

# RSBC

**Royal Society for Blind Children**



**Trustee**  
Candidate pack

# Welcome

**Patrick Plant**  
Chair of Trustees



The London Society for Teaching the Blind to Read was founded in London on 12 January 1838 when Thomas Lucas introduced his “Lucas Type” – a precursor to Braille – to the City Fathers in London. He showcased his innovation and following this event it was decided that a school should be immediately established to teach the visually impaired children of London to read. In the almost two centuries since then, the charity has continued its education provision, currently through Dorton College, and to innovate other services. The Royal Society for Blind Children (RSBC), as it is now, provides inclusive, integrated and community-based services across England and Wales, which reflect the needs of blind and partially sighted children, young people and their families today.

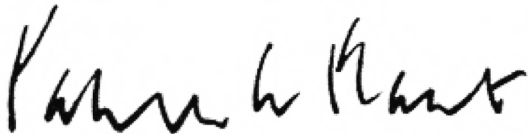
The impact RSBC makes increases year-on-year. We are currently embarking on a new strategy, which will launch in 2025, and will be spending 2024 on this process, making it an exciting time to join as a Trustee and provide input to this journey.

We are based in the heart of the City of London in our Life Without Limits Centre near London Bridge on the Thames Path. This was designed by world-leading architects and funded by very generous benefactors, and opened in February 2022. It is a home from home space filled with state of the art technology, yet is still welcoming to blind and partially sighted children, young people and their families. The Centre is also the Society’s headquarters, from where we deliver face to face services and activities. The welcome and the support we offer will always be present, whether they are able to visit in person or are engaging with us digitally from across England and Wales.

As we embark on crafting our new ambitious strategy, we are looking for a number of new Trustees to join RSBC's high-performing Board. The RSBC Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is small, but committed and efficient, and governance is well-established. This means that, as a Trustee, you are able to focus on contributing your skills, experience and strategic oversight. We are seeking Trustees with expertise in **Further Education**. As a national charity, we would also welcome Trustees who are located across the UK.

Together, we're a collaborative team. RSBC Board and sub-committee meetings are inclusive and non-hierarchical and work to our values of Trust, Energy, Ambition and Motivation. We welcome openness and flexibility. Members of RSBC's SLT attend Board and sub-committee meetings, and we ensure that those who cannot attend meetings in person are able to join remotely.

I am particularly interested in improving the diversity of our Board of Trustees. I recognise the positive value of diversity, and want to promote equity and challenge discrimination. My priority is to recruit more Trustees who have lived experience of vision impairment, as well as welcoming Trustees from all sectors of society, which would better reflect RSBC's staff group and the communities with which we work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Plant', written in a cursive style.

**Patrick Plant**  
**Chair of Trustees**



# About us

At RSBC our vision is that every blind child and their family will have the skills and confidence to live their life without limits.



There are just under 37,000 blind and partially sighted children and young people in England and Wales. Every day, four more children will be diagnosed with sight loss. Blind and partially sighted children and young people frequently live wonderful and fulfilling lives. However, statistically they are at a disadvantage.

- **90% of those who lose their sight in youth will never have a long term job**
- **Two thirds of blind people are living on, or below, the poverty line**

A lack of regular support for parents/carers, fewer opportunities to learn vital life skills, and limited access to positive social experiences mean that blind and partially sighted children and young people can be at a serious disadvantage when it comes to their emotional well-being, social development and ultimately, employment and life prospects.

**However, it's not all doom and gloom.**



## What we do

- We help families access practical and emotional support from the moment of diagnosis
- We bring blind children and young people together to build friendships and develop skills for life
- We provide education and help blind young people get qualifications and jobs
- We champion the use of new and existing technology
- We work with local partners and networks to make sure that blind young people and their families can equally access services wherever they live
- We fundraise passionately to support our work

## How we do it

Our Families First practitioners provide therapeutic support for parents and the wider family and can work alongside a child in a home or school environment to act as a bridge between the families and statutory services.

We offer an advice service for parents and young people to help them understand what they are entitled to and support them to access benefits and financial support.

We bring young people together through a number of activities including Supper Groups, Creative Sessions, Health & Wellbeing sports groups, audiobook clubs, Gaming and Assistive Technology sessions, Open Mic evenings to express their talents, socialise and reduce feelings of isolation.

At our specialist Further Education college, Dorton College, our students are able to follow an individual programme of academic learning and skills development.

