



THE
SPECTACLE
MAKERS'
CHARITY

IMPACT REPORT 2025



Registered Charity No 1186122
(England & Wales)



£69,052
given in grants and
awards in the year to 31
March 2025

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A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

I am pleased to present the work of the Charity for the period up to 31st March 2025. In total, the trustees awarded £69,052 in grants and bursaries. Once again, we continue to support a large number of diverse organisations involved in eye health and care, both in the UK and abroad. This is in keeping with our charitable aims in seeking to ensure 'better vision for all' and 'improve the lives of people with vision impairment and support those who treat eye health'.

We continue to support and inspire the next generation of eye health professionals, by awarding bursaries of up to £1000 to 20 students undertaking diploma or undergraduate study in the UK. It needs to be a recognised course at Level 4 or above which is designed to lead directly to a career in eye health. We also offer professional development awards for ophthalmologists in training and ophthalmic nurses, to help with the costs of presenting work and taking up short term fellowships outside the UK.

The trustees meet four times a year, and have decided that from February 2026, they will review grant applications at theme-based meetings throughout the year. It is therefore important that grant applicants are aware of these requirements and our new calendar (February - information and support, May - non-UK healthcare and training, September - employment and education, November - Wellbeing (arts, culture and sport)).

As we now look forward to the Company's 400th anniversary in 2029, we are planning to introduce a new bursary programme providing support for people with visual impairment in seeking future employment. I do hope by reading this report that you will be inspired by some of these stories and think about how you could help the Charity. If you are able to make a donation, or set up regular donations, join the 100 Club or even consider a legacy to the Charity, please go to www.spectaclemakers.com/Charity, or use the QR code below to find out more.

On behalf of all the Trustees, a big thank you to all our supporters and donors.

DR DAVID PARKINS FCOptom
Chair of the Board of Trustees



BUCKS VISION

BucksVision is a local charity supporting blind and partially sighted people across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, helping them live fuller, more independent lives.

Our £1,000 grant has enabled them to continue delivering our vital Home Support and Befriending Service, tackling loneliness and isolation among visually impaired people, many of whom are elderly and live alone. Volunteers make regular visits and phone calls, offering companionship, confidence, and practical support.

In the past year, the service created 44 new befriending relationships, with around 940 people benefiting directly and indirectly, including clients, family members, and carers. With 57 active volunteers, approximately 540 hours of support were given, averaging 25 visits each month.

The service is life-changing for many. One testimonial said: **“Robert is kind, friendly and very supportive. He reads my letters and files them away. I will find it very hard without him now.”**

Our support has also helped them recruit new volunteers through leaflets, posters, and community outreach, though demand remains high with 81 people still waiting for a befriender. By contributing to staff, training, and volunteer support costs, our funding has ensured they can sustain and grow this essential service.



£1,000

towards Home Support &
Befriending Service costs
in Buckinghamshire and
Milton Keynes

CLEARVISION

The ClearVision Project is a national lending library making books accessible to blind adults and children learning braille by adapting mainstream picture books to include braille, print and illustrations on every page.

In 2024, ClearVision launched a two-year pilot project to renew a specialist collection of books designed for braille-reading adults sharing stories with sighted children. These unique books include simple brailled picture descriptions and locator dots, enabling blind parents and grandparents to discuss images with their children — an essential part of early learning.

With support from the Spectacle Makers' Charity, ClearVision has already created 52 books, covering early learning themes such as colours, shapes and the alphabet, as well as classic picture books where the story is carried by illustrations. The goal is to build a 200-book collection by 2026.

The impact on families has been profound. Parents report that these books allow them to take part fully in family reading, helping them to bond with their children and challenge misconceptions about blindness. One mother described reading with her son as making her “feel like a real Mum”, while another borrower rejoined the library to share books with her new grandson.

By enabling blind parents to experience the simple joy of reading to their children, this collection is transforming family life and ensuring that no one is excluded from the formative experience of sharing stories.



£2,500
towards books for
braille-reading
adults sharing books
with sighted children

CROYDON VISION

Technology has become an essential part of daily life, yet many blind and partially sighted people face barriers that prevent them from benefiting fully.

At Croydon Vision, our £1,100 grant has helped expand their Tech for Good Hub, giving members access to electronic magnifiers and personalised training. Over the past year, 179 individuals received more than 400 sessions with their Tech Trainer, learning to use accessible tools that restore confidence, independence and connection.

