**Vision Foundation staff pose together wearing Vision Foundation t-shirts. 
heading says - Trustee Application Pack**

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# Chair’s introduction

A close up of a persons face

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Thank you for taking the time to consider applying to become a trustee at the Vision Foundation.

The Vision Foundation has been supporting and speaking out on behalf of blind and partially sighted people across London for close to 100 years. Formerly known as the Greater London Fund for the Blind we support organisations that provide a necessary lifeline and essential resource for London’s visually impaired community. That includes everything from making sure a child affected by sight loss can access education; to giving a young person a helping hand on the career ladder; or funding yoga, cookery and Zumba classes for an isolated older person.

But people living with sight loss in the capital are facing significant and growing challenges, and ever worsening life chances. Meanwhile, a very high and growing number of people are needlessly going blind. We have identified that the Vision Foundation can play a critical and unique role in both transforming lives and saving sight by working in partnership with others to deliver projects which inform, empower, and include.

We want to significantly grow the amount of money we raise over the next few years. We want this growth to be for the long term and to be sustainable. This will enable us to develop a London-wide approach and better enable our delivery partners to plan and roll out high quality relevant services that work for blind and partially sighted Londoners across the city.

As the chair of the Vision Foundation, I’m proud to be leading this change. I know from experience how important it is that we stay relevant to what’s needed. Being visually impaired should not lock you out of the opportunities that London has to offer. As someone who is registered blind I have faced challenges throughout my life and know first-hand how hard it is to get a foot in the door. I have fought hard to break down doors to stake my place at the table and want to ensure those doors remain open for other blind and partially sighted people.

As we look ahead to the next five years we have the opportunity to make more impact than ever before. We will work to improve the opportunities, wellbeing and inclusion for blind and partially sighted people. We will do more to ensure London is open and welcoming to the visually impaired community across employment, and social and cultural spaces. We will strive to reduce loneliness and isolation. And we will ensure that blind and partially sighted people further marginalised through homelessness, poverty or domestic violence are reached. Above all, we will emphasise what people can do, rather than what they can’t.

But our work is more than just providing support. It’s also about amplifying voices to ensure that blind and partially sighted are heard. And it’s about changing our society and the systems that structure it, by inspiring more people to advocate and take action. Being blind or partially sighted should not mean you are left out, isolated, or held back. The Vision Foundation believes we can all be equal citizens of this great city and have an opportunity to live life to the full.

Now, as we near our centenary year, is the moment to make a difference. If you have a commitment to the issue of sight loss and share our vision for London, I invite you to read on further and join us in making London a shining example of a sight loss aware city.

I look forward to meeting you.

Yours,

Anna Tylor  
**Chair**

# About the Vision Foundation

**We passionately believe that people living with sight loss should have the same opportunities as anyone else. And we are outraged that avoidable sight loss still occurs in 21st century London.**

2 women with white canes at a Croydon Vision event posing for the camera

The Vision Foundation was founded in 1921 by newspaper magnate Sir Arthur Pearson who was moved to improve the lot of blind and partially sighted Londoners as a result of his own experience of sight loss. The charity has a distinguished history in supporting the work of its local sight loss organisation members, who deliver services to blind and partially sighted Londoners.

We work in partnership with established delivery partners and grass-roots charities to deliver projects and to campaign for systemic change. Through our work, we help remove the biggest barriers facing blind and partially sighted people in our society today. We are committed to three strategic aims to help us move a step closer to achieving our vision, over the five-year period of our strategy:

* Preventing avoidable sight loss
* Opening London Up
* Empowering those at risk

We raise our funds through a variety of approaches, including sponsored events, individual gifts, legacies, and regular giving by a wonderful range of supporters. We also have a charitable retail business which makes a significant contribution to our income. We are keen to build on this success and to develop new ways to keep sight loss in the fore of the public imagination in order to increase our fundraising efforts. There are currently more than 2.4 million people living with sight loss in the UK, many of whom live in London, and the need for services is growing.

Our board comprises both independent and member nominated trustees and meets five times a year. We also have a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee which has four Trustee members and meets at least four times a year. We see the role of our Trustees as key to our continued development and growth and feel that it offers a unique opportunity to make a difference to the lives of blind and partially sighted Londoners.

# Our partner charities

The Vision Foundation works with a network of partners across London. In all cases, we provide funding, networking, opportunities to learn and share skills, and a united voice to influence policy and public attitudes.

We have a number of long-standing partners to whom we provide unrestricted funding:

* [BlindAid](https://www.blindaid.org.uk/)
* [Clarity](https://clarityproducts.org/)
* [Croydon Vision](http://www.croydonvision.org.uk/)
* [Kingston Association for the Blind](http://www.kingstonassociationforblind.org/)
* [MertonVision](http://www.mertonvision.org.uk/)
* [Middlesex Association for the Blind](http://aftb.org.uk/)
* [SeeAbility](http://www.seeability.org/)
* [Sight for Surrey](http://sightforsurrey.org.uk/)
* [Sutton Vision](http://www.suttonvision.org.uk/)

Additionally, each year we support a number of specific projects. Funding is awarded through our Vision Fund which aims to address the most pressing issues affecting blind and partially sighted people in London today. Its designed to fund innovative projects that are changing lives in our communities. Our current and most recent grantees include:

