



Blatchington Court Trust

Strategy Document
2026 – 2030

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Forward

Supporting children and young people with vision impairment is both a profound responsibility and a powerful opportunity. Across the UK—and here in Sussex—the evidence is clear: too many young people still face avoidable barriers to education, technology, wellbeing, and independence. Families often carry the emotional and financial weight of navigating fragmented systems, while young people themselves encounter challenges that can limit their confidence, aspirations, and life chances.

These realities shape the landscape in which we work, and they strengthen our resolve to do more, reach further, and create lasting change.

At Blatchington Court Trust, our vision is simple: every child and young person with sight loss should have the chance to thrive. This strategy sets out how we will turn that vision into action between now and 2030.





Forward

Guided by our values and informed by the lived experiences of young people and their families, our five strategic objectives focus on empowerment, digital inclusion, aspiration, family support, and organisational strength. We are committed to building a future where young people with vision impairment can access the tools, opportunities, and support they need to lead confident, connected, and fulfilling lives. I am proud of the work we do—and even more excited about what we will achieve together in the years ahead.

Andy Dalby-Welsh, Chair

Bernie Dawes, CEO

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The Challenges

The challenges for Children and Young People With Vision Impairment in the UK & Sussex:

Access to Technology

- Only 59% of blind and partially sighted people feel confident using technology, compared with 86% of the general population (Thomas Pocklington Trust).
- Two-thirds of blind and partially sighted people say inaccessible technology limits their independence (RNIB).
- Teachers report that technology is essential for accessing the curriculum, but inconsistent training and provision mean many children do not receive what they need (DfE SEND research).
- 27% of blind and partially sighted people are in work, compared with 51% of disabled people overall – and lack of accessible technology is cited as a major barrier (RNIB Employment Research).



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The Challenges

Educational Impact

- Vision impairment is linked to lower educational attainment, reduced access to the curriculum, and increased need for specialist support (Department for Education SEND statistics).
- Many children with VI have additional learning needs, compounding barriers to progress (RNIB "Sight Loss Data Tool").

Wellbeing & Life Chances

- Childhood vision impairment can negatively affect mental health, social development, independence, and long-term employment outcomes (UK Childhood Vision Impairment and Blindness Study).
- Young people with VI are more likely to experience social isolation and reduced participation in extracurricular activities (Thomas Pocklington Trust).

The Challenges

Impact on Parent Carers

- Parents of children with vision impairment experience higher emotional strain, including stress, anxiety, and isolation, as shown in research from RNIB, Thomas Pocklington Trust, and Sense.
- They often face complex and fragmented systems, spending significant time advocating for assessments, support, and accessible materials (DfE SEND Review evidence).
- Families experience financial pressure due to specialist equipment, travel, and reduced ability to work, as highlighted by Contact and Carers UK.
example
- These combined emotional, practical, and financial demands create sustained challenges that affect parent wellbeing, family life, and long-term stability.

The Challenges

Sussex-Specific Insights

- Sussex vision-health profiles show that sight loss is associated with reduced quality of life, mobility challenges, and poorer mental health (Sussex Health and Care Partnership – Vision Profile).
- Families in Sussex report difficulty navigating fragmented services, inconsistent access to specialist support, and long waits for assessments (local authority SEND reviews).
- Local charities supporting people with sight loss highlight rising demand for support, often exceeding capacity.



Our Aim

Our aim is to support, inform, and empower children and young people with sight loss under the age of 30 and their families across Sussex.



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Our Values

SUPPORTIVE

We listen with empathy, respond with kindness, and create a safe, welcoming space.

We take time to understand people's needs, offer reassurance, follow through on commitments, and make every interaction warm, patient, and reliable.

Find out more



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Our Values

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We bring expertise, professionalism, and clarity to everything we do.

We share accurate information, stay up to date with best practice, explain things clearly and use our specialist knowledge to empower the people we support.

Find out more



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Our Values

INCLUSIVE

We make sure everyone feels welcome, valued, and able to participate fully.

We remove barriers to access, build community, understand diverse needs, and bring a friendly, engaging energy that helps people feel they belong.

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Our Values

PROGRESSIVE

We embrace innovation and adapt quickly to new challenges and opportunities.

We stay curious, explore new ideas, adopt accessible technologies, improve our processes, and remain open-minded as our services evolve.

Find out more



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Our Values

ASPIRATIONAL

We believe in the potential of every person we support and help them move confidently toward their goals.

We champion growth and collaboration, inspiring young people, and families to believe in what is possible.





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Strategic Objectives

Our 5 strategic objectives will seek to address these issues:





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Empowering through education and advocacy

- Provide every child and young adult with visual impairment in Sussex with access to learning and development opportunities
- Strengthen education advocacy by increasing the number and quality of interventions that support children and young people
- Work with third-sector partners to ensure every client can access the advocacy support that is right for them
- Build and sustain strong relationships with referral partners to improve the quality and consistency of support available to young people
- Increase the employability and confidence of young people by establishing, testing, and growing mentoring and independence programmes





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Using digital opportunities to increase impact and modernise our organisation

- Increase the digital awareness and abilities of children and young people so they can achieve their personal aspirations in independence, travel, social life, and education
- Support children and young people (aged 8–29) to access digital solutions through training, information, and mentoring
- Improve the knowledge of professionals working with visually impaired children and young people by providing training in assistive technology





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Supporting aspiration and belonging for young people aged 16+



- Ensure that all services and activities are shaped by the interests, passions, and aspirations of young people
- Provide wellbeing services that are free at the point of delivery
- Increase opportunities for social connection through events and activities
- Build confidence, independence, and employability by offering skill-building opportunities and tailored 1:1 support.
- Establish and grow a Youth Forum to ensure that the organisation and its services remain genuinely client-centred.





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Providing parent and carer support

- Provide events and activities that reduce loneliness and isolation and help families connect and share experiences
- Help parents and carers understand the challenges their children face, building confidence and aspiration by showing what is possible
- Ensure families have access to the information, wellbeing support, and connections they need to help their child and family thrive
- Offer tailored 1:1 support that builds confidence, connection, and inspiration





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Being a fit-for- future organisation

- Demonstrate the impact of our work through clear outcome measures that show the difference that BCT makes and informs decision making
- Maintain a Board of Trustees with the skills, resilience, expertise, and insight needed to safeguard the organisation's future, supported by engagement with the Youth Forum
- Raise our profile so that people who need us can find us more easily
- Use digital technology to widen our reach across Sussex and improve access for families and young people



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Being a fit-for- future organisation

- Grow the funds available to sustain and expand our services now and in the future
- Develop an Ambassadors Programme to inspire young people and highlight the range of opportunities available to them
- Be recognised as an organisation that gives young adults with visual impairment, or those facing sight loss, a future they can be proud of