£1,100
towards expanding
their tech hub and
providing members
with needed equipment



For many, this has been transformative. Members who had given up on laptops or TVs are now able to use them again with voice control and magnification software. Others have discovered new ways of staying in touch with family and friends, reducing isolation and opening up opportunities to learn and connect.

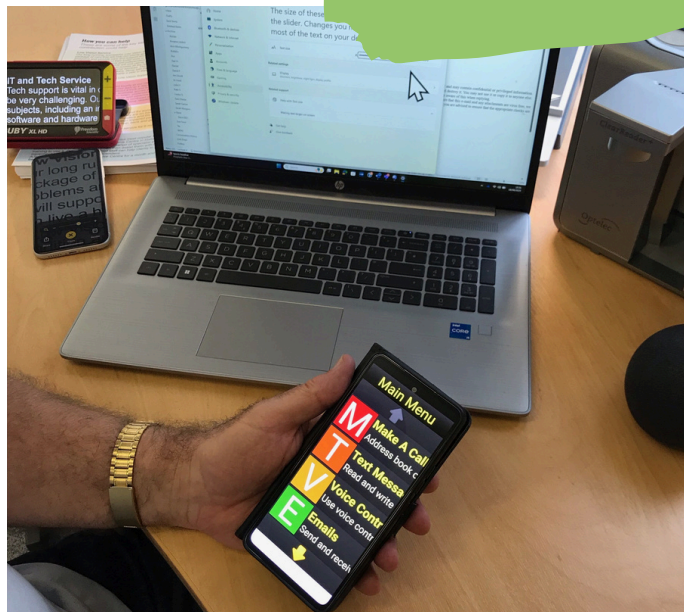
As one member explained: “Daniel showed me how to do a lot of things and was so patient. The most amazing thing is that I am now able to talk to my laptop and use it again.”

The equipment we have funded is already in daily use and will continue to support their members for years to come, ensuring blind and partially sighted people in Croydon are not left behind in the digital age.

EAST SUSSEX VISION SUPPORT

£3,500

towards IT support
across East Sussex,
Brighton and Hove



Digital skills are essential in today's world, yet many blind and partially sighted people face barriers to accessing technology.

With a £3,500 grant from the Spectacle Makers' Charity, East Sussex Vision Support delivered dedicated IT support across East Sussex, Brighton and Hove. Eighty-six clients received one-to-one training in using devices, assistive software and online tools, while IT guidance was also provided during 873 Aids and Equipment appointments, far exceeding original estimates.

This integrated approach meant they could respond to people's needs holistically — helping with everything from magnifiers to smartphones in a single visit. The result has been greater confidence, independence and digital inclusion for hundreds of individuals.



£2,000

towards hosting the
Champions League in
the UK

FEN TIGERS GOALBALL

In 2022, Fen Tigers became the first British team to qualify for the European Goalball Champions League — the Paralympic sport's equivalent of football's UEFA Champions League. With a £2,000 grant from the Spectacle Makers' Charity, they made history again in February 2025 by bringing a Champions League Qualifier to the UK for the very first time.

The event welcomed elite clubs from six European nations, including Paralympians and international medallists, and attracted local families, schools, and community groups — many experiencing goalball live for the first time. Accessibility was at the heart of delivery, with ZAP Vision QR codes, audio description headsets, and a professional livestream reaching over 5,000 global viewers — the highest ever for an EGCA qualifier.

The impact has been lasting. Children and families left inspired, new players have since joined sessions, and volunteers gained valuable experience, strengthening the grassroots of the sport. Media coverage, including BBC News, helped showcase goalball nationally and demonstrated what British clubs can achieve.

HENSHAWS

The Spectacle Makers' Charity provided a grant of £1,436 to Henshaws, enabling 34 visually impaired children to take part in winter activities, including cycling, sensory sessions, bowling, and a Christmas party.

The funding directly covered activity costs, travel expenses, and materials, ensuring that all children could participate regardless of their family's financial situation. This allowed Henshaws to provide a full programme of events, maintain staff support, and create a safe and inclusive environment for the children.

Children were able to try new activities, develop confidence, and improve social skills. One child, who was initially shy, engaged fully in the activities and built new friendships.

