

Application deadline: Midday – Friday 15 January 2021

Voluntary Sector Provider Contribution Fund Scheme Application Form

Details of your Organisation

Name of organisation	Support 4 Sight
Address:	8 Hill Street Saffron Walden Essex CB10 1JD
Postcode:	
Contact Person	Gary Hyams
Position in Organisation	CEO
Telephone Number:	01799 588897
E-mail address:	ceo@support4sight.org.uk
Website address:	www.support4sight.org.uk
Charity Registration No:	1169324

Declaration:

1. I am authorised to make the application on behalf of the above organisation.
2. I certify the information contained in this application is correct.
3. If the information in the application changes in any way I will inform Uttlesford District Council.

Signed: *Gary Hyams* Date: 29th December 2020

Name: Gary Hyams

Position: ... CEO, Support 4 Sight

Details of Application

Description of work undertaken by the organisation

Support 4 Sight exists to support, empower and inspire people affected by sight loss in Essex, through delivering high quality services, this has been recognised in 2020 by us being awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

Our services include providing resource centres in Saffron Walden and Chelmsford, further pop-up resource centres in Uttlesford, telephone and face to face befriending, home visiting services and employment support. Across Mid and West Essex, we also host (outside of COVID restrictions) coffee mornings, social trips and outings, man information and advice desks at eye clinics in local hospitals, provide social trips, exhibitions and talks to schools, scout and guide groups, rotary clubs, women's institute groups, we also run the low vision clinic at Princess Alexandra Hospital for the NHS which services local residents from Uttlesford. We regularly offer training to skill up our volunteers and offer the chance for some visually impaired service users to become peer mentors, able to use their own experience and training provided by us to support others with sight loss. We also run and produce the Uttlesford Talking news service which in normal times is produced on a weekly basis for the benefit of local people who have difficulty reading printed news.

In addition to this, we supply training to local employers both in the public and private domain on how to safely employ people who are visually impaired and on how to deal with members of the public who have visual impairment, an example of this is work we have completed recently with affinity water to make both their written correspondence and website more accessible for people with various sight conditions.

How many paid employees does your organisation have?

8

How many volunteers does your organisation have?

101

How many members does your organisation have (if applicable)

n/a

Who/what does your organisation support and in what way?

Support 4 Sight provides information, advice, guidance and support with low vision and everyday living aids to those with sight loss, their families and carers. Our services aim to provide those with a visual impairment with better health and emotional wellbeing, reduce isolation, as well as improve daily living skills, financial wellbeing and help with overcoming the barriers faced by those with sight loss in everyday life.

How much money is your organisation requesting?

2021/22 £11,650

Please give full details of the use that will be made of any financial aid given by Uttlesford District Council. (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

Currently we are an Uttlesford based charity, now being in our 27th year of providing services to people of all ages who are either partially sighted or registered blind, along with their families and carers residing in Uttlesford. During 2020 we have suffered greatly financially due to us not being able to operate our community fundraising which normally provides us with a substantial part of our income

During the past year our Pop-Up Resource Centre proved to be popular and much needed by the community with all clients who attended an appointment receiving information and advice as well as demonstrations of equipment. We have had some difficulties reaching the success planned for the service due to COVID-19 countermeasures and fears amongst members of our community who can often be elderly and vulnerable on top of their sight loss. We have however countered this difficulty by providing an increased number of home visits to those who were unable to come to us due to lack of transport or simply because of their fear of COVID, this has meant us purchasing PPE and encountering additional transport costs and staff time spent seeing people. The feedback received from those who have attended showed that they were not aware Support 4 Sight still has the presence it does in Saffron Walden and were extremely appreciative and glad to hear that our support and services were still available thanks to the financial support we received from UDC. We intend to continue this and increase it when possible.

We have now had to pause the service at the Saffron Walden Town Hall due to COVID-19 restrictions and hope to resume this as soon as possible to continue offering this much needed service in the

community. We will take appointment requests, triage them and prepare information and equipment that suit each visitor's needs, to be able to provide the best and most efficient experience for them.

