

The Powell Family Foundation.

Impact Report 2024.

Supporting children and young people with a vision impairment to reach their full potential.

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Review of 2024.

Welcome to The Powell Family Foundation.

By Colin Whitbourn, Executive Director and Simon Curtis, Chair.

Now in its third year of operation, The Powell Family Foundation helps enable children and young people with a vision impairment to reach their full potential by awarding grants to individuals and not-for-profit charitable organisations.

Reporting on our second successful year, we look back with pride on the wide variety of organisations and children and young people we have supported.

As well as providing grants to organisations across the UK that provide essential information and advice, we were able to support a range of valuable experiences and development opportunities. Among these were football training, music tuition, mental health support, employability skills, family advocacy, braille and audio books, mentoring and camping! Some of these are highlighted in the following pages and we hope you enjoy reading their inspiring stories.

We would like to thank our Trustees: David Genders, John Renshaw, Alison Oliver, Alex Pepper, John Turnbull, Abigail Sayagh and Steve Barton for their outstanding stewardship of the Foundation. We also thank our staff team of Cathy Hurst, the Grants Manager and Jenny Collins, the Grants Officer, for their dedication and professionalism.

The work of the Foundation is made possible through the generous legacies of Mr Rodney Powell and his mother Mrs Patricia Powell. Through these legacies The Powell Family Foundation will be able to continue to support the needs, passions and aspirations of children and young people with a vision impairment well into the future.

We are passionate about enabling children with a vision impairment to become confident, independent young people.

Our impact in 2024.

Our key statistics.

Children & Young People:

175 Grants, £277,775 awarded.

Grants awarded supported:

- access to education and learning.
- early years development.
- tech for education.
- tech for leisure.
- well-being.

Charities & Social Enterprises:

35 Grants, £623,330 awarded.

Grants awarded supported:

- access to education and learning.
- health equality.
- mental well-being.
- peer mentoring.
- regional and local support services.
- sports and leisure.
- specific sight conditions.

Organisations funded in 2024:

- Angel Eyes NI.
- Blind in Business.
- Bloomsbury Football.
- ClearVision Project.
- Croydon Vision.
- Esme's Umbrella.
- Goalball UK.
- Hair & Care.
- Hartlepool Vision Support.
- LOOK-UK.
- MACS.
- Marfan Trust.
- MyVision Oxfordshire.
- Moorfields Eye Charity.
- MoorVision.
- Merton Vision.
- Music of Life.
- New College Worcester.
- NICE-Foundation for Conductive Education.

- North East Sensory Services.
- North East Sight Matters.
- Open Sight.
- iSight Cornwall.
- Rangers Charity Foundation.
- Royal Society for Blind Children.
- Sense.
- Sight Concern Worcestershire.
- Sight Scotland.
- Sight for Surrey.
- Sight Life Cardiff.
- Stargardts Connected.
- Treloar's.
- Visibility Scotland.
- Vision Ability.
- VISTA.
- Wakefield District Sight Aid.
- Wales Council of the Blind.
- Wilberforce Trust.
- Wirral Society for the Blind & Partially Sighted.

Grants to organisations.

TPFF funds not-for-profit organisations of all shapes and sizes across the UK who are helping children and young people with a vision impairment to reach their full potential.

Making an impact across the UK.

We funded 15 organisations to provide vital local services to children and young people with a vision impairment.

The Royal Society for Blind Children.



Image of Woman with baby and toddler at a music group.

The Royal Society for Blind Children (RSBC) believes that no child should face the challenges of vision impairment alone.

Their flagship Families First service provides tailored emotional and practical support to children with a vision impairment and their families, particularly at the point of diagnosis or following a major change in vision.

TPFF funding supports the Families First service in Essex and Hertfordshire and provided 56 one-to-one support sessions to 20 families in 2024.

Layla*, age 9, was referred to RSBC after losing vision in one eye. She was afraid of what the future held, but through role play and support, Layla learned how to ask questions at appointments and felt more in control. Layla also gained confidence to explain her vision impairment during a class assembly. Layla told her friends, "I still like the same things, I just see them differently now!," Layla and her family feel reassured, knowing that RSBC will support them through Layla's journey to adulthood.

*name changed to protect identity

TPFF is a forward-thinking visionary funder; they are creative and dynamic in their response to issues that prevail for VI families. This valuable investment contributes to our strategic drive to ensure that every region has access to a dedicated Family Practitioner.

Julie Davis, CEO.

Angel Eyes NI.



Image of Euan with his grandmother.

Angel Eyes NI have provided expert services in education, family, youth support and accessible events since 2007, currently supporting over 700 families in Northern Ireland.

The TPFf grant has supported their Family Coordinator. Families can access emotional support and practical advice, home visits, accessible events and a Virtual Reality experience, which allows them to see the world through their child's eyes.

Euan and his family have been part of the Angel Eyes NI community for two years.

His family shared: "AngelEyes NI has been amazing, especially for Euan. The family support team has been incredible from the start. Euan loves accessible events, and the staff support is exceptional in meeting his needs. We're truly grateful for the guidance from the whole team."

This funding has made a real difference to the families we support, ensuring they have access to expert advice, emotional support, and practical guidance when they need it most. TPFf's belief in our work has allowed us to continue delivering vital services across Northern Ireland.

Sara McCracken, CEO.

Merton Vision.



Image of Aaliyah horse riding.

A TPFf grant supports Merton Vision, based in South London, with their award-winning children and young people outreach project.

Merton Vision delivers a person-centred assessment for each child or young person to ensure a bespoke service, working in tandem with their school and QTVI.

As well as providing advice to families on benefits and other financial support, Merton Vision provides children and young people with specialist support in IT, mentoring towards employment, and advice on Further Education and careers, working with national partners such as LOOK and Blind in Business.

