

Herts Vision Loss



Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2017 (V.5)

Herts Vision Loss
Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2017
Author: Joanna Carter, Chief Executive.

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1 General Information

The Hertfordshire Society for the Blind (HSB) was renamed as Herts Vision Loss on 16th May 2017. This was as a result of stakeholder engagement, where the consensus was to move to a modern name. Herts Vision Loss is a charitable company, limited by guarantee and was incorporated on 15th March 1995 and registered as a charity on 9th June 1995. The governing document is the Memorandum & Articles of Association.

Registered Office	Herts Vision Loss The Woodside Centre The Commons Welwyn Garden City AL7 4SE
Telephone	01707 324680
Website	Hertsvisionloss.org.uk
Charity Registration Number	1047148
Company Registration Number	3033089
Chairman of the Board	Dr. John Warner-Smith
Company Secretary	Keith Harding
Chief Executive Officer	Joanna Carter
Patrons	Lord Holmes of Richmond MBE The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP (from June 2014)

Members of the Board of Directors

The directors of the Company for the purposes of the Companies Act and the Charity Trustees for the purpose of the Charities Act are as follows:

John Warner-Smith – Chairman
 Edwin Godfrey
 Richard Seaman
 Keith Harding
 Gillian Richardson*
 Alex Hickenbotham
 Helen O’Kelly
 Paul Taylor – appointed 19th July 2017
 John Page*- appointed 19th July 2017
 Colin Macleod – retired from the board in October 2016

*Indicates visually impaired person.

Honorary Advisors

Solicitor

Longmores Solicitors LLP
24 Castle Street Hertford SG14 1HP

Independent Examiner

Mr Ardeshir Laloui FAIA
30 Cypress Avenue Welwyn Garden City AL7 1HN

Insurers

Towergate Insurance,
Funtley Court, 19 Funtley Hill, Fareham PO16 7UY

Bankers

Santander UK PLC
Bridle Road Bootle Merseyside GIR 0AA

Shawbrook Bank Ltd, Lutea House, Warley Hill
Business Park, The Drive, Great Warley, Warley,
Brentwood CM13 3BE

2. Welcome and Introduction from the Chair, Dr John Warner-Smith



The past year has been a busy year for Herts Vision Loss (HVL) in four main areas: consolidation of the administration, an expansion of our services for our organisation, changing our name and facing up to the usual challenges of financial pressures. It has also been the year in which I became Chairman and I should start by thanking my fellow board members and Trustees for their support. I also thank Richard Seaman who has been our chairman for the last five years. He has steered the charity through both good and tricky times with calm balance and humour.

We owe him a great debt.

After a rather difficult year, the charity needed to settle down and our Chief Executive Officer Joanna Carter has made all the difference and HVL is now in a much better place. She has re-organised our administrative structure, new staff have been appointed with new responsibilities; staff training, complaints procedures and risk management have all improved. As I write, the office is preparing for the PQASSO renewal. This is an award that recognises an outstanding level of administration in the independent and charity sector.

We exist to offer services and support to the blind and partially-sighted. During the year, we have expanded our activities with the development of job clubs, additional Sight Life groups, a restructuring of Sight Information Points and the establishment of a central supply base at The Woodside Centre. Counselling and schools work have expanded.

Amongst the elderly, isolation, loneliness and lack of confidence are major areas where home visiting can make a real difference. Volunteering for this is rewarding and very worthwhile as well as relatively un-demanding. We need more volunteers. We've held volunteer workshops to try to attract them.

During last year, the whole team and the trustees pondered over a new name and the decision was made in November, following consultation with our service users and volunteers to adopt Herts Vision Loss. Preparations were made with the Charity Commission, Companies House, the bank and with Inland Revenue to affect the formal change in April 2017. A successful launch party, with a "Walk a Mile in my Shoes" event, was held this June.

Our purpose and our aims remain the same. More clients are needing our help; we have to operate in an increasingly harsh financial climate. Herts County Council has cut their funding and we need to rely on winning bids for funds, attracting legacies and developing further fund-raising. We finished the year with a small surplus and our finances are at present just about stable but not generous!

I would like to thank Joanna Carter and all our staff for their dedication and enthusiasm. We are a small charity with a big job to do; there is no shortage of need out there. I have every faith that we can continue to rise to the challenge.

