 (2021 - £191,431) to a deficit of £15,649 (2021 - £79,613 surplus).

Although this has been another difficult year, the Charity remains financially sustainable due to good financial management and sufficient reserves, which will be used as necessary during this period to cater for the loss of income.

Where your donation goes

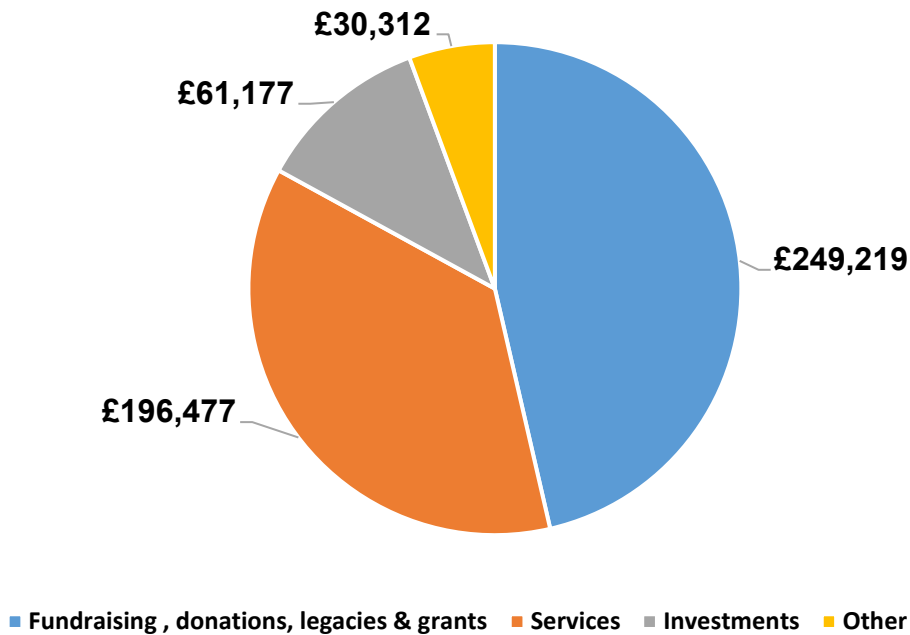


85p from every £1 donation we receive is spent on providing support services to local people with sight loss.

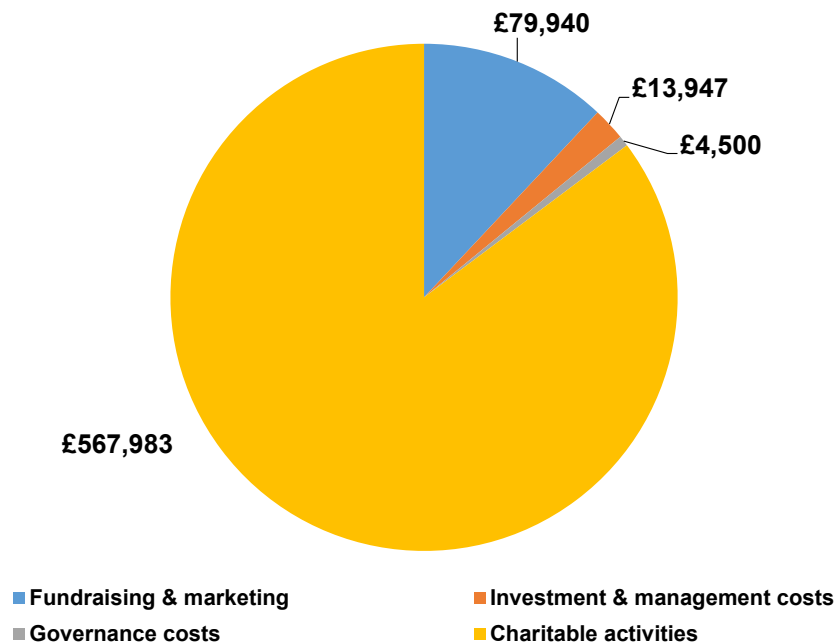
Our Finances at a Glance

During 2021/22 we received £537,185 in total income and spent £666,370.

Where our funding comes from



What we spend



Every penny raised or donated is spent in Hull and East Yorkshire.

This financial summary was taken from audited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2022. For a copy of the trustees' report and full accounts please contact us at info@sightsupport.org or 01482 342297.



Sight Support Hull and East Yorkshire

466 Beverley Road, Hull, HU5 1NF

www.sightsupport.org

Tel: 01482 342297

Email: info@sightsupport.org

Registered Charity No. 223668

This report is also available in CD, large print and Braille.