

BRITISH WIRELESS FOR THE BLIND FUND

KEEPING BLIND PEOPLE IN
TOUCH WITH THE WORLD

Dedicated to reducing isolation within the blind community

**"My radio is my
link to the outside
world and your
service has been
invaluable"**

William
Middlemass

**"It keeps me up
to date on
everything and
stops me from
feeling isolated."**

Mrs Dorothy
Callan

**"I would be
lost without it.
It's company
for me as I'm
on my own"**

Mrs Joan
Fenning

**"My radio gives
me company.
It helps to stop
sadness, isolation
and loneliness"**

Mr Hewitt

**ALSO
AVAILABLE
IN OTHER
FORMATS**



Foreword

Margaret Grainger
CEO



Welcome to the 2018 British Wireless for the Blind Fund Impact Report.

As I reflect on 2018 I feel so honoured to be part of the British Wireless for the Blind Fund. Our 90th birthday year was incredibly poignant and I hope this Impact Report shares with you the positive difference our charity has on the lives of so many visually impaired people across the UK – a difference that is only made possible thanks to our ongoing partnerships and wonderful supporters who have remained integral to our success over the years.

“The radio provides me with entertainment and education in my daily life. It staves off loneliness and I’ve been using the service for 20 years so far.” Susan Hughes

Last year our work continued to be driven by the needs of our family of beneficiaries. We took on board suggestions to improve our accessible online content, launched a new more user-friendly website and, most importantly, added a new radio to our range – the Opus. With Bluetooth audio

streaming from a smart device, USB recording and playback, this new set also has a large easy-to-read LCD display with zoom function. Coupled with its 10 one-touch radio station pre-sets and built-in battery charging it’s easy to understand why we have had such good feedback already!

And so, buoyed by the achievements of 2018 we commit to support more blind and visually impaired people than before - extending our reach to new areas, working harder than ever and taking you on that journey with us.

Once again I would like to extend my warmest thanks to everyone who has volunteered, donated, bought a Christmas card, worked with us or supported us. Our work is about you and for you.

Margaret Grainger

From our Chairman

Daniel Smith

Chairman of BWBF's
Board of Trustees



In 2018 we proudly celebrated our 90th year as the only charity in the UK supporting blind and partially sighted people with a specially designed free radio.

Our range of sets covers a variety of needs. They are easy to use and keep visually impaired people in touch with the outside world.

Thank you to everyone who helped us celebrate our milestone year. Whether you are one of our loyal donors or an organisation that we have recently connected with, we were so touched by your kind messages and well wishes. We look forward to sharing the next 90 years with you all.

We are currently supporting almost 30,000 visually impaired people across the UK with an innovative range of products. However, as we look to the future, we are keenly aware that we are not yet reaching all of those people who really do need our support.

With this in mind we have been focusing on a project which maps, in detail, potential beneficiaries across the UK; highlighting the areas where we suspect

our support is much needed, yet is still not being sought.

In the coming years, discovering and reaching out to these communities will bring us ever closer to our goal of ensuring that no one affected by sight loss is left feeling disconnected or isolated.

With the continued support of all our generous donors, committed partners and dedicated staff, I am certain we will get there. Together, we can achieve even greater things.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

WHAT WE DO

We are dedicated to raising awareness of the isolation experienced within the blind community; and how access to a radio can break down barriers with the outside world.

This has been at the heart of the charity for 90 years, providing a service that gives blind and partially sighted people a lifeline to everything that is going on in the world.

Our service provides radios on permanent free loan to registered or registerable blind people who receive a means tested benefit, ensuring we help those in the greatest need.

As the only service of its kind in the UK, every year we distribute over 2,700 radios to people with visual impairments.

“The radio is a window on the world. It is a means of communication when others are not there.” Mrs Linda Boyce

Receiving one of our specially adapted radios or audio devices can help alleviate the loneliness and depression that can so often affect day to day life when you have lost or are losing your sight.

For visually impaired or blind people feelings of separation from the wider community can often become overwhelming and may result in challenges with mental health.

“It’s like a friend who inspires, encourages and lifts me up when I’m down. I’m never isolated when I have BWBF.” Chinonye Linda Okoroji

There are 432,000 registered blind, severely sight impaired and partially sighted people across England alone. Therefore we know many more people could benefit from our support and we remain committed to reaching them.

