



Royal Society for Blind Children

Dear colleagues and friends,

"I just want my child to be safe, healthy and happy."

These are the words and aspirations of every parent, but they're particularly poignant when that child is blind or severely visually impaired.

The emotional protective shield which kicks in automatically upon diagnosis is a remarkable phenomenon, and something that's very evident in all the families we support here at The Royal Society for Blind Children.

We see ourselves as enablers; helping and supporting those families, gently and confidently, to dismantle some of that protective shield to allow their children to thrive and flourish without limits, and then mature to lead independent and fulfilling lives.

We do, however, recognise that we are operating in a world with many challenges. Global conflicts, an extended global economic crisis resulting in financial cutbacks particularly in healthcare and education and an increasing sense of concern about existential threats such as climate change are contributing to poor mental health and wellbeing. RSBC sees our children and young people as being at the centre of our charity and all we do. They are critical stakeholders, and we are here to ensure that they have the agency to curate the future, indeed their future, and be at the forefront of change.

With this in mind, I am particularly proud as Chair of this remarkable organisation that we have very recently welcomed representatives from our Youth Forum onto our Council of Trustees. Having young people with lived experience on our Board is vital in contributing to the strategy and leadership of the charity. Their presence is both inspirational and instructive for everyone on the Board: their views matter, and I firmly believe we make better decisions with them in the room.

Earlier this year, the Youth Forum launched their *Young People's Manifesto for Change*, featuring education, mental health and transport as key issues for blind and partially sighted young people – another example of the invaluable contribution they are making.

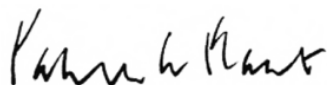
We know how important our channels of communication are in sharing our mission more widely through compelling storytelling. We will continue to develop them going forward, not least through our new website. In an ever-changing world, we also know that we need to do much more to raise RSBC's profile with both new and existing audiences.

Despite the numerous challenges, we are hugely optimistic about our future. We were thrilled when His Majesty King Charles confirmed his willingness to become our Patron; when we heard the news from Buckingham Palace, it felt like a wonderful boost for all that we do, but particularly for all those we support.

With your loyal support, we are committed to continuing our life-changing work and sharing many more positive outcomes.

Please do continue to support us.

With my very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Plant', written in a cursive style.

Patrick Plant
Chair of Trustees