

BlindAid



Candidate pack
For Trustees
January 2022



Welcome Message

Dear Applicant,

Thank you very much for your interest in BlindAid.

BlindAid has over 188 years of experience of delivering emotional and practical support to people with a visual impairment living in the 12 inner London Boroughs and the City of London.

Our enthusiastic team is dedicated to serving both our aims and values as we offer our services for our beneficiaries. BlindAid beneficiaries are primarily a hidden community of people; resident in the 12 inner London Boroughs. The majority of our BlindAid community are likely to be 50+, isolated and very much in need of the warm and welcoming support and social connections we offer. We provide a unique, vital service that is not replicated by statutory services, or other charities. Our employed Sight Support Workers are specially trained and work alongside our beneficiaries offering consistent friendly company and conversation as well practical support and links to other useful organisations. We also have 275+ valuable volunteers who support our core services with additional assistance with social activities. We aim to improve quality of life and to promote the best achievable level of independence for all. Beneficiaries with more complex circumstances may not be able to fully regain independent living; in which case we may be alongside them for life.

All our services are provided free of charge for our service users.

Our core service is our Community Sight Support Service; normally visiting beneficiaries in their homes converted to a telephone support service during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also provide Community Projects, based in three locations across London: now currently online classes. We operate Peer to Peer Telephone Support to provide peer led support. In addition, we are supported by Clothworkers Foundation with funding for a grant for grants programme that allows us to offer aids and equipment that support independent living for people in need and where these are not available via statutory services.

We provide services and support in the following Inner London Boroughs: Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, the City, Kensington and Chelsea, Lewisham, Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster.

We have recently appointed a new Chair of trustees in Angie Pankhania, who has been inspired by our cause for the past 9 years as our Honorary Treasurer previously.

Angie enjoys working collegially with our board of trustees and our experienced CEO to lead our organisation forward at an exciting time in the charity's development.

We are currently seeking active ambassadors for BlindAid with the enthusiasm to support our passion, aims and objectives wholeheartedly and also who may have some sound fundraising experience.

We very much hope you are interested in joining us and look forward to hearing from you.

Chair of Trustees, BlindAid

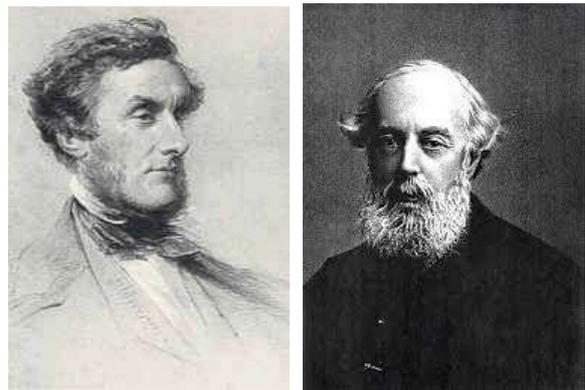
Angie Pankhania

History of BlindAid

BlindAid has a long and distinguished history and has earned an excellent reputation amongst both our beneficiaries and the professional organisations we work alongside.

The charity was established in 1834 and has been delivering support services for over 187 years and we have naturally evolved and developed during this period. BlindAid is the oldest specialist sight loss charity in London and has supported Londoners through some of the capital's most challenging and historic times.

Initially called the Indigent Blind Visiting Society, the charity was founded in 1834 by Lord Shaftesbury and Thomas Rhodes Armitage. Armitage was famous for introducing Braille into England and for also being one of the founders of RNIB).



In June 2011 we refreshed our brand and changed our name from the Metropolitan Society for the Blind to BlindAid.

Since then, we have consistently built upon our strong foundations and rich heritage to develop and enjoy the excellent reputation that we hold today.

What BlindAid does today

BlindAid is both a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

Our team are wholly invested in continuing to develop and improve our charity into the future. The quality of our service portfolio is developed by us listening to and collaborating with our beneficiaries.

We aim to ensure that no visually impaired Londoner is left living in isolation. Each year our objective is to raise the essential funding needed to increase the number of people we can support and help.

During 2020 and the COVID-19 global pandemic our BlindAid team has been working from home and we made over 36,000 contacts with and on behalf of our beneficiaries, which is a record for our charity.

Charitable Activities

Community Sight Support Service

BlindAid has an exceptional team of friendly, understanding Sight Support Workers who make regular visits to our 1,200 beneficiaries to provide emotional support and practical help where possible.