Merton Vision also offers a wide range of fun activities from the arts to sports to cookery and supported 161 children and young people in 2024.

Aaliyah discovered the joy of horse riding through Merton Vision. Her Mum said, “The impact of this experience has been transformative. Horse riding has greatly improved her physical coordination. But It’s her emotional wellbeing and confidence that have flourished the most. With every visit to the stables, her face lights up with joy.”

We are very proud of our CYP outreach project. Working with TPFf has been a fantastic experience. Kevin Gregory, CEO.

Funding innovative services to enhance young people's wellbeing.

Whether it is funding choirs, blind football, peer mentoring or hair and beauty, TPFf funding is helping children and young people with a vision impairment to live their best lives.

Music of Life.



Image of girl performing.

Founded in 2003, Music of Life is dedicated to enhancing the lives of children and young people with a disability through regular music-making.

Its mission is to foster the development of vital life skills, boosting well-being and confidence in its students, whose conditions include vision impairments, sensory, physical, and learning disabilities.

The award from TPFf in 2024 enabled Music of Life to support 80 students with vision impairments across two key programmes, funding 70 students through Choirs in Special Schools and 10 students with individual music tuition.

For the children and young people Music of Life works with, the effect of music is profound. For example, students who were initially non-verbal have joined the choir and then started to sing!

As a charity that works with beneficiaries with a wide range of disabilities and special needs, we strive to make our music activities fully accessible and enjoyable for all participants. The grant from TPFf has been invaluable. The Chair of Trustees.

LOOK.



Image of Adult and child hugging.

LOOK is a small but mighty national charity, empowering young people with a vision impairment to thrive.

LOOK's aim is to build a community, helping young people beat isolation, increase confidence and develop their aspirations.

The TPF grant has supported the LOOK youth mentoring programme. This ground breaking project pairs children with trained adult volunteer mentors who have a vision impairment. Mentors use their lived experience to guide mentees through the highs and lows of living with a vision impairment, sharing skills and, of course, having fun!

All of LOOK's services are co-created with their beneficiaries as they believe in the power and importance of expertise by experience. Eighty per cent of their staff team are visually impaired, including the CEO, Charlotte Carson.

LOOK supported 210 mentees with 182 mentors in 2024.

At LOOK our model of change is built on the principle of mutual support. By investing in young VI adult mentors, we create role models who inspire their mentees. Many mentees then go on to be mentors themselves. Mentors become change-makers in their workplaces and educational settings. This positive feedback loop creates a self-sustaining community, empowering young people to take an active role in creating a more inclusive and accessible society.

Charlotte Carson, CEO.

Grants to individuals.

Our small grants programme to individual children and young people helps families to support their child's hobbies and passions, as well as providing essential equipment for everyday living.

Mari's story.



Image of Mari at her tablet.

Mari is 12 years old, lives in Wales and is registered blind. Through a grant from TPFF, Mari was able to buy a tablet and accessories.

Mari loves the large screen of her tablet and the accessibility settings which make it easier for her to access technology to help her with her independence, keep in touch with friends and family and help with homework. Mari also loves to be creative using the pen and drawing pad.

Mari says, "I love my new tablet and pen and use them every day! I can play games like my friends, do art and use it for homework without having to get someone to help me all the time."

We are so grateful for the support to help Mari! The tablet enables Mari to do more things herself; she has become more confident and is able to use the technology with ease to help with her learning and enjoyment. Mari's mother.

Edward's story.



Image of Edward in his cadets uniform.

Edward had always experienced poor vision, having worn glasses from the age of 2.

In 2023 Edward began to struggle at school but it wasn't until a diagnosis of keratoconus was received six months later that the family realised how much his vision had deteriorated.

School immediately responded and Edward was offered both practical and emotional support to enable him to process his diagnosis. They also signposted Edward to TPFF for financial assistance.

Edward's grant from TPFF for a tablet, keyboard and accessories has helped him access his GCSE revision and continue his role at Air Cadets as a qualified drill instructor.

My life changed completely after receiving my diagnosis as everything I believed I was working towards had changed. However, TPFF's grant has helped me to continue my study and revise. My independence is very important to me and the equipment bought with my grant has also allowed me to apply for college courses on my own, resulting in three offers!

Edward.

Leah's story.



Image of Leah using her Braille Note Touch.

Leah is a Syrian refugee living in the Midlands and was diagnosed with advanced bilateral retinoblastoma at birth. Treatment was successful but she is severely sight impaired.

Despite this, Leah is thriving at school and as well as learning the piano, has learned braille first with a manual brailier and then moving onto the Braille Note Touch.

Leah's family were referred to the Foundation by RSBC, to request funding for a Braille Note Touch to use at home, and we were happy to oblige.

Wow! Amazing, I love it indeed, thank you for supporting me!
Leah.

Seb's story.



Image of Seb in the swimming pool.

In 2018, when he was 3 years old, Seb was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumour. Twelve months of intensive treatment saved his life but left Seb with long-term conditions, including vision impairment.

Seb's vision impairment has made joining in sport difficult, as he is unable to track the ball and the movement of his team mates. However, he has found that he loves swimming and The Powell Family Foundation was happy to help by funding one-to-one swimming lessons.

Abby, Seb's mum, commented, "Swimming is completely different to other sports. In water, Seb becomes an equal to his peers. He can move and dive like any other child. As you can imagine, this brings him enormous joy and huge benefits to mental and physical wellbeing. It also makes us so happy as parents to see him thriving and doing something he loves so much."

I love swimming, and I can now swim 25m unaided! My favourite bit though is diving for toys which we do at the start of the class and which I am very good at!
Seb.

The Powell Family Foundation.

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