BWBF is entirely reliant on grants and donations. We do not charge our recipients for any part of our service, nor do we receive fees or subsidies from the government or local authorities.

“It’s my lifeline to what’s going on in the outside world. Nobody has to read things to me. I just switch it on and listen and relax. I love my radio and would be lost without it.” Ray Peckett

Still going strong after nine decades it is only because of the generosity of our wonderful donors and supporters that we have been able to continue our vital service – a service we are dedicated to continuing for yet more decades to come.

The difference we make...

Jimmy Rimmington's British Wireless for the Blind Fund radio is the perfect match for his natural spirit of adventure.

Having travelled the world for his career, and served in the RAF for 6 years, Mr Rimmington's Concerto 2 radio allows him to connect with a wider world outside of his everyday life.

From news to culture to music to his favourite sport, Mr Rimmington says the radio makes 100% difference to his life today.

"It's fantastic – it's got Radio 4, Radio 5 Live, Radio Derby, Radio Nottinghamshire – it's got sport which I enjoy very much," he said.

"The TV isn't any good to me. This radio is my company. I have big earphones to help me concentrate and the buttons are tuned in for me already. It's marvellous."

Mr Rimmington, aged 90, has been supported by BWBF since 2008. Having started out with a DAB device, a move to Nottinghamshire saw him directed to British Wireless; a connection for which he says he is extremely grateful.

"Nobody knows how much people like me appreciate a radio because I'm totally blind, I'm partially deaf and my legs aren't very good," he said.

"I don't know what I'd do without it."

Mr Rimmington says he has had a wonderful life, and very much enjoys life with his wife and his dog. Now, he says his radio brings him even more



"I don't know what I'd do without it."

contentment and he especially enjoys the sense of independence and privacy – and even mischief - the Concerto 2 offers him.

"My wife's friends come over and they're all talking shop, and I'm not interested. So I can put my earphones on.

"Sometimes I burst out laughing – and they have no idea why!

"It's unbelievable the joy you get out of it."

Mr Rimmington says his life has been hugely improved since finding BWBF – from the volunteer support to the device itself.

He said: "Any time of day I've got a companion. I can always switch the radio on.

"I'd like to thank everyone involved. It makes a vast difference to life."

INTRODUCING THE OPUS

In December 2018 we launched our new flagship radio, the Opus, after months in development with our partner Roberts Radio.

The Opus is the latest in a collection of many radios that we have specifically designed and developed for blind and visually impaired people. We listened to feedback from our users and incorporated as many of the suggestions as we could. The result is a truly remarkable product with some incredible features.

- It is the only radio with a recordable USB feature in the world today, recording at 320kbps.
- It has internal battery charging capability and is extremely light and portable.
- Roberts Radio worked with a new parts manufacturer to develop Opus, which uses technology inspired by the Concerto 2 and Duet 2.
- It has Bluetooth capability to connect external devices and play the output on Opus.
- The raised buttons give ease of use for our visually impaired user.



The cost to distribute an Opus to a visually impaired individual is **£223**

Following the launch of the Opus, feedback has been really positive and we are getting interest from France and other European countries.

“The Opus is just amazing! I’m on my own a lot of the day. With this radio I’m not waiting for my daughter to come home – I can do it myself.

“There are so many features on the Opus I haven’t used yet – Bluetooth and the recordable USBs. I really feel like so much is possible.” Sean Redmond

All donations we receive allow us to help more people like Sean feel independent and connected to the wider world.

Last year was another successful year for BWBF. Across the UK we issued 2,712 sets to blind people, furthering our impact on reducing loneliness.

"I am 100 years old and cannot see TV properly so my radio means everything to me, especially since I am in a wheelchair and can't go out anymore."
Elsie May Phipps

The Talking Newspaper Federation campaign has continued to increase the number of publications uploading content for our online devices, Sonata and Bumblebee, from 163 to over 200.

545 new radio stations have been added to the streamed services including live football from Newcastle United and West Bromwich Albion and ball-by-ball commentary from the BBC for their cricket coverage. In addition, community radio station coverage has increased from 140 to 283.

Our Talking Newspaper service is going from strength to strength, with a phenomenal increase of

57%

in listening hours; proving that this is clearly a service our users value.

The Seeing Ear ebook library

has continued to be a huge success with Sonata Plus users having an increased choice of approximately

9,665 titles.