* [Age UK](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/redbridgebarkinghavering/)
* [The Amber Trust](https://www.ambertrust.org/)
* [The Change Foundation](https://www.thechangefoundation.org.uk/)
* [Blind in Business](https://blindinbusiness.org.uk/)
* [Deafblind UK](https://deafblind.org.uk/)
* [Drake Music](https://www.drakemusic.org/)
* [Kent Association for the Blind](https://www.kab.org.uk/)
* Lunch Club Plus for the Blind
* [Metro Blind Sport](https://www.metroblindsport.org/)
* [Merton Sports and Social](https://www.mssc.org.uk/)
* [Mousetrap Theatre Projects](https://www.mousetrap.org.uk/)
* [OBAC – the Organisation for Blind Africans and Caribbeans](http://www.obac.org.uk/)
* [Panathlon](https://panathlon.com/)
* [Southwark Pensioners](http://www.southwarkpensioners.org.uk/)
* [Talking News Islington](http://www.tnf.org.uk/local-tn/find-a-local-talking-newspaper/talking-news-islington.aspx)
* [Time and Talents](http://www.timeandtalents.org.uk/)
* [Timebanking UK](https://www.timebanking.org/)
* [Wood Street Walls](https://www.woodstreetwalls.co.uk/)

**Role Description**

**Job title:** Trustee

**Reports to:** Chair of Trustees

**Location:** Board meetings take place at the head office in London, SE1 7QD

**Role type:** Voluntary – expenses to be provided

**Key skills/experience desired:** Strategy, governance, legal, retail, digital, disability, policy, risk

**Time commitment:** Five board meetings each year, sub-committee meetings as appropriate, as well as attendance at fundraising events where possible.

**Overall purpose of the role**

* The Trustees, acting together, govern the charity, safeguarding its assets and applying them as efficiently and effectively as possible to further the charity’s objects

**Role Description**

In order to carry out your duties as a Trustee you will be required to:

* Act in the best interests of the present and future beneficiaries setting aside any other interests you may have
* Attend the Trustee Board meetings and sub-committee meetings (as appropriate)
* Devote the necessary time and effort to developing a good understanding of the Vision Foundation and its activities, reading papers and undertaking other preparatory work.

**General responsibilities**

* Ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document
* Ensure that all the charity’s activities are within its objects and within the law and relevant regulations
* Safeguard the charity’s ethos, its good name and the values of the organisation
* Work with our Chief Executive and leadership team to develop strategic goals and objectives, to agree those goals and objectives, and to assess whether the management’s strategy to achieve the goals and objectives is reasonable in relation to the risks involved, the resources required and the benefits to be achieved
* Monitor the charity’s progress towards the achievement of its strategic goals and objectives and monitor the impact of its activities on its beneficiaries
* Define the parameters on which the budget will be based, agree the budget and monitor financial performance
* Ensure that management has implemented an effective risk identification and management process
* Ensure that management has implemented effective internal control systems and management information systems
* As and when necessary appoint a Chief Executive, support him or her, agree their performance goals, monitor their performance against the specified goals, and agree their remuneration package
* Establish and, as necessary, review a clear framework of delegation to committees and the Chief Executive, monitor compliance with that framework and hold Committees and the Chief Executive accountable for the authority that has been delegated to them
* Be accountable to stakeholders for the way in which you have discharged your responsibilities as a Trustee board
* Represent the Board’s position when speaking publicly
* Assist with the recruitment of new Trustees
* Review the Board’s own performance periodically and build an effective team spirit across Trustees and management
* Identify with, and be motivated by, the values and objectives of the Vision Foundation.
* Enthuse the wider world with what the Vision Foundation is about.
* Contribute effectively within a talented Board

*For more information on the role and responsibilities of trustees see the* [*Charity Commission Guidance*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3)

**Person Specification**

**Personal Characteristics**

Essential:

* Commitment to upholding the values and ethos of the Vision Foundation.
* An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
* A commitment to dedicate the necessary time and effort to the role.
* Good communication and interpersonal skills. Able to speak their mind, while also demonstrating tact and diplomacy, where required.
* Experience of committee work and of working as part of a team.
* Demonstrates impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences
* Commands the respect of fellow Trustees and management
* Thinks innovatively, critically, independently and strategically, with the ability and a proven track record of translating strategy into operational plans

**Skills and Experience**

Essential:

* Analytical and evaluation skills, demonstrating good judgement.
* Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
* Good communication and leadership skills

Desirable:

* Knowledge and experience of charity fundraising and finance practices.
* Dedicated to the organisation’s cause and objectives and willing to act as the charity’s ambassador to external bodies, charities and companies.
* Skills and experience in one or more areas of non-executive governance and management e.g. strategic planning, business management, financial/accountancy, understanding of HR issues, communications and experience of fundraising.
* A team-oriented approach to problem solving and to management
* Demonstrates a healthy understanding of risk, and its benefits, is prepared to take risks, and has entrepreneurial instincts

**How to Apply**

Applications will be by way of CV and a supporting statement covering why you would be interested in the position and what professional and personal experience you feel that you could add to the Vision Foundation’s board as their Trustee. Applications should be submitted to [hello@visionfoundation.org.uk](mailto:hello@visionfoundation.org.uk) no later than 5pm on the 26th November 2019.

Please contact Olivia Curno on 020 7620 2066 or email ocurno@visionfoundation.org.uk for a confidential conversation and to discuss next steps.