John Warner-Smith

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Chairman

3. Overview from the Chief Executive, Joanna Carter



I am pleased to present the annual report and accounts for Herts Vision Loss. Our vision is to empower and support the people of Hertfordshire who have a visual impairment. We work closely with our commissioners as well as our donors to decide on the services that we can provide. I have set the strategic direction for HVL, which has been approved by the Board. The Strategy sets out our corporate objectives and these have been adopted by all our team. The objectives are:

- To achieve financial stability, ensuring that services grow at least 4% per year in line with the expected demand.
- To raise our public profile by increasing media coverage, networking activities and promotional material, increasing awareness and support
- To achieve and maintain effective quality assurance systems, maintaining our commissioned services.
- To retain, train and support highly qualified staff and volunteers to ensure excellent services are delivered
- To maintain and develop appropriate physical resources to enable services to be delivered and enhanced

Our objectives also incorporate those adopted by the UK vision strategy and we work with our local population to make sure that:

- Everyone knows how to look after their eyes and their sight.
- Everyone with an eye condition receives timely treatment and, if permanent sight loss occurs, there are early and appropriate services and support.
- A society where people with sight loss can fully participate.

We currently have over 2000 service users, with over 65% accessing our services on a regular basis. The county is supported by 4 Outreach support workers, who ensure that an accessible and equitable service is provided.

I am pleased that this year we have been able to expand and develop the services we offer. We have received funding to purchase a dedicated mini bus, which is a great opportunity for us. We have joined with other local groups and also started employment clubs. Our support groups have expanded and are reaching more people than ever before and we are well recognised at providing a great learning environment for BSc and MA students.

We continue to move from strength to strength, however, we could not do any of this work without the support from the local community as well as our dedicated team, who continually strive to deliver the highest quality of service.

A summary of the key services that have been and continue to be undertaken can be seen below:

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The Schools Programme

The Schools programme is in its second year and has received very positive feedback. We have been invited back to many schools and have also been successful at being nominated as the charity of the year for a number of the schools that we have visited. Our dedicated team provides education and raises awareness.

Social Media / enhancing our profile

Our profile on social media is really growing. Our website has been rebranded and relaunched and we have had over 3500 people accessing it in July, compared to 80 in March.



LIKE us on Facebook



FOLLOW US on Twitter @hertsvisionloss

The Jobs Club

Many of our service users are experiencing difficulties with gaining employment. This year we have successfully undertaken our first job club programme in Hemel Hempstead. The programme was a 10-week scheme and supported 8 individuals to become ready for employment. The club helped with CV writing, with confidence building and with looking at suitable employment opportunities. The job club will be running in the Stevenage area soon.

Support Groups

A number of support groups take place across the county. We now have established groups in Welwyn Garden City, Stevenage, Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and Waltham Cross. There are also many blind clubs running too. The groups have focussed on learning practical skills as well as having activities planned to reduce social isolation. There have been canal trips, velodrome trips, theatre, tennis and seaside trips to name a few. We continue to facilitate groups encouraging independence and growth.



FareShare

FareShare is a charity that supports with the food crisis and helps tackle waste. In its latest scheme, it has joined with Tesco's stores to help reduce their waste by using the food that is in-date to support other charities that may be in need.

We are part of this initiative which commenced on 18th October 2016. As a result we have been able to donate food parcels to those in need.

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Counselling

Our trained counsellor continues to operate services for our blind and visually impaired community and their families and carers. The service has expanded further this year. Two trainee counsellors joined us towards the end of last year, with one completing her training and joining our team later this year.

The counselling service has been very well received and has had very positive feedback.

Home Visiting and Befriending

We continue to provide home visits and befriending service users to reduce social isolation. We currently provide over 200 home visits per month. We have been successful this year in recruiting volunteers and in matching service users. We do still have some people awaiting a volunteer. We anticipate that we will have to cap our volunteer numbers as a result of new charges that the County Council have imposed on us for obtaining DBS clearance. This new charge does have financial implications for us and was not budgeted for.

Volunteering

We have 109 active volunteers on our database. We do continue to advertise volunteering opportunities and provide a range of things that people can support with.

