# Vision Foundation and Fight for Sight Merger FAQ

# Why merge and what does it mean?

## What is happening and when?

Vision Foundation and Fight for Sight are merging to become one organisation from 1 April 2023. We’re excited that together we will be the only independent UK-wide funder changing lives through:

* grant investment in funding **innovative services** for people with sight loss
* and saving sight by funding **ground-breaking scientific research**.

## What are the reasons for the merger?

Every 6 minutes someone learns that they are losing their sight. Every five hours, a baby is born with sight problems. In these moments, we’ve established that two profound questions tend to emerge:

Can this be stopped?

How do I (or my child) live this life?

Our new charity is here to answer these questions. We will work tirelessly to:

* **prevent sight loss** through world class research
* ensure that blind and partially sighted people can **live life to the full**, by funding amazing services and campaigning for social change.

Togetherour people have the knowledge, expertise, connections, and ambition to make extraordinary progress in sight loss prevention and cure **and** in improving quality of life for people living with sight loss**.**

## Why Fight for Sight?

When contemplating a merger, we had a few key criteria for any potential merger partners:

1.To be sight loss focussed.

2.Merging would bring us increased reach.

3.That they didn’t deliver direct services.

4.They’d be evidence and intelligence-led, with a human and dynamic culture.

5.They would be financially sound.

6. We wanted them to bring something different and complementary to what we do.

Fight for Sight answers all these criteria. The sixth point is something that we’re especially excited about, by joining with Fight for Sight we’ll be able to tackle both the prevalence and impact of sight loss.

## Why do we want to merge now?

Neither organisation is struggling alone, but both are desperate to see their expertise and vision on a bigger scale. This isn’t a merger of necessity but one of opportunity. We know our work is urgent - everyday sight loss in the UK is increasing and more people are being left unsupported. Together we believe our combined knowledge, reach and influence will have far more impact for people with sight loss, changing lives and saving sight.

## How will it work?

Our new organisation will continue to develop what we both do best:

**Fight for Sight’**s grant funding of world-leading medical research: fighting to preserve sight and end sight loss at every turn; investing in the best science that will detect and prevent sight loss, and preserve and restore sight.

**Vision Foundation**’s evidence-based grant making funds innovative projects that ensure that people living with sight loss can achieve equality as citizens in society, with access to the same social, cultural and economic opportunities as anyone else.

Our combined organisational expertise in funding eye research and social intervention and change will make us a uniquely informed funder. We’ll place the experiences of people at the heart of our ambition to drive improvement and change.

## Who will lead the new organisation?

The new organisation will be led by Keith Valentine. Olivia Curno will help to lead the merger and will then move to a new opportunity from April 2023. This was a difficult decision for Olivia, who is hugely committed and proud of what the Vision Foundation has achieved in the last five years, however, she could not wish for a better next chapter for the charity.

In combination with Fight for Sight, we’ll be able to expand our reach nationally overnight, and will be financially sustainable. Crucially, it will benefit from lived experience leadership in Keith, a key goal in the Vision Foundation strategy.

The ELT of the new organisation will be made up of leaders from both sides, the new board will be half Vision Foundation, half Fight for Sight, until we recruit new Board members.

## How have decisions been made?

This has been a merger of opportunity rather than necessity, but it hasn’t been taken lightly. Conversations about a potential merger started with both organisation’s executive teams. In the early stages this was purely hypothetical but both leadership teams quickly recognised the opportunity to increase impact by joining forces.

A carefully considered though excited conversation between Olivia and Keith set the ball rolling and plans began to take shape. A proposal with the full support of both executive leadership teams was discussed at both Boards of Trustees on 23rd and 24th November, after which the decision to go ahead with a merger was unanimous. Since then a team of people from Vision Foundation and Fight for Sight have begun working to bring the organisations together as one.

## What does the new charity look like? Will there be a new joint vision, strategy and values?

Absolutely. It’s telling that the existing Vision Foundation and emerging Fight for Sight strategies are already extremely complementary. Through early discussions, the teams across both organisations shared an ambition to demand faster, better change in the sector and even more impact for people living with sight loss.

This year (2023) work will begin in earnest to create a shared vision, strategy and set of values for our newly unified organisation.

## Will there be a new name and brand?

Yes. We will be developing a name and brand for the new organisation that reflects the new vision and retains the spirit of both the existing organisations. It will take time to do this properly, and will be developed alongside the vision, strategy and values of the newly merged organisation.

## Will Vision Foundation charity shops remain open?

Absolutely. The merged organisation is committed to continuing with the existing Vision Foundation retail strategy. All shops will carry on operating as they are, and we will look to continue to expand by taking on a new warehouse and open more shops in the future!

