



Middlesex Association for the Blind

Working locally with blind, partially sighted and
deaf-blind people

OUTLOOK

**SPRING-SUMMER
EDITION 2021**

**Barnet/Brent/Ealing/Enfield/Haringey
Harrow/Hillingdon/Hounslow/Richmond**

This free MAB Outlook magazine is produced in
print, Braille, CD and email

Patron HRH the Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO



Mission Statement

The Middlesex Association for the Blind aims to support people who are blind, partially sighted and deaf-blind, to lead independent lives. The Association achieves this through the local provision and delivery of a range of high-quality services, advice and information to people across nine London boroughs

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Message from our CEO Sahib Singh



I'd like to start this spring / summer 2021 edition by acknowledging and remembering our previous MAB Trustee and Chair, Alan Hills. Alan passed away on the 14th of February 2021.

Alan was appointed as an MAB Trustee in 1997 and served over a decade as Chair for MAB. Alan stepped down as Chair in 2013 due to poor health.

It's worth remembering that Trustees are not paid. They give up their time voluntarily to help charities like MAB.

I was fortunate enough to meet Alan for the first time over Zoom at our last AGM. Alan was beaming as he talked to MAB staff & Trustees about his time as Chair. Cathy, Alan's wife was also present at our last AGM.

My sincerest condolences to Cathy on Alan's passing.

Our previous Chair of Trustees, Doreen Luff, had the following to say about Alan Hills:

'I first met Alan when he interviewed me as a prospective Board member. At the time my brother was losing his eyesight, but I really didn't know anyone who had significant visual problems. I was both fascinated and admiring of how Alan managed his sight loss as he appeared to be matter-of-fact, accepting and good humoured about it. The fact that he had a lovely dog helped me to overcome interview nerves!'

I served on the Council of Management under his Chairmanship for several years before he asked me to take over because of his deteriorating health. During those years I was able to observe how he managed a diverse group of directors. Alan had an active brain; without taking notes he was able to assimilate everyone's comments; he listened intently and had an immediate grasp of the situation. I was in awe of his knowledge of the organisation and especially of the financial papers. He was friendly and welcoming to any newcomer and I understand that he spent some time in the office every month.

He helped to make MAB the organisation that it is today – he is still missed, and we all send our condolences to his wife Cathy on his passing. Rest in Peace Alan.'

