

NEWS RELEASE

21/08/06

For immediate release

Lancashire charity offers insight on employing blind people

Local charity, Action for Blind People Lancashire, invites employers across the county to open their eyes to the potential of the blind and partially sighted workforce. The visual impairment charity is holding an Employer Business Breakfast on Friday 20 October, from 9am–11am, at the Red Rose Suite, Ewood Park, Blackburn Rovers FC. Companies and organisations across the region are invited to book their free place.

There are approximately 140,000 blind and partially sighted people of working age in the UK, of these, only one in four is actually employed. However, recent research by Action for Blind People shows that 75% of employers agree that there is no difference between the performance of a visually impaired employee, compared to a sighted employee.¹

Action for Blind People's Employer Business Breakfast is aimed at making local companies and organisations aware of the skills and commitment visually impaired people bring to the workplace. The local charity also wants to highlight the support its Employment Team offers to both employers and their blind and partially sighted employees.

Action for Blind People Lancashire's Deputy Manager, Jack Ritson, comments: "We want to engage with local enthusiastic employers, who want to diversify their workforce, in order to provide better employment or job retention opportunities for

14 - 16 Verney Road London SE16 3DZ Tel 020 7635 4800 Fax 020 7635 4899

Website www.afbp.org

Patron HRH Princess Alexandra, the Hon. Lady Ogilvy, GCVO

Registered Charity no: 205913

NEWS RELEASE

visually impaired people. There will be presentations from local employers and blind and partially sighted employees, who have overcome many of the barriers in the workplace. There will also be an opportunity to view the assistive technology available to visually impaired people and, of course, everyone gets a free breakfast.”

Companies should contact Jack Ritson or on 01772 320550 or email Jack at preston@actionforblindpeople.org.uk to book their place at the event.

-Ends-

For further information please contact Zoë Patel, Press Officer, on 020 7635 4898, email: zoe.patel@actionforblindpeople.org.uk or alternatively contact Petra Maxwell, PR Manager on 020 7635 3027, email: petra.maxwell@actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Notes to editors:

- Action for Blind People Lancashire is based at Howick House, Howick Park Avenue, Penwortham, Preston, PR1 0LS, Tel: 01772 320550.
- Action for Blind People supports over 20,000 blind and partially sighted people in the UK every year. Action's National Freephone Helpline is 0800 915 4666.
- Action works to inspire change and create opportunities to enable blind and partially sighted people to have equal voice and equal choice and to live a full and valuable life.
- Action provides visually impaired people with opportunities through employment, housing, leisure and information and support.
- If abbreviating “Action for Blind People”, please use "Action" rather than AFBP or ABP.

¹ This qualitative research included 31 in-depth interviews with a range of employers. The research is part of a development partnership called VISAGE, funded by the European Social Fund, which is looking into ways of engaging with employers to tackle the barriers to employment for visually impaired people. Research released August 2006.