# In 2023, RSBC...

Provided over

**226**

instances of telephone advice and support

Welcomed

**1,437**

children and young people who took part in RSBC's activities

Supported

**4,582**

children, young people and their families through Families First

**4,279**

people supported

**84%**

average satisfaction rating

**90%**

would recommend RSBC

**19,767**

Dorton College education delivery hours

**100%**

Dorton College adaptive technology individual targets achieved

**98%**

Dorton College accredited qualifications pass rate

**186**

young people received employment support

**10**

young people gained paid jobs or apprenticeships

**654**

AQA accreditations

**57**

formal service partnerships

# Trustees' report

## **ABOUT US**

For over 180 years, The Royal Society for Blind Children (RSBC) has been educating and supporting blind and partially sighted children and young people and their families. Our founder, Thomas Lucas, set up a school to teach blind children to read in 1838. Nearly two centuries later, his vision to support blind children to fulfil their potential lives on. Today our team works across a range of services in local communities across England and Wales including family support, as well as activities to reduce isolation and loneliness, increase independence and support young people to find employment. We also continue to deliver education through the work of our specialist FE College, Dorton College, based in the London Borough of Bromley.

## **VISION**

Every blind child and their family will have the skills and confidence to live their lives without limits.

## **MISSION**

We work with blind children and young people and their families to develop the skills and qualifications they need to overcome the barriers to realising their hopes, dreams and ambitions.

## **OUR STRATEGY – Live Life without Limits (2021-25)**

We are now ending the second phase of a 10-year strategic journey which began in 2015. Our current strategy, Live Life Without Limits, covers the period 2021-25. Over this next year, we aim to create and launch our next 5 year strategy to extend further the Charity's reach with services that deliver the outcomes necessary to achieve our Vision and secure the income needed to meet the needs of those blind children, young people and families.

## **The 2021-25 strategy set out 8 key objectives:**

**Reach:** to have supported 25,000 blind and partially sighted children across England and Wales since 2015.

**Income:** to have achieved an income of £6 million, with unrestricted income having increased 10% year on year and the raising of those funds representing no more than 20% of income.





**Education:** to have an annual cohort of at least 20 students at Dorton College, and have diversified our education offer into the digital space.

**Quality:** to have an average Net Promoter Score in excess of 85% across all services and to have achieved an Ofsted rating of “Outstanding” for Dorton College.

**Impact:** to have engaged with a network of existing service providers, referral agencies and community groups across England and Wales to ensure that there is equality of access to mainstream provision for visually impaired young people and their families.

**Our People:** to have a staff turnover 10% less than the sector average and at least 75% of staff and volunteers recommend RSBC as a great place to work.

**Infrastructure:** to have established the RSBC’s Life Without Limits Centre as a hub for delivery of our services and a lighthouse for world class innovation, and ensure that our infrastructure supports our overall efficiency and effectiveness.

**Governance:** a Trustee Board that provides first class leadership to the Society and represents the community we serve.



# Financial Information

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES For the year ended 31 December 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	2022	2021
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>						
<b>Income from Charitable Activities</b>						
Fees		727	-	-	727	684
Grants		14	-	26	40	9
		<u>741</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>767</u>	<u>693</u>
<b>Income from investments</b>	2	1	-	-	1	-
<b>Donations and Legacies</b>						
Donations		876	94	476	1,446	2,949
Legacies		2,274	-	21	2,295	1,358
		<u>3,150</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>497</u>	<u>3,741</u>	<u>4,307</u>
Other	3	4	-	-	4	6
<b>Total Income and Endowments</b>		<u>3,896</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>523</u>	<u>4,513</u>	<u>5,006</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
<b>Expenditure on Raising Funds</b>						
Raising Funds		772	14	-	786	761
<b>Net expenditure available for charitable application</b>		<u>3,124</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>523</u>	<u>3,727</u>	<u>4,245</u>
<b>Expenditure on Charitable Activities</b>						
Education		968	41	4	1,013	1,177
Support Services		690	85	839	1,614	1,932
<b>Total Expenditure on Charitable Activities</b>		<u>1,658</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>843</u>	<u>2,627</u>	<u>3,109</u>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	4	<u>2,430</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>843</u>	<u>3,413</u>	<u>3,870</u>
<b>Net Income/(Expenditure)</b>		<u>1,466</u>	<u>(46)</u>	<u>(320)</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>1,136</u>
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit pension scheme	17	11	-	-	11	65
<b>Net movement in funds for year</b>		<u>1,477</u>	<u>(46)</u>	<u>(320)</u>	<u>1,111</u>	<u>1,201</u>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>						
Fund balances at 31 December 2021		1,642	1,121	418	3,181	1,980
<b>Transfers between Funds</b>		<u>(953)</u>	<u>902</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Fund balances at 31 December 2022</b>		<u>2,166</u>	<u>1,977</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>4,292</u>	<u>3,181</u>