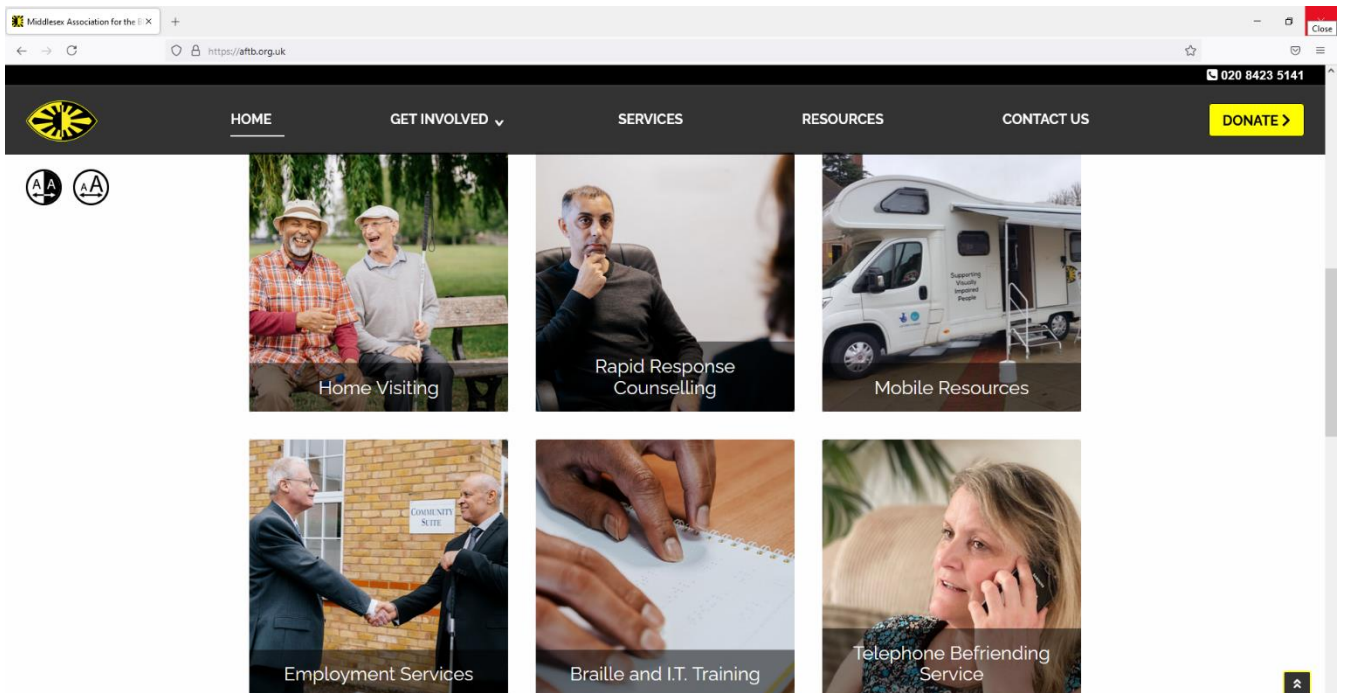
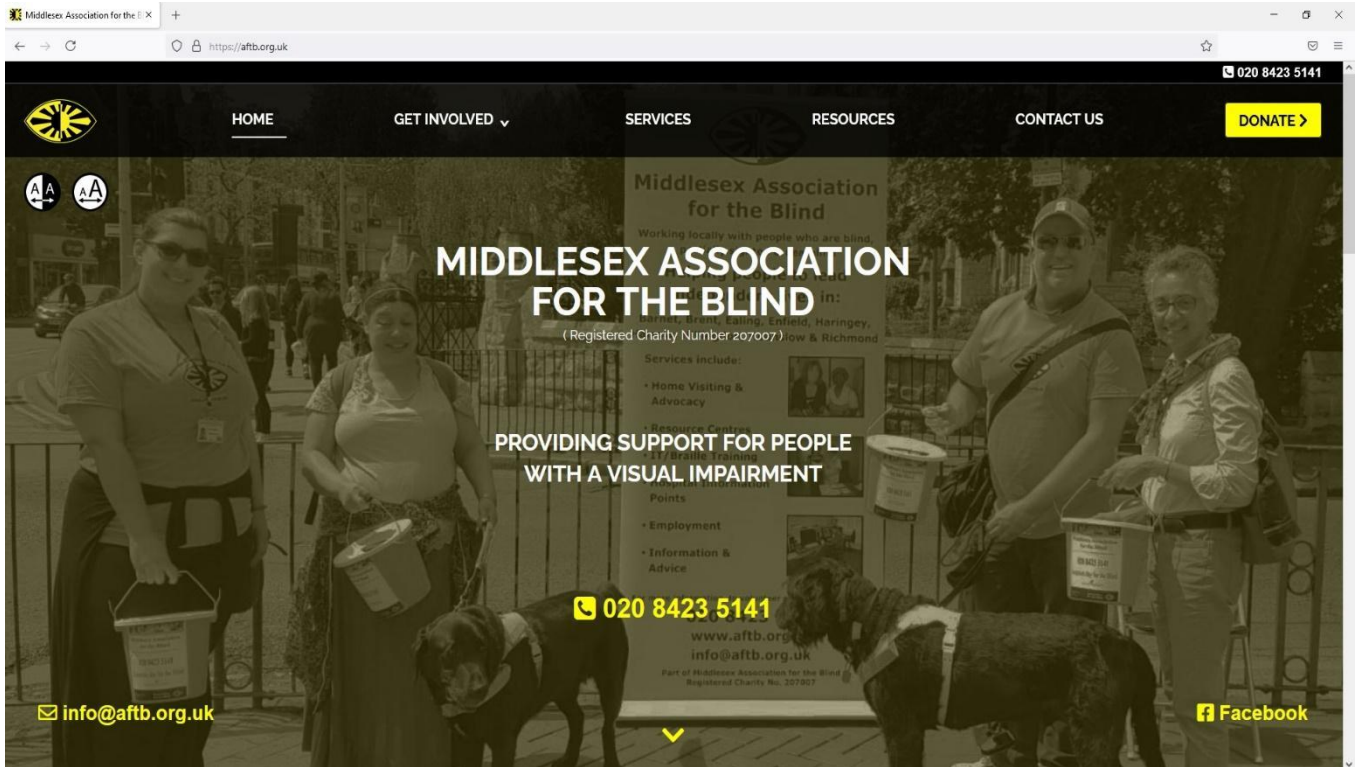
I'd also like to take this opportunity in our spring / summer edition to thank our incredibly hard-working team of staff and volunteers, who throughout lockdown and this pandemic have worked tirelessly to support our MAB clients. Middlesex Association for the Blind would cease to exist if we did not have our hard-working team of staff and volunteers.