## I host one of your collection boxes, what will happen to this now?

Thank you so much for supporting Vision Foundation by hosting a collection box.  We will be developing a name and brand for the new organisation that reflects the new vision and retains the spirit of both the existing organisations. It will take time to do this properly, and in due course your collection box may be replaced with one in the new brand. There’s nothing you need to do and your friendly regular collector will install this for you when the time comes. You will continue to receive the professional service and receipts for collections as you are used to.

## Does this mean the rebrand work Vision Foundation did in the last few years was a waste?

We certainly don’t think so. Over the last few years we’ve made a lot of changes, we’ve changed the way we deliver our impact, away from a membership model into reactive and proactive grant making, alongside research and campaigns. We’ve become a credible and dynamic voice in the sector, and a thought leader, meaning we now influence much bigger charities and the public about issues that, frankly, no-one was aware of.

And of course externally, we’ve changed our name, brand, reputation, and reach, building strong relationships with influencers and incredible VIP spokespeople.

All of this work has helped to crystalise our drive and focus and without it we wouldn’t have been such a popular merger partner. So no, we don’t think any of this effort was wasted and we’re proud of what we built in that time.

## How can I keep up to date with Vision Foundation’s work and news about the merger?

We’ll keep you abreast of merger news via our website, our Vision Matters newsletter - [**which you can subscribe to here**](https://www.visionfoundation.org.uk/newsletter-sign/) - and our social media channels:

Twitter - [twitter.com/Vision\_Fdn](https://twitter.com/Vision_Fdn)

Facebook - [facebook.com/VisionFdn](https://www.facebook.com/VisionFdn)

Instagram - [instagram.com/vision\_fdn](https://www.instagram.com/vision_fdn/?hl=en)

LinkedIn - [linkedin.com/company/visionfoundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/visionfoundation)

Or if you have a specific question for a member of the team please feel free to get in touch directly:

Tel: 0207 620 2066
Email: hello@visionfoundation.org.uk

# **What does the merger mean for grant recipients?**

## What will the merger mean for grants?

While we’re uniting for maximum influence and impact, we’ve taken the decision to maintain our separate grantmaking departments. This will ensure our organisation retains expertise and experience in both the science and services fields.

## Does this mean my grant will be interrupted or stopped?

Absolutely not. We’re committed to nurturing the relationships we have built with our funded partners so we’d never think of leaving you in the lurch. We’ll absolutely honour all the terms and conditions of your Grant Agreement(s), and as usual organisations can re-apply when funding rounds open up.

## Will the assessment criteria for applications change?

For the moment nothing will change, but as we develop and grow as an organisation we will ensure that you are part of our journey. We pride ourselves on listening and changing to meet your needs so we hope any change will be positive for all involved.

## Will the way in which we report to Vision Foundation change?

Our key priority going forward is simplifying the process, so any changes will be responsive to the needs of the sector. Again we want to take you on this exciting journey of improving the lives of blind and VI people with us.

## Will the size of grants I can apply for change?

We certainly don’t foresee grant sizes reducing. Our strategic aims are ambitious, so it’s a case of watching this space for where we take grants as we merge and grow.

## Who will we liaise with at Vision Foundation or Fight For Sight about our grant?

Coming together is about growing our influence and impact, not reducing or diluting what we do. In our current planning, you will still work directly with the Grants and Impact team.

As we progress through 2023 we’ll be building a new, more-impactful organisation but ahead of that we’ll continue to work on our existing plans, so that we can continue to support the communities and organisations we work on behalf of.

## Does this mean you’ll lose focus on the projects you’re currently working on?

Not at all, we’re merging to magnify the impact we have and take our agenda to a national stage. We’ll retain laser focus on the projects and causes we’re currently supporting and championing but if you have any concerns please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

# **What does this mean for Vision Foundation donors?**

## I support Vision Foundation through a regular gift, where will my money be going now?

We’ll be continuing to support the same incredible organisations that offer life-changing services to the sight loss community. So your money will be working hard. By merging with Fight for Sight in April we’ll be pooling our funds and resources with them, so together we’ll also be funding pioneering sight loss research.

By merging we’ll be the only significant independent charitable funder of social impact AND scientific research; science and services under one umbrella is a game-changing in this sector.

## Do I need to do anything about my annual gift to ensure it still gets to you?

As we work out the merger behind the scenes it could be that our bank details change. If that’s the case we’ll be able to walk you through any changes you need to make when the time comes.

For the time being your gift will continue making a difference to the lives of people living with visual impairment.

##  What will happen to the legacy pledge I made to the Vision Foundation now?

Legacy pledges make a huge difference to the services and organisations we support at Vision Foundation. And now we’re merging with Fight for Sight, your kind donation will also be working towards funding pioneering sight loss research as well. One of the many projects Fight for Sight have supported recently, is research into gene therapy that will help develop targeted treatment options and prevent sight loss.

