

VICTA
Annual report
and accounts
2021



**A CLEAR SENSE OF
purpose**



EMPOWERING
BLIND
CHILDREN
YOUNG ADULTS

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A clear sense of purpose

There is no doubt that the last 20 months have been extraordinary, and the pandemic tested us in ways that could never have been anticipated. As with many organisations, while the level of disruption we endured has been more significant than anyone might have predicted or prepared for, we should also appreciate just how much we achieved. At VICTA, we remained focused on our purpose, adapted to new ways of working, and did more with less.

CHAIR'S REVIEW

pamela lewis



The defining backdrop to 2021 was undoubtedly the continuation of the pandemic. Another year of social and emotional upheaval. Another year of economic uncertainty. But we are emerging stronger, leaner and fitter. It has brought out the best in us.

I am extremely proud of the charity's achievements which are a testament not just to its strength and resilience but also to the tremendous commitment and creativity of the VICTA team. Part of our original vision for VICTA was a charity simple in concept but sufficiently agile to remain relevant and highly effective at what it does. That foresightedness has paid off this year.

However, it's not all about founding concepts. Our people have been magnificent. Even though the pandemic impacted every aspect of our work, I am delighted and thankful that our

team was still able to deliver such amazing outcomes. We have protected key capabilities, we have made appropriate use of our reserves, and we are able to budget for a significant increase in our charitable activity, applying further resources as necessary and appropriate in the coming year.

As ever, none of this could happen without our very calm and pragmatic Board; the determination of our staff who continued to adapt, innovate and persist with great creativity and energy and remained focused on our fundamental purpose; and

finally, of course, most importantly our many and varied supporters. This combination of a sound charitable model and great people had stood us well.

I believe that change and innovation can follow periods of crisis like this: change is synonymous with new ideas and new perspectives which can drive innovation and growth. It's fair to say that we've used the experience of the past 12 months as an opportunity to do just that: we have adapted, and we have evolved. We've harnessed new technology to make our work more accessible, enabling us to engage with many more young people and their families living with sight loss in the UK. Careful and considered decision-making in the past, together with the extraordinary support from our

community, has been a key factor in our success this year, enabling us to accelerate a number of key projects.

As we look forward to 2022, we have taken the time to look at our strategy and have explored how we can further increase our reach and impact while learning the lessons from the pandemic. All of which are rooted in the hopes and aspirations of the children, young adults and families we support.

This year has been about pulling together in response to the pandemic, to support those in need while making sure we're in a strong position to pursue our goals in an altered world once the crisis abates.

Pamela Lewis

Chair, Board of Trustees

CEO STATEMENT

nick schofield



While it would be easy to focus on the many challenges that the pandemic brought to our work this year, we also have an opportunity to learn from what worked well and to reflect on what worked less well. Indeed, our response to this unique situation was to think differently about how we could use our experience and expertise to meet ever changing needs.

I believe our resilience is a function of the dedication of our team and an ability to adapt at pace, remaining true to our values and the single-minded clarity of our mission.

Being people centred and purpose driven has never been more important to our charity. It runs through everything we do, from building an inclusive activities calendar to our move to hybrid working, from bespoke parent workshops to making responsible business choices. It is important that everyone at VICTA feels

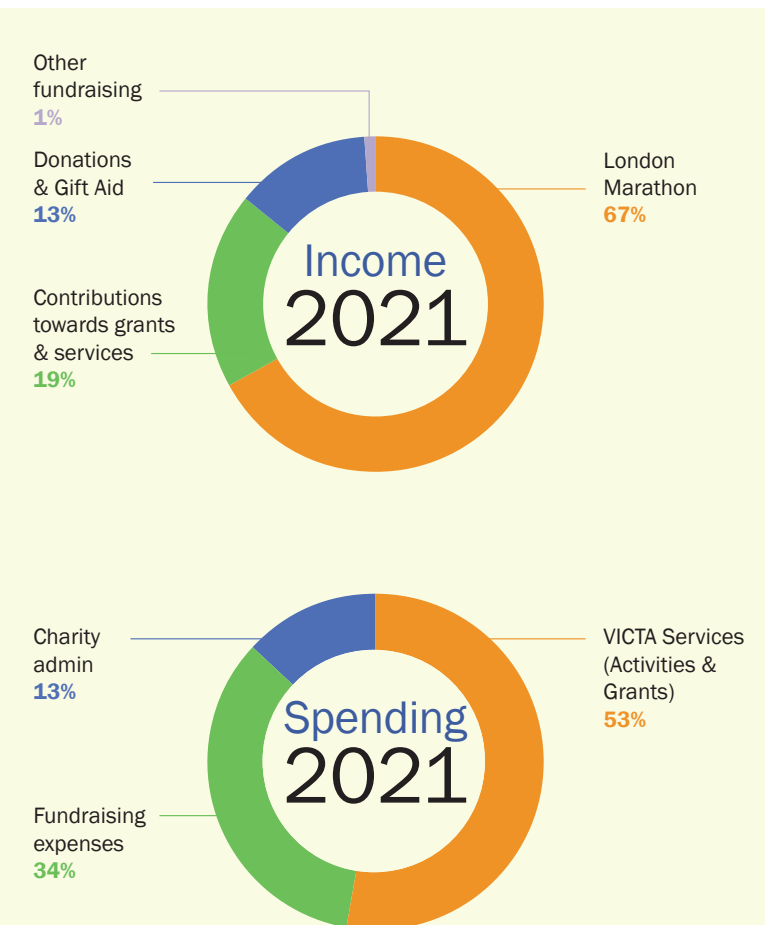
connected to our purpose through the ways we deliver for our young people, how we work with each other and our collaborators, and our impact on the wider VI community.

