

Thomas Pocklington Trust

Key Life Chances Report

2024/25



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Executive Summary

One year into delivering our Key Life Chances strategy, this report outlines the progress Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT) has made in improving the life outcomes of blind and partially sighted (BPS) people across the UK.

Our strategy has centred on ensuring that BPS people have equitable access to education, employment, health and wellbeing, and wider inclusion in society. We have made significant progress toward these aims through strategic partnerships, innovative service delivery, targeted campaigns, and direct support to individuals and communities.



The following achievements are a result of the commitment and collaboration of our staff, volunteers and partners.

Summary of Our Achievements in the Past Year:

- Expanded our education services through a strategic partnership with Guide Dogs.
- Our Young Voices and Student Voices volunteers lobbied MPs in Parliament for the Access and Assistance for All Campaign.
- Supported over **350 job seekers** through Works For Me, with 58 people securing employment.
- Delivered **31 Get Set Progress internships** through a funding partnership with RNIB, with an **85% transition to full-time work**.
- Influenced local and national policy through campaigns such as **Cut It Back** and **#MakeHealthAccessible**, delivered with **Sight Loss Councils**.
- Extended Sight Loss Councils into Scotland and prepared for our launch in Wales.
- Contributed to NHS tools for accessible screening, delivered vision impairment awareness training to healthcare professionals and supported the launch of the Eye Care Support Pathway.
- Played a pivotal role in the sector's Vision Partnership
- Worked in partnership to deliver the first ever Lived Experience Leadership **#LEX** conference.

Charles Colquhoun, CEO

Message from Our Chair

This report sets out the progress we have made in the past year towards our goal of equity for blind and partially sighted people.

I am very proud to be chair of Thomas Pocklington Trust and to be part of the difference we are making to the Key Life Chances of people from our community. I would like to thank staff, volunteers, partners and the board of trustees for their continuing support.

Together, we are making a tangible difference and I look forward to this continuing in the coming years.

Mervyn Williamson
Chair of trustees



What is Driving Our Mission?

I am driven by the urgent need to create a world where equity and inclusion are not just ideals, but realities for those of us who are visually impaired. Every day, I see how the lack of these fundamental rights impacts every aspect of our lives as BPS people.

Young BPS people, aged 16-25, face nearly double the likelihood of being NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) compared to their peers. Even with a degree or higher, BPS people have the same job prospects as those without any qualifications in the general population.

The unemployment rate for working-age BPS people remains alarmingly high at 73%, compared to just 19% for the general population.

BPS people also face significant inequities in accessing and receiving quality health and care services, including vital information. A staggering 25% of BPS individuals report that they cannot get out and about as much as they would like due to inaccessible public transport and built environments.

With vision loss projected to double, affecting 4 million people over the next 25 years, I know we must act now. I and the rest of my colleagues at TPT are committed to improving Key Life Chances for BPS people, ensuring they have the opportunities and support they need to thrive.

Together, we can make a difference. Let's act with urgency and compassion to build a more inclusive world.

Cathy Low

Director of Partnerships

About Thomas Pocklington Trust

Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT) is a national charity committed to achieving equality and inclusion for blind and partially sighted people. With over half of our staff and more than 200 volunteers having lived experience of sight loss, we ensure that our work is informed, representative and impactful.

We work across a range of priority areas, influencing policy, delivering services, supporting communities, and funding initiatives that drive systemic change. Through partnerships, advocacy, and practical support, we aim to remove the barriers that limit opportunity and participation for BPS people.

Our Strategy 2024–27: Key Life Chances

Our Key Life Chances strategy is underpinned by the belief that blind and partially sighted people should have the same life opportunities as everyone else. We focus on four key areas:

- 1. Better education and transition outcomes.**
- 2. Increased employment and career progression.**
- 3. Full access to health and wellbeing services.**
- 4. Greater inclusion and equity across society.**

This strategy was co-produced with staff, trustees, volunteers and the BPS community. This report marks the first year of delivery and outlines the progress we have made to date.

Our Achievements in 2024–25

This section highlights how we have delivered against the four strategic aims of our Key Life Chances strategy. It outlines the outcomes we have achieved in education, employment, health and wellbeing and wider inclusion in society.

Our approach combines direct support, influencing policy and system change, and strengthening partnerships to improve opportunities for blind and partially sighted people.



Better Education and Transition Outcomes

Expanded Education Support:

We supported 333 students and developed a new partnership with Guide Dogs, with a view to launching a joint Education Information, Advice and Guidance service from April 2025, supporting children and young people from age 7 and above, across all stages of education. This will ensure access to specialist guidance regardless of where a young person is in their learning journey.

Access and Assistance for All:

Our campaign launched a five-point plan to improve educational access for BPS students, supported by ministerial engagement and a parliamentary event. This has helped secure national attention on inclusive learning environments.

Accessible Technology Resources:

We published new resources to help students in further and higher education use technology effectively, addressing common gaps in access.

Youth Engagement:

We supported Young Voices (ages 11–18) and Student Voices (16+) and empowered participants to influence their own educational experiences and shape our education policy work.

Partnership Grants:

We supported organisations such as LOOK UK to deliver targeted education interventions for young people with sight loss.





