



Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans Strategy 2023-2024

Transforming, Uniting and Thriving
Building upon our rich history to create the
organisation of the future

Our Mission

We will reach everyone in Scotland with sight loss –
where and when they need us



The Case for Change

The economic and social impact of vision loss is huge, impacting employability, productivity and welfare costs, but perhaps most importantly, vision loss can have an enormous emotional toll on those it impacts. Service models for visual impairment predicated on support for the learning or relearning of independent living skills and emotional wellbeing offer major preventative benefits on a human and system level. Vision loss can occur at any stage in life, although most sight loss is ultimately age-related. Too often this results in people lacking, or losing confidence and independence, and affects their emotional wellbeing, leaving them reliant on health and social care services, when with the right support they can gain the skills to remain independent and active in their communities.

Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans have a long history of supporting those impacted by vision loss. The nature of this support has changed over the past 2 centuries that we have been in operation. Over this time, there has been a shift in societal expectations away from an institutionalised, paternalistic model of service delivery, to one where individuals and communities are empowered to live lives free of discrimination, and to live the lives each individual chooses.

At Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans, we believe that we play an important role in continually shifting this discourse, and in contributing to achieving a fair, equitable society. We are privileged to exist in a country where there are a number of other charities that support people with a vision impairment, along with other sensory impairments. It is important that we work across the sector to ensure that our collective resources are used to increase the benefit to those we serve.

As we consider our part in this landscape, and in particular, the areas in which we currently contribute, and importantly, those areas that we can yet contribute to, it is important to recognise our unique value:

- Together, Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans is the largest Scottish charitable organisation that supports people impacted by vision impairment
- Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans are the only Scottish vision impairment charities that fund medical research into eye health
- Together, Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans are the only Scottish vision impairment charities that have a dedicated policy and campaign team
- Our services span all age groups and vision related categories, and include those born with a vision impairment, as well as those that acquire a vision impairment throughout their lives

These unique attributes of our organisation allow us to become something more than we currently have been up until this point. The challenge for us is to transform our approach, and to build our capability to continue to be on the front foot and lead the change that is needed in society. This strategy outlines the key areas of focus for our organisation over the next two years, as we take on the challenge of transforming our organisation, and in turn transforming the lives of those impacted by vision loss.

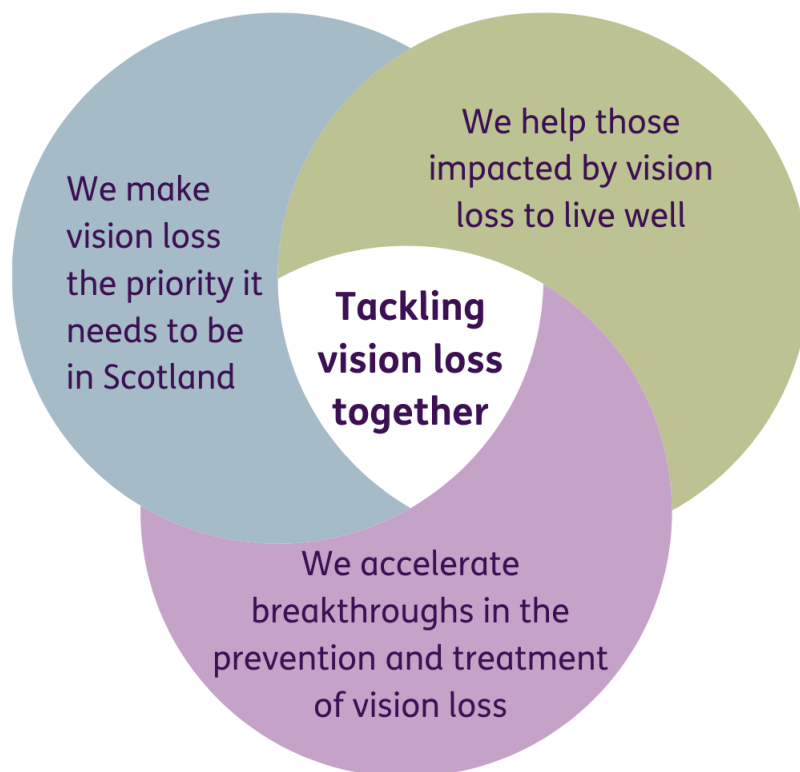
We truly can reach more people in Scotland impacted by vision loss – where and when they need us.