A big thanks also, to those who have raised and donated funds to MAB. We are a charity, and while the majority of our services are free, we are reliant upon donations, now more than ever.

As CEO it is my responsibility to ensure that the services we provide are to the highest of standards. I would like to ensure all our readers, any funds raised will be reinvested back into MAB.

Since our last edition of Outlook, we've had four new staff members join us and we've relaunched our MAB website.

If you haven't seen it already, please do check it out at www.aftb.org.uk



MAB Services and News

*We are pleased to introduce three new coordinators to the MAB team:

-**Rita Shah** is our new Brent coordinator

-**Bina Padia** has joined Carmel McBennett in Barnet

-**Allyson Snook** is supporting in Hillingdon

We would also like to thank **Tania Ortiz Zamorano** for her fantastic work in Richmond and Hounslow over the last few months, and we wish her all the best on the impending birth of her baby.



Rita



Bina



Allyson



Tania

***MAB Board members:**

Chair - Mr Raj Mehta

Vice Chair - Mr Bharat Hindocha

Treasurer - Mr Kambiz Daneshyar

Secretary - Mr Pushpinder Wadha

Trustee - Ms Ola Macauley

Trustee - Mr Jagdish Shingadia

Trustee- Mr Terry Mills

Trustee- Mrs Rachelle Goldberg

Trustee- Mr Jeremy Brown

***Thank you, MAB clients, for your words...**

As you all know, MAB is a charity and as such we are entirely dependent on donor funding to sustain our activities. From time to time, our fundraiser Catherine phones up clients to find out if they are happy with our services. She uses the quotes and information that she hears from clients in the funding proposals she writes to donors. The words of our clients bring home the heart of what we do to our financial supporters. Thank you to all of you mentioned below, for your words that have moved our donors to give:

Arthur Williams, Arvydas Cialha, Barbara Hogg, Carol Herdman, Colin Gourlay, David Delaney, David Merkell, Doris Jones, Gurdial Bhinder, Herbert Paul, Janet Simmonds, Jayantibala Dave, Marjorie King, Mary Lee, Mary Webster, Merle Sholarin, Mrs Kosky, Mrs. Amat Ibrahim, Nanette Gibbs, Rajakumar Kanagalingam, Sarah Reynolds, Sheila Anholt, Siriwardana Ralalage, Terry Mills, Tony Sutton.

We know that in the past year with COVID our support has not always been what we want it to be. We have had to cope with staff being furloughed and with volunteers and support workers being out of action. We had to resort to telephonic services rather than face to face support for many months. We are as sad about this lack of contact as we know you are. What we do know though, is that without the words you gave us, it would have been

even tougher on all of us. Your words have worked magic to bring many more donors on board this past year.

Thank you for your stories. If any other MAB clients would like to share their positive (or negative) experiences about our services, please feel free to phone Catherine on **07496186536** to give her your take on MAB.

***Looking for some affordable stationery suitable for the visually impaired?**



Middlesex Association for the Blind sells stationery specifically designed for those that have limited eyesight. We contrast our stationery between black and yellow so it's easier to see.

If you or someone you know would benefit from the items below, feel free to give us a call on **0208 423 5141** to place your order.

All items will be sent by FREE POST via Articles for the Blind (Royal Mail 1st class delivery)

- Yellow on Black - Large Print Calendar - **£8**
- Easy to see - 4 thick black marker pens in a bright yellow case- **£10**
- A4 Notepad with thick black lines + 2 yellow casing black marker pens - **£10**
- 2 yellow signature strips - **£5**
- Middlesex Association for the Blind Pin Badge - **£5**

All proceeds from the sale of these items will go back into Middlesex Association for the Blind.

***What's been happening in our Employment Services?**

We have managed to keep our Employment Service running through the lockdowns. If you have recently become unemployed due to sight loss or if you have never been employed because of your sight loss, you may want to consider attending our "Clear Vision to Employment" course. The course covers everything you need to know in order to become job ready. This includes CV writing, telephone skills, interview skills, assistive software, confidence building, and information about access to work and other benefits.