We visit people in their own homes, in sheltered accommodation or residential homes.

We employ our team of Sight Support Workers and invest in them with the provision of vocational training four times each year, to ensure our skills are up to date. Our team have all been carefully selected and hold current DBS (Disclosure and Barring Security Certifications). Our team engage in regular supervision meetings with their Team Leader to ensure quality standards and the consistency of our service offering.

BlindAid provides Peer to Peer telephone support for those who may not choose; or need to have a Sight Support Worker. Our Telephone Service is available to blind and partially-sighted people who reside in any of the Inner London Boroughs. People connect via a secure internet connection that means they do not exchange personal details whilst benefiting from peer engagement.

Community Projects:

We have offered three Community Projects over the past seven years, based at accessible locations within our area of operation. In 2020 these centres were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have converted our popular classes which are now available online every week, together with our social groups.

Share London: Funded by Big Lottery, reaching Communities:

This has proved to be an enormously successful 3 year project, which has enable BlindAid to recruit, train, match and deploy over 275 volunteers. The project is purely a social project to support blind and visually impaired people to take advantage of what London has to offer.

Grants

BlindAid operate a grant for grants programme funded by the Clothworkers Foundation. BlindAid may make grants available to help blind and partially-sighted people maintain independence and reduce isolation (subject to criteria and typically up to £400).

Peer to Peer Telephone Support:

We have an ever-growing team of volunteers with lived experience of being blind or visually impaired who have both time and experience to other Londoners either newly diagnosed or who are feeling the challenges that living with sight loss can present. Our volunteers can log on securely via our internet-based portal to call the people their choose to support without disclosing telephone numbers to each other, and BlindAid pays the cost of the calls, so volunteering with us is both safe and easy.

Structure and Governance

The Board currently comprises seven Trustees, with a broad range of skills and experience, a few whom have joined in recent years. Headed by the Chief Executive; BlindAid has 20 employees. A few key roles are office based; and our 14 Sight Support Workers, are mobile remote workers.

Chief Executive Officer

Sue O'Hara

Sue worked in the commercial management sector for many years, predominantly in global corporate relocation specifically with FSTE100 clients. Additional experience includes advertising and public affairs, as well as working as a voluntary bereavement counsellor.

Angie Pankhania: Chair of Trustees

Angie Pankhania trained and qualified as a Chartered Certified Accountant in 1991 with the National Audit Office (NAO). She worked for NAO for over 20 years as external auditor for Central Government Departments, NGOs, Commonwealth organisations and United Nations Development Programme as well as value for money reports. After leaving the NAO in 2007 she has worked mainly in the charity sector, initially as external auditor before joining DeafPLUS, a small-medium size national charity in April 2009 as their Head of Finance. More recently she has also started working for Latin American Women's Aid, a small London based charity, on a consultancy basis. Angie joined the Board of BlindAid as Honorary Treasurer in July 2013.

Kassim Gaffar

Kassim completed an Msc in IT systems from London School of Economics and subsequently qualified as a chartered accountant with Deloitte in London. He has worked in the financial services sector since 1997, having held several roles in the corporate and investment banking arm of HSBC. He is currently Director of Techrun Technologies Ltd, a company that providing IT services to non-profit and social sector enterprises. He is Honorary Treasurer of the Prisoners Advice Service, a charity that supports for prisoners. He also mentors several start-up businesses. Kassim was appointed to the Board of the Charity in November 2013.

Fran Hibbert

Fran Hibbert was the Chief Officer of Merton Vision for 13 years; retiring in 2016. During her tenure she increased services for people with a visual impairment, strengthened the charity and relationships with social services, councillors, MP's and other organisations. She was successful with applications for funding with national funders. Fran feels strongly that Local societies are unique in what they offer individuals with a visual impairment. The value of local support and peer support is often crucial to those newly diagnosed with enduring sight loss. Fran has a Post grad certificate from the Institute of Chartered Secretaries/Administrators; in Charity management and has served as a trustee on local and national sight loss charities. Fran was appointed to the Board of the Charity in July 2013.

