



2019 Impact Report



British Blind Sport

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"I have been supported massively by BBS and they have given me more opportunities than they know whilst giving me the opportunity to gain confidence in sport"



2019 Impact
Report

Executive Summary

The British Blind Sport (BBS) 2019 Impact Report sets out to review the objectives we set out and the achievements that were accomplished throughout 2019, in commitment to our membership and support for the Sport England strategy 'Towards an Active Nation'.

BBS is a membership organisation consisting of both children, young people and adults, the majority of whom (approx. 96%) are living with sight loss. Our remaining membership is made up of volunteers and supporters of the organisation.

The UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) Physical Activity Guidelines (2019) state that each week, adults should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity. BBS's own research indicates that people with a VI see transport, cost and lack of understanding on the behalf of coaches, teachers and gym staff as key barriers to them participating in sport.

It is reassuring to learn that, despite the barriers faced, according to our 2019 member's survey 78% of our members are meeting the CMO's guidelines. Sport generates inspiration, passion and excitement for all types of people regardless of age, gender or background. It challenges participants and brings a sense of purpose. In addition, it can help a VI person to develop spatial awareness, better orientation and higher fitness levels which can benefit their everyday life.

Previous research, alongside government strategy, supported BBS to set out key objectives for 2019 and beyond and consider how we can overcome specific barriers that a person with a VI may face on a regular basis when accessing sport and physical activity opportunities. Our key objectives are to:

Promote VI inclusivity across the sporting community for VI people

Grow participation and continue to develop new opportunities in sport and physical activity for VI people

Enable, encourage and educate deliverers of sport as to the needs of VI athletes, from grassroots opportunities, up to Paralympic standard

Chair and CEO Report

Being passionate about making a visible difference through sport remains at the heart of everything we do at British Blind Sport. As you read this report we hope you will be able to see the positive contribution the organisation makes to the lives of people living with sight loss.

Sport and physical activity can be the springboard towards a healthier lifestyle but can also develop confidence, create lasting friendships, increase social skills and provide a sense of well-being. We believe that everyone should have the right to participate in a sport or physical activity of their choice; regardless of ability or circumstance, and that our role is to be advocates for those that often feel marginalised and unable to speak for themselves.

We are a membership organisation supporting over 1200 members through a programme of events across the calendar. In addition, the very nature of our work is far reaching, supporting the programmes of Active Partnerships and National Governing Bodies of sport. We estimate that our work touches the lives of at least 4000 people per year.

We acknowledge that as a community, visually impaired people remain one of the two impairment groups that are least likely of all disabled people to participate in sport. We know that there is still a lot of work to do however, we continue to make new in-roads to lasting change. Membership numbers continue to increase as does participation figures, and our online presence and wider communications continues to strengthen.

Although we remain a small organisation, we recognise that our positive 'can do' attitude towards collaboration has enabled us to build strong alliances with key players within both the sport and third sectors that can achieve a bigger impact. Our Find a Guide programme in partnership with England Athletics has seen over 500 people train to be volunteer guide runners in 2019. Our partnership with the Thomas Pocklington Trust enabled funding support to conduct research exploring the physical development rates of children living with sight loss comparative to their sighted peers. This yearlong study will be published in 2021.

We hope that you enjoy reading this report. If you have any comments, suggestions or questions, please do not hesitate to contact either of us directly.



Alaina MacGregor
Chief Executive Officer



Sallie Barker
Chair of British Blind Sport

About the Charity

British Blind Sport was established in November 1975 under the name of BASRAB (British Association of Sports and Recreation Activities of the Blind) and was created to assist blind and partially sighted adults and children to access opportunities in sport and recreation.

Since its inception, British Blind Sport has assisted over 100,000 people with a visual impairment to access sport. Today, our vision is to empower all visually impaired people to get active and enjoy sport, whether it is taking their first steps or helping to secure talent pathways to encourage individuals to fulfil their potential.

British Blind Sport provides over 50 events every year across various sports that are set up and managed by our fantastic volunteers, including;



- A flagship annual youth event; the National Youth VI Swimming Gala



- Our Have A Go Day programme that has introduced over 1000 visually impaired adults and children to new sports as well as welcoming those back who were not regularly active



- A wide range of training and development events as well as competitions and tournaments across our sport sections



- Family Days for children living with sight loss and their families

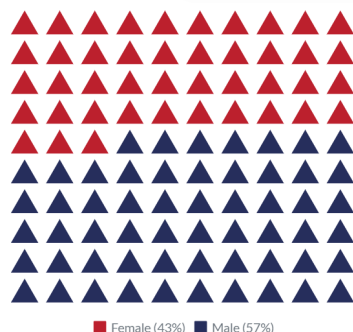


- See My Voice Youth Camps

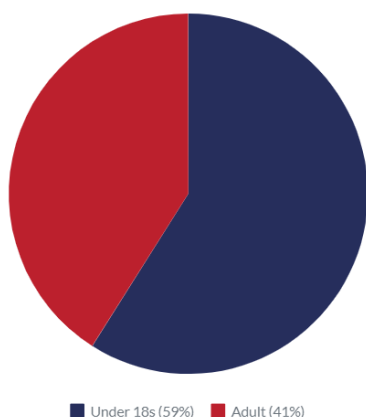
In addition, we offer a sight classification system across all sports for athletes with a VI to ensure fair and equal competition in the field of play. We have created a number of educational resources for teachers, coaches and parents to encourage inclusive sport. To date, over 9,000 resources have been sent to clubs, schools and organisations across the UK, as well as the introduction of the e-learning module in partnership with UK Coaching.

