



Middlesex Association for the Blind

Supporting people with sight loss since 1922

OUTLOOK

**AUTUMN / WINTER
EDITION 2024-2025**

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

This free MAB Outlook Magazine is produced in Print,
Braille, USB and Email

Registered Charity No. 207007

Mission Statement

The Middlesex Association for the Blind aims to support people who are blind or partially sighted 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 Valerie Hill



"Don't let the past steal the present"

As I write to you this December, I reflect on this powerful quote and it brings me hope.

The daily struggles are real, whether health-related, financial, emotional or other. Whilst none of us are immune to life's challenges, where there is life there is hope.

This is the overriding message our team wants to share with you all. Through our services, whether Home Visiting, IT support, Braille, Employment, Mobile Resource Unit or Social Clubs, we want to help you make the most of the present and look forward to the future.

We are humbled by the lovely testimonials you share with us throughout the year, and draw strength from knowing that we have made a difference. None of this would be possible without the constant support we get from you and the generosity of so many, whether individuals, local authorities, trusts or philanthropies.

My heartfelt thanks go to all our supporters, dedicated staff and volunteers, without whom our work would not be possible.

The New Year is a reminder that every day is an opportunity to start anew. May 2025 bring you peace, joy and happiness.

Donations, Wills and Legacies –

Thanks to all of you, it's been a "ka-ching" time!

I wrote to you at the end of November, telling you the story of Mrs Patel and the struggle she had on her holiday without having access to a mobile phone. You may remember how she became separated from her husband in a crowd. I told you about how Mrs Patel was lost to her husband for three whole hours until she managed to make contact with him thanks to a kind shopkeeper who saw her distress and looked after her.

Mrs Patel would have been able to find her husband in 5 minutes if she had been through her MAB IT training before her holiday. Thankfully, on her return, Mrs Patel made sure that she received some Digital training from our IT trainer, so that she need never go through a nightmare like that again.

Mrs Patel's story has made me wish that everyone who is visually impaired and who needs it, could get the IT training they need to join the online world. We already have a waiting list of people who are desperate for this training.

What you did for us in December...

I asked all of you to consider giving MAB a donation of £30, so that we could give IT training to another 30 people like Mrs Patel in 2025. After sending you the letter, we were overwhelmed by the number of donations that poured into the office. Nasreen and the office staff spent much of December opening envelopes and processing your donations. I have been humbled by the generosity of all of you who gave us a monetary gift in response to my letter. Because of your gifts, we are able to keep training more people who have visual impairment, helping them to break their digital isolation. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

If you were wanting to give then, but didn't manage to, or if you would like to donate to MAB once more, please feel

free to do so. You can phone us on 020 8423 5141 to make a telephonic donation (just have your card details handy), or you can donate online by going to www.aftb.org.uk/donate. As a charity, we are 100% dependent on grants and donations for our survival, so we would dearly love to hear from you.

Free Will Writing Service

And lastly, please remember that we also have a FREE Will Writing Service. If you have not yet drawn up a Will and would like to do so, please feel free to phone our Head Office to hear more about this service. We will give you a code that you can use that ensures that you won't have to pay a penny to have your Will drawn up by a solicitor who will visit you in your home.

All we ask in return is that after you have taken care of your loved ones, you consider joining the family of givers who have included the Middlesex Association for the Blind in their Wills as a beneficiary. These are the people whose shoulders we will be standing on long into the future. Because people choose to leave money in their Wills today, we are able to continue supporting people with visual impairment tomorrow.

If you have already drawn up a Will and don't want to spend more money and time changing it, you can add a document called a Codicil to your Will. If you would like a copy of this document so that you can add us as a beneficiary to an existing Will, please feel free to phone us and we will send you a document that you can complete and keep in a safe place, along with your existing Will.

Phone us on 020 8423 5141 to hear more about our FREE Will writing service, or to request a copy of a Codicil.

Valerie Hill
CEO



DONATIONS WELCOME Thank You!



Thank you for supporting us. With your Financial Gift, we can help people who need us. Losing sight can be terrifying and anxiety provoking. With your help, we can enable people who have a Visual Impairment to maintain their Independence and regain their Mental Wellbeing.

Call 020 8423 5141 to Donate by Phone.

Go to www.aftb.org.uk to Donate Online.

Or Scan the QR Code on the right.



A very big thank you to Inna and Rakesh, representatives of The Vanik Vaishnav Social Club, who presented MAB with a generous Club Donation of £400. The Club holds events in support of up to five charities every year. MAB was put forward by Bina, Support Worker for Barnet and was subsequently nominated by the Club.