The grant has also allowed Henshaws to provide tailored support for individual needs. Travel costs covered by the funding meant that children from a wider area could attend events, reducing barriers to participation. Staff and volunteers were able to offer more personalised attention during activities, helping each child engage at their own pace. This practical support has contributed to improved confidence, independence, and a stronger sense of belonging among the participants.





£3,500

towards surgical
camps in remote
parts of Kenya

IMPACT FOUNDATION

Funding from The Spectacle Makers' Charity has enabled vital eye care services to reach communities with limited access to treatment.

Between February and August 2025, two eye screening and surgical camps were held, reaching 330 people and performing 100 surgeries, including cataract operations, cyst excisions, and tarsal rotations. Common conditions treated included cataracts, glaucoma, allergic conjunctivitis, dry eye syndrome, and refractive errors.

Many residents travel long distances to access care. One patient, who had suffered poor vision for seven years, travelled 70 km with his grandson, who had paused his schooling to provide care. After surgery, he shared:

"I feel you have given me a new life and also let the young boy resume his studies. It's a miracle that I can see again."

Our support has also helped IMPACT East Africa prepare training for local health practitioners, building lasting capacity in eye care and ensuring future benefits for the community.

NAB

Our grant has enabled Northamptonshire Association for the Blind (NAB) to continue delivering its Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) service at Northampton and Kettering hospitals, as well as extend support into a private eye clinic. The role of the ECLO is to offer a point of contact for anyone seeking emotional support, further help, advice or assistance for themselves or their carers.

Between January and June 2025, the ECLOs handled 647 referrals, providing over 650 support sessions in person and remotely. They also processed 171 Certificates of Visual Impairment, helping people access essential benefits, and supported 42 individuals with mobility needs such as Blue Badge applications and symbol canes.

The grant has also strengthened advocacy and awareness, with ECLOs signposting people to wider services, supporting clients through 234 advocacy cases, and delivering training to GPs, hospital staff and opticians. This has widened understanding of sight loss and improved referral pathways.

By funding this work, the Spectacle Makers' Charity has helped ensure that hundreds of people across Northamptonshire receive timely, practical and emotional support at the point of diagnosis, improving confidence and quality of life.

"I am supported in all my needs. I am looking forward moving on knowing NAB is there for me." - one beneficiary of the ECLO service.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

£2,100

for a new workshop for students who are blind and visually impaired.

The National Archives has introduced Sensing the Archives, a workshop designed to make its collections more accessible to blind and visually impaired students. The programme uses specially created 3D-printed versions of historic documents, such as a medieval map and a wage slip for Tudor courtier John Blanke.

These tactile resources allow students to engage with history through touch. Raised surfaces reproduce features such as churches, houses, moorland and battle formations, as well as the signatures of significant historic figures, including kings and queens.

Workshops are available for students from Key Stage 1 through to Key Stage 5. Supporting materials are provided in large print and Braille (grade 1 or 2), tailored to student needs. To ensure participation from a wide range of schools, a bursary scheme is available to help with travel and teacher costs.

The workshop was developed with input from New College Worcester and uses optacartography to transform flat documents into tactile 3D models. Created by George Rhodes of the University of Westminster with All Able, the models use UV cured resin to achieve fine detail without specialist equipment. Alongside these, students explore original parchment documents and tactile props, enabling fuller engagement with the archives.



NATIONAL SCIENCE AND MEDIA MUSEUM

The mission of the National Science and Media Museum is to inspire the next generation of scientists, inventors and engineers and to be open for all, helping everyone access science and feel science is for them.

With the support of the Spectacle Makers' Charity, the Sound and Vision project and the Audio Description will have a lasting legacy and permanent impact. Sound and Vision has accessibility at its heart. The project will completely remodel two floors of the building, the ground floor of the museum will be reconfigured, and an additional accessible passenger lift will be installed to enable all visitors to move around the building with ease.