"Listening to the radio – sport and football in particular – was a lifeline for my dad. We were able to have some common ground to talk about when he no longer became interested in the TV. We are extremely grateful to you all." Eileen Phillips

We are nothing without the support of our volunteers, who last year contributed 10,052 hours to the charity. They covered enough miles to travel to Milan and back 24 times installing our radios to those in need.

"This role at British Wireless gave me great satisfaction; knowing I was helping in some way. On top of this I've had the bonus of making new friends." Rosemarie, BWBF volunteer

BRITISH WIRELESS ACROSS THE UK

Last year, BWBF worked hard to reach greater numbers of recipients across the UK. The launch of a new, volunteer-led community outreach project focused on signposting our service via GP surgeries, libraries and daycentres proved successful; with three areas in particular showing an enormous improvement in number of sets issued.

In the North, the number of radios given out across Newcastle Upon Tyne increased twofold - from 21 to 42. And in our Central region, Halton and Warrington showed incredible growth. Recipient numbers in Halton climbed from 9 to 29, and the number of people reached in Warrington increased by 37 – from 1 to 38.

South West Region

In the South West and Wales region we work with 34 BWBF agents who either let us know about people who need our support or who actively install radios for beneficiaries on our behalf. We also have 14 Radio Support Volunteers who are committed to supporting people living

with sight loss across some of the largest and most remote counties in England and Wales.

To further our reach in these communities we were delighted to be invited to 38 events last year, and we continue to work hard to find more Exhibition Volunteers to help us widen our impact.

South East Region

In 2018 our South East Team undertook a major project to connect with people who have had one of our radios for years but may not have been in touch for a while. We checked that our radios were still working well and offered replacements if necessary; for example updating older sets that don't have DAB function.

Two people vital to this work were Head Office Volunteers Rosemarie and Diane who called several thousand beneficiaries. Diane said "It was a privilege to chat to people benefitting from a British Wireless radio to hear what a lifeline it is and to learn more of the daily challenges faced."

The Northern Region and Scotland

To cover this vast geographical area which includes Northern Ireland, we work with a large network of volunteers providing a fantastic personal service. With great coverage in the North East, Cumbria, Glasgow, Lancashire and Halifax and Leeds we continue to recruit and train volunteers in all other areas.

Last year we saw an encouraging increase in sets issued in a number of areas including Liverpool, Newcastle and Edinburgh. This was as a result of our 'Reaching Out' campaign, promoting BWBF's equipment and services to organisations such as libraries, GP surgeries and community centres.

Where
our sets
have
gone

North &
Scotland
Region
782
sets issued

Central England Region

Our Central region also benefits from a volunteer network that went from strength to strength last year. Now with 40 Radio Support Volunteers, 5 Administration Supporters and an Exhibition and Events Team who attended over 40 events it's easy to see why our army of volunteers are so important to us.

We also recruited two Volunteer Ambassadors who continue to visit local communities to spread the word about BWBF, again helping us to reach some of the region's most vulnerable visually impaired people.