Hospital information services

These continue at the acute hospital Trusts. Our representatives in the hospital are very well received and support the acute trust with training and information services. The low vision clinics lead to many people being sign-posted to our services as well as to the services of others. We have a dedicated eye clinic liaison officer (ECLO).

Sight information points (SIPs)

We have undertaken a number of events and SIPs. These have been well received on the whole.

We provide a range of other services and also deliver time specific projects. Our website provides details. To enable the delivery of the key projects we rely heavily on external funding. We receive funding of £58K from the local authorities, however the rest of the running costs are provided through charitable donations and fundraising. We are fortunate to have been very well supported over the last few years and we are working hard to ensure that the support continues.

Without the work from our dedicated team of staff and volunteers and without the ongoing support from the service users and our local partners the charity would not be so successful. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those involved for their hard work and dedication and I look forward to working with you all in the future.

Joanna Carter

Chief Executive

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4 Meet the Board

John Warner Smith (Chairman) is a retired GP with over 30 years' experience. During his time working in a Stevenage practice he had particular responsibility for purchasing or commissioning healthcare for patients, beginning with GP Fundholding and later working with CCGs, PCTs and Locality Groups. He kept the accounts for the practice for 20 years, being also responsible for maximising (and then keeping to) healthcare budgets.

Alex Hickinbotham (Vice Chair) is a retired Senior Manager in the Health Service having qualified as a nurse and midwife. She has over 35 years NHS experience. She has successfully run her own business, specialising in service transformation and is now a trustee of two charities, including HVL. She also works with the Parish council on planning issues.

Richard Seaman has global experience of working in both the commercial and not for profit sectors. From 2002 to 2011 he was the Executive Director of Abbeyfield International, the charity which provides affordable sheltered housing and extra care homes for the elderly around the world. Prior to this, Richard had a 30-year career in the IT company IBM, where he worked in marketing, finance and sales operations for the firm in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

He has a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Birmingham.

Edwin Godfrey holds a Cambridge MA degree in law, and has recently retired from a long and varied career practising across a wide spectrum of business law in the City of London. He is chairman of the board of Purple Conversation CIC, whose objective is to get large numbers of disabled people into paid employment, and a member of the UK and international boards of the overseas disability charity CBM.

Keith Harding is an ex-Corporate Bank Manager and Business Consultant who has been involved at Board level in Charities for the last 20 years.

Helen O'Kelly is an optometrist and former Director of Clinics and Primary Care Research at the department of Optometry, City University, London. She has been a volunteer at the charity since 2011 and a trustee since 2013.

Gillian Richardson * has been associated with the Charity for over twenty years as a registered visually impaired user, volunteer and committee member. She has provided the charity with a wealth of information regarding its history which she has spent time researching.

Paul Taylor is a retired finance director and with several years' experience in working with large organisations to support financial turnaround. Paul had given support with the financial operations over the last few years. This year he has spent time supporting the PQASSO renewal.

John Page * John is a degree-qualified electrical engineer and has spent 40 years working in the defence industry, the last 33 of those being at British Aerospace/MBDA in Stevenage, before retiring in 2013. During his time at work, he managed multi-site teams and budgets as well as performing technical design roles. Shortly after retiring, John joined the Society as a Volunteer to produce and maintain their new website, before moving on to provide IT support for service users and one-to-one training in the use of talking software. John has Macular Degeneration and coping with this gives him a good understanding of the day-to-day problems people with sight impairment have and the role the Society has to play in supporting them.

Trustees' Areas of Responsibility

The Trustee Board members determine the general policy and ensure the governance of the Company. The day-to-day management of the Company is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer.

Organisation, Committees and Working Groups

The Charity has a Board of Directors that meets four to five times a year and is responsible for the strategic direction, policies and review and monitoring of performance. The following sub-committees of the Board were in place during the year:

- Finance and Governance Committee
- Service Committee
- Fundraising and Marketing Committee

The chair of each committee presents reports and makes recommendations for action to the Board. The Chief Executive presents her report to the Committees and to Board.

Recruitment and Appointment of Directors

The Trustees are the Directors of the Company for the purposes of the Companies Act, and Charity Trustees for the purpose of the Charities Act. The directors seek to ensure that all proposed directors enhance the existing, committed and diverse body of directors and are able to provide the necessary skills, experience and commitment to the Charity's development before being approved and elected.