Membership Overview

1217
Members



356
New Members
260
Sight Classifications



Our membership reached 1217 by the end of 2019. We had 356 new members during the year. Our membership now has a significant number of under 18's, with 59% of the whole membership being U18 and 41% being adult members. Our gender split is 57% male, 43% female. During 2019, we handled 260 sight classifications for people across the whole of the UK.

The results of our member survey showed that 78% of our members were hitting the CMO recommended activity levels per month, the most participated in activities being swimming, walking and cricket.

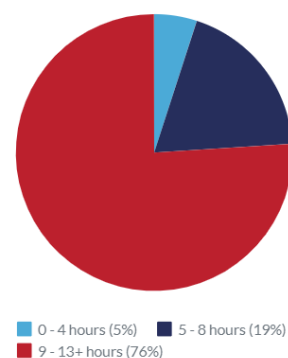
We found that almost half of our membership are willing to travel nationally or internationally to take part in sports events. The main three reasons members take part in physical activity is for: enjoyment, being healthy and feeling good.

The most attended events by BBS members were the National Youth Swimming Gala, followed by Have A Go Days and Sport Section events.

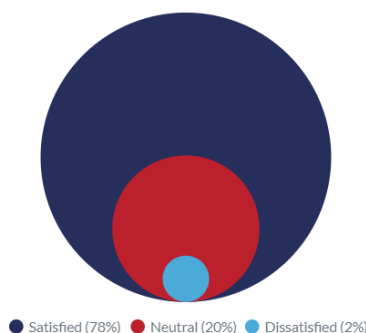
Top 3 reasons for taking part in physical activity:

Enjoyment
Being Healthy
Feeling Good

Monthly Participation Levels

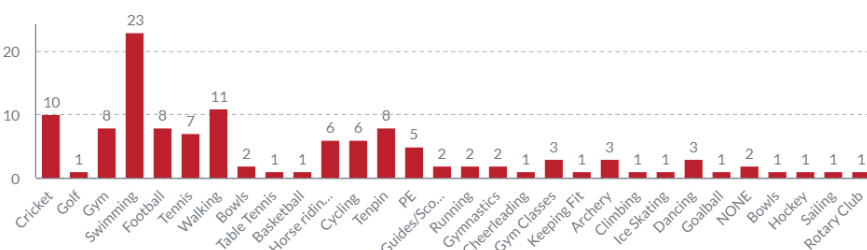


Satisfaction with BBS



Top 3 reasons for being a member:

Sight Classification
Attend BBS Activities
Sport Section Member



Emilio's story!

Emilio found his love for tennis at a British Blind Sport Have A Go Day in Cambridge – before that, he stayed away from sport as he didn't find anything accessible or inclusive.

This Have A Go Day was the start of a wonderful journey for Emilio. He was able to try tennis, goalball, cricket, guide running and more – as soon as he picked up the racket a change was visible in Emilio. His smile said it all!

After that day, he went on to be coached in tennis by one of the Have A Go Day coaches, until Emilio and his family relocated. Emilio continues to play tennis at Widnes Tennis Academy under a new coach, Bez. Although Bez isn't trained in the world of VI Tennis, he has done all he can to help Emilio progress and continue to play.



Seeing Emilio on the tennis court is enough to spark joy in any spectator. When he smashes the ball past his coach, the joy is evident in his smile. Emilio recently played against former professional tennis player Chris Bailey, who said he has a natural talent and is definitely one to watch!



This has given Emilio hope and confidence that he can achieve something great in the future.

If Emilio hadn't attended the Have A Go day event in Cambridge, Emilio's mother feels he would not be enjoying sport as he does and instead would be sat indoors, inactive and on his iPad. It gave him the confidence to try sports at his own pace and at a rate he feels comfortable.

Sport is incredibly important for Emilio as his brother and sister are both very sporty and he wanted to find his activities to enjoy and succeed in – and now he has.

Reach and Communications

7947
TWITTER
FOLLOWERS

3266
FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS

233
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

29135
**Website
users**

MOST VISITED PAGES

Events 

Classifications 

Play Sport 

Types of
Memberships 

Guide
Running 

Our online presence continues to strengthen, with 29,135 users visiting our website in 2019; an average of 2428 visitors each month. Our Twitter has seen a 8.7% increase in followers - our 2019 total followers being 7947 - whilst our Facebook boasts a huge 35% increase in followers to 3266. Our regular communication with members and a wider audience is well received.