What We Do

At Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans, we believe in tackling vision loss together. In order to reach as many people as possible that are impacted by vision loss, our work needs to focus on three main areas:

- Making vision loss the priority it needs to be in Scotland
- Accelerating breakthroughs in the prevention and treatment of vision loss
- Helping those impacted by vision loss to live well

All three of these areas of focus are interrelated, and we believe that each are vital if we truly want to tackle vision loss together.

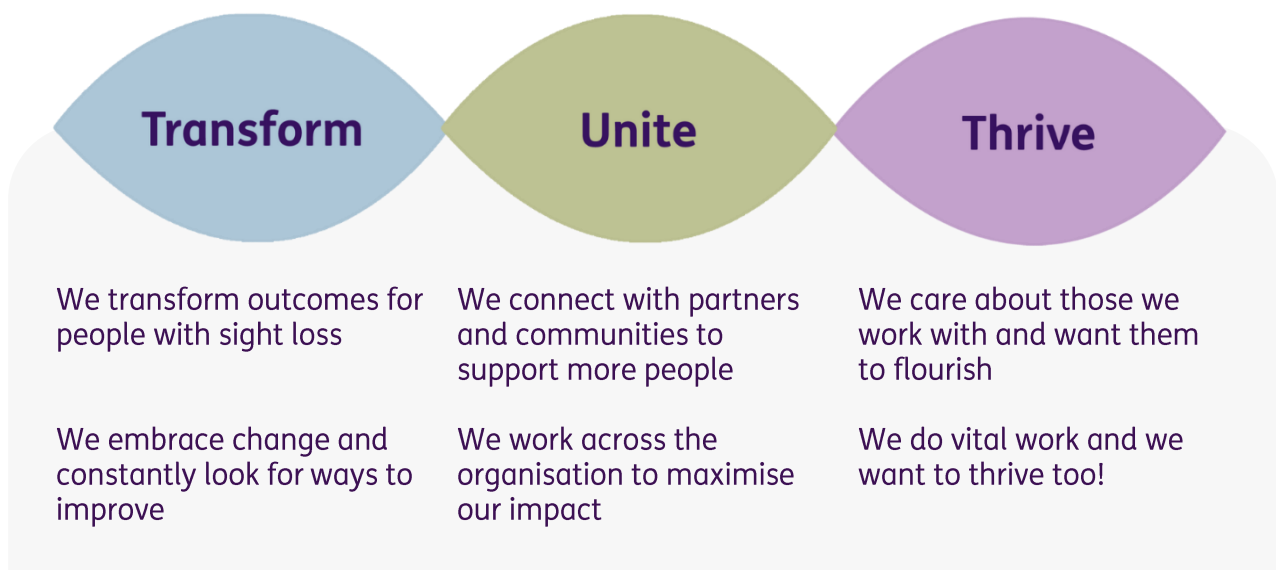


Enabling Factors

For us to be able to meet our ambition, and be effective in the work that we do, we recognise that we need to make our organisation as effective as possible. To enable our organisation to deliver on the three key areas of focus described above, the following four enabling factors also form part of our strategy:

- Our people and culture, ensuring we have an engaged workforce that can meet the challenge ahead, and also grow and develop themselves
- Financial sustainability, to ensure we will always be here to help
- Effective governance, ensuring that we continue to make decisions that improve the lives of those impacted by vision loss
- Modernising our digital infrastructure, maximise the availability and quality of data, and truly become technical innovators and advocates

Our Ways of Working



Transform, unite and thrive are our core values at Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans. These three values permeate all that we do and are guiding principles for how we make decisions. So when we talk about any of our three areas of focus such as making vision loss the priority it needs to be in Scotland, we look at it through the lens of transforming, uniting, and thriving. Our strategic plan has been developed with these values at the heart of all we do.

Making Vision Loss the Priority It Needs To be In Scotland

It is estimated that around 200,000 people in Scotland experience some form of vision impairment. Vision impairment can impact anybody, at any stage of life. A diagnosis of a sight loss condition is a life-changing event with both physical and emotional impacts. The evidence is all too clear that visually impaired people are at high risk of unemployment, mental health problems, loneliness, poor education and financial challenges for the rest of their lives.

At Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans, we believe that this inequality is unacceptable, and we feel we have a part to play in raising awareness of these issues, and driving for real change, both in how policies are developed and implemented, but also in the wider community.