Proposals for directorship are made after advertising or personal recommendation. Each prospective candidate is interviewed by two Board members and the CEO. New directors are invited to attend The Charity's Board meetings at least once as a non-voting observer. This forms part of the Board co-option process.

All directors and proposed directors are issued with a copy of "The Essential Trustee", produced by the Charity Commission, copies of the Governing Document and a copy of the latest Annual Report and Accounts to enhance their understanding of their statutory responsibilities.

Each director is familiar with the work of the Charity and takes an active interest in the services and activities. Once elected to the Board, a director serves a term of three years, after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting.

Committees and Membership

Finance and Governance Committee

Keith Harding	Chair, Trustee
Alex Hickinbotham	Trustee
John Warner-Smith	Trustee
Edwin Godfrey	Trustee
Paul Taylor	Trustee
John Page*	Trustee

Chief Executive in attendance

Service Committee

Alex Hickinbotham	Chair, Trustee
Helen O'Kelly	Trustee
Gillian Richardson*	Trustee
John Warner-Smith	Trustee, Chairman
Ann Potter	Sensory Services Rehabilitation Officer (January 2015)
Terry Knight*	Volunteer, Service User

Chief Executive in attendance

Fundraising and Marketing Committee

Richard Seaman	Chair, Trustee
Gillian Richardson*	Trustee
Paul Taylor	Trustee
Helen O'Kelly	Trustee
John Page*	Trustee
Krystyna Strzelecki	Volunteer
Siobhan Meade*	Fundraising and Marketing Coordinator (since Sept 2016)

Chief Executive Officer in attendance

*Indicates visually impaired person.

5. Meet the Team

The Chief Executive is supported by a small team of permanent staff covering finance, administration and fundraising, together with a field-based team who deliver the front line services, who are in turn supported by dedicated volunteers without whom the Charity would not function so successfully. The directors would like to thank the team, staff and volunteers, for their commitment and hard work.

The team consists of:

Joanna Carter (CEO) – joanna.carter@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Lindsey Wheeler (Outreach Support Worker, North) – lindsey.wheeler@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Vanessa Macdonald (Outreach Support Worker, South East) – vanessa.macdonald@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Sophia Ramsden (Outreach Support Worker, West) – sophia.ramsden@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Laura Gillespie (Outreach Support Worker, Central) – laura.gillespie@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Vanessa Browell (Counsellor) – EarsforEyes@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Sue Firth (Volunteer Coordinator) – volunteering@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Debra Lavington (Office Administrator) – office@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Jodie Binns (Office Administrator) – office@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Rhona Blyth (Finance Officer) – rhona.blyth@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Maria Murphy (Apprentice) – maria.murphy@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Alma Henderson (Trainee Counsellor) – alma.henderson@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Ellie Church (Trainee Counsellor) – ellie.church@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

Will Davis (Advocate and Project support) – willdavis@hertsvisionloss.org.uk

6. Governance

Our Mission

‘Supporting and empowering people in Hertfordshire with a visual impairment’.

Our Vision

- The people of Hertfordshire know how to look after their eyes and their sight.
- Everyone with an eye condition receives timely treatment and, if permanent sight loss occurs, there are early and appropriate services and support.
- A society where people with sight loss can fully participate.

Between 2015-2021, HVL’s strategy is one of **Growth** and **Outcome**. We will reach and support thousands more blind and partially sighted people who most need our help. We will work to ensure that people who are experiencing loss of sight receive support to rebuild their lives. We aim to make sure that blind and partially sighted people get advice, support and access to services to make the most of their lives. We will work to change our local community so that it fully includes blind and partially sighted people as equal citizens and consumers. We will continue to monitor the prevalence of sight loss and ensure that our accessible services meet the demand across Hertfordshire.

Our Values:

Our values describe our ethos. They underpin our behaviour and help us to judge our actions. They are:

S ustainability	We use all resources effectively and efficiently
I nclusive	We include and value people with diverse experience, abilities and backgrounds.
G iving	We give our help and support to those who need it in a non-judgemental way, ensuring that blind and visually impaired people are in the heart of all that we do
H ealth.	We promote good health and wellbeing amongst our service users, volunteers and staff alike.
T ransparent.	We are open and honest in all that we do.