Mobile IT Services – Tomasz Szuberski & Marc Davis

The technology is going so well! Tomasz says I have picked it up remarkably well for a person my age. He is a very clear and good teacher. I am using a Blindshell Phone specifically for blind people. I am now involved in Lazarus, a Satnav, and I have also learnt everything to do with the BBC, iPods and talking newspaper. Next, I am going in for a Smart TV which will be better for me being partially sighted and the internet is on it too. I didn't think I would learn at my age, but I seem to have done so! I am well pleased with him. Independence –Yes! And this was the main thing. It has introduced me to the internet. Reduced social isolation definitely. I can now get in touch with people much more easily. It has helped me with my mental wellbeing as I am more independent.

Service User Testimonial:
David – L. B. of Ealing 

Home Visiting Services

Kasia Cieplak
Hounslow & Richmond

Bina Padia
Barnet

Mobile IT & Digital Support Services

Tomasz Szuberski

Marc Davis

Employment Services

John Monkhouse

Sheila was referred to MAB by her son who was concerned about her. Our Support Worker, Kasia, visited her and assessed her needs. Sheila needed help with ad hoc shopping, and with getting out of the house to get some exercise. Kasia has been helping her get to Tesco regularly, and has also been taking her to Osterley Park for walks. Perhaps most importantly, Kasia has linked her in with the Monthly VIP Club. Sheila says, "I love going to the monthly meeting, because it gives me the opportunity to meet other people who have the same needs that I have. And I don't mean it is a place where I can go 'poor me, poor me!', but I mean more that it helps me to realise that I am not the only person losing my sight. Speaking to other people gives me a sense of balance. I always come away feeling happy, it is such a positive experience." Sheila is 91 years old and lives alone. She says she is close to her family in one way, but not geographically. She used to go out every day, but she cannot manage that now. "Kasia is wonderful. She brings me home after the VIP Club and helps me when I need it. It is wonderful to know that she is there if I need her."



Service User Testimonial:
Sheila – L. B. of Hounslow

"Kasia is great. Sometimes I have no one to take me shopping, and then Kasia comes and does it with me. She is a big help. She makes sure that everything I need is at hand. She is brilliant. She will help me with anything that I need doing. I am so pleased that she keeps in touch with me. She has also taken me to the Monthly VIP Lunch Meetings at the British Legion, which are great."



Service User Testimonial:
Patricia – L. B. of Hounslow

Eugene was referred to MAB from the Barnet Sensory Team, after the Council had helped him with grab rails on his staircase as well as other adaptations to his home. He was visited by Bina, our Support Worker, who immediately made him aware of the Monthly VIP Club. The Club gave him the opportunity to connect with other people who are also on a sight loss journey, which reduced his sense of isolation significantly. Eugene was also pleased to hear about the Employment Service Course, and he attended the Course that ran from July to September 2024. He says this Course gave him confidence and made him aware of opportunities that are out there that he wouldn't have known about otherwise. He is now in the process of looking for work, and applying for jobs. In addition to using these services, Eugene has also started doing the IT Training with Tomasz. He is really pleased about this, as he feels if he can learn to touch type he will be able to regain his access to the online world, something that he lost when he started having eye problems. All in all, Eugene feels that MAB has made a big difference in his life. He sounds upbeat and happy on the phone, which is an achievement for someone going through a sight loss journey.

Service User Testimonial:
Eugene – L. B. of Barnet



"The Middlesex Association for the Blind helps me in so many ways. I always make a list so that I can make good use of the time that I have with Kasia when she visits me. She works through the list with me, and that makes my life easier for the rest of the week. I do the same for the IT training. As my eyesight is deteriorating, I can do less and less, but the IT trainers help me with my phone and my computer. The organisation is very helpful indeed."



Service User Testimonial: (pseudonym)
Daisy – L. B. of Hounslow

Kasia, Support Worker is very good. She is very, very good and very nice. She is very understanding and visits me once a week. She takes me out for a walk which is very important for me. She also reads my letters. She is doing a fantastic job.