£3,000

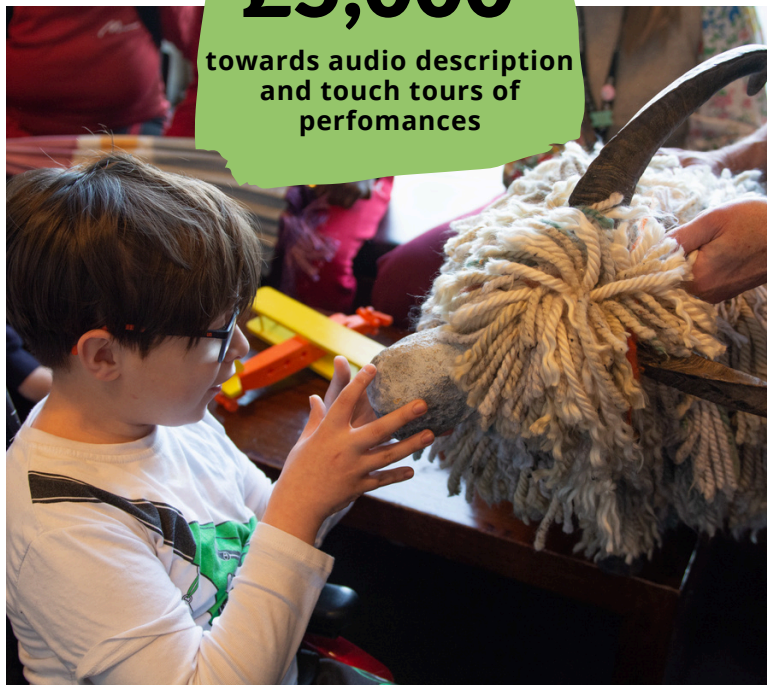
**towards audio
description for 2 new
galleries in Bradford**



Millions of visitors will have the opportunity to access and directly benefit from the Audio Descriptions across the lifetime of the galleries. Blind and partially-sighted people who may otherwise be unable to access the galleries will have the opportunity to experience and enjoy them at the same time as their peers. Furthermore, by funding the training and upskilling of staff, our grant will have a long-lasting impact not just for the Bradford museum but for the Science Museum Group as a whole, with learnings and best practice shared across all its sites. The skills developed will be utilised across all five museums in the Group, enabling the internal writing, recording and editing of Audio Guides for future exhibitions and galleries.

NATIONAL THEATRE

Through our £5,000 grant, the Spectacle Makers' Charity enabled the National Theatre to make live theatre accessible to people with vision impairments. Since June 2024, every South Bank production has included an Audio Described performance, often preceded by a Touch Tour giving audiences the chance to explore costumes, sets and props. In the past year this support has delivered:



- 23 Audio Described performances across 13 productions, reaching over 500 people with vision impairments.
- 24 Touch Tours with 477 attendees, many led by cast members to help audiences connect more closely with the performances.
- Special schools performances, and an Audio Described performance of Dear England for secondary schools, supported by tailored workshops and resources.

“We were absolutely amazed by every aspect: from the Touch Tour on stage, engaging conversations with the actors, and the opportunity to explore props with our hands — to the high-quality audio equipment that allowed full immersion in the performance.” - Touch Tour Attendee

NORTHERN BALLET

With our support, Northern Ballet delivered audio described performances, Touch Tours, and outreach workshops for Hansel & Gretel, their first children's ballet audio described on tour. Six audio described performances and four Touch Tours took place across Leeds, Huddersfield, and London, engaging 18 people directly.

Our grant also supported nine outreach workshops in Leeds and Huddersfield, reaching 156 children, including 52 with vision impairment. Feedback highlighted that the Touch Tours and audio description improved understanding, enjoyment, and engagement with the production.

Funding contributed to the purchase of new audio description equipment for the Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre, ensuring a permanent setup for future productions and improving the experience for vision impaired audiences. Although London workshops could not take place, new relationships were established, which will be built on for future tours. Our support has helped Northern Ballet extend access to children with vision impairment and will inform continued growth of their accessible performances.



£3,000

towards Live touch tours
and audio described
performances of a new
children's ballet

PLEASANCE THEATRE



£1,600

**for improvement of
accessibility for
vision impaired
people**

PLEASANCE
Guide for Visually Impaired Visitors

 **Sight
Scotland**
Created in partnership with Sight Scotland

With our support, the Pleasance Theatre worked with Sight Scotland to improve accessibility for visually impaired visitors at the 2025 Edinburgh Fringe. This included training their full festival team of 300+ staff on visual impairment awareness and sighted guiding, helping staff feel confident to assist visitors and improving the overall festival experience.