# GROUP AND CHARITY BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Note	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000	Group 2021 £'000	Charity 2021 £'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible Assets	9	1,229	1,229	1,319	1,319
		<u>1,229</u>	<u>1,229</u>	<u>1,319</u>	<u>1,319</u>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	11	2,617	2,617	1,086	1,096
Cash and Bank balances		1,711	1,711	2,100	2,090
		<u>4,328</u>	<u>4,328</u>	<u>3,186</u>	<u>3,186</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	(924)	(924)	(799)	(799)
		<u>3,404</u>	<u>3,404</u>	<u>2,387</u>	<u>2,387</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>					
Creditors: Amounts falling due >one year		(327)	(327)	(499)	(499)
<b>Net assets excluding pension scheme liability</b>					
Defined Benefit Pension Scheme	17	(14)	(14)	(26)	(26)
		<u>4,292</u>	<u>4,292</u>	<u>3,181</u>	<u>3,181</u>
<b>Total net assets</b>					
<b>The funds of the charity:</b>					
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Permanent Endowment Funds	13	25	25	25	25
Other Funds	13	124	124	393	393
		<u>149</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>418</u>	<u>418</u>
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Designated funds	13	1,977	1,977	1,121	1,121
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>					
General Funds	13	1,583	1,583	1,059	1,059
Revaluation Reserve	13	583	583	583	583
		<u>2,166</u>	<u>2,166</u>	<u>1,642</u>	<u>1,642</u>
		<u>4,292</u>	<u>4,292</u>	<u>3,181</u>	<u>3,181</u>
<b>Total charity funds</b>					

# The role: Trustee

**Are you interested in an opportunity to become a Trustee for an organisation making a real difference to the lives of young blind and partially sighted people?**

If you believe in a better life for blind children, join our committed Board of Trustees.

Here at the Royal Society for Blind Children, our vision is that every blind child and their family will have the skills and confidence to live their life without limits.

Our values of Trust, Energy, Ambition, and Motivation underpin everything we do, and by giving young people the essential skills they need to take control of their own lives, they can unleash their true potential.

## Role summary

Our Board of Trustees works together to ensure that our organisation is sustainable and accountable by exercising good governance and following all necessary policies and procedures.

In addition to their statutory duties, each Trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the Trustee has special expertise.

## Trustees' main duties

Find out details on this [link](#) to the Essential Trustee 6 main duties, which include:

- Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with your charity's governing document and the law
- Act in your charity's best interests
- Ensure your charity is accountable
- Manage your charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill

## What we are looking for

We are interested in hearing from individuals with skills, knowledge and experience in **Further Education**, as well as the following:

- A commitment to RSBC and its objectives
- Good, independent judgement
- Strategic vision
- A willingness to bring constructive challenge
- An understanding of legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a Trustee
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- An ability to think creatively

As an organisation, we are particularly keen to ensure that our Trustees are fully representative of the community in which we work. At the current time we would warmly welcome applications from people with a diverse range of backgrounds, ethnicity, gender and age. We also welcome applications from Trustees who are located across the country, especially in the regions in which we work.

## What difference will you make?

Your role as a Trustee will be key in the strategy of our organisation. With your skills and experience, you will contribute to driving the board to make decisions that will have a huge impact on the future of our charity, shaping how our services are delivered going forward.

## What's in it for the Trustee?

At RSBC, our vision is that every blind child and their family will have the skills and confidence to live their life without limits. This is an exciting opportunity to join an organisation committed to fulfilling this purpose. You will be involved in driving the strategic direction of our organisation, as we continue our provision of services for visually impaired children, young people and their families.



## **Terms of appointment**

Board meetings are held quarterly. If you are involved in sub-committees, you will be required to attend respective meetings which are currently held remotely. Trustees will need to allow sufficient time to read papers which will be provided one week in advance of meetings. Trustees can hold office for 3 years following appointment and can be reappointed for up to 3 terms. All Trustee roles are unpaid and voluntary.

## **Other information**

The Society is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Therefore, all roles are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure check from the Disclosure and Barring Service, 2 satisfactory professional references and a commitment to undertake regular safeguarding training.



# How to apply

Please send your application to [recruitment@rsbc.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@rsbc.org.uk)

You should write a short letter outlining why you are interested in joining our board, your relevant skills and experience (see 'Who we are looking for' section on page 12), and how you think you could apply your skills and experience to strengthen our board. Please also attach a CV or similar (LinkedIn profile, portfolio etc).

For an informal chat with us, please contact our People and Facilities Director, Eileen Harding, at [eileen.harding@rsbc.org.uk](mailto:eileen.harding@rsbc.org.uk).



**RSBC, Life Without Limits Centre, 10 Lower Thames St, London EC3R 6EN.**

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