We are acutely aware of the impact of the pandemic on our families across the UK. The economic and social effects of the necessary lockdown measures have taken a heavy toll on children's education, mental health and wellbeing. For those living with sight loss the period has been particularly traumatic

and disruptive. We will always shape what we do and what we offer around empowering our young people and their families so that they feel more supported, in control and confident about their future.

We have already taken vital learning from recent months and begun building on it to make sure we are in the best possible place to meet the continuing uncertainty and challenges ahead. This means fully embracing technology to maximise the reach and effectiveness of our services. Indeed, the expansion of our digital capability has already proven to be hugely beneficial.

It was important for us that the quality of our online activities matched that of our in-person delivery and didn't reduce



our hard-won reputation for excellence. Virtual activities needed to foster the same social and personal development benefits as our face-to-face work. This resulted in different conversations and new collaborations with charities and organisations not in our sector, thereby strengthening our offer.

With support from the British Science Association, we developed the virtual VICTA Science Fair. From the very beginning, the goal was to make science, technology, engineering and maths fun and rewarding, and most importantly, make science appealing to young people. The Science Fair was designed around a raft of bite-size resources including fun challenges and experiments to do at home. We created opportunities to blend inquiry with authentic scientific endeavour and build self-efficacy. A belief in their own ability to complete tasks is critical for students to achieve equity and accessibility to advanced coursework and post-secondary schooling and careers.

For older age groups, the Science Fair offered them the chance to listen to inspiring Q&As with a host of different STEM professionals ranging from astronomers to oceanographers to video game designers. We found willing contributors from around the world. We deliberately connected with as many vision impaired professionals as possible in the hope that they would inspire our students. In explaining how they and their workplace have adapted to meet their accessibility needs, we wanted to build ambition for our VI young people.

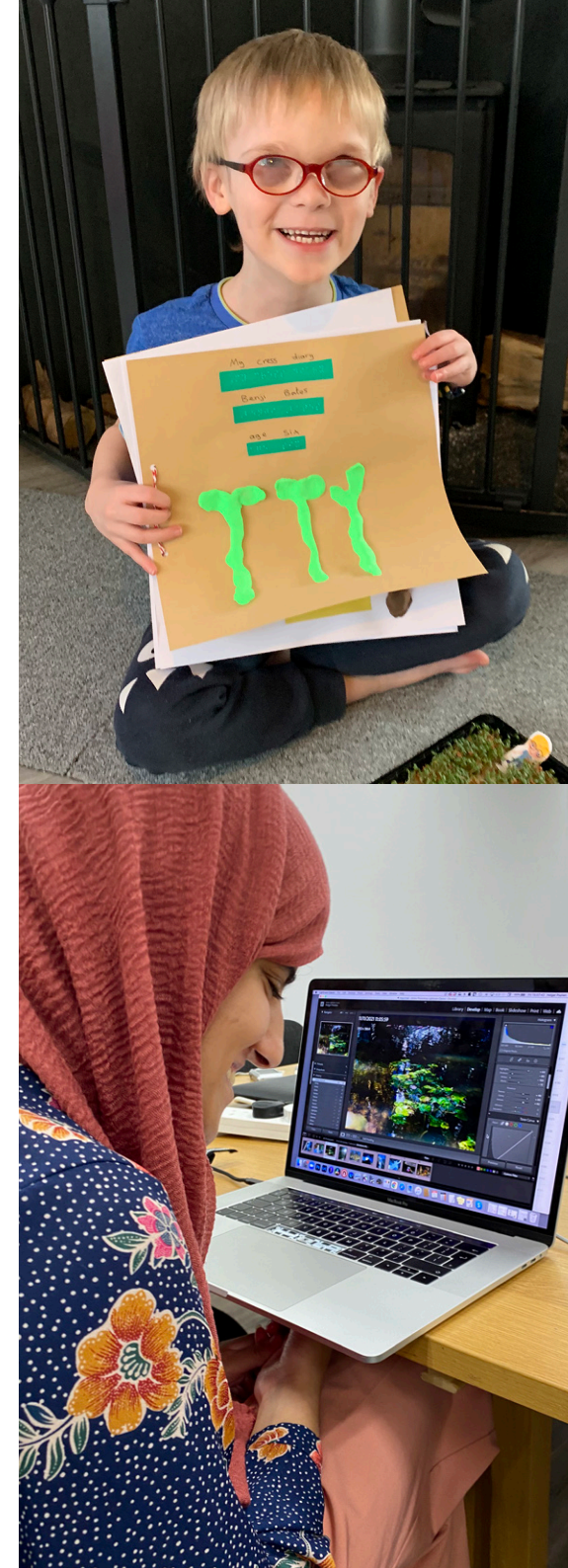
It is fair to say, that despite not delivering our usual outreach in 2021, we have attracted many new families, and connected with more visually impaired young people helping to empower their choices. The success of our digital transformation, designed to be both purposeful and sustainable, has led to a permanent change in our delivery model and as a result, we continue to extend our reach, building on our inclusiveness. Another key factor has been our prudent management before the

pandemic; our cash reserves ensured we could meet our financial obligations, manage risk and plan forward.