Funding also enabled the creation of accessible venue guides in braille and large print/high contrast, focusing on key navigation points and essential information. These guides were sense-checked by visually impaired users and will continue to be used at future festivals.

During the Fringe, audio described performances and Touch Tours were delivered for visually impaired audiences. Feedback highlighted the importance of these initiatives in making the festival more inclusive, with audience members noting that accessibility had often been overlooked in the past.

The £1,600 grant was used for training, braille transcription and printing, large print guide design, and associated overheads.

SEEKENYA

Support from The Spectacle Makers' Charity contributed to SeeKenya's eye care clinics in northern Kenya, enabling the team to deliver vital services during the October 2024 and March 2025 trips. For these visits, three UK optometrists joined a team of 18 Kenyan staff, operating across multiple clinic stations, including assessment, lens assembly, and dispensing.

Patients ranged from 3 to 103 years old, demonstrating that the message of "caring for your eyes" reaches all generations. Clinics provided

spectacles, treatment for complex conditions, and access to specialised equipment, including glazing and edging machines, tracers, and focimeters. Children's toys and other items were also included to make the clinics welcoming and accessible. One patient received a specially adapted pair of glasses, restoring sight he had lost for decades, illustrating the transformative impact of the work.

Volunteers noted that the clinics offered both practical and emotional benefits, not only improving vision but also fostering community engagement and gratitude.



£2,500

to help fund eye care
through the biannual
SeeKenya team visits

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

The Eyes on the Future project ran from February 2024 to February 2025, providing professional eye care and spectacles to children and young people supported by SOS Children's Villages across Colombia. During this period, 143 children received consultations with specialist optometrists, with 10 receiving corrective lenses through targeted interventions. The funding enabled the project to cover the costs of eye examinations, provide glasses, and reach children in regions with limited healthcare access, including Bogotá, Chocó, La Guajira, and Nariño.

Children ranged from 5 to 21 years old, with most between 9 and 16. Many had previously experienced headaches, eye strain, or learning difficulties due to undiagnosed vision problems. By providing assessments and corrective lenses, the project enabled children to read, write, recognise faces, and participate fully in educational and social activities.

The project improved visual health, confidence, and school participation for children living in challenging circumstances.

£1,000

towards the wellbeing and educational attainment of disadvantaged children and youth



TRELOAR'S

The £3,250 grant provided by The Spectacle Makers' Charity has funded a new light sensory trolley, now actively benefiting many of Treloar's students, including the 44% with a visual impairment.

The trolley has already:

- Increased engagement by offering motivating, accessible sensory input, particularly for students with physical disabilities who use switch-access features.
- Supported regulation, enabling students to be in an optimal state for learning through calming or stimulating visuals and sounds.
- Enhanced inclusivity in group learning by offering differentiated ways for students to participate.
- Empowered choice and independence, especially through adaptive controls.
- Improved emotional well-being, reducing anxiety and providing experiences tailored to individual needs.

It is being used across the curriculum, in therapy sessions, for well-being activities such as relaxation and mindfulness, and as a reward or leisure tool. Use is tailored to each student's sensory profile and learning targets, with decisions guided by their multi-disciplinary team. Feedback from students, parents and staff highlights the value of this resource in supporting education, therapy and emotional development.



MACS

£3,500

**towards an adventure
trip for young people
with sight loss**

In July 2024, Microphthalmia (small eye), Anophthalmia (no eye) and Coloboma (a cleft in the eye) Support (MACS) held its annual adventure week at the Calvert Trust in the Lake District. The event brought together 19 young people aged 10–18 who were born with no eyes or underdeveloped eyes.

The programme was designed to give participants the chance to try new activities in a safe, fully accessible environment. Over the course of the week, young people built independence, gained confidence, and shared experiences with peers facing similar challenges. Families also highlighted the importance of the trip in helping children strengthen social skills, develop new friendships and enjoy a sense of belonging. Parents and young people alike described the event as a unique opportunity. For many, it was a rare chance to feel part of a supportive community while enjoying the fun and freedom of an outdoor adventure.



VISIBILITY SCOTLAND



The grant has enabled Visibility Scotland to deliver a rich programme of support for children, young people and families affected by sight loss. Their activities build independence, confidence and social connections at every stage of childhood.