Service User Testimonial:
Mia – L. B. of Richmond

Bina, our Support Worker, has also been supporting Margaret (*pseudonym*) since 2023. Despite her sight loss, Margaret is still active in the world, and able to go out. Her challenge is that from time to time she gets very depressed, and then becomes housebound. She has also had to move houses this year, down scaling from a home to a flat. This has given her further stress, and worsened her depressions when they come. Bina has been instrumental in encouraging Margaret during her down times, to visit her GP. This has meant that Margaret gets the medication she needs to lift her out of her depressions. Aware that Margaret can still get out, Bina spent time investigating activities in her area, that she could motivate Margaret to take part in. She linked her up with the VIP club, and with the monthly gym session that happens at the Leisure Centre. She also got her to attend Eye Matters, an organisation that arranges outings for people with sight loss. Margaret has a son who Bina is also in touch with. Not only is he very grateful for the support that MAB gives his mother, but he also gets some support from Bina when he and his mother have difficult days in their relationship. By helping him to deal with the conflict that sometimes arises between them, Bina ensures that the son remains a supportive presence in his mother's life. The holistic and wrap around support that Bina gives Margaret, means that she can cope with the depression that sometimes hits her, and remain independent and active in the world.

Service User Testimonial: (pseudonym)
Margaret – L. B. of Barnet



MAB is making a big difference in my life. I love the coffee mornings. They are really good. It is important for me to see how other people are managing their sight loss. I learn so much from this. Kasia is also very good and very helpful. She comes to see me to help me with my paperwork. Your charity is helping me considerably.

Service User Testimonial:
Petra – L. B. of Richmond



MAB Services and News

We are pleased to introduce the MAB Team:



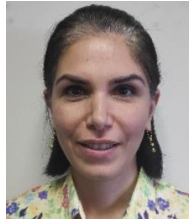
Valerie Hill
Chief Executive Officer



Patricia Odina
Operations Manager



Catherine Holtzhausen
Fundraiser



Shahin Toopchian
Bookkeeper /
Admin Assistant



Tomasz Szuberski
Mobile IT
Support Trainer
5 Boroughs



Marc Davis
Mobile IT
Support Trainer
4 Boroughs



John Monkhouse
Employment
Services Officer



Maggie Dawson
Braille
Tutor



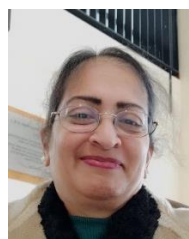
Shayan Syed
Mobile
Resource
Unit Project
Manager



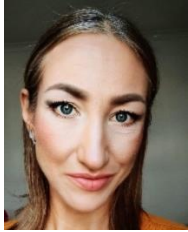
Raheel Razvi
Rapid
Response
Counsellor



Bina Padia
Barnet
Support Worker
& Coordinator



Rita Shah
Brent
Support Worker
& Coordinator



Kamila Reynolds
Ealing
Support Worker
& Coordinator



Ruth Gaskin
Enfield
Support Worker
& Coordinator



Caroline Adamson
Haringey
Support Worker
& Coordinator



Alison Bicknell
Harrow
Support Worker
& Coordinator



Joanne White
Hillingdon
Support Worker
& Coordinator



Kasia Cieplak
Hounslow &
Richmond
Support Worker
& Coordinator

**HEAD OFFICE
VOLUNTEERS**

Hasmukh Mehta
Marc Hill



Nasreen Akhtar
Office
Administrator

From all of us at MAB, thank you for your valuable contribution and all the very best for the future. We are very grateful for the hard work and dedication of all our team members, past and present, and thank them for always striving to make a positive difference to the lives of people with a visual impairment.



This is a free online resource dedicated to helping people live better by seeing better. They recently published an educational guide to navigating the internet for individuals with low vision or blindness. Our free resource covers the built-in tools that make sites more accessible for people with vision loss. Please take a look: nvisioncenters.com/internet-accessibility-guide/

MAB VOLUNTEERS

Meet Hasmukh: - A Blind Cricketer & Screen Reader User

Hasmukh, a talented blind cricketer with lots of patience and determination, shares his experience using the web with a screen reader and highlights the importance of accessible emails, forms, language, and prioritising content within a web page.



Tell Us About Yourself - My name is Hasmukh. I'm visually impaired. I do need to explain however that even if someone is visually impaired, there can be

varying degrees of vision. In my case, I have no vision at all. I depend on a keyboard, browsing with a screen reader to access the web. I use a desktop computer and a Smartphone for some Apps.

My interest is walking and playing cricket for Metro Blind Sports Club. I'd always had a passion for playing cricket but never played much when I had sight. When I gradually lost my sight between the ages of 25 to 30, I went to a rehabilitation centre, and it's there I met someone who used to play blind cricket. He was amazing and put me in touch with the secretary of the Club. And that's how I got involved. It's a great game, in the UK we play with a softball that rattles because there are ball bearings in it, so we can hear it. It's almost the size of a football. International cricket uses a cricket ball.