“Visually Impaired people are at the heart of all we do”

Corporate Objectives

During the year, the Board monitored the performance of the Charity against the objectives set out below:

- To at least break even and aim to grow income above CPI each financial year.
- To raise our public profile by increasing media coverage, networking activities and promotional material
- To achieve and maintain effective quality assurance systems
- To deliver and broaden services to meet emergent and current contractual obligations
- To retain, train and support highly qualified staff and volunteers to ensure excellent services are delivered
- To maintain and develop appropriate physical resources to enable services to be delivered and enhanced

Performance and Results

The Board of Directors' Annual Report for the year to 31st March 2017 will report links between the Charity's Governing Document and the Statement of Financial Activity. This will be achieved by reporting the aim of the charity, our corporate strategies and how our principal activities have been achieved.

Quality Assurance

The Charity was awarded the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO) quality assurance kite mark (Level 1), by the Charities Evaluation Services in September 2014. The Charity was inspected by the County Council and achieved a "good" rating, scoring 82% against key performance indicators last year. A further inspection is planned. HVL is also undertaking a reassessment of PQASSO as its renewal is due shortly.

Financial Summary

The Charity has generated a surplus of £1,267 in the year ended 31st March 2017.

The Statement of Financial Activities (see pages 24 to 30) is in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 with all gains and losses recognised in the year.

Risk Management

The Board of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the Charity's risk management activities. Detailed consideration of risk is delegated to the Finance and Governance Committee, who reviews this matter and reports thereon to the Board. The Charity has an up to date risk register that is reviewed on a monthly basis. Operational risks are scrutinised by the Services Committee.

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Serious Incidents

There were no serious incidents reported in 2016/17.

Complaints

There were 2 complaints received in 2016/17. Both complaints involved communication issues and were locally resolved.

Reserves Statement

The Charity's reserves policy focuses on the 'net current assets', which amount to £81,234 as at 31st March 2017. This equates to more than three months' operating costs together with costs of any statutory payments to staff should normal funding sources be absent.

Payments

The Directors acknowledge the importance of maintaining goodwill by meeting financial obligations to staff, volunteers and suppliers, in a timely manner. The Charity seeks to pay its bills within 30 days of receipt

Financial Scrutiny

The Finance and Governance Committee takes the lead in supervising the Charity's financial affairs and the maintenance of proper financial records and procedures in order to ensure the charity's financial viability. The Committee meets several times during the year to review, monitor, discuss and make recommendations on, amongst other matters, the management accounts, the budget for the next financial year and the Annual Report and Accounts respectively.

Directors' Interest in the Shares of the Company

The Company is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital; therefore the directors have no interest other than the extent of the limited guarantee, as a Member, as denoted in the Memorandum of Association of the Company.

Market Value of Land and Buildings

The freehold land and buildings were revalued on 16th January 2003 by Aitcheson Raffety, Property Consultants, in accordance with Accounting Board Standard FRS15, and RICS Appraisal and Valuation Manual Practice Statement 12 on a current value replacement cost basis, at £95,000. This value was incorporated in the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2003.

7. Principal Activities

Founded during the First World War in November 1915 the Charity provides high quality advice, information, and support and services too, and for, visually impaired people who are resident within Hertfordshire. The Charity also supports people affected by sight loss including family members, friends and carers. We aim to reduce loneliness and social isolation, maintain independence and provide assistance with daily living needs via a range of services:

Social groups and clubs to help reduce loneliness through increased social interaction and activity

Information, advice and outreach to ensure people have the right help and support when needed

Gadget and equipment demonstrations to help with daily living and maintaining independence

Home visiting and befriending to help reduce loneliness and social isolation

Technology facility with coaching and training

We also provide help, support and advice to patients and clinical staff at a number of low vision and hospital eye clinics across the county, an advocacy service, a counselling service, coaching and training for those who come into contact with blind and visually impaired people; whilst providing opportunities to help and support some of our younger clients back into the work place.

The Charity continues to work in partnership with our colleagues from Sensory Services and Ophthalmology Departments in hospitals across the county, together with voluntary organisations both local and national.