While the pandemic is a defining moment for us all, the true strength of VICTA continues to be our clear sense of purpose, the strength of our team, our young people, our families and our team of volunteers and supporters.

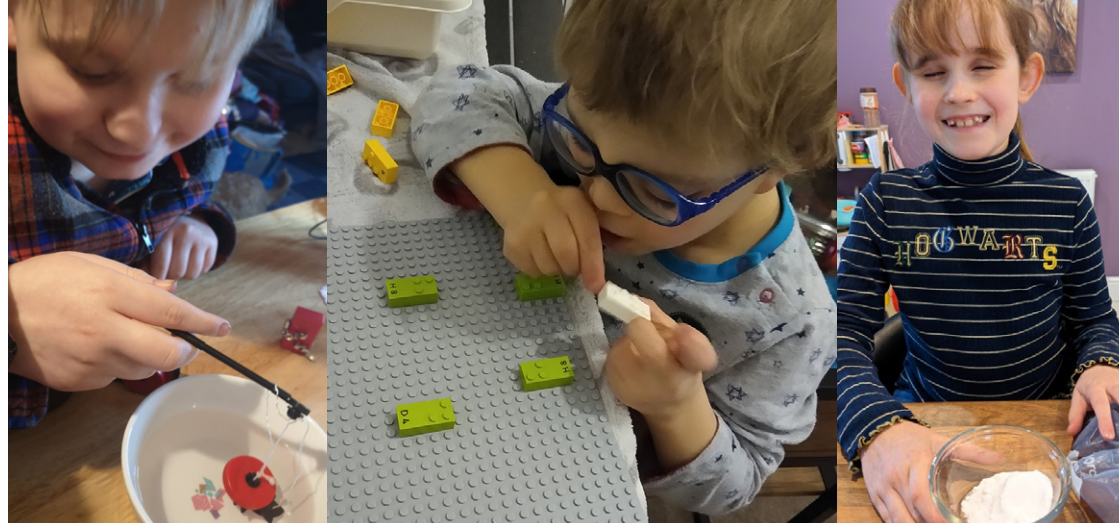
As much as 2021 has been about change, it has been about re-imagining what's possible and we remain focused on delivering against our objectives.

Nick Schofield
Chief Executive





LAUNCHING VICTA'S VIRTUAL science fair



In January 2021, VICTA launched its first virtual Science Fair. It was conceived to last for two months and culminate during British Science Week in March 2021. Science and STEM are known passions for many of our young people, where it goes beyond just a personal interest. For many, assistive technologies - screen readers on mobiles, smart speakers at home, talking microwaves - are key to increased independence.

The Science Fair was designed to engage and present opportunities for students of all ages. Under 10s could apply for free Braille LEGO sets to begin their engineering journeys. The Braille LEGO sets were kindly provided by the RNIB. Pleasingly, 61% of applications for these sets were from new families to the charity. And with demand was so high, we have since worked with the RNIB to deliver more sets to families.

Over 10s were challenged to submit entries taking on fun challenges and experiments such as making the worst smell, or the tallest freestanding tower. All challenges were deliberately designed to be low-cost, minimally

resourced tasks, often with items readily available around the house to encourage families and young people to take part. Students could also apply for magnet kits and cress growing sets, who were then encouraged to have a go at devising their own experiments at home.

For older age groups, the 'Amazing Futures' section of the Science Fair offered them the chance to listen to inspiring Q&As with a host of different science and STEM professionals ranging from astronomers to oceanographers to video game designers. We found willing contributors from around the world. We deliberately connected with as many vision-

impaired professionals as possible in the hope that they would inspire our students. In explaining how they and their workplace have adapted to meet their accessibility needs, we wanted to build ambition within our VI young people.

The importance of the virtual science fair was recognised by the science industry, with contributors including The Welding Institute, The Royal College of Pathologists and DOWiNO video games. As well as providing content, these contributors also provided credibility to the science fair, showing our families, young people and the wider VI sector

that our science activities were being recognised by STEM professionals.

