

Insight into visually impaired people's lives

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One of the biggest surveys ever carried out into the lives of visually impaired people, run by the University of Birmingham and VISION 2020 UK, has revealed some significant findings.

The project, Network 1000, was conducted by the Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research (VICTAR) at the University to gain an insight into visually impaired people's views and circumstances.

Researchers at the University found that only 34% of participants of working age reported being in some form of employment

Researchers were also interested to find that a high occurrence of disabilities and long term health issues in addition to visual impairment were reported. Nevertheless, visually impaired people frequently reported that they were carers for other people who were sick, disabled or elderly.

The interviews covered many aspects of participants' lives, including communication, leisure, employment, the use of computers, transport and education.

Dr Graeme Douglas, the project leader from the University, said: "The views and concerns of visually impaired people are clearly expressed through this report. The findings provide important information for service providers and policy makers concerned with visual impairment."

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Notes to Editors

The research is being undertaken by the Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research (VICTAR) at the University of Birmingham and funded by the Big Lottery Fund through VISION 2020 UK.

1007 research participants are all registered blind or partially sighted and were recruited from registers in the Great Britain of approx 360 000 people.

Title of the report: "Opinions and circumstances of visually impaired people in Great Britain: report based on over 1000 interviews".

Authors: Graeme Douglas, Christine Corcoran, and Sue Pavvey

The full report (including executive summary) can be found on the following website:

<http://www.vision2020uk.org.uk> (<http://www.vision2020uk.org.uk/>)

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