I'm a people person, so initially I didn't want to learn about computers. But just before I was going to retire from my job as an operator, my manager, who was very nice, advised me to learn computer skills. He gave me a day a week off work so I could do a three year course at the College of Northwest London.

What Barriers Have You Experienced Using The Web?

This is a very interesting question because I face challenges every day, but I don't give up. I'm very patient and want to complete the task, but sometimes I get stuck, so I have to get help from somebody to carry on.

The main challenge is when apps I am familiar with get updated, and suddenly I can't use them anymore! People who design websites need to include people like us so that they understand what works for us. Unless they watch how we use things, how will they know?!

Other challenges can be simple things. For example, an email with graphics with no text descriptions means I can't use it! This is a big problem with meeting invites. I've actually missed a few meetings because I can't read the time or date or find the join meeting button. Sometimes I have to ask somebody for help and wait for them to have the time to help me which is frustrating.

Are There Any Websites You Find Especially Accessible?

I do volunteer work for a small charity, Middlesex Association for the Blind and their website is good because it's simple. Otherwise, I'm struggling to be honest because even simple things can make it difficult when you have no sight. If you have a little vision, maybe you can see an icon, click on it, and be on your way, but without any vision, simple things like filling in a Form can be really hard. A recent example was selecting my age from a dropdown. I selected "75 and above" but when I clicked on it, the cursor jumped onto the "16 to 25" age group. But I didn't know this when I submitted the Form! So, should I go back and double-check everything?

Another thing with Forms is sometimes I don't know what the question is because I can't find a Form label. If I get really stuck, I use an app called Be My Eye. This app has volunteers who can tell me what the question is. Even consent forms can be hard to sign especially if they are protected. Sometimes I can't win. Overall these kinds of issues are getting better and better, I must say. You know, it's improving all the time. But the problem is it keeps changing as well!

What Features or Improvements Would You Like to See on The Web?

Making things easy to find on a page. For example, when I click on a link and go to a new page, I expect the information to be right on the top or under a heading. Otherwise, I spend so much time looking for the information that should be just there. It can really waste my time because websites can be so complicated with lots of information you have to go through. Mostly I will find it after a while, but sometimes I can't. I must say that skip links are excellent because you pass all the other bits and get straight into the content. But whether I get into the content that I'm looking for depends on how it's designed.

The last point I want to add is language because English is my second language. Keywords are important. For example, I was on a website for a train station and looking for a café where I could have a cup of coffee. I searched for "R" for restaurant, "C" for café, and "F" for food. But to my surprise, after spending so much time looking for this information it was under "R" for retail. Now, retail, I think, is a shop like Debenhams, Marks and Spencer's, or Primark. I would never think to look for a café under "retail".

I'd like to see better alternatives for maps which are not accessible. I was looking at a PDF of a map the other day where they listed the names of the shops next to the map. But they didn't say where on the map the shops were located, so it wasn't really very useful.

Finally, I want to say, while initially I wasn't interested in technology, it is so important to me. Email in particular has allowed me to find so many opportunities and stay in touch.

Posted 15.10.2024 by Henny Swan in [User Experience](#)

Meet Tarla: - MAB Volunteer & Butterfly Volunteer at N.P.H.

I began my volunteering journey with MAB 15-years ago. My most early role involved visiting a client and assisting them with day-to-day activities. I subsequently provided clients with telephone befriending and I continue to provide such service. In recent times, I have been helping out regularly with Open Eyes Monthly VIP Club, as well as representing MAB at College Fairs. I have always enjoyed volunteering with MAB.

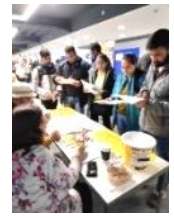


Alongside my volunteering with MAB, I volunteer regularly at Harrow's Northwick Park Hospital. Here, I am a Butterfly Volunteer, which involves working on Wards to support patients who are at the end of their life. I provide company, comfort, companionship and compassionate listening to patients in their last few days and hours of life – this is especially important for those patients with few or no visitors. I often help patients by reading aloud, playing soothing music, offering mouth care, combing their hair, or by sitting down for a chat. I also provide silent company or hold the patient's hand. I liaise with Ward Staff if I feel that a patient has any additional needs. I also provide support and respite for the Patients' families and friends. I very much enjoy my role, and find it highly fulfilling.

*OTHER NEWS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

You can Make a Real Difference!