We sent a total of 16,610 monthly e-newsletters throughout 2019, averaging out at 1348 recipients per newsletter, showing they are going further than merely our membership base. We average a 26% open rate on e-newsletters. Our bi-annual Vision magazine, which is exclusively for BBS members, is still most popularly received in print form, with over 50% of magazines distributed in this format. A quarter of all magazines are received in PDF version, whilst audio CDs and plain text numbers are falling.

16610
e-newsletters sent

4311
e- newsletter opens

2818
Vision Magazines

Vision Magazines by Type



● Print (56.78%) ● PDF (25.66%) ● Audio (12.63%) Plain Text (4.93%)

Projects Overview

British Blind Sport delivers a range of projects that aim to address the needs of visually impaired people in sport or physical activity.

Alongside the continued delivery of our Have A Go Days programme, BBS has also been funded to deliver 2 key projects that aim to support children and young people with a visual impairment with opportunities to both live an active lifestyle and develop leadership skills using sport as its platform.

Have A Go Days

A Have A Go Day is a multi-sport taster event provided by BBS and partners to enable people with a VI the opportunity to try a wide range of sports. 2019 saw BBS deliver 10 separate events, in various locations across the UK including; York, Birmingham, Belfast, Leicester, Wolverhampton, Norwich, Manchester, Southampton and Cambridge.



A variety of 18 different sports were delivered across 2019, our most regular sports including: goalball, VI football, tennis, guide running and cricket. The events welcomed over 220 participants, supported by 112 volunteers. The participants have a fairly equal gender split (51% male: 49% female) and ages ranged between 5 to over 80 years old! We had really positive feedback, 100% of participants who gave feedback had fun, felt safe and would return to a similar event in the future.



100%

Had fun at the event



100%

Felt safe at the event



100%

Would come again

Projects Overview



2019 Impact Report

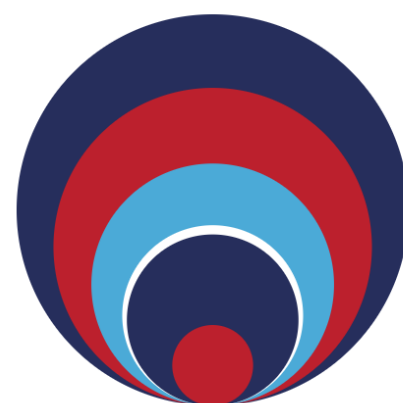
First Steps

BBS set up the First Steps project with an aim to improve the health and fitness of children with a visual impairment by encouraging an active lifestyle.



Since launching First Steps North West and Midlands in March 2019, BBS has engaged with a total of 120 families all of which have received the First Steps pack and ongoing support from the First Steps Coordinator. The map to the left identifies where the families are located, this includes 30 families from outside the target regions, as agreed with the funder.

The project has been incredibly well received by all of the families who have taken part. The families were predominantly recruited through BBS engaging with Children and Young People Services across local authorities, in particular the sensory teams. Alongside this, families had also heard about First Steps through Guide Dogs, RNIB and directly via BBS communications.



88%

have improved their kicking skills



76%

have improved their throwing skills



76%

have improved their catching skills



64%

have improved coordination



52%

have improved balance



76%

of parents believe their overall phys

Throughout the project we collect data, which enables us to monitor the confidence and competence of the child's physical skills at the start and end of their First Steps journey.

2019 saw the introduction of First Steps Family Days. Bringing together 23 of the First Steps families, enabling them to share positive experiences.

"My little one can now kick a ball, which he couldn't manage at the start of this project. He can now confidently throw the ball very well and if close enough, he can catch the ball. This is amazing progress for my little boy"

Projects Overview

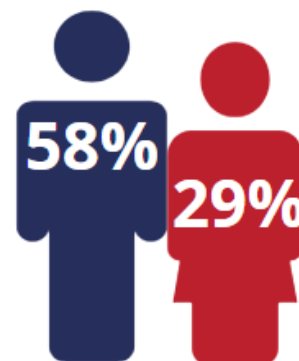
See My Voice

See My Voice is our volunteering programme for young leaders aged 10-20. In 2019, its second year, we have been able to reflect on things that we did well whilst also making improvements on the original delivery model. As part of the project, volunteering opportunities are sourced for young leaders, encouraging them to undertake meaningful experiences.

The project has recruited a total of 159 young leaders from various locations across the country. Young leaders have logged over 2350 voluntary hours in total, with an average of 25 hours per leader. A total of 74 young leaders were recruited in 2019.

The project has taken on learning improvements and made significant progress in 2019, including:

- changing development learning days into residential camps
- enhancing and creating new partnerships to generate more quality opportunities
- utilising broader partners in and outside the sector throughout the recruitment process
- offering more qualification opportunities to young leaders



By the end of 2019...