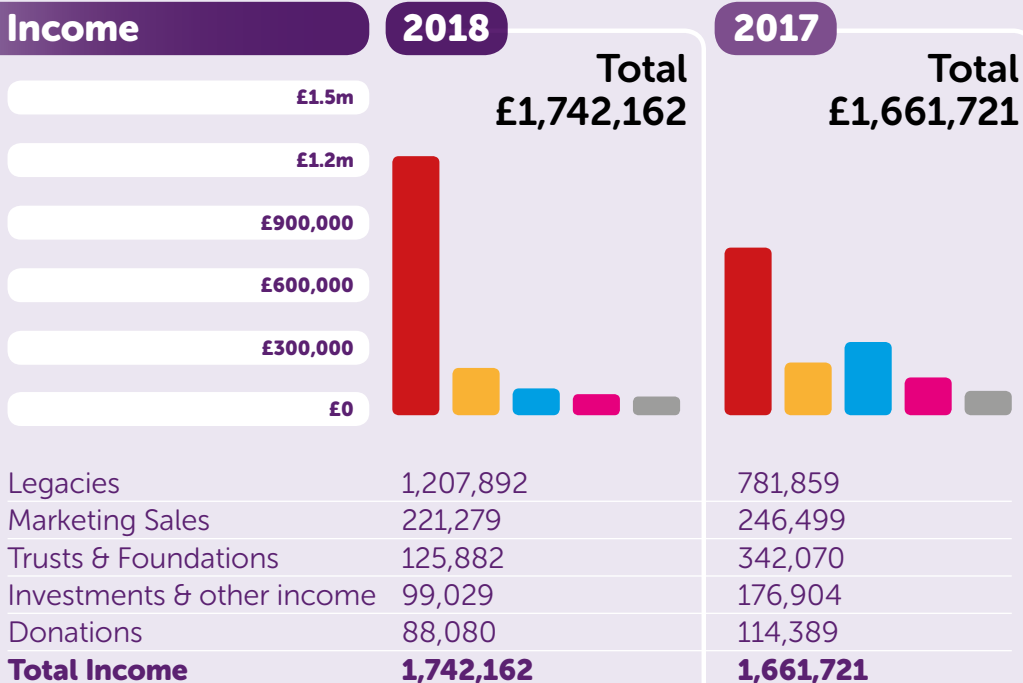
Central
England
Region
745
sets issued

South West
Region
570
sets issued

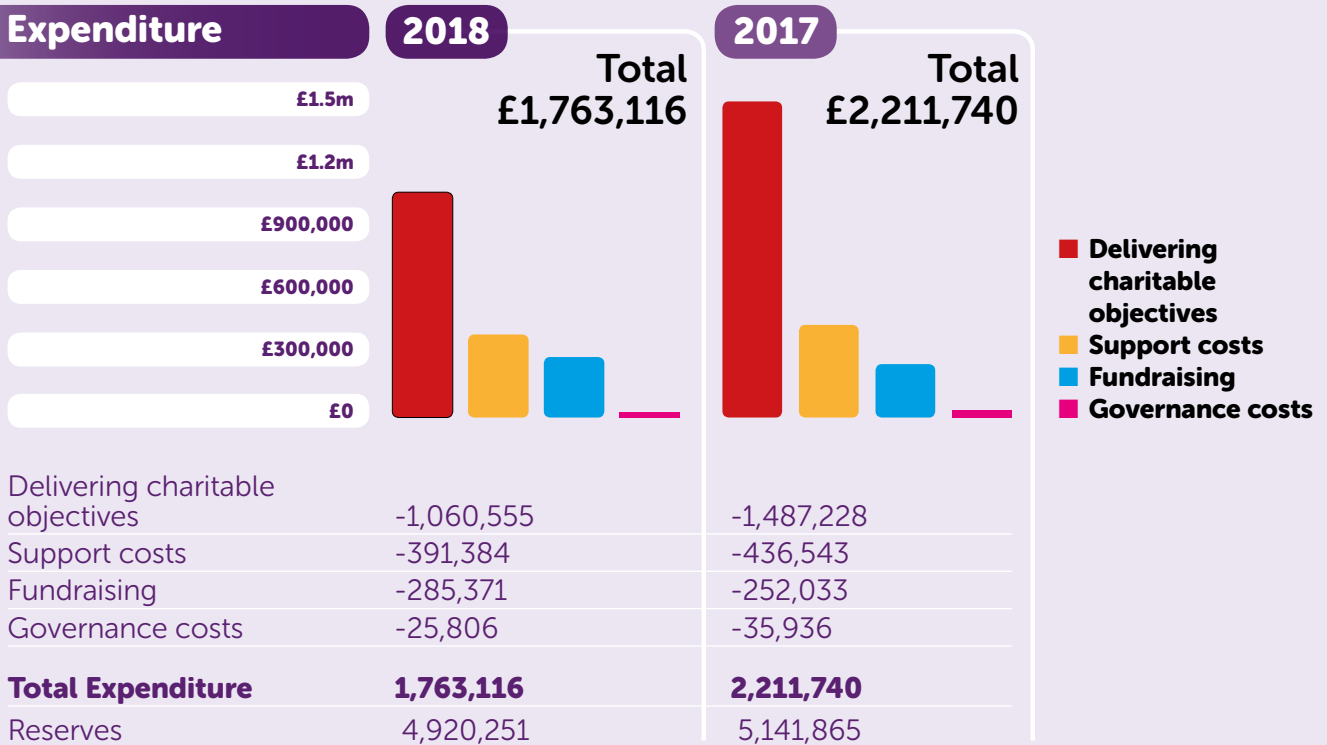
South East
Region
615
sets issued

Our finances

Income



Expenditure



PRODUCT RANGE

"My Concerto 2 is easy to use and has everything I need. Your support is first class, many thanks."
Ed Saul

Concerto 2

The only CD, cassette, USB playback, DAB & FM portable digital radio of its kind created for people living with limited sight.



