

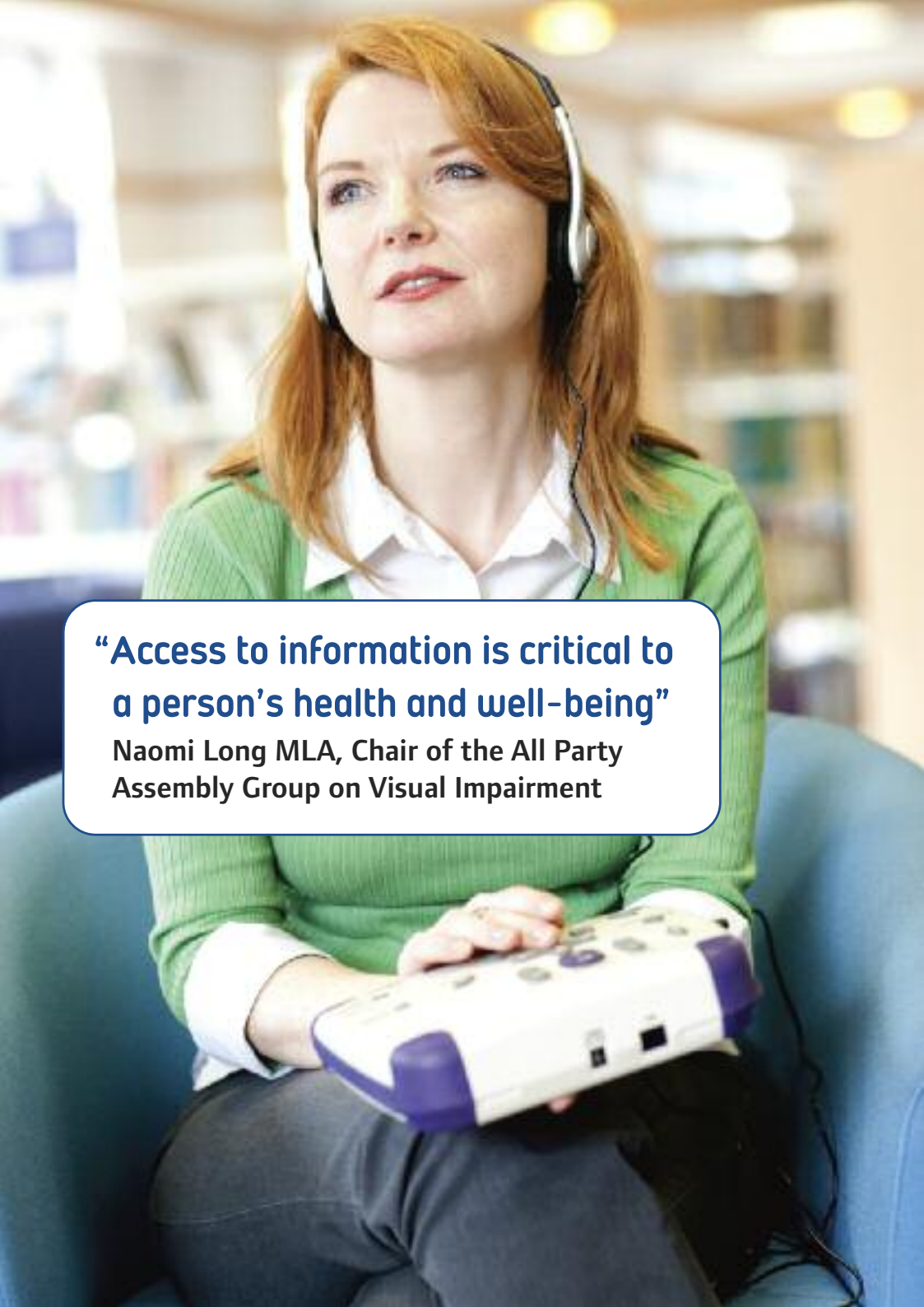


Great Expectations

Bookmarking success 2009/10

RNIB
Northern
Ireland

supporting blind and
partially sighted people



“Access to information is critical to a person’s health and well-being”

Naomi Long MLA, Chair of the All Party Assembly Group on Visual Impairment

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“RNIB has helped me to say look, this isn’t the end of my life – I may have to learn to do things slightly differently but I can cope and I can have an independent life.”