2350 hours logged



100+ host organisations



1000+ opportunities sourced

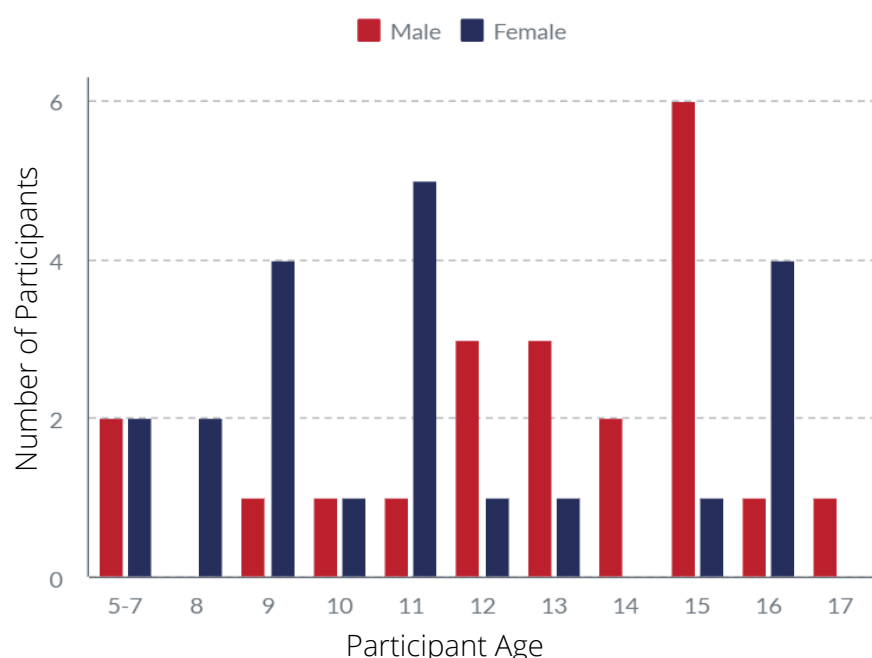
Coach Marshall
Captain Tournament volunteer
Coaching assistant Registration support
Costume designer Sports therapist Match Reporter
Commentator Social media
Equine helper Fundraiser
Official Sports leader
Marketing and promotion Match day volunteer
Vice-captain Event organiser Instructor
Photographer Campaigner

"The See My Voice programme has opened doors for us. I think we would have continued possibly on with what we were doing before. And not seen what was around us. It's given me new angles on things, both sports and our lives."

Projects Overview

Swimming Gala

The annual BBS National Swimming Gala took place on Saturday 31st March at the University of Birmingham Sport and Fitness club. 38 visually impaired participants took part ages 7-17 years old and 1 to 1 lessons were offered to those 5-7 years old, which was taken up by 6 individuals. Races took place in all individual strokes as well as relays.



Participant feedback tells us that swimmers felt the atmosphere was both exciting and inclusive. They also mentioned that staff and volunteers were 'friendly' and 'welcoming'. 100% of participants who completed the feedback forms said they had fun, they felt safe, and they would come again to a future swimming gala.



100%

Had fun at the event



100%

Felt safe at the event



100%

Would come again

"We all had a lovely afternoon. Thank you. Very well organised and super medals. We'll be back every year!"



BBS Sport Sections

As part of an individual's membership with British Blind Sport (BBS), members are eligible to play in any of our four sport sections; Archery, Cricket, Acoustic Shooting and Tenpin.



Archery

The BBS Archery Section holds its own Indoor Championships in April and Outdoor Championships in September each year. These events are held at Lilleshall National Sports and Conferencing Centre in Shropshire. Archers are also given the opportunity to take part in a series of winter performance archery coaching sessions at Stoke Mandeville Stadium.

In 2019, BBS Archery sent a team of archers to the World Archery Para Championships which took place in the Dutch City of S-Hertogenbosch, where they came home with gold and bronze in the VI 2/3. The Indoor Championships was delivered in April and hosted 13 competitors, the Outdoor Championships, in September, welcomed 14 competitors.



Cricket

The BBS Cricket Section works in partnership with Blind Cricket England & Wales (BCEW) & the England & Wales Cricket Board. This partnership delivers national, regional & international competitions for those who are blind or partially sighted.

There are currently 24 teams involved in BBS or BCEW competitions. 2019 was the most open year ever for blind cricket, with every competition or team award going to a different club. London Metro won the BBS Cup for a record 17th time, whilst Northants Steelbacks won the BCEW National League for the first time to become only the fifth team to win the National League title since it was first competed for in 1996.

BBS 2019 Indoor Champs



13 competitors

10 clubs

BBS 2019 Outdoor Champs



14 competitors

8 clubs



8

National
league
clubs

11

Regional
league
clubs

5

Development
clubs

BBS Sport Sections



2019 Impact Report



Acoustic Shooting

The BBS Acoustic Shooting Section works closely with the National Small-bore Rifle Association to deliver a number of opportunities for VI shooters. There are 30 centres in the UK set up to support shooting for people with a visual impairment.

The Winter 2018/19 League hosted 78 competitors across 2 leagues; a supported league and an unsupported league. The Summer League hosted 69 competitors across the 2 leagues. The VI British Shooting championship was held in March. 26 competitors shot in the supported division and 5 competitors shot in the 2 free standing divisions.