In support of our work, The British Science Association, a charity and organisation committed to diversity and inclusion in science, awarded us a community grant. These are awarded to community groups that work with underrepresented groups in science. In recognition of the work done to make science accessible to young people with a vision impairment, we were also invited to write a blog for the BSA website: www.britishsociety.org/blog/victa-virtual-science-fair-2021-british-science-week

Moreover, our engagement with the science industry has in turn led to further opportunities for our families and young people. For example, we were approached by Winchester Science Centre

to invite families to the premiere of their VI friendly planetarium show. The event was exclusively for VICTA families and young people. Professor Nic Bonne from Portsmouth University, an astronomer with a vision impairment, was the lead consultant in the design of the show and also contributed a careers interview for the science fair. He has developed the 'Tactile Universe', a tactile model of the solar system for use by VI students to learn and discover space that he would like to trial with VICTA young people. The National Youth Agency produced a 'Geophysics in a Box' project for schools to engage with as entry level activities in geophysics. They asked us to trial a box with VI students so they could produce a more accessible version.

INTRODUCING parent workshops

A large-scale study undertaken by the NHS in July 2020, found that mental health issues among children had risen by 50% compared to three years earlier and confirmed fears about the impact of the pandemic and lockdown on young people.

The study reported that a staggering 'one in six children' (16%) of children aged five to 16 were identified as having a probable mental health disorder, increasing from one in nine (10.8%) in 2017. And the situation for young people with a vision impairment is worse.

Evidence from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (2008) suggests that people who are blind or partially sighted are two to three times more likely to be depressed than people who are not vision impaired. Significantly, a cross-sectional study in 2019 identified 'being

young' as a risk factor for increasing the chances of a blind or partially sighted person having depression. This confirmed the findings of the Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health who in 2018 presented research that showed how children aged between eight and 11 years old who live with a vision impairment are three times more likely to develop a mental health problem than children with no vision impairment. And a third of these children are at high risk of anxiety or mood disorders with around half showing difficulties in quality of life or adaptive behaviour.

In responding to these statistics and recognising that mental health in young people has a big impact in adulthood, we launched a series of virtual Parent Workshops in 2021

aimed at equipping parents with the knowledge and tools to support their children through the anxiety of forced lockdowns, remote study and increased isolation.

We launched our first virtual workshop during Children's Mental Health 2021 week which focussed on building resilience in children and adolescents. This was followed by workshops on:

- Anxiety
- Teenage brain development and behaviour
- Sibling support
- Instilling self-confidence/developing self-advocacy skills

PARENT WORKSHOPS continued

We partnered with Children's Mental Health Workshops to shape and deliver the first of our workshops. With over 30 years' experience of working with children, they have 'hands-on' knowledge of and engagement with primary mental health, play therapy, behaviour consultation and parent coaching. As such, they were ideally placed to lead these parent events. Our relationship with them continues to grow.

To ensure the workshop was meaningful and to allow for full engagement, it was delivered over two sessions. The first more formal was led by Children's Mental Health Workshops while the second, more informal session was hosted by VICTA a week later without any members of the Children's Mental Health Workshops team.

With time to digest and reflect on what was said during the formal presentation, parents joined the second session armed with questions, comments and points for further discussion. It also created a safe and controlled environment for parents to discuss some quite sensitive topics with people in similar circumstances.

In addition, we limited the total number of participants to 20. With such complex matters under discussion, it was important that every parent had the opportunity to question the session leaders as the workshop presentation was delivered.

It is fair to say that these sessions have generated huge interest and every workshop has been oversubscribed. As such, it is a shape we have adopted for all

Exceptional workshop, very informative and interesting to learn about brain science and have a different perspective on the teenage brain. I felt inspired to go into high schools to share knowledge.

It was brilliant!

It was lovely to chat to other parents/guardians and to hear what everyone's thoughts were, thank you.

our parent workshops and confirms the importance of digital platforms within our delivery model.

Encouraged by feedback from our parents, our plans for 2022 include more Parent Workshops with the following themes:

- Early years and acceptance
- Friendships, loneliness, and isolation
- Sensory Processing Disorder

It was good to share experiences with other parents in a similar position to myself.

victastudents.org.uk



achieve

Resources for students with a vision impairment all in one place.
Choose your age group and start unlocking your potential.

10 TO 13

I'm aged 10 to 13

14 TO 17

I'm aged 14 to 17

18 plus

I'm aged 18 plus

SECTOR FIRST VICTA student portal

In September 2021, we launched our Student Portal, a new, sector defining, online platform conceived to revolutionise the way students with sight loss achieve success and fulfil their potential.

The VICTA Student Portal has been designed to provide advice and guidance to vision impaired young people from the age of 10 through to 29 years old, covering key school and age transition phases. While the internet is a great source of information, finding the right information can be difficult, especially for those with sight loss. As a one stop hub of advice and information, we believe the Student Portal provides a solution to internet overload. We also hope it will address the severe lack of support for students with a vision impairment, that has led to a widening of the gap in the rate of employment compared to their sighted peers.

A paper released in April by VIEW, a charity and professional association for vision impairment education, showed that employment rates for blind and partially sighted young people aged 16-25 are lower than those of their age peers (25.6% vs 54.0%), and the difference is not accounted for by the higher proportion of vision impaired students in education.

The VICTA Student Portal was developed with the input of VICTA Young Ambassadors, students and specialist VI schools and colleges. One issue that consistently comes up is that of self-advocacy – students being stronger advocates for themselves

when faced with challenges in education or workplace settings. As a response to this, the portal has been designed with clearly defined pathways to help students with sight loss to inform their emotional wellbeing and take control of their educational and employment experiences.

