



**There are 100,000  
talented people in the UK  
that you may not have  
considered**

**Can you afford to miss out?**

### **Curriculum Vitae**

**Name:** John Gregory

**Qualifications:**

Business Information Technology Degree,  
University of Coventry. Professional Diploma,  
Chartered Institute of Marketing.

**Personal profile:**

A Fellow of the Institute of Sales and Marketing Management, a highly motivated and successful sales person with management expertise and an excellent communicator with a wide experience of sales and marketing.



**For more information on how to find other top quality  
candidates for your business - read on....**



John is a high achiever, highly motivated and successful, with excellent experience across a range of companies.

**John is also blind.**

But he has not let that prevent him from becoming a highly successful businessman.

**“Sight loss should never be a barrier to success.”**

**Steph Cutler, visually impaired entrepreneur**



Given the right opportunities, blind and partially sighted people have always been able to compete in the job market. New advances in assistive information technology and other new support options are increasing their ability to gain and retain employment. However, many potential employees and employers are not aware of the technical assistance and support options available to them.

Action for Blind People are leaders in the employment field for blind and partially sighted people. We will work with you to ensure that the right support is in place - not only for recruiting new visually impaired staff, but also for your existing employees whose sight may be deteriorating.

**We understand that you may have some concerns about employing someone who is blind or partially sighted.**

**Action can answer your questions and provide you with all the information you need.**



**Action for blind people**

## 1) What financial support is available to me as an employer to help me employ blind or partially sighted people?

### Access to Work

Under this scheme the Government will pay up to 100% of the agreed additional costs of employing a visually impaired person going into a new job and up to 80% of the agreed additional costs of retaining a visually impaired member of staff who has been in post for more than six weeks. These agreed additional costs can cover items such as essential equipment, adaptations to lighting or premises, and transport to and from work if needed. It only provides the cost of things that are needed specifically because of the individual's visual impairment - not things that are provided normally to everyone else.

### Workstep

Workstep is a government funded programme designed to support disabled people. Workstep benefits employers and visually impaired people who are either starting work or in work.

Workstep support can take many forms (job-coaching, one-to-one support, liaising with employers, training, personal development etc) and is tailored to the individuals needs, to enable them to progress and develop to a stage where support is no longer needed.

## 2) How can I adapt the working environment?

### Assistive Information Technology (AIT)

Computers can be used by blind and partially sighted people regardless of the degree of their sight loss by using assistive information technology. A computer screen can be 'read' using specialist magnification software, specialist screen reading software, Braille displays or all three at once! AIT enables blind and partially sighted people to access jobs, even in those sectors where the use of information and communication technology features significantly. Action can provide you with advice and support on the best technology for your employees.



### Visual Awareness Training

Action for Blind People's Visual Awareness team can advise on how to make reasonable adjustments to a number of areas within the work environment, to help not only visually impaired members of staff but also visitors and customers. Managers and staff who are trained to be visually aware, add value to the business, and are generally more knowledgeable and better at their jobs, because they are putting equal opportunities into practise. With two million blind and partially sighted people across the UK, businesses that ignore visually impaired customers are missing out. Whatever the type of business, visually

impaired people will want to access the service, and how staff respond to their needs determines how likely they are to use the service again.

### **3) Will it be safe for me to have a blind or partially sighted person working in my business?**

The majority of work sites have few or no barriers to blind or partially sighted workers. Usually there is an easy solution to any barriers that do exist and changes can almost always be paid for with a grant from Access to Work.

**Solutions are often simple and easy to put in place**

When standard health and safety procedures are followed, the risks of having a blind or partially sighted member of staff should be no greater than for any other employee. It is even suggested that safety records improve, as people may become more consciously aware of good practice, and improvements to systems are encouraged. Basically, your obligations to a visually impaired member of staff or visitor are the same as those to everyone else. It is not difficult to make sure that all training and procedures are inclusive and safe.

**There is no extra cost in health and safety or insurance**

### **4) Ongoing Support from Action for Blind People**

Once you have made the decision to employ someone who has a visual impairment, Action will put into place an ongoing programme of support to ensure that you and your employee are free to get on with your business. If one of your existing employees discovers that they have problems with their sight, Action will provide all the advice and support that is needed, so that your employee can retain their job and you can keep a valued and experienced member of staff.

Retaining an employee who is losing their sight is generally cheaper and more cost effective than recruiting and training up new staff.

In a recent case, a business that dismissed a member of staff who had lost their eyesight after a stroke - without even attempting to make any adjustments to retain the staff member - was fined over £20,000. Mistakes can be a costly business.



**Talk to our experts and get the best advice.**

## Leading the way

Values and ethics matter to the modern consumer. Employing blind or partially sighted people not only sends a positive message about the values and ethics of your company, both to investors and staff, but also to your existing and potential customers. Similarly any involvement by a business in discrimination is likely to impact negatively upon the image of the business. Visually impaired people have the legal right not to be discriminated against.

Corporate Social Responsibility is no longer the sole preserve of a handful of giant international corporations - small and medium sized enterprises should address the needs of all people whatever their disability.

**Action for Blind People is here to help you lead the way.**

**Contact us to find out more:**

Call our National Freephone Helpline on: **0800 915 4666**

You can also visit our website at **[www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk)**

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London SE16 3DZ  
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**Talk to our experts - talk to Action**



## Recognising potential

Action for Blind People is working with employers across the UK. Here are just two of our clients and the companies that chose to recognise their potential.



### Birmingham Midshires

Philip Robert's eye condition, Retinitis Pigmentosa, was preventing him from finding employment, despite retraining in IT. With Action's help, Philip secured a position with Birmingham Midshires as a Customer Liaison clerk.

**“He can perform the role as effectively and efficiently as a fully sighted employee. It is a pleasure to work with such a dedicated member of staff.”**  
Nigel Stockton, Managing Director, Birmingham Midshires

June Wilkes, HR Consultant at Birmingham Midshires also appreciates the benefits of diversity.

**“Through our successful working relationship with Action, Birmingham Midshires has gained invaluable knowledge to support its commitment to diversity in the workplace, especially in understanding the problems experienced by those with visual impairment. We are very keen to continue to work with Action and their clients to provide those who are successful through the recruitment process with meaningful employment and career development opportunities.”**

### Preston City Council

Stephen Parkinson, Head of Communications at Preston City Council talks about Action client, Robert Bywater.

**“Rob's eyesight has never been an issue for us - he is treated the same as everyone else. His productivity is good and he is always coming up with new ideas and initiatives. This is one of the key benefits of employing somebody like Rob - motivation. He wants to prove himself and is determined to succeed and build a successful career. Rather than just doing a job, Rob has brought so much more to the table and as an organisation we have benefited from that.”**



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**Action for blind people**