In October, visually impaired shooting was included in the World Shooting ParaSport Championships for the first time. Sadly, in March, BBS learnt of the sad passing of our Chairman, Ken Nash. Since its launch over 14 years ago, Ken set up and chaired the BBS shooting section, as well as organised the annual British Blind Shooting championships. A man of great stature both at BBS and within the shooting community.



Tenpin

The BBS Tenpin Section has a number of VI tenpin teams around the country, competing in leagues and tournaments or playing it as a hobby. The section continues to run two league competitions (Pairs and Trios) across the year, concluding in finals in November and May. In 2019, the Pairs league hosted 24 teams across 4 divisions and the Trios league had 21 teams competing across 3 divisions.

This section is planning a future project aimed to encourage more members to join the section and will be contacting clubs and societies throughout the UK with a view to them becoming members. This project aims to bring new participants to sport, providing fresh ideas for the committee to take forward.

Summer League 2019



69 total competitors
13 total divisions

Winter League 2019



78 total competitors
16 total divisions

VI British Shooting Championships 2019



31 total competitors

Tenpin Pairs League 2019



24 teams
4 divisions

Tenpin Trios League 2019



21 teams
3 divisions

Partnerships Overview

The Sensory Alliance is a collaborative partnership involving BBS, UK Deaf Sport and Sense. For 2019, the alliance set out 3 main objectives; to conduct research around accessibility of leisure centres for people with sensory impairments, to work in partnership with Oomph regarding the development of training materials for care workers supporting older people with sensory impairments, and working in partnership with British Gymnastics to develop an e-learning course; 'Inclusive Coaching for Gymnasts with Sensory Impairments'.

In 2019, we received funding from Thomas Pocklington Trust to conduct research exploring the physical development rates of children with sight loss in comparison

to their sighted peers and explore the reasons behind any differences. This research will be conducted by UCLAN and delivered across 2020.



200+
TOTAL partners engaged

52
2019 new partners



NGBs
29



SLAs
15



Forums
126



Events
21

BBS continue to maintain established partnerships with organisations in the sport and sight loss sector including but not limited to; RNIB, Guide Dogs, and Active Partnerships. In particular, we strengthened our relationship with RNIB by regularly featuring and sharing information with RNIB Connect radio.

England Athletics Find a Guide

In partnership with BBS, England Athletics developed a training and licence scheme for runners wishing to become guides, alongside providing a national database of guide runners known as 'Find a Guide' to help visually impaired individuals search for and contact licensed Guide Runners. In order to join the database, individuals need to attend a 'Sight Loss and Guide Running Awareness Course' and be DBS checked.



24
Guide Running
courses delivered



1000+
Guide Runners on
Find a Guide
574 Guide Runners
inputted in 2019

In 2019, there were a total of 24 course delivered, with over 680 guide runners trained. Find a Guide now hosts over 1000 guide runners, with a total of 574 being added onto the database in 2019.

Partnerships

Overview



2019 Impact
Report

Coaching People with a Visual Impairment

Coaching People with VI is an e-learning developed in partnership with UK Coaching and launched 2018. The online course covers 6 modules providing quick tips and interactive information including how to guide, communicate, adapt sessions and engage people with a VI. Since its launch, over 140 learners have completed the e-learning course, with a total of 103 completed in 2019.

Our E-learning course won the Global Learning Technologies Award in 2019. With screen reader capability, the e-learning also helps coaches with VI to complete the online course independently, and it was this innovative technology which gave this course the edge to win the award. The development of this e-learning course in partnership with UK Coaching, has paved the way for an increase in accessible learning across the wider sport sector.

'Coaching People with a VI' E-learning course



140+

Learners completed the course

103

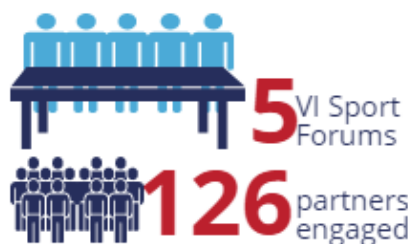
Learners in 2019

"A well prepared and detail e-learning course that really gives confidence to the coach be able to work jointly with a visual impaired person to help achieve their goals."

VI Sport Forums

Following the delivery of Have A Go Days, BBS look to set up local stakeholder forums where there is a need. The forums aim to improve access to VI sport and physical activity in the local area. Throughout 2019, VI forums have been maintained in London, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham and a new forum was set up in the West of England, independently chaired by Vision West of England with BBS support.

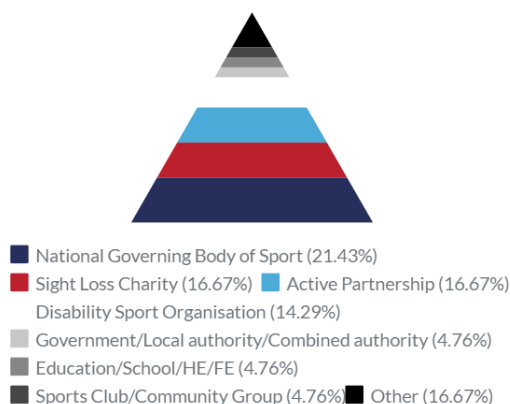
We have managed to engage a total of 126 partners across the 5 forums. In 2019 the forums provided a total of 12 new opportunities for our service users, including Have A Go Day events and new VI sporting clubs.