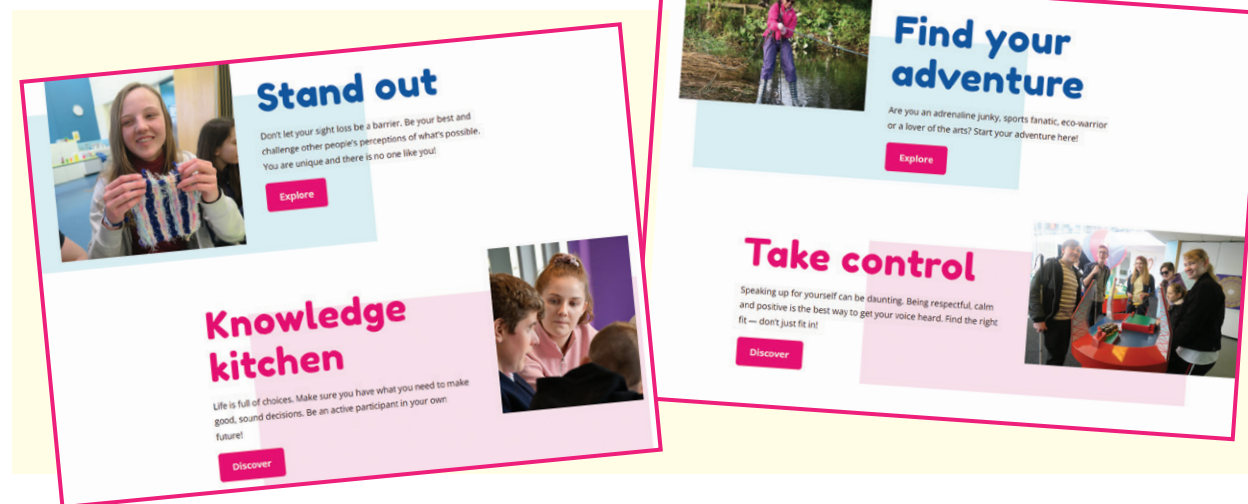
Each young person with sight loss can personalise their pathway using 'The Vault'. This password-

protected area of the portal allows participants to keep an online record of their achievements and skills development, as they build content for their future higher education applications or CVs.

For our young adults over 18, the portal is designed to steer them towards their next steps – whether this is connecting them to others, becoming their best advocate, taking personal time out, or

securing their first job, the portal is a good starting point.

A first in the sector, the portal provides information, guidance and signposting to feed ambition, strengthen self-advocacy, challenge personal limitations, inform emotional development, shape perceptions and create opportunity.



VICTA VIRTUAL wellbeing parent retreat

As the pandemic progressed, early studies by the Mental Health Foundation confirmed the negative effects of physical distancing, social isolation, and the economic consequences of lockdown on individual mental wellbeing. In thinking about our families, our response was to strengthen our Parent Portal with resources specifically targeting wellbeing.

We also wanted to help our parents connect with others who may be experiencing the same issues and challenges. As so, the VICTA Virtual Wellbeing Parent Retreat was born. Alongside practical advice and information to support mental health, there was a curated live ZOOM panel answering pre-submitted questions relating to wellbeing and parenting of a visually impaired child during lockdown.

In identifying appropriate content, we approached organisations

both within and outside the sector known for their expertise in wellbeing. By doing this, we strengthened existing relationships as well as created new partnerships in a way that wouldn't have ordinarily happened through our typical in-person activity delivery.

The live panel of professionals included:

- Laura Hughes – founder of Moorvision and parent. We have previously partnered with Moorvision on in-person activity

delivery however, we had not previously utilised Laura's vast sector knowledge with parents in this way.

- Karen Newell – co-founder of Toy Like Me and parent. Karen and her son have attended our activities as a family, but we were excited to tap into her professional lived experience as a developer of toys representing different disabilities.

- Lorna Payne – Blatchington Court Trust, Assistive Technology Trainer and Life Coach. It was great to work with Blatchington Court Trust in this way and give Lorna a platform to discuss trends in mental health and wellbeing that she has seen

through her coaching sessions.

- Claire Windmill – Family Practitioner RSBC. This was a wonderful opportunity to re-engage with RSBC and share how they support families who have children with a vision impairment.

- Elin Williams – Founder of My Blurred World. As a former VICTA Young Ambassador and named in the top 100 influential disabled people in 2018, Elin shared her personal experience of mental health and wellbeing struggles related to her vision impairment.



AMBASSADOR STORY BY HARRIET SMITH

my internship with VICTA

I decided to apply for the VICTA Young Ambassador programme because I wanted to have the opportunity to further develop my writing skills and increase my confidence in working within a team.



I also wanted to meet new people and improve my employment prospects. For my secondary education I attended New College Worcester (a boarding school for visually impaired people), then went on to study Creative Writing at the University of Gloucestershire where I gained a 2.1 degree. One of the main projects during the programme was to work on and design an online newsletter called Strive with a small group of young visually impaired people between the ages of 18 to 29 from across the country, and given my passion for writing and aforementioned degree, this was another reason it appealed to me.