Service User / Volunteer Pairing Testimonial

By Ruby J. – Alicia's Mum

I was signposted as I was looking for some organisation who assisted VI adults. I have a VI disabled daughter with mild learning difficulties.

Once I contacted the Middlesex Association for the Blind, to my surprise, I had a quick response and Bina called me and we arranged to meet with Alicia, (my daughter) at my house.

The moment Bina came in she was full of enthusiasm and wealth of knowledge she shared with us. The door to many avenues suddenly opened for Alicia. I couldn't believe it. Alicia is 24 years old and this organisation existed all this time but I had no idea.

She ordered Alicia electronics e.g. Alexa, tape recorder and radio and organised the visit to the group, where she had opportunity to meet the MRU Project Manager, Shayan, who showed Alicia various VI equipment available to buy. She also arranged for a Volunteer, Janet, who is of similar age, to support Alicia. It is credit to this organisation and the people who run it that within months, Alicia's demographic of outreach assistance from various pools for VI departments opened up.

All thanks to Bina for her professionalism and her caring nature to assist people in Alicia's situation. I am very grateful and humbled by the support and guidance from Bina.

Service User – Alicia. Volunteer – Janet.

Barnet Support Worker/Volunteer Coordinator – Bina Padia

**BARNET | BRENT | EALING | ENFIELD | HARINGEY
HARROW | HILLINGDON | HOUNSLOW | RICHMOND**

A BEACON OF INDEPENDENCE FOR PEOPLE WITH SIGHT LOSS

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly emerging as a powerful force for accessibility, holding the potential to revolutionise the lives of individuals with sight loss and empower them to live more independently. While the cost of some cutting-edge assistive devices currently presents a barrier, the rapid evolution of AI technology suggests a future where these transformative tools will become widely available and affordable. Already, AI-powered applications like Seeing AI and Envision AI are making a tangible impact, enabling users to access real-time descriptions of their surroundings, read text, identify objects, and navigate everyday tasks with greater confidence.

Transforming Daily Life with AI-Powered Assistance:

The true potential of AI lies in its ability to bridge the gap between the visual world and the experience of those with sight loss. Imagine a world where smart glasses and wearable devices seamlessly provide real-time audio descriptions of faces, obstacles, and complex environments. These tools could offer invaluable guidance in navigating public spaces, accessing information in stores, following presentations, and engaging with educational materials. While current high-end devices may be out of reach for many, ongoing research and development, coupled with the natural trend of technology becoming more affordable over time, promise to make these powerful aids accessible to everyone who needs them.

Unlocking the Digital World with AI Language Models:

Beyond the physical realm, AI-powered language models are poised to dramatically enhance digital accessibility. These sophisticated systems can generate detailed image descriptions, provide comprehensive product information, and create rich, engaging audio narrations for online content. As this technology matures and becomes more deeply integrated into digital platforms, it promises to unlock a vast wealth of websites, media, and educational resources, making them fully accessible and enjoyable for people with sight loss.


Fostering Inclusive Workplaces and Driving Innovation:

AI-driven tools that translate visual information into alternative formats have the power to open up exciting new career paths for individuals with sight loss in fields such as design, data analysis, and media production. By fostering more inclusive and accessible workplaces, we can tap into a diverse pool of talent and perspectives, enriching both the professional landscape and society as a whole. Moreover, the innovation spurred by the development of assistive technologies often leads to broader advancements that benefit everyone, highlighting the interconnectedness of accessibility and progress.

A Future of Inclusion and Empowerment:

By harnessing the power of AI to break down barriers, we have a unique opportunity to create a truly inclusive world where everyone can thrive and contribute their unique talents. As technology becomes more affordable and accessible, AI-powered tools will become increasingly commonplace, empowering individuals with sight loss to live more independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. Through continued collaboration, a commitment to equity, and a compassionate understanding of diverse needs, we can build a future that celebrates the potential within each of us and ensures that no one is left behind.

Acknowledgement:

	Claude https://claude.ai	This article was developed by Claude, an AI assistant created by Anthropic, exploring the transformative potential of AI to enhance independence for people with sight loss.
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	BrailleBliss Braille Greeting Cards	The link to Kerry's Online Shop is below: BrailleBliss.etsy.com
Donations to be made from Sales to Guide Dog UK		

RNIB EYE CARE LIAISON OFFICERS - ECLOS

Eye Care Liaison Officers (ECLOs)

Eye Care Liaison Officers - ECLOs, have lots of knowledge on eye conditions and on helpful local and national services. By offering dedicated individual care, ECLOs can talk to you about your worries and give you advice on how to lessen the impact your eye condition may have on your life.