8. Our Performance

Thanks to a fabulous team effort by staff, volunteers, trustees and ambassadors. With the support from our Patrons, together with the support of Hertfordshire County Council and many funders, including Taylor Wimpey, The Childwick Trust, The Graham Rowlinson Foundation, Goundworks UK, St Albans Old People's Trust, The Elliston Fund, Santander Foundation, Will Charitable Trust, John Apthorpe Charity, Dacorum Borough Council, Greater London Fund for the Blind, The Ulverscroft Foundation, the Charity has flourished. Our achievements include:

- Development of a counselling service.
- Delivering an excellent service to our clients, their family members and carers.
- The development of new initiatives and expansion of the current services.
- Implementing new social clubs and events
- Improving of information sharing
- Development of our fundraising and marketing department

We measure performance of our key service areas – Home Visiting & Befriending, Hospital Information and Equipment & Information Outreach – through both output and outcome measurements, the latter of which were agreed with our Commissioning Manager at Hertfordshire County Council. All our outcome measures have been achieved in 2016/17.

Home Visiting & Befriending Service

The Home Visiting and Befriending Service helps to meet the needs of blind and visually impaired people in our community, the vast majority (75%) of whom are elderly, in retaining their independent living for as long as possible in their own home, help reduce loneliness and social isolation, whilst providing assistance with their daily living needs, in order to improve their quality of life. Our services are provided in line with the Care Act. We also provide, where applicable, a well-earned break for family members and carers from their caring responsibilities. This key community service has been delivered by HVL since the 1920's. The service is managed by 4 outreach support workers and is supported by more than 100 volunteers. There are two strands for this part of the contract. The outreach support workers will contact people in their home, make assessments of their needs and source further support as required. When considered beneficial to service users the outreach support workers will match them with volunteers to reduce isolation. The contract carries £16k of funding and the outcome that needs achieving is over 1,000 home visits and reach over 65 service users with befrienders.

The Home Visiting Service can quite often be the only contact and lifeline that some people have. The visits allow relationships to build, allow us to signpost service

users to other organisations and ultimately serve to reduce hospital admissions and improve quality of life.

Hospital Information Service

The Hospital Information Service delivered by our staff and volunteers, supports the Ophthalmology Departments by adding capacity. We aim to help visually impaired people during low vision and general eye clinics, providing them with support during the difficult diagnosis period and reduce the workload for NHS paid staff.

The contracted provision of services with the Hertfordshire County Council is as follows:

- Advice and information about sight loss, registration, signposting and/or referral to other services, support services and rehabilitation after sight loss at six county hospitals – QEII, Lister, St Albans, Hertford, Watford and Hemel Hempstead.
- Facilitate low vision clinic (twice a month) at the Hemel Social Centre for the Blind on behalf of Stoke Mandeville Hospital.
- Follow up support service for patients at low vision clinics, including information about access to low vision aids and equipment.
- Support and information provided to carers and/or family members regarding help and support offered by the Charity and other agencies.
- Enable patients to discuss their diagnosis, in particular its non-medical implications and respond to any emotional and social consequences.

We measure the success of this service by patient feedback as well as the amount of people we come into contact with. In 2016/17 we saw over 2,000 people in the hospital location. Many of these people go on to become regular users of the service and others may just need short term support.

Equipment and Information Outreach

This service enables relevant information, advice and guidance about sight loss and relevant services to be disseminated to blind and visually impaired people, family members and carers via sight information points, events, exhibitions and at our resource centres in Welwyn Garden City and Hemel Hempstead.

The contracted provision of services with the Hertfordshire County Council is as follows:

- Advice and information about sight loss, available support, services, equipment, gadgets and technology.
- Support, advice and information provided to carers and/or family members regarding help and support offered by the Charity and other agencies (for example, Sensory Services).

- Display and demonstration of low vision aids, gadgets, equipment and technology via personalised 'one to one' appointments at our centres in Hemel Hempstead and Welwyn Garden City.

Overall Summary of Services

Finally, 100% of our service users who were asked, felt that the Charity had made a positive difference to their lives. In our recent satisfaction survey, service users were very positive about their contacts with our team and the use of our resources. We have delivered against our contracts and have demonstrated growth as we reach out to more service users. We are really pleased with our performance this year.