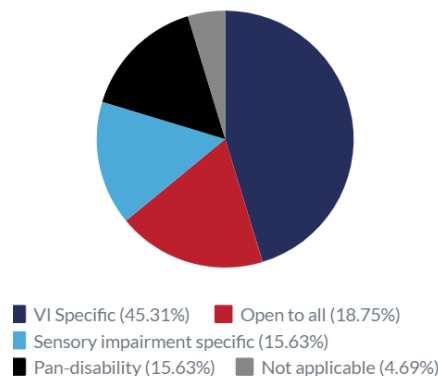
Partner Survey Results

We undertook a Partner Survey in January 2020 to reflect on our relationships throughout 2019. We had a total of 42 responses, 21% of which came from National Governing Bodies (NGBs), followed by sight loss charities and Active Partnerships, representing 16% each respectively. We asked which opportunities we helped organisations to develop; the overwhelming response was VI Specific with 45% of the responses. This was followed by Sensory Specific and Pan-Disability with 15% of responses.

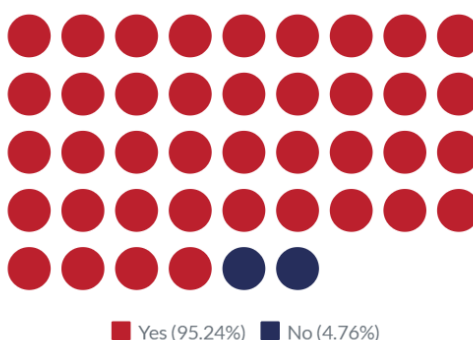
Types of Organisations



Activities and Opportunities BBS help Partners develop

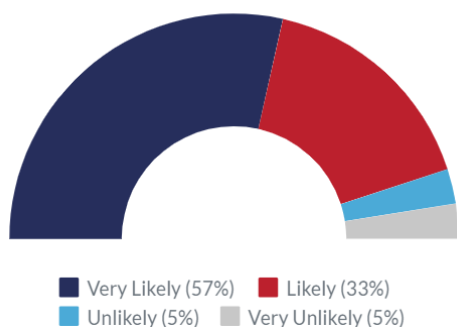


Do you intend to work in partnership with British Blind Sport during 2020?



"BBS help us better understand the VI community through their insight and research."

How likely is it that you would recommend British Blind Sport to a friend or colleague?

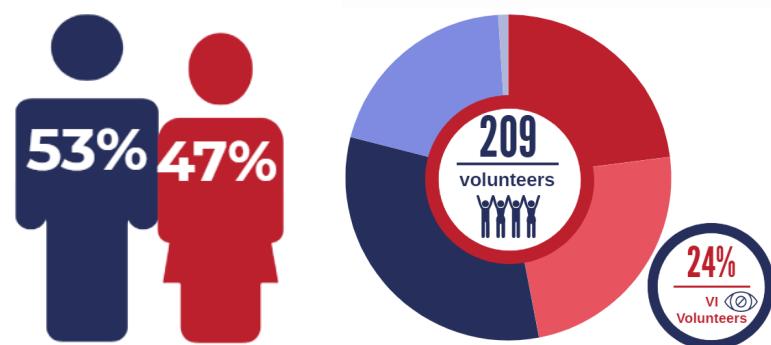


We asked partners if they intended to work with BBS again and over 95% replied "Yes". We also asked if partners would recommend BBS to a friend or colleague; 90% were likely to recommend us.

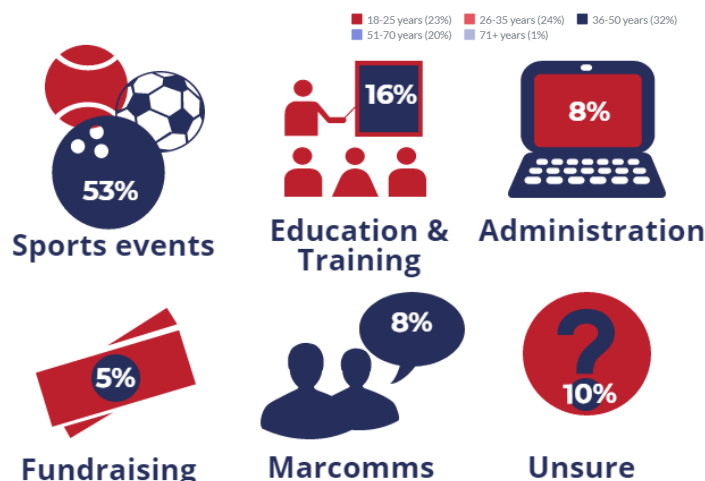
To the statement "The members of staff I work with are able to make clear and informed decisions", over 85% replied well or very well. Over 75% also agreed with the statement "The relationship is mutually beneficial and the objectives of both parties are met". Regarding our person-centric services, over 75% agreed that "Agreed solutions and interventions are person centred and visually impaired people are at the heart of all decisions".