Structure and Governance Cont:

Tim Barnard

A Cambridge graduate, Tim Barnard retired from full-time work as a solicitor with a large international law firm based in the City of London in 2013. His specialism in practice was real estate he advised a wide range of individual and corporate clients including charities on many aspects of real estate transactions. Tim was ordained a non-stipendiary Church of England curate in 2013 to serve in Amersham in Buckinghamshire and was appointed to the Board of the Charity in 2013.

Katherine (Katia) Ramo

Katherine is a Qualified Corporate and Commercial Solicitor in England and Wales at the global law firm CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP, London Office. She is active in all diversity related issues in the City of London. She is a PhD Candidate at the Centre for Energy, Petroleum, Mineral Law, and Policy (CEPMLP), University of Dundee in Scotland. She holds a BSC, MPA, LLB, LLM with Merit in Comparative and International Dispute Resolution from Queen Mary University of London. Before then, she had an extensive career in international development working with governments and international aid organisations globally. Katherine has a passion for serving, assisting, and advocating on disability issues, especially having become disabled herself few years ago. She was a service user of BlindAid for several years. She is the founder and chair of CMS ENABLE Disability Network. Katherine was appointed to the Board of the Charity in 2014.

Aneta Saunders

Aneta is currently a Director of Income Generation at the Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice, responsible for the voluntary and trading income. Previously Director of Community & Engagement at Barts Charity, she brings a broad experience in fundraising, engagement, and marketing & communications within healthcare charities. Aneta was appointed to the Board of the Charity in November 2019.

Rachel Holdsworth

Rachel is an Investment Manager at Ruffer in the City and joined the investment company in 2013 after graduating from the University of Oxford with a first class honours degree in biological sciences. She is a member of the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment following completion of the CISI Masters in Wealth Management, receiving a distinction in both the Private Client Investment Advice and Management and Portfolio Construction Theory papers.

Financial Information

In 2020 BlindAid had an annual income of c£580,000, and the charity currently has total funds of c£2.8m.

In 2019 and again in 2020 we were awarded substantial grants by the Big Lottery Fund; during 2020 we raised £240K via in-house fundraising, this was attained mainly in grants applications to trusts and grant making organisations. We also receive income from the charity's investment portfolio and by legacy and donation. We have no local authority contracts.

In 2018 BlindAid commenced a strategic fundraising campaign for the first time. In past years, the trustee's financial strategy has been to invest surplus reserves in the expansion of charitable activities for Londoners with visual impairment. As a result, BlindAid has budgeted annual deficits each year.

We have been successful in spending down some of the charity's reserves for the benefit of our service users, and now in view of the financial circumstances brought about by COVID-19, BlindAid has brought forward a planned for strategy that supports a key intent to be diligent in minimising its deficit budgets and maximising fundraising income specifically to cover the costs of its vital core services.

Our annual report and accounts are available at both:

Companies House – Registered No: 00986407

Charity Commission – Charity No: 262119

Chair of Trustees

We are at the exciting time in the development of our charity. In 2017 we conducted a thorough strategy review and at the beginning of 2018 we embarked on our first fundraising campaign. Previously, we have operated a deliberate deficit budget to invest our reserves, mainly from legacies and donation, in our charitable activities, whilst at the same time, building our capacity to fundraise against our core services.

We are seeking an experienced Chair to lead the charity through this transition, initially for a three-year term.

Future Plans

During the past few years, the charity has made many positive changes, developing, and expanding our services. In addition, operational improvements achieved include updating the terms for its staff, documenting formal policies, outsourcing the accounting function, introducing technology platforms to manage activity, and modernising the charity's governing documents.

We anticipate there to be more changes in the next few years:

- Ensuring the charity's stability throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
- Developing/enhancing our capacity as fundraisers
- Expansion of the charity's services
- Exploring partnerships with other charities

Key Responsibilities of the Chair

- Lead and direct the Board to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities for governance and strategic direction effectively.
- In conjunction with the Board, appraise, oversee, and constructively advise and guide the CEO (including regular meetings with the CEO)
- Liaise regularly with the Treasurer and Vice Chair (as the Finance & Resource Committee) to monitor financial performance and oversee implementation of strategy on behalf of the Board
- Act as ambassador for the charity at appropriate events
- Support the organisation's fundraising efforts.

Key Qualities of the Chair

Essential

- Empathy with BlindAid's mission
- Willingness to commit time to carry out your responsibilities.
- Prior experience of trusteeship.
- Understanding of responsibilities and duties of trusteeship.
- Leadership and diplomatic interpersonal skills.
- Ability to foster and motivate a collaborative team environment.