ECLOs act as an important bridge between health and social services and are central to the support and wellbeing of patients in eye clinics. They also help prevent avoidable sight loss, by talking through treatment and helping people to understand their medication if necessary. The RNIB's ECLOs are an integral part of available Sight Loss Advice Services.

What Kind of Support Can an ECLO Give?

ECLOs are there to provide you with up-to-date information and put you in touch with useful services by making referrals on your behalf. They can advise you on:

- Eye Conditions
- Welfare Benefits you may be entitled to.
- Remaining In Employment or Re-Training.
- Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing
- Children's Services / Where to get Help
- Voluntary Organisations and Local Support Groups.

ECLOs are also able to explain the process of becoming Registered as Blind or Partially Sighted and the benefits of being Registered. They can work with people of all ages, but some may specialise in working with people of a specific age group, such as older people. However, all ECLOs will provide you with support and advice if you ask for it.

Family, Friends and Carers – With your permission, ECLOs are happy to open discussions with people close to you who may be affected by your sight condition.

Medical Questions - You should speak to your ophthalmologist (hospital eye doctor) about any medical queries.

Referrals - Your ECLO may be asked to see you in the clinic by an ophthalmologist, an optometrist or a nurse. You can also ask to see an ECLO independently, which is something we

encourage. All referrals to ECLOs are optional. Even if you have been advised to see one, you don't have to, if that is what you prefer. You may, however, want to see the ECLO during a later stage of your diagnosis – this option is available to you at any time, even if you have previously declined the option.

For more Information, or For a Referral to the ECLO in your Area, Please Call the Helpline at 0303 123 9999

The following London Hospitals have an ECLO Service:

Great Ormond Street Hospital London WC1N 3JH	Western Eye Hospital London NW1 5QH	King's College Hospital, London SE5 9RS
Royal Free Hospital London NW3 2QG	Mile End Hospital London E1 4DG	Saint Ann's Hospital London N15 3TH
Charing Cross Hospital, London W6 8RF	St George's Hospital, Moorfields Eye Clinic London SW17 0QT	Central Middlesex Hospital, London NW10 7NS
Whipps Cross University Hospital London E11 1NR	Croydon University Hospital, Surrey CR7 7YE	Kingston Hospital Surrey KT2 7QB
Edgware Community Hospital Middlesex, HA8 0AD	Ealing Hospital Middlesex UB1 3HW	Northwick Park Hospital Middlesex HA1 3UJ
Barking Hospital Essex IG11 9LX	Sir Ludwig Guttman Health and Wellbeing Centre London, E20 1AS	



Alison Bicknell
Harrow Support Worker

Raheel Razvi
Rapid Response Counselling

Sandra (pseudonym) - Harrow 'Open Eyes' VIP Social Club

Sandra became visually impaired in the past year. She was referred to MAB through the local council. Alison visited her immediately and outlined all the services we could offer her. Sandra opted for the Rapid Response Counselling, as she felt that she needed some psychological assistance to cope with what had happened to her. Alongside the Counselling, Alison continued to visit her in her home on a weekly basis, helping her with tasks that she could no longer do alone. One of the problems that Sandra faced was that her sight loss had made her extremely isolated. She had lost the confidence she needed to leave her home. Alison persuaded her to join our VIP club.

I met Sandra on her first visit to the club. She was delighted to be sitting next to 2 people who were also visually impaired, and they were chatting up a storm, sharing stories and giving each other tips. To bring home to the donor what we do as MAB, I asked if anyone in the room was willing to talk about what MAB had done for them. To my great surprise, Sandra was the first to put up her hand. She spoke of the shock she had experienced losing her sight, of how much she had struggled with life, and of how lonely she had been. "And yet," she said, "here I am sitting here today, with other people who have gone through what I have gone through... I can honestly say that I don't know how I would have coped without Alison. Alison and MAB have been the rock that I have stood on in this time". As Sandra was talking, she started crying. She wasn't crying from sadness or from joy, she was crying from the sheer relief of having come across MAB. She was brave enough to keep talking while she cried openly. At one stage the lady sitting next to her reached out and fumbled around looking for her hand, so that Sandra could feel her support.

Everyone in the room sat dead still listening to her. You could have heard a pin drop. It was evident that her story resonated with everyone. When she had finished speaking, other people in the room shared their experiences, and the word that kept coming out over and over again, was "Alison..." "Without Alison, I wouldn't cope..." "Because of Alison, I am managing..." "Thanks to Alison, I am here..."