Around the same time, VICTA also offered me a six-month internship which ran alongside the Young Ambassador programme which I was delighted to accept. When I first started, I was very nervous as I'd never done an internship before so didn't know what to expect, but I enjoyed meeting the other Young Ambassadors and soon settled into the team. I travelled to VICTA's office in Milton Keynes three days a week which helped me to establish a good working routine. Having not had much experience of working in an office previously, I enjoyed being part of the team and becoming familiar with office duties, such as attending regular meetings.

One of my roles during the internship was to co-ordinate the Young Ambassadors which involved reading, editing and sending back their articles for the Strive newsletter when they were ready. As well as this, I wrote a wide variety of articles for the VICTA website and social media channels, helping to raise awareness of the charity in general. One of my highlights was when I had the opportunity to interview BBC Radio 4 broadcaster Peter White who is blind. I researched and wrote the questions myself as well as transcribing his answers, all of which contributed to and developed my interview skills. Since my internship, I started a part-time job at Northamptonshire Association for the Blind (NAB), which is the local sight loss charity for the county where I live. I work one day a week for seven hours as a Communications Assistant which involves writing articles for the charity's website and social media channels. My internship with VICTA helped towards getting this job because I was able to

build on my team-working skills and similar qualities I learnt during my time there.

I would highly recommend an internship with VICTA to any future Young Ambassadors. It is a wonderful opportunity to learn new skills, increase confidence and meet new people. Also, it's a positive addition to add to your CV. I would like to thank everyone at VICTA for all the support they have given me so far.

AMBASSADOR STORY

BY RUQUAIYA ASIM my interning experience

Project Box is a company that assists students and graduates begin their early careers with world leading accountancy firms.



In my role, I helped with making the application and interview processes more accessible for visually impaired people. I did this by going through these processes as an applicant, during which I identified some aspects that could be improved to make them more accessible. Then I presented my findings to Project Box and their clients.

While I go through my internship experience, I want to highlight some key points that really helped me.

Networking

Networking is extremely important: you never know what opportunities are out there if you do not make good and strong connections with people. The more people who know you and your skills the better. It is these people that are more likely to let you know about possible roles you may be interested in, as well as different projects you may want

to be a part of. I was fortunate enough that VICTA recommended me for this role. Through my strong network with VICTA, I managed to gain this opportunity

Managing interview nerves

Before I got the role I had an interview, which I was really nervous about! I recommend going through practice interview questions with your family and friends. This helps immensely, as it makes you feel more prepared.

My interview experience

For this role, I had a phone interview. I was extremely anxious and nervous. Right before the phone rang, I remember running through several different interview questions and answers in my head. The thoughts just kept swirling around and I kept reliving all my practice questions.

The time came and my phone rang... I took a deep breath and picked up. We exchanged

greetings and I accidentally called the person the wrong name. I felt like I had died of embarrassment and that I had ruined my chances of getting this role from the get-go.

The person interviewing me was absolutely wonderful, and we carried on with the interview. It gradually got easier. However, I made a conscious effort to get the person's name right every time I said it. I still felt so embarrassed and truly thought that it wouldn't be possible for me to be hired.

At the time, even though I wasn't sure I would get the role, I was grateful to have had the interview experience. Being a student, it can be difficult to gain authentic interview experience to help for the future, so I found this one extremely informative!

Even after all of that, I managed to get the role. When I believed I wouldn't because I made a mistake in saying the wrong name.

But now I know it's normal, we all make mistakes and it just means we are all human. It also makes us relatable. If you are someone who has had a similar experience, I hope this made you feel less alone, because we're not the only ones who have had mishaps in interviews.

Advocating for yourself

It is really important, if you're a visually impaired person or have any other disability, that you understand your own needs and how things can be more accessible for you. Remember, just because a specific accommodation may work for someone else with the same disability, it doesn't necessarily mean it will work for you as well. Disability is a spectrum, and everyone has to have their individual needs met.

What I found works for me is asking for a phone call to specifically discuss my access

requirements. This is because I cannot assume they already know my needs and it also helps everyone involved to know they are making it as accessible as possible for me. Also having a phone call dedicated to accessibility needs is helpful, otherwise everything that has been said might be forgotten and mixed in with other meeting topics.

I had a great experience working with Project Box. Making the world a more accessible place and making sure there are equal opportunities for people with disabilities to be able to work is something I am very passionate about. I am extremely delighted to see that Project Box is taking a step in the right direction to make everything more inclusive. I am also very thankful to VICTA for recommending me for this role and being able to gain and enhance new skills during the internship.

AMBASSADOR STORY BY SAM ROBERTS

turn a blind eye

Hi, I'm Sam. I'm 27 years old and I live in North Wales.
On the 28th August 2020 I was declared legally blind.