The quotes below come from clients who attended the training in 2020. If you would like to find out more about the course, please phone our Head Office on

020 8423 5141.

But in the meantime, read the stories below.

Dinika has this to say: "The course was good. One take-away for me was learning to use the screen-reading software. It was the first time for navigating assistive software after sight loss, and it was helpful that the computers at the office already had it installed, and that I could learn to use it then before I applied to go back to work. Being able to use this technology helped me to get back in the job that I had before. It was also useful to learn about Access to Work, and the other benefits that we could apply for. I was always going to apply to go back to work, but doing the course gave me confidence to do so."

Sumit speaks about the course in the following way: “The course was brilliant. I gained a lot of self-confidence on the course. Unfortunately, the pandemic also picked up at that point, which has meant that we couldn’t go quickly and easily into employment at Firmenich, but John keeps contact with me, and I know that is still going to happen. It was also very good for me to learn about the other services that MAB offers. If I had to name one main take-away from the course, it was a growth in my self-confidence. I was in retail before I lost my sight, and the course was very useful as I hadn’t done a CV or applied for a job in 19 years. After the course, I realised that it didn’t matter if I was visually impaired; if you have the will to get a job then you will find a job. And I have that will!”

Dipti explains: “Doing the Clear Vision to Employment Course was a very good experience for me. It was very important that I did it. It was the first time that I met people who have the same problem that I have. I had finished my previous job and needed to meet other people like me then, as it was a new world for me losing my sight. John and Michelle were very supportive.”

***Telephone Befriending-a volunteer's account**



Our volunteer Tarla shares her experience:

“My mother became profoundly blind during my teenage years. Through this, I witnessed how blindness can have a significant, detrimental impact on one’s life, and the resultant care and support that can be required. This experience encouraged me to become a volunteer for MAB, and I have been a longstanding volunteer. I recently took on a voluntary telephone befriender role; I have found this to be very enjoyable and rewarding.

Many people, young and old, are lonely, and this seems to be a growing issue, particularly amongst older and marginalised communities. As telephone befrienders, we may perhaps be the only form of human contact that a client might have had that day. And clients may feel a great deal of excitement, waiting for that phone call. Such phone calls may be the highlight of someone's week.

The current Covid-19 pandemic has completely overturned our every day, routine lives, and it has caused

many interruptions, devastation, and uncertainty about the future. Lockdowns, self-isolation, shielding and sadly, bereavements, to name a few, are likely to have heightened the effects of loneliness. Concerningly, loneliness is thought to be just as lethal as smoking 15 cigarettes per day. Even the smallest of activities such as telephone befriending may well be a starting point in helping to combat this problem, and this may well make a difference to someone's life.

Telephone befriending requires compassion, patience, empathy, and good listening skills and rapport building. It can very much involve general chit chatting; talking about the weather, life in general, golden memories, hobbies and interests, likes and dislikes, public affairs, or maybe possible coping strategies, such as the importance of having structure in the day. Ultimately, the clients' best interests must be at heart.

Kind words could have a huge impact on a client- they may inspire, uplift, motivate and provide much needed comfort; they may help a client to see things in a more positive light. I believe that every phone call can make a difference, and I recommend telephone befriending as a meaningful, productive voluntary activity".

If you wish to become a Telephone Befriending volunteer like Tarla, contact us on 020 8423 5141.

Should you be unable to volunteer with MAB at this time, consider setting up a direct debit, or leaving MAB a bequest in your Will. With your support MAB can help support even more clients in your area and beyond.

***Satya's volunteering experience**

Satya volunteers with MAB as a Home Visitor. The below article has been adapted from a social media post he wrote during Volunteers Week in June 2019 and was shared with the permission of Mr Norris Jones, who is a member of the Middlesex Association for the Blind:

“Volunteering with Middlesex Association for the Blind, I met Norris in 2018 as he had signed up to the Home Visiting service provided by the charity. MAB is not your mainstream, high street charity but has managed to do incredible work to support our local communities since 1922!

As a volunteer Home Visitor I visit Norris once a fortnight for a couple of hours for a chat and a cuppa. To be honest there is minimal sacrifice on my part, especially as he only lives 10 minutes away from me.

