



Seeing Opportunities: This is working for blind and partially sighted people

**Kelly Curran
RNIB Scotland**

What will we cover

- RNIB: who we are and what we do.
- The myths and reality of sight loss.
- Shocking statistics
- Barriers to employment
- Positive pathway to change
- Examples of how employment is working for blind and partially sighted people.

Aim of presentation

To give you a little insight into the reality of the experiences of blind and partially sighted people of working age, and consider ways in which we can work together to make positive change.

Who we are

- Leading charity working with blind and partially sighted people in Scotland offering information advice and support.
- Membership organisation.
- Campaigning for civil and welfare rights.
- Delivering vital services.
- Support blind and partially sighted people to live full and independent lives.

What we do

RNIB Scotland Employment and Learning Service

- Support blind and partially sighted people to find work.
- Assist employees with sight problems to continue in work.
- Help employers to achieve best practice in the recruitment and retention of blind and partially sighted people.

Icebreaker

**Consider one aspect of
your job that involves
sight**

Myths and reality of sight loss

- Blind people see nothing
- Blind people have special gifts
- All blind people read Braille
- Most blind people own guide dogs
- Blind people can't do normal jobs

Snapshot of sight loss and employment

- 2 million in the UK with a sight problem
- Majority in old age
- 38,366 registered in Scotland 7383 of working age - Registration major underestimation
- 1,144 in Edinburgh and the Lothians
- **Around 73% (about 3 in 4) of people with sight loss of working age are unemployed.**
- Compared to 55 per cent of disabled population and 15 times that of the general population.

Barriers to employment

- Employers misconceptions - 92 per cent believe it would be 'difficult' or 'impossible' to employ someone with sight loss.
- Unaware of access to work and JCP support
- Inaccessible job adverts and recruitment information
- Requirement for driving licence
- Lack of accessible interviews
- Lack of knowledge on possible adjustments.
- Confidence of job seekers.

See the 'ability', not just 'disability'

- Need to recognise people for what they can do, not for what they can't.
- Also need to embrace people's potential
- Blind people like anyone else require relevant training and support
- Sometimes this means specialist provision to provide accessible and inclusive training in technology and work preparation.

Sight loss does not = job loss

- Succeed in a diverse range of jobs.
- Work in virtually every employment field
 - hospitality, public sector, IT, financial, catering, broadcasting, agricultural, self employment, etc. Talents.
- Use a range of techniques to help them carry out their job roles.
- Diverse energies and talents
- Contribute to wealth and wellbeing of employer, family and society

What we are doing

- Aim to cut unemployment rate by 6 per cent and:
 - Help move 460 into work
 - Assist 300 people to retain work
 - 700 to learn new technology
- Edinburgh and Lothian 14 per cent

How are we doing this

- RNIB employment and learning Centre
- Work preparation course and work placements
- Pre-recruitment courses in partnership with JCP and employers
- Confidence building courses for clients
- Visual awareness training
- Employment consultancy services
- Providing workplace assessments.

How you can help us

We can't do this alone, we need your help!!!

- Changing environment for job seekers and contractors.
- No longer focus on specialist support
- Working together to provide accessible employment support provision
- Employment compacts – sharing employer contacts, resources and opportunities.

Action points from today

- Apply learning to workplace
- Focus on areas of change
- Consider what you have learned
- Selection of action points
- Meet with us for possible joint working

And finally...

Contacts

- Kelly Curran – kelly.curran@rnib.org.uk
- Nigel Townley – nigel.townley@rnib.org.uk
- Grace Spiers – grace.spiers@rnib.org.uk

0131 657 8209

And now....

**....Over to Barbara and
Fiona for their
perspective.**

Thank you!