THE MOBILE RESOURCE UNIT ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATIONS



For more information on Assistive Technology; How to Prevent and Manage Sight Loss and more, Please Visit our Mobile Resource Unit. For full details, Including Venues and Dates for the MRU, Please

Visit our website www.aftb.org.uk or Call **020 8423 5141**

EYE MATTER - MULTI-ACTIVITY PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT ZOOM ONLINE & MONTHLY MEET-UPS

Cookery	Poetry	Chair Yoga	Book Club
Audio Described Zumba Sessions		Sailing Day & Picnic Break	Neurobics, Aerobics for the Memory
Tate Modern Audio Described Tour		Audio Chair Yoga	
Sports Taster Days		Drama Improv.	
Social Gathering			
Quiz Time	Mental Health Wellbeing Group	Discuss & Swap Survival Hacks	Listen & Sing Along

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT SUZIE AT EYE MATTER
CALL 07968 722664 OR EMAIL EYEMATTERVI@GMAIL.COM**



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Inner Vision Orchestra - the world's only professional ensemble of blind musicians offering a series of music workshops and performances by blind musicians for blind people. For all levels of ability and experience. For more information <https://www.balujimusicfoundation.org/inner-vision-orchestra>



The next exhibition at **The King's Gallery** is ***Drawing the Italian Renaissance***, an exhibition which brings together a wide range of drawings from the Renaissance period which saw a dramatic transformation in the way that artists worked, with a new-found appreciation for creativity pushing artistic boundaries. **The next descriptive event is on Tuesday 11 February, 13:45 - 16:15 - [Descriptive event: Drawing the Italian Renaissance \(rct.uk\)](#)**. You can book these events online via the links above, or by calling **0303 123 7301** – please call this number if you wish to book with a 1-Year Pass. The event will take place on a day when the Gallery is otherwise closed to the wider general public.



Audio Described & Touch Tour - Royal Ballet & Opera
[Event webpage hyperlink.](#) Telephone: 020 7304 4000

 Onegin - Ballet	 Aida – Opera	 Phaedra & Minotaur	 Light of Passage
15.02.2025 7pm	09.02.2025 3pm	Ballet & Opera	Ballet & Dance
Touch Tour 6pm Pushkin's classic love story becomes a sumptuous ballet with John Cranko's choreography. Tchaikovsky's soaring music.	Touch Tour 2pm Verdi's sharply relevant opera of love and war returns to the Royal Opera House.	09.02.2025 2.30pm Touch Tour 1pm Two Tales of Desire & Death. Impassioned singing meets dreamlike dance in two compelling pieces, (Greek myth inspired).	01.03. 2025 7.30pm Touch Tour 6:30pm Crystal Pite's poignant work grapples with themes of safe passage, displacement, community and mortality.



Holidays for the Blind & Partially Sighted

Seable's mission is to provide accessible tailored holidays to the visually impaired community. Amazing, inclusive trips with local sighted guides and tailored activities to suit your needs and enjoy a stress-free holiday. Telephone: 020 3375 6947. www.seable.co.uk

MAB Board of Trustees

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Trustee - Ms Helen McGrath

Trustee - Ms Jenny Yoe

Poem for Northwick Park Hospital Butterfly Service Users By Tarla Modha – MAB Volunteer

Nearing end of life,
Feeling anxious, confused, and wary.
Forlorn and full of strife,
Hospitals seem dark, cold, and scary.
A brightness flies into the room,
Its presence so positive and charming.
Now there is less doom and gloom,
The sickbay no longer seems alarming.
Spoken words so uplifting and sweet,
Reassure against deathly fears.
The care is so much like a treat,
Moments of joy before life disappears.
A touch so gentle and warm,
Soothing and comforting to the mind.
A calm before the storm,
From a butterfly ever so kind.