Norris is well into his ninth decade, hailing from Grenada but has lived across West London for over 40 years, contributing to the local and wider society through his work in construction. Over a decade ago he developed glaucoma, leading to majority sight loss which has changed his life in obvious and countless ways.

Norris always says that he's grateful for my company, which is nice to hear, but in all honesty, I get more out of our conversations than he does. He's like a mentor and always has great advice to give, with entertaining stories from his younger days.

In short, through next to no effort on my part, I've met a true gentleman who I'd never have met otherwise and

allows me to have some small positive impact, but what I get out of it is a lot more than what I put in.

I'd like to add, Norris has also lived with prostate cancer, and is currently in remission. What a legend. You don't need to watch YouTube videos for inspiration - people like Norris live up the road from you and will have a much greater impact on you than anything you watch online.

This is why I'd highly recommend getting involved in any kind of volunteering. You'll add something to your life you didn't even know was missing. Shout out to those already doing it.

Peace & Love from myself and Mr Norris Jones."



Other News

***Have you heard of an organisation called TAFN?**

They are an online charitable organisation which has been running since 2004. They offer weekly chats, quizzes etc from the comfort of your own home and welcome you whether you're blind, vision impaired, or the friend or family member of someone with a vision impairment. For full details, please visit their website <https://www.tafn.org.uk/>

***Looking for a social club in Ealing?**

The Ealing Social Club for the Blind is a social club for blind and partially sighted people who live in and around Ealing. For more details, please email karieclifford@hotmail.com, telephone **020 8997 5642** or visit their website <https://www.sightlinedirectory.org.uk/.../ealing-social-club-for-the-blind>

***Freeview accessible TV guide**

Freeview's Accessible TV Guide will make it simpler for viewers with accessibility needs, such as visual impairments or hearing loss, to discover and find content more easily. For full details, check out the following link: <https://www.freeview.co.uk/help/accessible-tv-guide>

***OrCam MyEye**



OrCam MyEye is a wearable device that can instantly read text from any surface, recognise faces and identify products. It is suitable for all eye conditions and all levels of vision loss, as well as for people with reading fatigue and reading difficulties.

The device increases independence by allowing individuals to access visual information (text, faces, products, colours, money notes), conveyed by audio. It will not improve a person's vision. Hearing impaired individuals would not be able to benefit from the device. OrCam MyEye also requires the user to have full control over their head and hand movements.

For full details, please visit orcaml.com or contact Rubin on **+44 (203) 750 9748, quoting MAB**

***Travel Hands: Opening Up London for Visually Impaired People (VIP)**



Travel Hands is a product of [VIP World Services](http://VIPWorldServices.com), a service that pairs VIP with sighted and verified volunteers to walk together towards their similar destinations.

A VIP can submit a trip request that is automatically sent to a volunteer near them, alerting the volunteer to their location. The accepting volunteer will then come and pick-up the VIP and walk towards the requested destination. For full details, visit <https://www.travelhands.co.uk/>

***"Can-Eye" mobile application**



Low vision in children has been making their and parents' life difficult day by day. According to WHO, around 1 billion people, including children, are visually impaired. Rehabilitation technique has been known for many years for the treatment of low vision in children.

Due to Covid-19, there is severe disruption of low vision rehabilitation in many countries including the United Kingdom and Covid-19 has led to an increase in demand for low vision rehabilitation. But did we ever wonder what if technology could act as a virtual rehabilitation centre and help thousands of children visually impaired? What if our smartphones could help us with the rehabilitation for low vision?

Technology can act as a virtual rehabilitation centre and help thousands of children with visual impairment. Thankfully, we have created "can-eye" <https://www.caneyecu.com/download> , a mobile application which provides various types of visual stimulation exercises for visually impaired children which are fun and enjoyable which would help develop your child's vision and prevent low vision from developing further. "Can-eye" aims to help thousands of children with low vision, improve their lifestyle and create a bright independent future for them. For more information visit: <https://www.caneyecu.com/>

Donations, Wills and Legacies

Thank you for your generous donations

In our June letter, we also asked for donations from any of you who wanted to support the work we do. Once again, we were overwhelmed at the generous response we received from our supporters.