£3,500

**towards a suite of
services to children,
young people and
their families**

Since November 2024, they have run six Messy Play sessions for under-5s, practical kitchen skills workshops led by dietitians, sensory art and music classes, baby yoga, and a festive Christmas party. A highlight was their outdoor pizza event with 18 young people, featuring a local band and sensory art, which gave families the chance to connect in a fun, inclusive setting.

Parents and carers also benefit from wellbeing support, peer groups and counselling. Families have praised these services as a lifeline — helping children try new skills, grow in confidence, and feel accepted.

VISION 2020 LINKS

£9,988

**towards continuing
the Glaucoma-NET
project in Nigeria**

Glaucoma-NET, part of the Vision 2020 Links programme, was launched to address the urgent challenge of glaucoma, the world's leading cause of irreversible blindness. With funding from the Spectacle Makers' Charity, the network created a dedicated website that now serves as a hub for training, resources, and clinical discussion, connecting eye health professionals across more than 30 countries.



A major achievement has been the adaptation of the Glaucoma Toolkit into Nigeria's first national guideline, endorsed by the Ministry of Health and launched in 2023. Training sessions across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory equipped glaucoma care teams to apply the toolkit, ensuring consistent and effective patient management nationwide.

Capacity building has been central to the programme's impact. Advanced surgical training courses and specialist nursing workshops have expanded the skills of local teams, with over 95% of participants reporting greater confidence and improved practice. These efforts are already helping patients to be diagnosed earlier and receive better treatment.

The project has also placed patients at the centre of care. New support groups in Lagos and Abuja are reducing isolation and encouraging follow-up, while national awareness campaigns are helping more people seek timely eye tests.

VISION CARE FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

£1,620

To support their
Glazing and Range
Improvement Project



The Glazing and Range Improvement Project (GRIP) aims to improve the quality and consistency of spectacle provision for people experiencing homelessness across the UK. The project focused on two key areas: consolidating suppliers and introducing electronic ordering.

Ten separate glazing laboratories were reduced to three core suppliers, enabling a consistent lens range, improved lead times, and standardised training for clinic teams. This has enhanced the dispensing experience, bringing it closer to what beneficiaries would expect in a high street optical practice.

The project also implemented an electronic ordering system, now used by 80% of clinics, which allows faster processing, order tracking, and streamlined management of lens ranges. Comprehensive training has been delivered to all 60 volunteer dispensing opticians.

Over the past nine months, GRIP has directly supported 767 individuals across the UK, providing them with the correct spectacles and improving their vision, safety, and independence.

VOCALEYES

£2,000

for training of ten new audio-describers from different ethnic backgrounds

Progress has been made by VocalEyes over the past six months on the Global Majority New Describer Training Project, which we are supporting with a grant of £2,000.

During this period, the project team has confirmed key partnerships with the National Theatre and the Kiln Theatre in Brent, ensuring the training opportunity will reach a wide network. SoundScribe, a collective of audio describers and consultants with heritage from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and Asia, has also joined the project. They are contributing to promotion, delivering a training module on Describing Diversity, and shadowing the full course for their own professional development.

Recruitment is now open and will run until the end of September 2025. Applicants will be able to attend online Q&A sessions and an Information and Audition Day at Shakespeare's Globe before submitting. The project will train eight new describers, alongside two SoundScribe trainer-trainees.

Training will begin in December 2025, mainly at the National Theatre, and will include two intensive weeks of teaching, followed by writing and research. As the project continues, we will present outcomes.

The first phase has focused on careful planning and consultation to ensure the project is sustainable and impactful. A further report in January 2026 will share outcomes from the training and reflect on the long-term benefits for blind and partially sighted theatre audiences.



LINCOLN AND LINDSEY BLIND SOCIETY TRUST

The Frontline Financial Services project aims to ensure that visually impaired people can access welfare and money advice promptly, helping to reduce stress from debt and benefit challenges, which have increased due to the rising cost of living. Support from The Spectacle Makers' Charity has funded a Training Officer, who has delivered staff training, mentored frontline staff, and enhanced overall service delivery.

Since the start of the project, four training sessions have been delivered covering Older People's Benefits, Income Maximisation for Older People, DLA for Children, and Introduction to Debt Advice.