As we merge, your kind donation will not only make a difference to the lives of people who are living with sight loss right now, but also go towards helping to treat and cure sight loss in the future.

## I don’t want my pledge to go to scientific research, can I ensure it goes towards services for blind and VI people?

We want to ensure your gift has the impact you want it to, please contact a member of our team to discuss this further.

Telephone: **020 7620 2066**

Email: **hello@visionfoundation.org.uk**

## I have written Vision Foundation into my Will. What happens now and what do I need to do?

Thank you so much for including Vision Foundation in your Will. Any gift citing Vision Foundtion will still be received by us even if our name changes. However, if you are updating your Will, you may wish to update it to reflect our new charity name, once it has been announced.

We would also love to know if you have included us in your Will, please do contact us at:

Telephone: **020 7620 2066**

Email: **hello@visionfoundation.org.uk**

## I want to include Vision Foundation in my Will. How can I do that?

A gift in your Will – whatever the size – is a wonderful way to always be there for the blind and partially sighted children and adults who need your help. By merging with Fight for Sight we’ll ensure your gift will work towards funding crucial projects and services that support blind and partially sighted people for now and future generations, but it will also help to facilitate pioneering medical research to help prevent and cure sight loss in the future.

[Visit this page](https://www.visionfoundation.org.uk/our-work/gifts-in-wills/) to find out how to leave a gift to Vision Foundation and Fight for Sight in your will:

[**How to leave a gift in your will**](https://www.visionfoundation.org.uk/our-work/gifts-in-wills/) >

## Can I still make a donation in memory of a loved one after the merger?

Absolutely. Giving in memory means you can donate to Vision Foundation and Fight for Sight in memory of your loved one. Your donations will create a lasting tribute that will honour the life of someone you have lost.

You can donate in memory of someone via [our websit](https://www.visionfoundation.org.uk/support-us/donate/)e or contact Francesca in our fundraising team by calling 020 7620 4994 or emailing hello@visionfoundation.org.uk.

## I’ve opted in to receive communications from Vision Foundation. What happens now?

We’ll continue to keep you in the loop about the incredible work we’re doing and supporting within the sight loss community. We’ll also start including information about the groundbreaking medical and scientific research that Fight for Sight enable. If you follow us on social media we’ll eventually be merging our accounts, so please do ensure you follow both Vision Foundation as well as Fight for Sight to keep informed about our life-changing mission:

**Vision Foundation on social media:**

Twitter - [twitter.com/Vision\_Fdn](https://twitter.com/Vision_Fdn)

Facebook - [facebook.com/VisionFdn](https://www.facebook.com/VisionFdn)

Instagram - [instagram.com/vision\_fdn](https://www.instagram.com/vision_fdn/?hl=en)

LinkedIn - [linkedin.com/company/visionfoundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/visionfoundation)

**Fight for Sight on social media:**

Twitter - [twitter.com/fightforsightUK](https://twitter.com/fightforsightUK)

Facebook - [facebook.com/fightforsightuk](http://www.facebook.com/fightforsightuk)

Instagram - [instagram.com/fightforsightuk](https://www.instagram.com/fightforsightuk/?hl=en)

LinkedIn - [linkedin.com/company/fight-for-sight\_2](https://www.linkedin.com/company/fight-for-sight_2/)

## What happens to the projects and organisations my donation has supported after the merger?

We remain committed to the organisations and works that we currently fund. There will be no interruption to the project activities after the merger and we will ensure that your donation continues to make an impact in the lives of blind and partially sighted people.

Will my details still be kept safely and securely after the merger?

Absolutely. We take data security very seriously and will continue to do so throughout the merger process. [You can find out more about our Privacy Policy here.](https://www.visionfoundation.org.uk/cookies-privacy-policy/)

## With a new, larger charity, I’m concerned the small amount I’m able to donate won’t make an impact. Is that the case?

## Not at all. The range of life-changing services and pioneering research we support is as huge as it is varied. But one thing that’s constant is our focus on making every penny work towards our goal of changing the world for people living with sight loss. Whatever you can give is enormously appreciated.

## Does Fight for Sight test on animals?

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) Fight for Sight supports the principle of using animals in research. They believe it is an important part of the research process to advance our understanding of eye conditions and to develop treatments, but should only be used where there is no alternative. [**Take a look at this article**](https://www.fightforsight.org.uk/apply-for-funding/animals-in-research/#:~:text=Fight%20for%20Sight's%20terms%20and,of%20animals%20in%20medical%20research.)to find out more about their stance on using animals in medical research.

# What does it mean for people that work and partner with us?

## What does this mean for our volunteers?

Our volunteers provide an invaluable role to both organisations. We want them to keep volunteering in their roles and carry on as they are for now. If you’re keen to volunteer with us as part of our new, unified organisation please do email hello@visionfoundation.org.uk