Before we get to where I am now, we need to go back to February 2004. I was told I had Leukaemia, and had to undergo a bone marrow transplant (luckily my Mum was a match), as well as chemotherapy. After recovering from Leukaemia. On New Years Eve 2006 I collapsed in the bathroom at home and after being taken to hospital, the Doctors told my parents I had Meningitis. This, combined with the lasting effects of the Leukaemia treatment, irreparably damaged my lungs, taking the lung capacity down to 11%. This meant that, on 13th July 2007, I had to have a double lung transplant.

These treatments also damaged my eyes. I noticed first at around 16 my sight wasn't great but I didn't really think that much

about it, partly because I had other health issues to resolve. It was in my early 20's when I really noticed it was deteriorating. The treatments had caused my eyelashes to grow back inward, which scarred the surface of the corneas, leaving me with limited vision. I got by, although at times it was difficult to see small print, and I found bright light and glare blinding. At this point, I already had no vision in my left eye.

I was told by Professor Kay at Liverpool St. Paul's Hospital that I needed a cornea transplant on my right eye. I had that done in 2017, and it all seemed to be going well. 12 weeks later, it failed. I had an emergency second transplant to repair the damage. This was even better, and the vision appeared to be improving, and it was

the best I'd had in a long time. Unfortunately that failed too with another leak, and needed a third transplant to save my eye. Fast forward a few years, and we're seven transplants down, and after a serious infection, I lost the sight in my right eye, as the infection detached the retina. Professor Kay worked hard to save the eye, but was unable to save the vision. Throughout all of this, the hospital have been incredible, and I can't thank them enough for all they've done, and continue to do. On 28th August 2020, I was declared legally blind.

Accepting the news

Accepting my disability was certainly a massive role in adapting to my new life being visually impaired. For me acceptance isn't something that just happens over night, everybody will be different and it might take some people longer than others. I wish I could tell you



the moment I fully accepted losing my sight but I can't, it happened gradually day by day.

The same day I was told by the doctors I'd lost my sight and there was nothing else they could do was the day I accepted what had happened and had to start to make adjustments. Up to that point, I had been through seven cornea transplants and multiple operations, and I was still trying to be positive and clinging on to the hope that some sort of vision could be saved. If I'm completely honest it was tiring, both mentally and physically. My whole life had completely changed in that one moment and looking back now I can honestly say it's changed for the better.

Making Changes

I was prepared straight away for the need to change and adapt big parts of my life, and I did worry about how I'd do a lot of the

things I enjoyed, like how would I cook, how I could get back to work and how I would be able to look after myself. I think what helped me quickly accept my situation and make the changes I had to make was my mindset. I tried to stay positive and rather than see them as stumbling blocks, I saw them as challenges I was prepared to face. I set myself goals every day – there was no way I could do these things all at once, so breaking them down into daily goals really helped. I didn't see anything as something I couldn't do, just something I'd have to relearn. Using a boiling kettle again, finding my way around the house and even using my phone were all challenges I set myself early on. Obviously, there were a few mishaps on the way, but through perseverance and a positive mindset, I found that I was able to adapt fairly quickly. These things are now second nature to me.



Another worry of mine was how my family and friends would react to the news. I worried about how they would respond, but more importantly I didn't want them to look at me any differently. I'm no different than I was before being declared blind, I just now have an excuse for being messy.

I made a point early on to 'own' my disability, and I think that certainly helped with how others saw me. I had no intention of letting this news stop me doing anything, and by carrying on exactly as I had before, everyone seemed to carry on in the same way too.

Losing my sight inspired me to act upon things I had previously

thought about, and actually do them. I'd had thoughts of going skiing, climbing and hiking before being declared blind, but actually being given that news has given me the drive to do them. I've since booked a skiing holiday, learned how to play golf, rock climb and kayak, and I've also just booked on to a skydive.

I'm sure that, for example, when a blind guy phones up to book a rock climbing session, people aren't sure what to do, and that's only natural – it's as new to me as it is to them. However, throughout all the things I've booked to do so far, and the people I've dealt with, the response has been really positive. I think what's helped with

that is confidence – I'm confident on the phone, confident when I get there, and confident in my ability. I also feel like I'm there to prove them wrong, and show everyone what a visually impaired person can do. I'm the first to try and do the hardest wall at the rock climb or the most difficult course at the golf club. I'm not there for people to look at me and think 'that's nice for him', I'm there to give it everything I've got. Perception is everything, and I think people have a stereotypical view of what a visually impaired person can do – or any disability for that matter – and what they'll be like, and it's up to us to change that.

Always being better

I try and live my life by always being better every day, and I'm always setting little challenges or goals to achieve, or big goals, like a kayaking trip or a sky dive. One of the next big challenges I have though is cane training. If I'm being honest, this is something I'm apprehensive about starting, but I also realise

this is something I have to do, and want to do, to help me become more independent. I was asked by a friend a while ago about whether I'd consider using a cane, and if I'm honest, I shut that conversation down quickly – I didn't want to talk about it. I don't think I was ready to talk about that yet, or acknowledge that having a cane was even something I'd need. But here we are, and as much as I'm nervous about it, I know I need to, and I want to. In a way, I'm quite excited about it, and seeing how much more independence it can give me. At the time of writing this, I'm just in the process of sorting out the training and I'm hoping it can start soon.