9. Looking to the Future

The next 12 months will provide many challenges and opportunities including:

- The development of some new services to complement our existing rich portfolio including school's education programmes and job clubs, whilst growing our currently limited counselling provision.
- Continued development of the Charity's wider governance structures.
- Recruitment of new team members, volunteers and members of the charity.
- Attracting and increasing the number of people accessing the services
- Further partnership working with other organisations to enhance our portfolio.
- Development of student cohorts
- Participating in the Government Apprenticeship Scheme and developing employees.
- Recruitment of new Ambassadors
- Enhancing the portfolio of services being offered

10. Independent Examiner

The Independent Examiner (IE) is "an independent person who is reasonably believed by the Charity's Trustees to have the requisite ability and practical experience to carry out a competent examination of the accounts" (Charities Act 1993 s 43 (3) (a)).

Therefore, an IE does not need to be a qualified accountant. A person "qualified by experience" - a retired person with financial skills for example - could be considered by the trustees. The IE should always be independent and should have no connection with the organisation, which might inhibit the impartial examination, such as a personal or business connection to a trustee or employee.

The Board invited Mr Ardeshir Laloui to independently examine the Charity's accounts. Mr

Laloui is a qualified accountant, being a Fellow of the Association of International Accountants (FAIA) and is a former European Finance Director of McCann Erickson Advertising Agency. He has 48 years' experience in airlines, manufacturing, research and industry. He is a trustee of the Hertfordshire Hearing Advisory Service.

A resolution proposing the re-appointment of Mr Laloui, as Independent Examiner of the Company will be put to the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

We record our sincere thanks to him for his expertise on our behalf during the reported year.

11. Independent Examiner's Report

To the Members on the un-audited accounts of Herts Vision Loss, I report on the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2017, which are set out in the section headed Financial Reports on pages 24 to 29.

Respective Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the Directors of the Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an Independent Examination is needed. Having satisfied myself that the Charity is not subject to audit under Company Law and is eligible for an Independent Examination, it is my responsibility to:

1. Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
2. To follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act and
3. To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Opinion of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention:

- 1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - a) To keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
 - b) To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Company Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or
- 2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Ardeshir Laloui FAIA, Independent Examiner
9th October 2017

12. Audit Exemption Statement

For the year ending 31st March 2017 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' Responsibilities Companies Act 2006

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts
- These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies, subject to the small companies' regime

Statement of Financial Activities

	Year ended 31 st March 2017			Year ended	
	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31 st March 2016 £	
Incoming resources					
Herts CC Contract		-	58,656	58,656	60,505
Project Grants		-	57,642	57,642	59,355
Locality Grants			2,198	2,198	7,000
Fundraising		29,798	-	29,798	37,996
Legacy		30,241	-	30,241	520
Donations		18,047	-	18,047	15,540
Merchandise & Activities		20,566	-	20,566	11,560
Advocacy Project		8,603	-	8,603	8,030
Advertising & Subscriptions		900	-	900	1,200
Other Income		640	-	640	907
Total incoming resources		108,795	118,496	227,291	202,613
Resources expended					
Income generation		27,076	-	27,076	31,577
Charitable activities		53,794	127,273	181,067	150,322
Fundraising & Publicity		17,881	-	17,881	19,027
Governance		-	-	-	-
Total resources expended	1	98,751	127,273	226,024	200,926
Net incoming / (outgoing) resources		10,044	(8,777)	1,267	1,687
Funds brought forward		55,553	96,419	151,972	150,285
Net movement in funds		10,044	(8,777)	1,267	1,687
Total funds carried forward		65,597	87,642	153,239	151,972

Herts Vision Loss

Annual report and accounts for the year ending 31st March 2017

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2017

	As at 31 st March 2017	As at 31 st March 2016
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Land & Buildings	61,859	64,069
Furniture & Equipment	10,146	16,456
Total Fixed Assets	2 72,005	80,525
Current Assets		
Debtors & Prepayments	16,153	6,790
Short Term Deposit	3 187,544	126,579
Cash at Bank & In Hand	4 24,614	16,692
Total Current Assets	228,311	150,061
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	4,612	5,174
Accruals	9,916	6,370
Grants relating to a future period	128,997	64,755
Payroll Liabilities	3,552	2,315
Total Current Liabilities	147,077	78,614
Net Current Assets	81,234	71,447
Total Assets less Liabilities	153,239	151,972
Represented By		
Funds c/fwd. from previous year	151,972	150,285
Surplus/(deficit) for year	1,267	1,687
Total Funds	153,239	151,972

These Financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 31st October 2017 and signed on behalf of Herts Vision Loss by John Warner-Smith, chairman, and Keith Harding, Company Secretary.