"British Blind Sport (BBS) helps us to reach & provide opportunities for visually impaired people in Northamptonshire who we know are currently some of the least active in the county."

Volunteering



Around 5.5 million people volunteer in sport across the UK. Volunteers continue to be the lifeblood of our organisation with over 100 people volunteering for BBS each year, alongside the guide running database of over 1000 guides. Our volunteers include trustees, guide runners, sport section members, coaches, event staff, support staff and fundraisers.



At the start of 2019 BBS conducted a cleanse of our volunteer database and launched a new, more secure database for our volunteers. We now have 209 volunteers registered on the database; 76 of those now regularly volunteer across various roles including: events, administration, and education and training. Of our registered volunteers, 24% of those are volunteers with a visual impairment.

In addition to our volunteer database, we recruit volunteers to support with the delivery of our Have A Go Day programme. Some of these volunteers are sourced through our database, whereas others are recruited through partnership organisations and local volunteer platforms. Throughout 2019, we engaged over 160 volunteers across our events.

At the end of each event, we ask our volunteers to complete a short event volunteer satisfaction survey in order to continuously monitor and evaluate our impact on volunteer's experiences.



"The event was well organised and very well run. Volunteers were well looked after and felt like valued members of the team!"



73%

Agreed or strongly agreed they had a good level of communication in advance of volunteering



82%

Agreed or strongly agreed they had a satisfactory amount of pre-event training



91%

Agreed or strongly agreed they had clear roles and responsibilities during the event



82%

Agreed or strongly agreed BBS staff were approachable during the event



91%

Are extremely satisfied with their volunteer experience



91%

Would volunteer again with BBS

Governance Review

BBS is governed by a Board of Trustees who support the organisation in a voluntary capacity. The board currently consists of 8 individuals who bring a range of skills and experience in supporting the organisation with governance decisions and maintaining effective strategic direction.

An annual review of board members is undertaken to ensure that the board is made up of individuals with the right balance of skills and experience to meet the needs of the organisation. These skills include marketing, finance, commercial, legal services, human resources and an understanding of VI and sport specialisms. During 2019 we undertook an independent 360 degree governance review, funded by Sport England. The evaluation identified some key strengths of our governance.

GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN

Board Effectiveness and Culture

1 Revisit Articles of Association

2 Broaden board knowledge of wider policy areas

Duties, responsibilities and compliance

3 Board Leadership

4 Strategic oversight

Structure, operations and meetings

5 Board composition and recruitment

6 Review subcommittee terms of reference

7 Agenda preparation

Following the review, a number of new processes were introduced to maximise board effectiveness and transparency. We undertook a renewal of commitment from the board and conducted a skills gap analysis, leading to a vigorous recruitment programme. An action plan was developed providing principal recommendations for the BBS trustees to consider. BBS plans to implement the actions over a period of 12 - 18 months, working methodically through to completion.

BBS also undertook a review of its Articles of Association to ensure the organisation complies with the new Governance Code for Sport and to take account of the findings from our independent Governance Review.

<https://britishblindsport.org.uk/governance-statement>



Thank you!



2019 Impact
Report

Our sincere thanks go to the individuals and organisations who so generously supported our work in 2019.

Here are some of our highlights:

- **Challenge Events:** The Virgin Money London Marathon, 10 runners ran as 'Team BBS' and raised over £20,000, we also had runners in the Chicago Marathon, Paris Marathon and Cambridge Half Marathon.
- **Skydiving:** our first-ever team of skydivers, 'Flying Blind', led by Ibraheem Iqbal, raised over £3200.
- **The Pacific Crest Trail Trek** saw Dave Glover take on this 2650 mile route solo from Mexico to Canada to raise funds in honour of his nephews.
- **The BBS Christmas Appeal** with The Big Give raised a record-breaking £7,332! Supporters included individuals and community groups together with organisations; The Wright Hassall Charitable Trust, United Fresh, O'Brien Contractors and Emerald IT.

Support from **Trusts and Foundations** included: BBC Children In Need, The Garfield Weston Foundation, The Torch Trophy Trust, The Primary Club, The Thomas Pocklington Trust, The Worshipful Company of Fletchers, Westfield Health, The 29th May Charitable Trust and Barbara Ward Children's Foundation.



Conclusion: Key Learning

Engagement

We have continued to support our service users through the delivery of core BBS activities and our ongoing communications programme through our website, social media, e-newsletter and membership magazine. Our website has connected over 29,000 users to our pages, with the most popular being our events, classifications and guide running pages. Our social media channels have continued to enable a vital platform for raising awareness of the charity and informing our followers of services and opportunities available.

Services

Being a membership organisation enables us to evaluate and improve year on year. It's reassuring to learn that whilst a large number of our members renew annually, we're still bringing in new members to the charity. We will continue to offer our recreational sight classification to our members, with over 260 being produced in 2019; sight classifications remain one of the top reasons for being a BBS member. Our sport sections are paramount to keeping our membership so high, offering a number of events for our members to compete in. Insight from our 2019 member survey informs us that the sport sections are another key reason for being a member with BBS.