Possibly due to the COVID-19 situation and people finding themselves more stuck at home, we did find an increase in the number of people who were interested in using technology to assist with their sight loss. Some users were opting for a portable electronic magnifier over handheld magnifiers, one of the few reasons included was because people who are still trying to receive treatment or have had it postponed, felt that a magnifier was too static in the support it offered whereas an electronic magnifier they can increase or decrease magnification as their sight requires. As a result we have spent time training people on the use of these technologies.

We also discovered there was an increase in the number of people who wished to be able to use digital technology such as phones and mobiles to stay in touch with family, carry out shopping and read books or news. We have been looking into ways to provide this but have met increasing difficulty with the restrictions in place due to COVID-19. For example, we cannot just issue an instruction booklet or video to show people how to do something as many of our service users would not be able to see enough to follow along. This support has to be tailored to a person's needs based on their current experience, their ability and the goals they want to achieve.

While we are unable to operate our services normally. We have launched two online groups that meet regularly and can offer much needed social interaction. We are looking to grow these groups and assist greater numbers, but it is difficult to both advertise the groups and assist service users with how to connect.

During the continuing pandemic we are reaching out to as many of our service users as possible to ensure that they are OK and are receiving the support they need, and if needed we have been collecting food and medication and delivering it directly to them. This is likely to continue for the foreseeable future until people are able to travel out safely, we anticipate that a lot of our service users would have lost confidence in their ability to safely step out of their homes due to the long period of inactivity they have experienced and so we feel it will be an up-hill struggle to coax them back into our social groups etc. for this reason we will use our 7 seater charity car to pick up and take as many as we can to get them interacting again with their peers as soon as is allowed.

(No more than 500 words)

Name up to three things you aim to achieve in the funding period.

- 1) To ensure the mental and physical wellbeing of our visually impaired community
- 2) To train as many people as we can in using digital technology
- 3) To provide a talk and support service to visually impaired people of all ages.

What is the demand for the service and how is this being established? How will your project/service find out what the views of its users are and about the services they (will) receive?

The demand for the service remains high and is increasing as well as changing due to the pandemic. With service users being unable to receive services in the short term directly from hospital eye clinics and other services that have been affected by COVID-19, some are coming to Support 4 Sight instead for more immediate support.

1 in 5 of the people who attended the Pop-Up Resource Centre during 2020 had either not been contacted about resuming their NHS appointments or had an appointment with a wait time that left them currently unsupported. These people came to Support 4 Sight in the hope we could 'bridge the gap' with information and guidance as well as low vision aids. As a result of the delays for some of them their sight has actually worsened during the intervening period.

We also found some service users had either newly discovered us or assumed we were no longer operating following the closure of our previous George Street Resource Centre in Early 2020 due to the financial pressures on us. We feel there will be a need to re-market ourselves in 2021 to make the local community aware of the services we offer ongoing.

As there is no alternative to our services these users were very pleased to find us and that all services and support are still being offered. This has now been impacted by COVID-19 but Support 4 Sight continues to operate as much as possible within the guidelines available to ensure as many people are supported with their sight loss as possible. We are monitoring the situation closely to be sure we can return to full support operations.

Does the Council encourage or support your organisation in any way other than financially? Please give details.

The support of local Councillors, officers and the Chief Executive has been extremely useful at our charity events, such as our exhibitions, which has helped raise awareness of our charity's services and the profile of our organisation. We thank you for your continuous support.

A link to the Council's Corporate Plan is below. Please explain how your organisation or the proposed project would contribute to the Council's corporate plans objectives?

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/corporate-plan>

The Council's Corporate Plan aims to put residents first. Many of Support 4 Sight's service users are residents in Uttlesford and rely on the services offered by the charity. Uttlesford exceeds the national average for people with sight loss as we tend to have a greater number of aging people in our community. The RNIB estimates that the number of people living with sight loss will increase by 30% over the next 10-15 years, meaning that the demand for our services will only increase year by year.

