



# NEWS RELEASE

05/12/07

For immediate release

## **Blind people get an insight into Entrepreneurship**

66 percent of blind and partially sighted people of working age are unemployed and forced to claim incapacity benefit. The majority, given the opportunity, do want to work. This week Action for Blind People is giving visually impaired people the chance to become entrepreneurs, through the launch of a fantastic new initiative called Enterprise in Sight.

Enterprise in Sight, funded by the London Development Agency's Opportunities Fund, will provide support and empowerment to London-based visually impaired entrepreneurs. The project will focus on women and those from Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, to enable them to capitalise on the commercial opportunities presented by the 2012 Games.

Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone said: "The 2012 Games may be five years away, but the benefits are already being felt across London. Thanks to a £386,380 grant, the Enterprise in Sight project will be able to help visually impaired entrepreneurs across London.

"£11 million of Opportunities Fund grants will provide over 14,000 Londoners with the training and support they need to make the most of the huge opportunities

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Website [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk)

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brought by the London 2012 Games.”

Dragon's Den Star and successful entrepreneur of 'Reggae Reggae' sauce Levi Roots launched this great new programme in London yesterday. He comments: “It is so shocking to see how many blind and partially sighted people are out of work. I commend Action for Blind People for their great work in enabling more visually impaired people, particularly from BAME communities, to get into entrepreneurship. With the right support anyone could become a successful entrepreneur.

Action's Business Advisers will lead the entrepreneur through a very structured process, from what it means to be self-employed and business plan preparation, right through to the start-up of the business. As part of the project Action's Advisers will also work with existing businesses owned by blind or partially sighted people. The emphasis here will be on supporting the businesses to become sustainable and grow to exploit market opportunities presented by 2012.

Barbara Morton, Development Manager at Action for Blind People said: “Many blind and partially sighted people find self-employment is an excellent way of generating income, as it allows them to accommodate their disability and maintain their own independence. We look forward to working with our future entrepreneurs in helping them to achieve the best possible success for 2012. We are very grateful to the London Development Agency for their support.”

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For further information about Enterprise in Sight please call our National Freephone Helpline 0800 915 4666 or visit Action's website [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk)

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For further media information please contact Debbie Flatley, press office on 020 7635 4921/ 07739 819954 or email: [debbie.flatley@actionforblindpeople.org.uk](mailto:debbie.flatley@actionforblindpeople.org.uk) or Katy Atkins at the LDA press office on 020 7593 836 or email [katyatkins@lda.gov.uk](mailto:katyatkins@lda.gov.uk).

## Notes to editors:

- Action for Blind People is an expert national organisation, ensuring blind and partially sighted people get practical support in all aspects of their lives. Contact Action for Blind People's National Freephone Helpline on 0800 915 4666 or [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk)
- Action for Blind People is breaking down barriers that prevent visually impaired people from achieving the same opportunities as sighted people.
- 2007 marks Action's 150 years of transforming the lives of blind and partially sighted people.
- If abbreviating "Action for Blind People", please use "Action" rather than AFBP or ABP.
- The London Development Agency works to improve quality of life for all Londoners and drive sustainable economic growth.

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- Enterprises in Sight is funded through the London Development Agency's Opportunities Fund programme: Round 2 of the Opportunities Fund is split into four themes and is investing a total of £30 million in a total of 70 projects. The Youth Impact Project is within Theme 3 - projects that "help to spread the legacy benefits of the 2012 Games, and ensure London's diverse communities are engaged in, contribute to and share the benefits of the Games and associated opportunities."
- The projects include: sports and leisure training for young people, a London Metropolitan University project to create 40 new women-led businesses, catering and hospitality training in Hammersmith & Fulham, support for Bengali women to start up and develop businesses and training in Islington and training and work placements for 200 Black and Ethnic Minority construction graduates.
- Organisations who are running Opportunities Fund projects include the Peabody Trust, City Gateway, Princes Trust, Centrepoint and Sports Coaches UK.

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