A recent case illustrates the impact: Mr. T, aged 78, was struggling with his state pension, rising household bills, mobility issues, and food costs. Our advisors identified additional entitlements, including Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, and Council Tax Reduction, and supported him through the application process. As a result, Mr. T can now heat his home, arrange household support, buy nutritious food, and attend a local social club, significantly improving his wellbeing.



£2,055
towards training costs
involved in helping
vision impaired people
complete and submit
benefit claims

"I didn't know I was entitled to anything more. This support has made a world of difference—I'm not just surviving now, I'm living again." – Mr. T

Staff feedback highlights the difference training has made:

"The support we've received has allowed us to embed benefit advice into our day-to-day work, transforming the way we support our clients."

JERMYN STREET THEATRE



£800.

**Towards audio description
of the visual elements of
Eurydice for people who
are blind or partially
sighted**

Support from The Spectacle Makers' Charity enabled the creation of an audio introduction for the revival of Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* at Jermyrn Street Theatre. This resource provided an accessible overview of the production's visual elements, allowing blind and partially sighted audience members to familiarise themselves with the characters and actors' voices prior to attending.

The audio introduction was produced by Matthew Jarman of Bad Princess Productions, with coordination by Carne Theatre. It was launched online via the theatre's website and YouTube channel for the full run of the production from 3 October to 9 November 2024.

Approximately 60 audience members accessed the audio introduction during the run, highlighting the importance of such resources for inclusive theatre experiences. The funding supported production costs, coordination, marketing, and box office staffing.

BURSARY AWARDS

The Spectacle Makers' Charity bursary scheme is open to students of optometry, dispensing, ophthalmic imaging, orthoptics and ophthalmic nursing. Each bursary winner is asked to provide a short report. One submission came from Emma, who is retraining as an Optometrist after working as a Dispensing Optician since 2008. Emma said about the bursary:

£18,860
for student
bursaries



"Studying so much later in life has been a truly life-changing experience. Balancing a full-time job, the heavy workload of a degree, and the financial strain of a huge remortgage to pay for the course has been incredibly challenging. At times I doubted whether I would be able to manage, but the experience has also been deeply rewarding.

I have found retinoscopy particularly difficult, but thanks to the bursary I was able to buy a second-hand retinoscope and practise regularly. With the support of my supervisor, who spent many hours guiding me through the process, I have made real progress and I am proud to say that I passed all of my exams this year. The PanOptic ophthalmoscope I purchased has also been invaluable, allowing me to examine patients comfortably despite my spinal condition.

This bursary has been absolutely invaluable — I cannot fully express the difference it has made to my studies. It has given me not only the tools I need to succeed, but also the confidence to continue this journey. With this support, I am one step closer to achieving my goal of becoming an Optometrist and making a real difference in the lives of future patients."

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, Emma and 20 other students received vital support this year, helping them gain the skills, equipment and confidence they need to excel in their studies and future careers.

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

£807
helping
ophthalmologists in
training

As well as bursaries for undergraduate students, the Spectacle Makers' Charity offers travel grants to support professional development and advance the careers of young ophthalmologists. This year, one award was made to Riddhi, an academic ophthalmology specialty trainee at the University of Leicester, who attended the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Annual Meeting 2025 in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

Riddhi explained:

"With the support of this travel grant, I presented a poster on using automated machine learning (AutoML) to distinguish papilloedema (swelling of the optic disc due to raised intracranial pressure) from pseudopapilloedema using optic disc imaging. This approach can help clinicians detect serious neurological conditions while reducing the need for invasive tests.

"Attending ARVO provided invaluable feedback from international colleagues and networking opportunities with leading researchers. These experiences have strengthened my academic journey and inspired me to pursue further study, including joining the Wellcome Trust Mental Health Network Doctoral Training Programme in October 2025.

"This opportunity has been especially meaningful as I have had few role models in academic ophthalmology. Meeting diverse leaders who shared their guidance has given me confidence and mentorship to support my career. I am deeply grateful to the Spectacle Makers' Charity for making this experience possible."





THE SPECTACLE MAKERS' CHARITY

**You can help the Spectacle Makers' Charity continue to
make a difference by donating at
[https://www.spectaclemakers.com/charity/how-to-give-to-
the-spectacle-makers-charity](https://www.spectaclemakers.com/charity/how-to-give-to-the-spectacle-makers-charity)
or using the QR code below**



THANK YOU

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We are a registered charity in England and Wales number 1186122.