Education and training

Our education and training offer equips coaches and deliverers to be able to confidently engage people with a VI into their services. Feedback from our e-learning module 'Coaching People with a VI' has informed us how beneficial the training is to provide instructors with the confidence to support our service users. Our Sight Loss and Guide Running Awareness course in partnership with England Athletics is undeniably one of the most sought after training resources, selling out places at each one of the 24 courses delivered in 2019.

Partnerships and Awareness

BBS continues to engage with new partners year on year and welcome new opportunities for collaborative work. We have maintained our support with sport organisations in providing VI expertise and guidance to them as well as brokering valuable relationships with VI organisations. In 2019 we increased our focus on engaging with VI organisations, which has led to greater awareness and credibility of the charity within VI communities. We're proud of the overall positive feedback received in our 2019 partnership survey and will strive to achieve even more in 2020 and beyond.

Plans for 2020 and Beyond

Our strategy 'A Vision for 2020 and beyond' set out some ambitious objectives at the start of 2018. This impact report has reviewed 2019's commitments to our strategy and enables us to identify our plans for 2020 so that sport and physical activity for all visually impaired people is a realistic proposition. We aim to do this by continuing to develop **projects, partnerships** and **engagement** that maximise opportunities and capacity for all.

Please note: At the time of writing this report, we're in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis. As such, some of the original plans we set out at the start 2020 have become unattainable. This said, as an organisation we have addressed the challenge swiftly and have adapted our delivery model in order to continue to meet our objectives; to make sport and physical activity inclusive for people with a visual impairment.

Projects

We have been working with sport and physical activity deliverers to offer VI friendly audio led workouts enabling our service users to keep active from home. This brings people together, creating a sense of community and social interaction for individuals at immediate risk of isolation. Whilst initiated in response to the Covid-19 constraints, this project is enabling BBS to engage a new audience and therefore BBS plan to retain this service beyond the pandemic.

Our See My Voice programme was due to complete by the end of September 2020. After negotiation with Sport England as the funder, we have re-profiled the project to extend until December 2020. We're currently planning an Autumn conference to share learnings with partners in the sport and VI sector.

After piloting the First Steps project across a number of identified areas, BBS has been successful in receiving Children in Need funding to roll the project out nationwide. In response to the positive feedback of our audio workouts, we will be implementing a range of online workouts designed for young children using First Steps as a vehicle to engage families.

BBS have been working in partnership with Metro Blind Sport on a new project which aims to work with VI sport and activity providers to help them survive beyond the Covid-19 pandemic. We have sent out a survey to clubs to understand the challenges faced and are in the process of evaluating the results to determine the support that is most needed.

Plans for 2020 and Beyond

Partnerships

We will continue to support existing partners with identified collaborative opportunities whilst also seeking to work with new partners where opportunities are presented for increased participation.

Our work with the Sensory Alliance will continue to deliver on the leisure centre research to produce guidelines for leisure centres around including people with sensory impairments. In particular we will work together to assist the 'Return to Play' post-Covid plans, ensuring the needs of people living with sensory impairments are on the national agenda.

In partnership with Thomas Pocklington Trust and the University of Central Lancashire, BBS is currently undertaking research to investigate the physical development rates of children with sight loss compared to their sighted peers. The research will explore whether any link exists between a child's sight levels and physical health levels, including measuring motor skills, whilst also identifying the impact that reduced physical health or motor skills rates may have on a child's individual mental wellbeing.

Engagement and Participants

Our online Activity Finder was launched at the beginning of 2020. The BBS Activity Finder is an innovative way for blind and partially sighted people, family members and professionals to search for VI-friendly clubs and community groups across the United Kingdom. There are currently around 900 opportunities listed on the Activity Finder database across the UK, and we will continue to build on this through 2020 and beyond.

Finally, following a combined bid between BBS, UK Sport, Birmingham City Council, the University of Birmingham and Sport Birmingham, British Blind Sport and the city of Birmingham have been selected as the hosts of the 2023 IBSA World Games, a multi-sport event for blind and partially sighted athletes. The IBSA World Games are the largest high-level international event for athletes with visual impairments, with over 1000 competitors from more than 70 nations. BBS and our partners will be working hard over the next 3 years to plan and deliver this event. This event brings a welcome boost to the landscape of major events at a time when sport is facing unprecedented challenges and BBS is delighted to have been chosen to as the host of such a prestigious sporting occasion.

Reference List and Useful Resources

- [Sport England Towards and Active Nation Strategy](#)
- [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#)
- [BBS Overcoming Barriers to Participation Research](#)
- [Activity Alliance Research 'Delivering activity to disabled people: The workforce perception gap'](#)
- [BBS & UK Coaching 'Coaching People with a Visual Impairment'](#)
- [Run Together 'Find a Guide' Database](#)
- [BBS Online Activity Finder](#)

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