

Spring Newsletter 2025

Discover how lives are changing because of you

- Thanks for being there at Christmas
- Find out how you gave Chase a day he'll never forget.
- See how you're transforming lives with tech.
- Discover how you can help solve the SEND Crisis.
- Meet one of our Young Ambassadors.
- Hear why mum Nicola thinks you're the best.
- How to have fun fundraising.
- Find out how to make your Will for free.
- Order our amazing braille greeting cards.

We knew we could count on you at Christmas

Last year, as we counted down to Christmas, we asked for your urgent help so blind and vision-impaired children like Jay could feel the magic of the festive season and receive life-changing support into 2025.

Your response was incredible! We received over 1,100 donations from amazing supporters like you. Your generosity will help provide an extra 791 essential support sessions for blind children and their families this year. These sessions can be the difference between a child like Jay being isolated and alone or living an independent life to the absolute full. Quite simply, they're a lifeline.

Jay's Family Practitioner, Jeanette, knows the difference your donations will make: "Huge thanks to Jay and his family for

sharing their story. Not only has it raised much-needed awareness about the impact of vision impairment on young people's lives, but because of all the kind donations, it will also help us support many more families across the UK."

Thank you for helping us bring hope, support, and opportunities to blind children and their families in 2024. We can't wait to transform more lives with you in 2025!

You're helping young people like Chase unlock their creativity

As one of our supporters, you're always helping young people to explore their creativity and pursue their passions. Find out how a trip to the Roundhouse theatre in Camden made a huge impact on 18-year-old Chase.

The Roundhouse is known for pushing boundaries and creating unforgettable moments, serving up a mix of music, spoken word, theatre, and visual arts.

We arranged a special behind-the-scenes visit for some of our blind and vision-impaired young people so they could find out more about music creation. It gave them the chance to discover how the Roundhouse is making creative spaces more VI-friendly, and they had the opportunity to let their creativity flow.

18-year-old Chase, who loves music, had a particularly special experience. He was referred to RSBC in 2023, and it's been great to see how his self-confidence has improved since joining the first sessions. This trip was a real milestone.

Chase shared, "I'm enjoying learning how to DJ at the Roundhouse. I've made new friends, and it's fun."

It's only thanks to you that we can make these experiences a reality – thank you!

Thanks for transforming lives with technology

Technology can open up a whole new world for blind and vision-impaired young people, from enabling them to see better to helping them live independently. Thanks to your kindness, our incredible Assistive Technology Officer, Alex, is helping blind young people gain all the knowledge they need.

Alex teaches people how to use a wide range of devices such as smartphones, computers, and braille readers. He also offers practical advice on how everyday devices can be used to support vision-impaired people in areas such as travel, finances, wellbeing, and school.

To help more VI people access and understand technology, Alex has also created Tech Corner. This is a new range of webinars, which will help many more blind and vision-impaired young people, and their families, access Alex's expertise.

Alex ran 222 assistive tech sessions in 2024, empowering 164 VI young people. To read more about how RSBC is supporting young people with accessible technology, visit <https://www.rsbc.org.uk/accessible-technology/>.

Your support is helping to solve the SEND crisis

Children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) are finding it difficult to access

education and get the support they need. The system is in crisis and could result in a 'lost generation of children.'

RSBC welcomes the report by The Public Accounts Committee and the government's planned £1bn investment in SEND. However, while the solutions to the crisis are still under review, it's not yet clear what that £1bn will achieve.

But there is hope ahead. Dorton College, our independent specialist college for vision-impaired 16 to 25-year-olds, many of whom have additional needs, is shining a light on best practices and offering policymakers a new way of thinking about inclusive education.

Our young people then have the very best chance of succeeding and completing their courses, as they have the additional help they need.

Your support is helping us advocate and instigate change to make sure the system works for all SEND children. We'll keep you updated on our progress and how you can get involved.

Meet one of our Young Ambassadors

By supporting RSBC, you're making it possible for blind children to live a life without limits. Our Young Ambassadors are role models and mentors who lead by example. Find out more in our Q&A with inspiring Young Ambassador, Ewan, who is a keen goalball player.

Q: As a Young Ambassador, what has been your proudest moment?

A: I really enjoyed coming to the RSBC family fun day in December, speaking to the children, and hearing their experiences.

Q: What does being a Young Ambassador mean to you?

A: Representing vision-impaired people is so important to me. I want to show that we can make the world a better place for anyone who is blind or partially sighted.

Q: What have you learned?

A: I've learned to be confident in public. I make audio clips to help with this and recorded one for Disability Pride Day last year, sharing my thoughts on why the day matters. It was a proud moment.

Q: What are your goals as a Young Ambassador for 2025?

A: I would like to create more content for RSBC's website and social media, sharing all the ways my vision impairment impacts me – the ups and the downs, but mostly ups!

Mum Nicola thinks you're the best

We'd like to share the story of mum Nicola and her super seven-year-old George. They both have Axenfeld-Rieger Syndrome (ARS), a rare genetic disorder that affects the development of the front part of the eye. Here, Nicola tells you why they have so much to thank you for.

"George was born with cloudy corneas. When he was only a few months old, he underwent surgery to have corneal transplants. Unfortunately, one of the transplants failed before he turned two. George is now registered as severely vision-impaired and uses a long cane.

"Despite the challenges he faced, George thrived and was a happy toddler. But, as he got a bit older, he struggled to understand why he did things differently from his friends. It was hard when he worked at a different pace at school and needed

help to go to the toilet. He became anxious, and that's when I realised we needed help.

"Thanks to your support, RSBC was able to give us that help. Our Family Practitioner, Jeanette, quickly connected with George, helping him to be confident about his differences, talk openly about his feelings, and manage his anxiety."

It's only thanks to supporters like you that we're able to reach children like George and provide the vital support they need to thrive.

Leave a lasting legacy

Gifts in Wills are essential to RSBC's services, funding around a third of the support we provide each year. Without legacy gifts, we simply wouldn't be able to transform as many lives. By leaving a gift in your Will, you could help future generations of blind children live a life without limits.

We've partnered with the National Free Wills Network to offer you the opportunity to create your Will for free with a solicitor near you.

How to register for your free Will:

1. Scan the QR code or visit rsbc.org.uk/gift-in-wills and fill out a short form.
2. We'll pass your details to the National Free Wills Network.
3. They'll send you a list of participating solicitors in your area.
4. Pick your solicitor and book an appointment.

For more information, please email giftsinwills@rsbc.org.uk.

Have fun fundraising

Run for RSBC. Join us for the Great Birmingham Run on 4 May 2025 or the Great Manchester Run on 18 May 2025!

Every stride you take will help provide crucial support and opportunities for blind children, young people, and their families.

To find out more, contact matthew.limb@rsbc.org.uk.

Play to Make a Difference

Everyone's a winner when you play the RSBC Lottery!

For just £1 a week, you'll be in with the chance to win an incredible £25,000!

It really is a win-win—as you play, you'll help give blind children, young people, and their families the skills and confidence to live life without limits.

To find out more and get your tickets, visit rsbc.org.uk/lottery.

Order Your RSBC Braille Greeting Cards

Each set features four unique designs and the words 'Life Without Limits' in braille.

These cards are suitable for any occasion and make a meaningful gift for someone who reads braille—or anyone interested in learning it.

We ask for a suggested donation of £4, which helps us continue providing vital support to blind and vision-impaired children and their families.

To order your pack of cards phone us on 020 3198 0225 (9am–5pm Mon–Fri) to make your donation and arrange delivery. We'll then send your cards to your home address.