MAB VIP Social Clubs

The meetings are a chance for people to get together and make new friends. Through socialising at the clubs, people who are new to visual impairment are inspired by the people they meet. It is an opportunity to share challenges and victories, and to make social connections that go beyond the life of the monthly meeting. We currently run Monthly Clubs in all 9 Boroughs:

Barnet



Our Barnet VIP Club runs from **11AM to 1PM**, on the **last Thursday** of every month at **St Margaret's United Reform Church, Victoria Road, Finchley, N3 1BD**

Brent



Our Brent VIP Club runs from **10.30AM to 12.30PM** on the **first Monday** of each month at **the Brent Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre Brentfield Harrow Road NW10 0RG**

Ealing



Our Ealing VIP Club Coffee Morning runs from **10.00AM to 1.00PM** on the **third Thursday** of each month at the **William Hobbayne Centre 1 St Dunstan's Road W7 2EY**



Our **Ealing Trike Club** usually runs from **10.00AM to 1.00PM** on the **last Wednesday** of the month (**March to October only**) in **Walpole Park Mattock Lane W5 5EQ**

Enfield



Our **Enfield VIP Drop-In Centre** runs from **10:30AM to 12:30PM** on the **third Thursday** of each month at **The Park Avenue Centre, 65C Park Avenue, Bush Hill Park, Enfield EN1 2HL**

Haringey



Our **Haringey VIP Club** runs from **2.00PM to 4.00PM** on the **second Wednesday** of each month at the **Winkfield Resource Centre 33 Winkfield Road, Wood Green N22 5RP**

Harrow



Our **Harrow 'Open Eyes' VIP Club** runs from **10:45AM to 12:45PM** on the **last Wednesday** of each month at the **Wealdstone Library 38 - 40 High St Wealdstone HA8 7AE**

Hillingdon



Our **Hillingdon VIP Club** runs from **10.30AM to 12.30PM** on the **last Thursday** of each month at **Christ Church, Redford Way, Belmont Road, Uxbridge UB8 1SZ**

Hounslow



Our **Hounslow VIP club** usually runs from **1.00PM to 3.00PM** on the **last Thursday** of the month at **The British Legion Whitton Road, Hounslow TW3 2DB**

Richmond



Our **Richmond VIP Club** runs from **10.30AM to 12.30PM** on the **fourth or last Monday** of each month at **Duke Street Church Living Meeting Room Duke Street Quadrant Road Richmond TW9 1DH**

For more details about our **Social Clubs**, please visit our website www.aftb.org.uk or call **020 8423 5141**

CONTACT NUMBERS

MAB BOROUGH COORDINATORS' CONTACT NUMBERS

Borough	Name	Telephone No.
Barnet	Bina Padia	07594 625215
Brent & Barnet	Rita Shah	07510 127893
Ealing	Kamila Reynolds	07387 101631
Enfield	Ruth Gaskin	07858 311410
Haringey	Caroline Adamson	07754 875175
Harrow	Alison Bicknell	07387 101632
Hillingdon	Joanne White	07387 101630
Hounslow & Richmond	Kasia Cieplak	07511 826892

BOROUGH SENSORY SERVICES TEAM CONTACT NUMBERS

Borough	Telephone No.	Borough	Telephone No.
Barnet	020 8359 5000	Harrow	020 8901 2680
Brent	020 8937 4300	Hillingdon	01895 556 633
Ealing	020 8825 6230	Hounslow	020 8583 3100
Enfield	020 8379 1001	Richmond	020 8891 7971
Haringey	020 8489 8900		

Contributing to Outlook

We welcome contributions to the newsletter. Please send your Articles to Patricia Odina (patricia@aftb.org.uk).

This edition of Outlook is produced by:

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 A big Thank You to the Management & Community Champion Team at Morrisons Supermarket Honeypot Lane, Queensbury London NW9 6RN for allocating Free Car Parking Spaces to MAB Service Users and Staff.

Our sincere thanks to the following for allowing us place **MAB Collection Boxes** on their premises:

Joe's Bake & Bite
5 Queensbury Station Parade HA8 5NP


Bath Road Pharmacy
115-117 Bath Road Hounslow TW3 3BT


Seven Oaks Court
Copsewood Way Northwood HA6 2TW

Harris & Hoole Coffee Shop 24 King Street Twickenham TW1 3SN

Special thanks also to our Volunteers for their continued support.

 Established in 1999
Many thanks to the Magnifier Company for their Free Sample Magnifiers for our Service User demonstrations. They offer a selection of Magnifying Glasses, Fresnel Lenses, Magnifier Lamps, Loupes, Linen Testers and Low Vision Aids. For more information; www.magnifyingglasses.co.uk.

 To the Management & Community Champion Team at Tesco Superstore, Ballards Lane, Finchley N3 1XP – A big Thank You for your continued support of our VIP Barnet Monthly Coffee Mornings.

 Thank you to Barnet Copthall Leisure for hosting MAB Monthly Activity Days.

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~ Without you, we would not exist ~
Thank you for your continued support!**



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