

NEWS RELEASE

21/01/08

For immediate release

Blind charity opens helpline in Manchester

National charity, **Action for Blind People** opens its national freephone helpline for blind and partially sighted people, in Manchester this February. Handling up to 10,000 calls every year, the helpline offers support and advice to the UK's two million visually impaired people, along with their family and friends.

"I've recently lost my sight and I don't know what to do or who to turn to? What help is available to me?"

"My grandma is 90 years old and used to love reading. Is there anything out there that can help her to do this?"

"I'm scared of losing my job because my sight has deteriorated, what can I do?"

"My son, aged nine, is blind and loves football, but is unable to join in at school. Are there any opportunities out there for him?"

Action for Blind People's helpline has been handling calls like these for the past five years from its offices in London. From its new home in the charity's existing office in Manchester, the helpline will be staffed by a new team with vast experience in the field of visual impairment. Peter Holton, Action for Blind People's new Helpline Manager, explains how the move to Manchester will improve the existing service:

14 - 16 Verney Road London SE16 3DZ Tel 020 7635 4800 Fax 020 7635 4899

Website www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Patron HRH Princess Alexandra, the Hon. Lady Ogilvy, GCVO

Registered Charity no: 205913

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“The helpline has always provided an invaluable service to callers, but whereas in the past callers were simply given useful information and advice, we can now take on clients and work with them over a period of time and support them to address their issues. For example, if a visually impaired caller is interested in getting re-housed, Action can support that person with the process right through to when they move.

“To ensure clients’ needs are met we also work closely with other organisations and appropriate local service providers, and undertake research if we do not have the information required on hand. Whether our callers are calling for themselves, or on behalf of a visually impaired friend or relative, I believe Action’s enhanced helpline service in Manchester will benefit blind and partially sighted people across the UK.”

People can call Action for Blind People’s National Freephone Helpline on **0800 915 4666** for confidential and impartial advice and guidance. The helpline is open to callers across the UK, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm. The helpline team has an email address: helpline@actionforblindpeople.org.uk and support is also available on the charity’s website: www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

-Ends-

For further media information or photos please contact Zoë Patel, press office on 020 7635 4898/ 07739 819954 or email: zoe.patel@actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Notes to editors:

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- Action for Blind People's National Freephone Helpline is based in the charity's Greater Manchester office: 5th Floor, Orbit House, Albert Street, Eccles, Greater Manchester M30 0BL
- Action for Blind People is an expert national organisation, ensuring blind and partially sighted people get practical support in all aspects of their lives. Contact Action for Blind People's National Freephone Helpline on 0800 915 4666 or www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk
- Action for Blind People is breaking down barriers that prevent visually impaired people from achieving the same opportunities as sighted people.
- If abbreviating "Action for Blind People", please use "Action" rather than AFBP or ABP.