Desirable

- Lived experience, or experience of visual impairment.
- Wider involvement with voluntary sector organisations.
- Ability to help charity's fundraising efforts.
- Familiarity with financial management.

Board of Trustees and Governance

The Chair is also a member of the Finance & Resource Committee, which meets four times a year, at the offices of the charity (in Bermondsey SE1 close to London Bridge Station). In addition, the Chair is an ex officio member of the Nominations Committee which meet on an ad hoc basis as required to recruit new trustees. The Board also holds an away day every year to review and discuss strategy.

Time Commitment

Up to 10 hours per month, including planning for and preparing for meetings, attending meetings and events, and undertaking training activities. Meetings will take place at a time to be agreed by the Board of Trustees, are usually 1.5 hours long.

- Board Meetings four times each year
- Finance & Resource Committee meetings four times each year usually two weeks ahead of each Board Meeting.
- Meetings since March 2020 have taken place virtually and we expect this to continue temporarily throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Expenses

The role is voluntary, but expenses will be paid, for example cost of travel to meetings.

Application process, contact & enquiries:

- Application is by CV and cover letter which may be sent to enquiries@blindaid.org.uk
- You may have an informal discussion with the Chief Executive via telephone or Zoom at a mutually agreeable time prior to interview.
- A representative group of Trustees (The Nominations Committee) will interview short-listed candidates via Zoom at a mutually agreeable time.
- The successful candidate will join the next Board Meeting as an observer, thereafter, the trustees will formally nominate the candidate to be appointed to the Board of Trustees and the candidate will then join the following meeting as a trustee.

Appendix: The Roles and Duties of a Trustee

Blind Aid – Lantern House, 102 Bermondsey Street, London, SE1 3UB

Trustee roles and responsibilities include the following:

1. Set and maintain vision, mission and values.

2. Develop strategy.

The trustee board is responsible for establishing the essential purpose or mission of the organisation. They are also responsible for guarding its vision and values. Together, the board and chief executive officer develop long-term strategy. Meeting agendas reflect the key points of the strategy to keep the organisation on track.

3. Establish and monitor policies.

The trustee board creates policies to govern organisational activity. These include:

- guidance for staff
- systems for reporting and monitoring
- an ethical framework for everyone connected with the organisation
- conduct of trustees and board business

4. Set up employment procedures:

The trustee board creates comprehensive, fair and legal personnel policies. These protect the organisation and those who work for it. They include:

- recruitment
- support
- appraisal
- remuneration
- discipline

5. Ensure compliance with the governing document:

The governing document is the rulebook for the organisation. The board makes sure it is followed. In particular, the organisation's activities must comply with its charitable objectives.

6. Ensure accountability:

The board should ensure that the organisation is accountable as required by law to:

- the Charity Commission
- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- the Registrar of Companies (as BlindAid is a company limited by guarantee).

The board also needs to make certain that the organisation is accountable to donors, beneficiaries, staff, volunteer, and the general public. This means publishing annual reports and accounts and communicating effectively.

7. Ensure compliance with the law:

The board is responsible for making sure that all the organisation's activities are legal.

8. Maintain proper fiscal oversight:

The board is responsible for effectively managing the organisation's resources so it can meet its charitable objects. It:

- secures sufficient resources to fulfil the mission
- monitors spending
- approves the annual financial statement and budget
- provides insurance to protect the organisation from liability
- seeks to minimise risk
- participates in fundraising (in some organisations)
- ensures legal compliance

9. Select, manage, and support the chief executive:

The board creates policy covering the employment of the chief executive. It selects and supports the chief executive and reviews his or her performance.

10. Respect the role of staff:

The board recognises and respects the domain of staff responsibility. At the same time, it creates policy to guide staff activities and safeguard the interests of the organisation.

11. Maintain effective board performance:

The board keeps its own house in order. It takes steps to establish:

- productive meetings
- high standards of trustee conduct
- effective committees with adequate resources
- development activities
- recruitment and induction processes
- regular performance reviews
- partnership with consultants where necessary

12. Promote the organisation:

Through its own behaviour, governance oversight and activities on behalf of the organisation the governing Board enhances and protects the reputation of its organisation. All Board members are ambassadors for the organisation.