There's been a lot to adapt to over the last year, and a lot has changed, but it's still early days. I'm proud of what I've achieved so far and I have every intention of keeping that going, and I hope that what I've achieved so far can show that being declared blind isn't the negative it can be perceived to be. I'm a true believer

in that if you set your mind to something you want, you'll achieve it. It's all about your perspective, and remaining positive. Don't get me wrong, I completely understand what a massive blow news like this could be, but if you stay positive, set yourself small goals, and set about achieving them one at a time, you'll find that things aren't that different, they've just changed a bit.

I chose to document my story through Turn a Blind Eye on Facebook and Instagram. You can find me at www.facebook.com/turnablindeyepodcast where I post regular updates on what I've been up to, what challenges I've set myself and more. If you have any questions, head on over there and feel free to ask anything you like – I'm more than happy to help!



2021
financial
accounts

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

charity details

Key Staff and Trustees

Nick Schofield, Chief Executive

Pamela Lewis, Chair

Special responsibility for finance

Gurvinder Kaur, Trustee

Special responsibility for legal matters

Elizabeth Richards, Trustee

Special responsibility grants

Christian Sprenger, Trustee

Special responsibility for engagement, fundraising and marketing

Our Patrons

Michel Roux Jr

Michel Roux Jr took over the helm at the world famous Michelin starred Le Gavroche in 1991. Since then, Michel has won numerous awards for his cuisine and has continued to set the standard for classical French fine dining in London. Prior to Le Gavroche, Michel honed his skills working for master chefs in Paris, Lyon, Hong Kong and London, spending two years with Alain Chapel and cooking at the Elysee Palace for President Mitterrand.

Michel has also been a judge alongside Greg Wallace on Masterchef: The Professionals. Michel has been a great supporter of VICTA Children for many years, he continues to run in the London Marathon raising money to help us to provide our services.

Mardy Smith OBE

Mardy worked at New College Worcester (NCW), a residential school for students who are blind or partially sighted for 27 years, including the last 13 years as Principal. She retired at Christmas 2016 but maintains her commitment to ensuring young people who are blind or partially sighted have a wide range of opportunities and challenges. In addition to such experiences resulting in enjoyment and achievement, the positive impact on self-esteem and self-confidence is invaluable and Mardy is pleased to be able to support VICTA in their work with young people and their families.

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

charity details

Registered Charity Details

Registered Charity Name

VICTA Children Ltd

Charity Registration Number

1065029

Company Registration Number

03424608

Principal Office

Challenge House
Sherwood Drive
Milton Keynes
MK3 6DP

Auditors

MHA MacIntyre Hudson

Moorgate House
201 Silbury Boulevard
Milton Keynes
MK9 1LZ

Bankers

CAF Bank

25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hall
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

Metro Bank

44-46 Midsummer Arcade
Midsummer Boulevard
Milton Keynes
MK9 3BB

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

statement of financial activities

(Incorporating the income and expenditure account)

	(£)	Total Funds 2021 (£)	Total Funds 2020 (£)
INCOME			
Income from generating funds:			
Donations and legacies		27,289	27,300
Other trading activities			
Fundraising events	1,911		
Marathon runners	293,171		
Sundry income	83,695	378,777	140,574
Income from investments		62	613
Gift aid		29,017	3,769
TOTAL INCOME		435,145	172,256
EXPENDITURE			
Charitable activities	212,088		
Marathon fundraising costs	122,419		
Charity administration	53,522		
Other fund raising costs	11,793		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		399,822	350,374
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR		35,323	-178,118
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward		407,292	585,410
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		442,615	407,292

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

balance sheet

(Incorporating the income and expenditure account)

	(£)	Total Funds 2021 (£)	Total Funds 2020 (£)
FIXED ASSETS			
Office equipment and computers		8,037	11,346
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stocks	11,124		13,016
Marathon places carried over from 2020	142,520		141,160
Other debtors and prepayments	245,739		110,128
Cash at bank	593,880		682,205
	993,263		946,509
CREDITORS:			
Amounts falling due within one year			-
Cheque payments not yet cashed			-
Trade creditors	14,238		8,018
PAYE and social security	4,642		3,667
Marathon income received in advance for 2020	511,346		483,392
Other creditors including grants approved but not yet delivered	28,459		55,486
	558,685		550,563
NET CURRENT ASSETS		434,578	395,946
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		442,615	407,292
NET ASSETS		442,615	407,292
FUNDS			
Designated funds		324,700	42,604
General funds		117,915	364,688
		442,615	407,292

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime and were approved by the members of the committee and authorised for issue and were signed by Pamela Lewis on 16 June 2022 on behalf of the Charity.

The audited financial statements can be found on the VICTA website and are available on both the Companies House and Charity Commission web sites.



VICTA

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Sherwood Drive
Milton Keynes
MK3 6DP

01908 240831
victa.org.uk

VICTA Children Ltd. Charity No. 1065029.

 /VICTAUK  @VICTAUK



EMPOWERING
BLIND
CHILDREN
YOUNG ADULTS