One of our lesser mentioned services is the Uttlesford Talking News. Support 4 Sight took on this service to save it from closing down in 2018. We felt then and now that being able to provide news and information in an accessible format to those who struggle with printed or online materials is extremely important for the residents of Uttlesford.

We already include articles from local Uttlesford newspapers but we would welcome additional bulletins of importance from the council which could be included to help the council expand its reach to those print impaired. This will assist the council with putting residents first, increasing the opportunities for communication between the council and residents of Uttlesford, some of whom may have otherwise been missed.

Are there any other organisations providing the same service as your organisation in Uttlesford? If yes, please give details.

No there isn't another organisation in Uttlesford providing the same or similar support to people with sight loss. Other organisations that do provide some support to those with a visual impairment (such as long cane training by ECL) usually refer into Support 4 Sight's services for more specialised support of the local residents.

Do you work in isolation to these organisations or collaboratively in any way? Please provide details.

We work collaboratively with other organisations as much as possible either through signposting for additional services which Support 4 Sight carries out or through receiving referrals and providing support direct to users.

We are also a founding member of Essex Vision which is a partnership between all the sight loss charities in Essex and we work together to ensure we share best practices and support one and another in any way we can.

Your project costs

Please give an estimate breakdown of your running costs

Revenue Costs	2021/22
Salaries, NI and Pension costs	£5,000

Rent	£4,350
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General running expenses (phone, Post, room hire, insurance etc.)	£1,000
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Producing information, education and Promotional materials	£ 500
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Training	£ 250
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Travel expenses a) Staff b) Volunteers	£ 300
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Recruitment costs	
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Other costs	
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Additional cost relating to Covid-19	£ 250
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Total revenue costs	£11,650
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Capital costs

Total capital costs

Total Organisational costs	£11,650
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Income - current year only £285,000

From grants £220,000

From other sources £ 65,000

Total income £285,000

Is your organisation financed or supported by other organisations, if yes, give full details, if no, why not?

Essex County Council via Essex Cares Limited
National Lottery Community Fund
Various foundations and trusts where appropriate.
Corporate and private / individual donations

What fund raising activities has your organisation undertaken in the last 3 years and how much money have you raised? Please do not include grants from Uttlesford District Council or other funding bodies.

Community Organisations	£820.14
Craft	£2,433.60
Ebay Sales	£163.30
Essex Lottery Income	£648.15
Fundraising Events	£8,133.57
Participant Events	£12,545.81
Recycling	£1,368.76
Social Events	£2,966.88
Stalls	£2,646.25
Static Tins	£3,680.14
Street & Store Collections	£8,609.05
Total	£44,015.65

What percentage of your users are Uttlesford Residents?

60%

How many people benefit from your service(s) each year?

8,000+

What effect would a reduction in the amount you have applied for have on your forward plan/service? Please provide quantifiable information?

We would need to further reduce services leaving gaps in support to those with sight loss, which would then increase the burden for other public service organisations, but more importantly be detrimental to both their physical and mental health and wellbeing. We would also need potentially to carry out another round of redundancies.

If you are currently in receipt of a grant from Uttlesford District Council, what effect would a reduction in funding have on your organisation? Please provide quantifiable information?

We would need to further reduce services leaving gaps in support to those locally with sight loss. We would also possibly need to carry out another round of redundancies and possibly close our services totally in Uttlesford.

Check List

- **Most recent Audited financial accounts**

- **List of extra spending due to Covid-19**

- **Medium/Long term business plan**

- **Copy of the organisation constitution**

I confirm that:

- to the best of my knowledge the information given above is accurate;
- I am authorised to make this application on behalf of the organisation named overleaf;
- Neither I nor the organisation is seeking to obtain any personal or financial benefit from the project/initiative.