Jamila, 49



Preface

Together we can make a difference

Major change doesn't happen overnight. However together with your help, here are five days in 2009/10 when we took big steps towards our goal to end the isolation faced by blind and partially sighted people.

Day one: 1 April 2009

“Joining forces!”

On 1 April 2009 we joined forces with Action for Blind People. Later we also welcomed Cardiff, Vales and Valleys (formerly Cardiff Institute for the Blind) and National Talking Newspapers and Magazines into the group. A year on, we are delighted that together we can help more people find their lives again after sight loss.

Day two: 17 July 2009

“Changing the NHS and the law”

Together with hundreds of people with sight problems we took the NHS to task for sending out confidential medical information that people cannot read. The scandal reached Prime Minister's question time and now many NHS trusts are changing their ways,

so that reading medical information privately and independently is within our grasp. RNIB Northern Ireland have been at the forefront of this campaign with a series of lobbying events throughout the country where people with sight problems met directly with their local MLAs to demand action on this totally unacceptable practice.

Day three: 20 September 2009

Launch of “Lost and found”

We asked people to imagine what they would lose from their life if they lost their sight as part of our national “Lost and found” campaign. From television interviews to advertising posters to blindfolding politicians, our successful campaign made people take the reality of sight loss to heart.

Day four: 20 October 2009

“Power to the people”

In Northern Ireland, Stormont witnessed the country’s largest ever political rally – even more impressive because the 450-strong crowd were blind and partially sighted people passionate about their right to read. Across England people with sight problems joined our network of campaigners. We also launched a new approach to working with RNIB Members to make sure our direction is always guided by the people who matter most to us.



Every day: 365 days a year

“Helping people to find their lives again”

We support people as they live their everyday lives. During the year we put £13million into the pockets of people with sight problems by identifying unclaimed benefits. We lent out two million audio, large print and braille books from our much-loved library. Thousands of people found life a little easier thanks to our specially designed products, such as our brand new labelling device “PenFriend”. Whether it’s over the telephone, online or from our mobile information vans, we are immensely proud that we offer people their first step to finding their lives again.

Looking forward to 2010/2011

All charities have been affected by the challenging economic climate. We have weathered the financial storm well but we know there will be challenges ahead so we need your time, energy and donations more than ever. We are determined to continue to make real and lasting change happen. To do this we need your ongoing support and commitment. These stories of success inspire us to strive for more. We could only choose a handful here – read on for many more.

Charlie Mack, Director

John McNamee, Chair

Persuasion

Stopping people losing
their sight unnecessarily





It's a shocking fact that 50 per cent of sight problems in the UK could be avoided. We worked tirelessly this year – campaigning for change and bringing our sight-saving messages to people most at risk.

A universal ECLO service

This year the Eye Care Liaison Officers (ECLO) service in Northern Ireland reached 3,200 people with sight loss, directing them to appropriate services and information. ECLOs have been in place across Northern Ireland for nearly two years, ensuring all hospital eye departments and optometrists have access to one. Their role was expanded this year to include checking patient compliance with their medication, ensuring further sight loss did not needlessly occur. They also provided visual awareness training to hospital staff to help improve the experience of blind and partially sighted people attending eye departments.



Health Minister Michael McGimpsey at the RVH Eye Clinic with Sarah Henderson, Specialist Nurse (left) and Claire Bowes, RNIB NI Eye Care Liaison Officer.

Looking after our future vision

Our “Future Vision” tour came to Belfast in March, enabling young people to see how they might look in years to come, how to protect their eyesight and to reduce the risk of becoming blind later in life. Using a Virtual Aging booth at the City Hall, Queen’s Library and the University of Ulster, the young people were shown how lifestyle choices, such as smoking, can affect their vision and were encouraged to look after their eyes by having regular eye tests. They were able to take away pictures of themselves aged 70, based on their current lifestyle.