Key Deliverables:

- We will raise awareness of vision impairment and its impacts in the broader community in Scotland
- We will build a comprehensive campaigning network, allowing more targeted campaigning on issues of importance for those impacted by vision loss
- We will increase our focus on policy and campaigning work with the Scottish Government and Scottish Local Authorities



Helping People Impacted by Vision Loss to Live Well

People are at the heart of everything we do. At Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans, we believe that those impacted by vision loss should be involved at every stage of understanding need, designing and delivering services, and in ensuring their ongoing effectiveness. We recognise that we cannot possibly meet all the needs of visually impaired people in Scotland. However, we recognise that if we attempted to meet all the needs ourselves, we would disempower those impacted by vision loss. So we believe our role is to empower individuals, families and communities to help those impacted by vision loss to live well.

We believe we have a role in providing expert advice and information on eye conditions, and on living well with vision loss. This includes having a comprehensive knowledge of, and partnering with other organisations that provide complementary services to ensure that anybody who needs information or support, will know exactly how to access it.



Key Deliverables:

- We will establish a comprehensive ‘one-stop’ service for information on sight loss conditions and how to adjust and live well
- We will build our capability to truly understand the needs of people impacted by vision loss, and design, review and refine services to meet those needs
- We will work with partner organisations to enhance current service offerings
- We will empower communities to provide support to those impacted by vision loss

Accelerate Breakthroughs in Preventing and Treating Eye Conditions

Research into eye conditions is vital to prevent or slow down the onset of vision loss. There is a lack of research funding into eye health in Scotland, with no other Scottish sight loss charities funding medical research.

At Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans, we fund and support research to save sight in the future and help people live well with sight loss today. We support research into eye health conditions aimed at encouraging innovation and improving diagnosis, treatment, person-centred care and better outcomes for people with sight loss.

We want to do more to support ground-breaking research in Scotland and beyond which will change the lives of people with sight loss in Scotland and around the world.

Key Deliverables:

- We will establish a robust and sustainable research funding model, including establishing a research advisory committee, and clear guidelines for accepting funding requests
- We will create a wide research partnership network, both in academia and other research-based organisations
- We will forge a strong link between research, our campaigning and policy work, and the services we provide



People and Culture

In order to deliver on our ambition to reach more people impacted by vision loss in Scotland, we need to have a skilled, engaged and productive workforce. We also should be an exemplar in employing people with a vision impairment, so we can help show other employers how they can be more inclusive.

We recognise the importance of strong leadership. Strong leadership benefits not only our colleagues, but also supports the transformation we want the organisation to go through to continually improve the services we provide.

Key Focus Areas:

- We will increase the capability and effectiveness of leadership at all levels of the organisation
- We will provide our colleagues with support in their growth and development, and enable them to thrive in their work
- We will champion the employability of people with a vision impairment, and will lead by example
- We will ensure that our workforce matches the ambition we have as an organisation, and is capable on delivering our mission

Financial Sustainability

As charities, we are grateful for the generosity of people and organisations donating money so we can continue to innovate and provide services to those impacted by vision loss. We raise income through a combination of traditional fundraising, cost recovery for statutory service provision, and income from investing our financial reserves. At Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans, we believe that we have an obligation to ensure that we can continue to provide services into the future. We can only do this if we remain financially sustainable.

Key Focus Areas:

- We will build our investment portfolio to fund the ongoing services, ensuring long term viability
- We will develop new and innovative fundraising streams
- We will responsibly manage our obligations to our defined benefit pension scheme



Effective Governance

As charities with a long and rich history, we have an obligation to ensure the effective administration of the organisation. Not only will we comply with the relevant regulatory requirements, but we are committed to transparently and robustly.

Key Focus Areas:

- We will continuously review the effectiveness of our Board and management team in conducting the business of the organisation
- We will ensure that both Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans work together to more effectively deliver services

Digital and Data Transformation

Ensuring we have modern digital and data practices enables us to more effectively deliver our services. This is important in two ways – one to ensure that our systems provide us with the ability to understand and respond to service needs, and two, to ensure that we are leaders in understanding advances in assistive technology, that can benefit our service users.

Key Focus Areas:

- We will develop and deliver an effective data management strategy for the organisation
- We will deliver our technology cultural change program, and invest in technologies that will enable us to effectively deliver our services
- We will become a trusted source of advice in enabling those impacted by vision loss to utilise existing and emerging technologies to enhance their lives