We are still celebrating the life of Marie Bloom



For those of you who missed our June bequest mail appeal for any reason, please join us in celebrating with grateful thanks, the life of Marie Bloom. Marie was a volunteer for MAB. She started working with us after she had retired, and after her husband had passed away. Sadly, Marie died this year in January. In her lifetime Marie was an incredibly kind person. We matched her at MAB with a client, Doris Jones and like many of you; Marie and Doris formed a life-long friendship. Marie would visit Doris each week. Doris told us of how Marie was kind to everyone she met. Marie had another friend who she saw on the bus each week. This friend was also visually impaired and had a guide dog. Marie thought nothing of taking the dog into her home to look after it, while its owner went into hospital for an operation. Marie was extremely generous to MAB as well. She donated regularly to MAB during her lifetime, and she made sure before she died that MAB was written into her will as a beneficiary. The bequest

that Marie has left us will ensure that many more people with visual impairments get the support they need from MAB.

Thank you from all of us, Marie. Your generosity will not be forgotten.

If any of you would like to find out more about how to leave a bequest to MAB, feel free to phone our Head Office on 020 8423 5141 and speak to Nasreen or Sahib.

Raising funds for MAB via JustGiving

We are very humbled and grateful for the willingness and efforts of some of our volunteers and staff in raising funds for our charity.



Our volunteer Sarina Mahmi set up a JustGiving page to raise money for MAB on her birthday, raising over £1500.

Thank you, Sarina, for all you are doing for Hilary and the Middlesex Association for the Blind.



Our Barnet support worker Bina set up her JustGiving page in conjunction with her Walk Talk Friends group, raising over £2000 for MAB.

A great achievement Bina, thank you to you and your wonderful walking group.



If you'd like to help raise funds for MAB, setting up a JustGiving page is easy.

For more information, visit [**justgiving.com**](https://www.justgiving.com)

We would like to say a big thank you to all the individuals and the following organisations who have kindly made donations to the Association:

Waitrose Richmond

The Pelican Club

Pinner Methodist Church Harvest of Waste

Ladies Probus Club of Pinner

Foresters Friendly Society

Nadiad Nagrik Mandal

The GPT Law Practice

Contact Numbers

Borough Coordinators' contact numbers

Borough	Name	Telephone Number
Barnet	Carmel McBennett	07599 012 045
	Bina Padia	07594 625 215
Brent	Rita Shah	07510 127893
Ealing	Kamila Reynolds	07387 101 631
Enfield	TBC	0208 423 5141
Harrow	Alison Bicknell	07387 101 632
Hillingdon	Allyson Snook	07387 101 630
Hounslow	TBC	020 8423 5141
Richmond	Daisy Jajh	07387 101 627

Sensory Services Team contact numbers

Borough	Telephone Number
Barnet	020 8359 5000
Brent	020 8937 4300
Ealing	020 8825 6230
Enfield	020 8379 1001
Haringey	020 8489 8900
Harrow	020 8901 2680
Hillingdon	01895 556 633
Hounslow	020 8583 3100
Richmond	020 8891 7971

Contributing to Outlook

We welcome contributions to the newsletter. Please send your articles to Valerie Hill (valerie@aftb.org.uk)

This edition of Outlook is produced by:

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Find us on Facebook - @middlesexblind

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So that we can keep our records up to date, please telephone us if you move address or would like to receive Outlook in a different format.

Tel: 020 8423 5141

Alternatively, please email Nasreen at: nasreen@aftb.org.uk

Thank you

Our thanks to the following for allowing us to put MAB collection boxes in their premises:

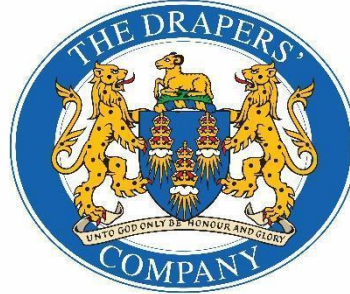
Bath Road Pharmacy, Bath Road, Hounslow

Seven Oaks Court, Copsewood Way, Northwood

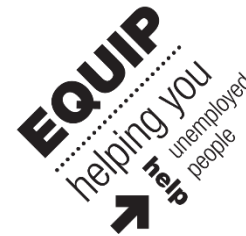
Harris and Hoole, King Street, Twickenham

Special thanks also to our volunteers for their continued support and for sharing feedback on their experience of volunteering with MAB. Your comments and suggestions will help shape meaningful communication in future.

And to all our Trust, Foundation, Borough and Corporate donors – without you we would not exist. Thank you for your support!



**LONDON
COMMUNITY
RESPONSE FUND**



Harrow Giving