Be AMD aware

We supported a major campaign to bring home the risks of age-related macular disease to older people in the UK. We’re delighted that the “Be AMD aware” campaign (www.beAMDaware.co.uk) will get the message across about this leading cause of sight loss in the UK.

Preventing AMD

We met with the health authorities to ensure that all patients assessed as suitable for wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD) treatment received it within the target guidelines. Our report on Waiting lists to the All Party Assembly Group on Visual Impairment in October ensured, through the implementation of the UK Vision Strategy in Northern Ireland, that there was full and equitable provision of treatment for wet AMD patients.

Safeguarding eye care services

A massive increase in referrals from optometry to hospital ophthalmology as result of new NICE guidelines on glaucoma management, led to us organizing a meeting of all stakeholders in the eye care field to be held in April 2010. The focus of the Future of Eye Care in NI event will be joint working to improve services for less cost.

Hard to reach

The “Hard to Reach” project, developed in partnership with the Upper Springfield Development Trust, is designed to meet the needs of people living with sight loss in west Belfast. We ran a series of awareness events on the services provided by RNIB and other local organisations, which also helped build up local knowledge and contacts, allowing us to work with local communities, such as Colin and Whiterock, and to make direct contact with local people, referring them onto services, where necessary. In the next stage of the campaign we plan to communicate the eye health message to local groups of older people and those on low incomes. We are currently training people with sight difficulties to deliver this important prevention and sight-saving message through the RNIB Activity Programme in Belfast.

Ground-breaking research

We launched two ground-breaking research reports into the “Future of Sight Loss in the UK”, revealing the true financial burden of sight loss to the nation and proving that sight problems will increase in the future as the population ages.



Claire's story

Claire began to lose her sight as a result of diabetic retinopathy. But she has been able to stay in her busy job as a technical manager at a food company due to the help she received from ECLLO, Susan Caskey.



“When I was diagnosed, I had so many questions. I was thinking, God, am I going to go blind? How’s it going to affect my job?”

But Susan gave me so much support. She told me about all the things I could do to help myself and about the many different support networks. She put me in touch with the employment services and told me about the different software and computer equipment that would help me to continue in my job, if my sight gets worse.

Susan helped me to realise that it wasn’t the end of the world and there were things that would enable me to do my job as well as anyone else. In fact, Susan was the first person who gave me hope.”

Brave new world

Supporting independent living





Losing your sight is not the end of your life – but the start of a new one. We made huge steps in 2009/2010 in helping people who have lost their sight to lead independent lives.

Lisburn in Focus

The innovative “Lisburn in Focus” project was launched in November. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund and delivered by a partnership of RNIB NI, Guide Dogs, Lisburn City Council and Lisburn City Centre Management, the project will create a model of excellence for people with sight loss in the city, improving all aspects of safety, well-being and social inclusion.

As well as working with local blind and partially sighted residents to help them feel secure in their own homes, we aim to help create stress-free journeys around the area, improve experiences when shopping, eating out, using leisure facilities or dealing with public services and promote inclusive, accessible social and cultural events. In addition, the project intends to provide three unemployed people with sight loss with paid, 50-week work placements under the RNIB Trainee Grade Scheme.





Crossing borders

A new three-year inter-regional project, to improve the engagement levels and confidence of sensory disabled people as service users and consumers started in February. Drawing on £1.86million of European funding, the project will focus on the Donegal/Derry and Dundalk/Newry areas and be delivered by RNIB NI in partnership with the National Council of the Blind Ireland (NCBI), DeafHear and RNID NI.

The project will offer confidence building, IT, and active citizenship training for local people with sight and hearing loss. We will also be encouraging FE colleges, libraries and banks to make their services accessible to people with sensory impairment and to become models of good practice. During the project, 340 sensory disabled people and 600 staff providing services will receive training and support to improve and increase service provision.

Our expertise, your entitlement

Last year our specialist advisers in RNIB NI's Benefits Service gained £1.8million in benefits for people with sight loss and their families, and dealt with over 1,700 enquiries. During the severe winter we helped a number of people who could not afford to heat their homes properly and were cutting down on food to pay for extra fuel.