Increased Employment and Career Progression

Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives:

We co-authored a report with RNIB and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Eye Health and Vision Impairment with 21 recommendations for government. The report was based on data from a YouGov poll of 2,000 employers.

Works For Me:

We delivered personalised employment support to over 350 people. Of these, 58 secured employment.

Residential Training:

We piloted a residential course in employment and assistive technology, oversubscribed fourfold. This highlights the demand for immersive, skills-based learning.

Mentoring Scheme:

We matched mentors and mentees across employment goals, helping to build networks and confidence.

Get Set Progress Internships:

We delivered 31 internships with financial support from RNIB, including 10 with employers outside the VI sector. 85% secured full-time roles and 100% of participant and host organisations rated the programme positively.

Skill Share:

We partnered with external organisations to deliver short workshops pro bono to interns and volunteers, promoting knowledge exchange and exposure to different industries.

Partner Projects:

Through Blind in Business, we funded career pathway support for 13–19-year-olds, helping young people explore jobs and gain experience.



Access to Health and Wellbeing

Accessible Screening Tools:

We contributed to the development of an NHS tool to deliver accessible health testing, making it easier for people with sight loss in England to participate in life-saving bowel cancer screening. This tool represents a significant step towards inclusive healthcare.

#MakeHealthAccessible Campaign:

We called for a pan-disability taskforce to improve early detection and access to healthcare for disabled people.

VI Awareness Training:

We delivered training to over 250 medical students at Newcastle University. We also supported staff development at Sirona Healthcare.

Accessible Information Standard (AIS):

Our campaign offered direct support to individuals and professionals, promoted AIS compliance, and helped prompt a national review.

Research and Grants:

We supported UCL's research into digital phenotyping for early detection of sight loss and partnered with Age UK and Metro Blind Sport to promote health and fitness for BPS people.



Inclusion and Accessibility in Society

#CutItBack Campaign:

Our campaign on overgrown street vegetation reached over 100,000 people, prompting local authority action and improving navigation for BPS pedestrians.

Transport Accessibility:

We secured a "Your Station, Your Community" grant and delivered improvements to six rail stations, demonstrating practical action on inclusive transport.

Floating Bus Stops:

We published a position statement opposing floating bus stops and engaged local authorities in identifying safer alternatives for BPS people.

Training for Transport Professionals:

We partnered with the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) and launched the UK's first e-learning course on inclusive transport design, endorsed by key national bodies.



Extending Our Reach

Alongside our core programme delivery, we have expanded our reach and influence through new partnerships, national initiatives and sector leadership. This year, we strengthened the infrastructure behind our volunteer network, scaled our Sight Loss Councils across the UK and played a central role in shaping cross-sector collaboration.

Volunteering Infrastructure:

We developed a new volunteer recruitment app to be launched in 2025 and partnered with NCVO on a national training programme for volunteer managers, increasing accessibility and confidence in campaign delivery.

Sight Loss Councils:

We have grown to 25 active Sight Loss Councils, including expanding into Scotland. Plans are underway to establish SLCs in Wales.

Vision Partnership:

As a founding member, we contributed to workstreams on access to technology, mental health, and lived experience leadership.

VI Insight Hub:

In partnership with RNIB, added Education as a strategic theme to the Insight Hub, creating a central evidence base for BPS-related research.

LEX Leadership Conference:

We worked as part of the Vision Partnership to host the sector's first ever conference focused on lived experience leadership, setting a high standard for inclusive event delivery and winning a Visionary award.

Health and Eye Health:

We supported the Eye Care Support Pathway developed by RNIB and piloted new approaches to mental health support for people newly diagnosed with sight loss.

All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG):

We jointly funded the relaunch of the All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPG) with RNIB, which now boasts much better representation of MPs.

Communications and Engagement

In 2024/25, TPT generated over 325 pieces of print and 25 broadcast media coverage, raising awareness of our impact and influencing public opinion. We also achieved growth on our targeted social media platforms of Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, via our e-newsletters and direct mailing.

Grant Making

We reviewed our grants reporting processes to improve efficiency, impact measurement, and user experience. All grants are now managed via a dedicated online portal aligned with our strategic priorities.

Measuring Our Impact

Using a bespoke Salesforce system, we capture both quantitative data (e.g. number of beneficiaries, placements secured) and qualitative feedback (e.g. testimonials, case studies). This enables us to measure reach, effectiveness and areas for growth.





Case Studies

Jane's Story

Despite a strong academic and professional background, Jane faced repeated rejection due to her sight loss. Through a Get Set Progress internship at Senclude, she demonstrated her value and now plays an integral role in their team.

Leonie's Perspective

Leonie Milliner, CEO of the General Optical Council, hired a BPS intern through our scheme and described it as one of the best decisions she made for her organisation, highlighting the transformative power of inclusive hiring.

Financial Overview

	2025
Where our money comes from	£'000s
Net Property Income	3,927
Grants Donations and Other Activities	329
Total Income	4,256
What we spend our money on	
Grants and Donations to Other Organisations	(745)
Internal Charitable Expenditure	(4,470)
Interest	(112)
Total Expenditure	(5,327)
Net	(1,071)

Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our staff, trustees, partners, funders, volunteers, and blind and partially sighted people who have contributed to our mission. Your support drives our success.

For further information, please visit:

www.pocklington.org.uk





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