John Warner-Smith
Chairman

Keith Harding
Secretary

*Herts Vision Loss
Annual report and accounts for the year ending 31st March 2017*

Audit Exemption Statement

For the year ending 31st March 2017 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' Responsibilities Companies Act 2006

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006
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- These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies, subject to the small companies' regime

Notes to the Accounts

Hertfordshire Society for the Blind has changed its name to **Herts Vision Loss**. The registration date of this change was 16th May 2017.

1. Resources Expended

		Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	31 st March 2017 Total £	31 st March 2016 Total £
Staff Costs	1a	64,020	109,566	173,586	142,657
Training		164	118	282	165
Recruitment		-	-	-	547
Volunteer Costs		-	1,831	1,831	2,707
Trustee Costs		78	31	109	220
Merchandising		768	1,791	2,559	665
Advertising		122	-	122	943
Fundraising & Events		8,427	-	8,427	11,518
Advocacy Project		-	4,146	4,146	5,656
Premises Costs		6,652	2,587	9,239	7,703
Stationery & Printing		3,271	1,273	4,544	5,349
Postage		579	225	804	1,706
Telephones		2,479	965	3,444	3,298
Subscriptions & Donations		-	-	-	680
Professional Fees		3,237	1,259	4,496	4,977
Insurance & Licences		2,134	829	2,963	2,334
Depreciation		6,366	2,476	8,842	9,271
Payroll & Bank Charges		454	176	630	530
		98,751	127,273	226,024	200,926

1a Staff Costs

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	31 st March 2017 Total £	31 st March 2016 Total £
Salaries	57,637	97,551	155,188	127,176
National Insurance Costs	2,867	5,062	7,929	6,843
Travel & Subsistence	3,516	6,953	10,469	8,638
	<u>64,020</u>	<u>109,566</u>	<u>173,586</u>	<u>142,657</u>
Number FTE Employees			6.5	5.5

2. Fixed Assets

	Freehold Property £	Furniture & Equipment £	Total £
Cost			
Brought Forward	95,000	72,353	167,353
Additions	-	323	323
Disposals	-	-	-
Carried Forward	<u>95,000</u>	<u>72,676</u>	<u>167,676</u>
Depreciation			
Brought Forward	30,931	55,897	86,828
Charge for Year	2,210	6,633	8,843
Carried Forward	<u>33,141</u>	<u>62,530</u>	<u>95,671</u>
Net Book Value at 31st March 2017	<u>61,859</u>	<u>10,146</u>	<u>72,005</u>
Net Book Value at 31 st March 2016	<u>64,069</u>	<u>16,456</u>	<u>80,525</u>

3. Short Term Deposit

	As at 31 st March 2017 £	As at 31 st March 2016 £
Shawbrook 100 day Notice	30,179	-
Santander Instant Reserve	157,365	126,579
	187,544	126,579

4. Cash at Bank & in hand

	As at 31 st March 2017 £	As at 31 st March 2016 £
Cash	189	460
Santander Business Account	24,425	16,231
	24,614	16,691

Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of certain assets and in accordance with the statement of recommended Practice: Accounting for Charities.

Income

Grants, donations and legacies are taken to the statement of financial activities when there is a reasonable assurance of receipt. Grants relating to a future period are deferred.

Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at the following rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Furniture	25% Straight Line
Computers & Equipment	25% Straight Line
Freehold Land & Buildings	43 year Straight Line

Taxation

The company is a registered charity and is exempt from tax on its income and gains applied to charitable purpose. The company is not registered for VAT.

Restricted, Unrestricted and Designated Funds

Restricted Funds

These are to be used for the specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure that meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Unrestricted Funds

These are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the objects of the Charity without specified purpose and are available as general funds.

Designated Funds

These are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Board of Trustees for particular purposes.