Helping people stay in work

Our Employment Service continued to help people with sight loss into work and to stay in work. Davina is a care assistant who was finding it difficult to work in bright light as a result of the eye condition Uveitis. We carried out an employment assessment which helped put in place a number of adjustments in the care home – allowing her to continue to work without discomfort.

Our Employment Technology team helped make a difference to Jacqueline, an admin officer with NI Water, who had developed Keratoconus. Our assessment recommended magnification software and hardware and Jacqueline was also able to discover that reading text on blue paper significantly reduced the strain on her eyes. With her equipment in place, she is now feeling much more confident about her future.

Alice's story

Alice was referred to us initially for a vocational guidance assessment. The information and advice we gave Alice allowed her to begin our 12-week Work Preparation Programme, where she gained a placement in Marks and Spencer, working in the ladies clothing department and also in the food market. At the end of 12 weeks Alice was registered on New Deal for Disabled, which gave her support in job search, application and interview skills.

Alice said: "I applied for a job in VivoXtra in my local town and, after a successful interview, was offered a job working on the shop floor. My duties are stock replenishment, pricing goods, assisting with customer queries and general house keeping. I'm extremely pleased with all that I have achieved and greatly appreciated the help and support I got from RNIB to enable me to reach my goal of entering employment."



Pride and prejudice

Creating an
inclusive society



We want to make the UK a better place to live if you are blind or partially sighted. Last year we made a big impact on improving travel, shopping and control of money. We also focused on developing better ways to read, watch TV and use technology.

Demanding the Right to Read

More than 400 blind and partially sighted people supported our “Right to Read” Rally outside Stormont in October, showing anger and frustration at their right to information not being met. Only five per cent of printed material is available in alternative formats such as audio, braille and large print. Inside Stormont, the issues were further highlighted as blind and partially sighted people met their local MLAs.



Supporting the event, Chair of the All Party Assembly Group on Visual Impairment, Naomi Long MLA, said: “Access to information is critical to a person’s health and well-being and we hope today’s Right to Read Rally will raise awareness of the importance of providing for people with sight loss in this respect.”

A Resource Centre of excellence

Our Belfast Resource Centre was shortlisted in the Belfast Business Awards 2010 for ‘Customer Service Excellence’. We made the shortlist after a ‘mystery shopper’ visited the centre during February to March and was impressed by our level of service. The Awards, hosted by the City Council in partnership with Belfast City Centre Management, give businesses a unique opportunity to gain recognition for the excellent contribution they make towards the overall development of our city. Amy Stewart, the Resource Centre Manager (pictured below), said: “Getting shortlisted raises our profile in Belfast and is a great recognition of the hard work and dedication of our Resource Centre staff.”



Animal magic

In August we helped Belfast Zoo give people with sight loss the opportunity to touch, feel, hear and smell some of the zoo's most popular residents. This certainly proved to be the case for a group of blind and partially sighted children who were amazed at the strength of a giraffe's tongue, pulling leaves off branches for food, and were excited to meet George the Bearded dragon, Snowball the hedgehog and Samantha the royal python.



RNIB Helpline celebrates its first year!

We responded to over 2,000 requests from customers every working day – that's over 400,000 in the year. We also merged with Action's telephone service so now anyone in need can reach our combined expertise and support with just one number.

Accessible books on the high street

For the first time, anyone can buy a range of large print or braille books through high street stores. Our "Focus on books" campaign was backed by many bestselling authors.

National Library Service

We added 3,000 new book titles to the collection in 2009/10. Our 45,000 members worked their way through nearly two million books last year.

Louise's story

Our Resource Centre supports people with sight loss both through the innovative products we sell to make life easier and also through the service provided by our staff. If we were to highlight the top five qualities in our staff, the Resource Centre Supervisor, Louise, ticks all the boxes:



- ✓ Louise's hard work and dedication won her promotion to supervisor last November.
- ✓ She uses her knowledge of products and services to help customers make the choices which are right for their needs.
- ✓ She embraces opportunities to enhance her skills through training.
- ✓ She offers valuable ideas on how to improve our service.
- ✓ She loves taking on new challenges, such as giving talks at events and going out into the community to promote the Centre.

