

Vision Foundation (previously The Greater London Fund for the Blind)

Great Giving Award

Describe the work of the organisation being nominated

The Vision Foundation raises vital funds to support a wide range of services for people with sight loss – delivered at the local level by grantee charities. With around 200,000 people impacted by sight loss in London, the requests for specialist support assistance are growing. For many of these individuals, sight loss brings isolation, vulnerability and lack of independence. Vision Foundation, together with its grantees, is working to change this. Whether it is providing funding for sight tests in special schools, employment skills training for young adults or social clubs for isolated older people, the charity aims to improve lives by helping individuals overcome many of the challenges associated with sight loss. Additionally, the Vision Foundation works with partners to support work which prevents avoidable sight loss and creates systemic change.

What has the funder done to demonstrate a clear understanding of beneficiaries and the funding environment? Please be as specific as possible

The Vision Foundation is a forward thinking grant-maker that develops strong partnerships with grantees and people with lived experience. In the process of the Vision Foundation's recent strategy review, the charity consulted directly with grantee organisations and those who have sight loss to understand the challenges they face. As a result, the Vision Foundation has designed funding priorities that are clearly linked to supporting Londoners with sight loss to live life to the full and make our capital a global exemplar in providing for those with sensory and physical disabilities. As a grant-maker, the Vision Foundation is very open and demonstrates a keen interest in the work that they fund, frequently offering expertise and organisational support. This includes organising specialist fundraising workshops so grantees can increase their skills and effectiveness when approaching other grant-makers.

The Vision Foundation use their unique expertise and focus on supporting Londoners with sight loss to bring charities together in the delivery of programmes. For example, we had early stage discussions with the Vision Foundation about a new supported employment programme for people with learning disabilities, autism and sight loss. This led to us being connected with another regional organisation who were in the process of developing a similar project. As a result, we are now working in partnership to share resources and reach more beneficiaries.

How was the funder able to demonstrate an understanding of the grant-making application process? Was guidance clear and support given?

The Vision Foundation understands the fine balance between having the necessary information to make funding decisions and streamline the application process. We deeply value the opportunity to discuss our work and proposed approaches before making a full application. This gives us the chance to understand whether the Vision Foundation would be open to supporting particular streams of work. Ultimately, the opportunity to discuss our work and excellent guidance saves our time and organisational resources in compiling our funding approaches.

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