Bumblebee

An easy to use app designed to unlock the digital world for people with any level of sight loss. Content includes radio, podcasts, talking newspapers and audio books.



Opus

Introducing our newest radio in the range. Full details available on page 6.



Play

An ultra-compact and portable DAB/FM radio by Roberts with 10 pre-sets, a headphone socket and built-in battery charger. Not adapted.



R9928

Roberts LW, MW and FM radio with large speaker for clarity of sound. Not adapted.



HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT MORE PEOPLE LIKE JIMMY?



Online:

We have recently relaunched our website so we hope that you will find it much easier to use. If you would like to make an online gift visit www.blind.org.uk/support-us

By post:

If you would like to make a donation by post please complete the donation form on pages 13 and 14 and return to us using the freepost envelope provided.



By phone:

You can always phone us on 01622 754757 to make a payment over the phone using your debit or credit card.

(Monday – Friday
9am-5pm)

Giving In Memory:

Making a donation in memory of a loved one is a special way to celebrate their life and to help a visually impaired person receive a window to the world.

Funeral donations:

Many families are opting to make charitable donations instead of sending floral tributes. You could suggest contributions be sent to us, indicating the name of the person the donation is in memory of.

Leave a gift in your will

Leaving us a legacy is a special way to help us ensure we are here to support people with sight loss, when they need us, for years to come.

To request a full legacy pack or for a confidential conversation please contact our Legacy Manager, Kirsty Grainger, on 01622 427641 or email kirsty@blind.org.uk

If you have any further fundraising enquiries please contact our Individual Giving Manager, Julie Hocking, on 01622 427632 or email julieh@blind.org.uk

Thank you so much for thinking of British Wireless. Your donation is an incredible gift to someone who needs it.

I would like to help reduce isolation and loneliness by supporting the work of British Wireless.

I enclose a cheque for £

(made payable to British Wireless for the Blind Fund)

or

Please debit my: Mastercard Visa (Please tick)

For the amount of £

Card number

Start date / Expiry date /

Issue number (if on your card)

ACCOUNT HOLDER DETAILS

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

or

If you would prefer to make a regular gift, you can request a Direct Debit form from Julie Hocking on 01622 427632 or by emailing julieh@blind.org.uk

Alternatively you can simply download the form from our website - www.blind.org.uk/support-us

“Our sight is so precious and to support, in some small way, anyone who has had to come to terms with sight loss is so gratifying.”
Mrs Fitzsimmons.

Please turn over >

MAKE YOUR GIFT WORTH EVEN MORE

giftaid it

If you would like to make your donation go 25% further through allowing us to claim Gift Aid, simply sign the declaration below. Using Gift Aid means that **for every pound you give, we get an extra 25 pence from HM Revenue & Customs.**

Simply complete and return this form and we'll do the rest!

I am a UK tax payer and would like to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in future or have made in the past four years.

I understand if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify BWBF if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay income tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid declarations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Signature

Date

Our promise to you - BWBF values its supporters.

We would not be able to continue our work without you.

It's important to us that you feel informed about our news, future developments and fundraising. We want to share with you how your amazing support helps to change the lives of visually impaired people across the UK.

If you do not wish to be contacted, or you would like to change how we contact you, let us know at any time using the following details –

mydata@blind.org.uk, 01622 754757, 10 Albion Place, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 5DZ, www.blind.org.uk/privacy-policy/

We respect your privacy and remain committed to ethical and responsible fundraising and communications. Your details will be stored securely and we will never sell them. However, from time to time we may need to share your details with trusted partners authorised to work on our behalf such as our printers or agents (e.g. your local blind association).

For further information please refer to our privacy policy – www.blind.org.uk/privacy-policy/

THANK YOU!

British Wireless for the Blind Fund receives no government funding. It is only thanks to the kindness of all our supporters that we can continue to be there for blind and partially sighted people across the UK.

We want to take this opportunity to share a huge, heartfelt thanks with everyone whose generosity allows us to support visually impaired people, helping ease their isolation, bringing hours of enjoyment and keeping a window open on the outside world.

Thank you so much to everyone who supports us, including our key strategic partners – just a few of whom we have mentioned below. Together we can do more.



The Plum Trust

The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

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