



Registered Charity No. 1093675

Embargo: 12/10/2006

“A Bite Without Sight” for World Sight Day

“One doesn't believe until it happens to you how much you rely on your eyesight... you use your eyes for everything, I just can't get used to it.”

Interviewee, age 63

In an unprecedented move, 11 visual impairment charities will join forces today to mark World Sight Day and raise awareness of sight loss in the UK.

Under the umbrella of Vision 2020 UK, the charities are hosting an event at specialist restaurant ‘Dans le Noir’ where guests will be invited to experience a variety of sight conditions, before being served lunch in total darkness in the restaurant’s renowned ‘Dark Room’.

The day is also a platform to launch the publication of a report*, commissioned by Vision 2020 UK, into the experiences and lifestyles of visually impaired people in the UK. Key findings include:

- 42% of unemployed interviewees of working age had not worked for more than 10 years. A further 24% of the total working age population said that they had not worked for between five and 10 years.
- 84% of those living with someone said they needed help with basic daily tasks.

Anne McGuire, Minister for Disabled People, said: "I am delighted to support this Vision 2020 UK event on World Sight Day. It is difficult for a sighted person to imagine the impact sight loss can have on quality of life, but today's event will give myself and other guests a small insight into what some of those difficulties may be."

Chief Executive of Vision 2020 UK, Mike Brace said: "Nearly 4.5 million people in Britain have a significant sight loss and services available to them are fragmented, disjointed and in many cases, non-existent. These charities are coming together today with the common goal of preventing sight loss (where possible), improving provision of services, and raising awareness of the issue. Despite sight loss being the condition most people say they fear, it is also the condition that most do nothing to prevent happening."

Ends

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Notes to editor:

- VISION 2020 UK is an umbrella organisation which facilitates greater collaboration and co-operation between visual impairment organisations within the UK.
- The VISION 2020 UK event is taking place at Dans le Noir?, 30-31 Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0DU. Media welcome between 12.30 and 1pm for interviews, but please do let us know in advance.
- *'Network 1,000: opinions and circumstances of visually-impaired people in Great Britain', University of Birmingham, August 2006. The report can be downloaded from www.vision2020uk.org.uk and is available in a range of alternative formats including large print, Braille and tape.
- Thursday 12 October is World Sight Day, a Vision 2020 initiative providing a chance to raise public awareness of

blindness as a major international public health issue. For more information, visit www.vision2020uk.org.uk

- Charities supporting the Vision 2020 UK event:

Action for Blind People

Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO)

Childhood Eye Cancer Trust

Guide Dogs for the Blind

The National Blind Children's Society

Thomas Pocklington Trust

RNIB

Royal College of Ophthalmologists

St Dunstan's

Vision 2020 Global

Vision 2020 UK