In short, Louise sets a great example to blind and partially sighted customers, who often ask for her by name when they visit. Her pride in our service shines through.

Making a difference in The Gambia

Our campaigns team leader, Thomas Quigley, alongside two colleagues with sight loss and two guides, visited the Gambian Organisation of the Visually Impaired (GOVI) and their school for blind and partially sighted children in March. The trip was part of a project, developed with Children in Crossfire, to engage, assist and train local people in order to benefit the pupils in the school.

Thomas, said: “We provided music and facilitated musical cultural exchanges with the children; organised sporting workshops, including football and boccia; brought games, toys, daily living aids and some IT equipment with access technology; and recorded interviews with teachers and children for RNIB audio publications. Our trip was also covered on Gambian TV, which helped to raise the profile of GOVI and its school.”

A £400,000 bid has been made to the Department for International Development to establish a resource centre at GOVI and a training programme for teachers.



Helping people find their lives again



None of the amazing achievements mentioned in this review would be possible without the fantastic and tireless endeavours of thousands of donors, volunteers and campaigners. We can only mention a few here, but our heartfelt thanks go out to you all.

President Mary McAleese visits RNIB

Irish President Mary McAleese visited our Belfast HQ in September, toured our Resource Centre and addressed service users, staff and volunteers. Barry Macaulay, Specialist Services Senior Manager said “We were thrilled that President McAleese found time to visit us and take such an interest in our work, it was a great boost to staff, volunteers and service users alike.”



Lost and found

In September we launched our “Lost and found” campaign, asking people “What would you lose if you lost your sight?”, and explaining how together we can help people find their lives again after sight loss. We used the power of empathy to encourage people to think more about sight loss and we will continue to ask our supporters to help people losing their sight, to find their lives again.

Strong links with businesses

British Gas continued to support our “Here to Help” project, enabling us to put £1.5million of unclaimed entitlements into the rightful pockets of people with sight problems.

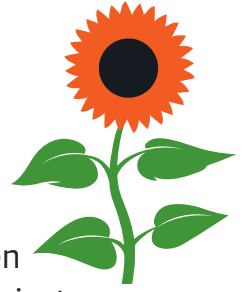
A lasting legacy

Many of our services are only possible because of the support we receive from people who choose to remember blind and partially sighted people in their Will. John Vale is one of the generous supporters who has chosen to leave us a legacy this year:

“I was suicidal when I first lost my sight but then I contacted RNIB. They showed me the practical and useful equipment I needed to make my life easier and I joined their Talking Book Service, which is just out of this world. I got audio description so I could enjoy television again and was introduced to equipment to help me use my computer.

They have shown me there are so many things I can still do and enabled me to enjoy and value my life again. I really don't know where I would be without RNIB and would like to know they will be there to help others in the future.”

Thank you



We are honoured to have the support of some remarkable individuals.

First we are indebted to our Patron – HM The Queen and to our President – His Grace the Duke of Westminster and to our Vice-Presidents

- Sir John Beckwith
- The Rt Hon David Blunkett
- Richard Brewster
- Professor Ian Bruce
- Jeremy Bull
- Jack A Dunn (deceased January 2010)
- Haruhisa Handa
- Euclid Herie
- Lady Joan Jarvis
- Penny Lancaster-Stewart
- Lord Low of Dalston
- Sir Mike Rake
- Dr Dermot Smurfit
- Rod Stewart
- Lord Stockton
- Sir Duncan Watson

We'd like to say a big thank you to the following individuals, companies and trusts who have contributed significantly over the year. Thank you for your donations and support.

- 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- Alcon and Allergen
- Gerry Allen
- Milly Apthorp Charitable Trust
- Lady Ashcroft
- John Atcheson Foundation
- Awards for All NI
- BAND Trust
- Big Lottery Fund NI
- Ms Pattie Boyd
- Ann Brown Charitable Trust
- BBC Children in Need
- Billmeir Charitable Trust
- Booker Prize Foundation
- Boots D&A

- Breakaway Charity
- Richard Brewster
- British Gas
- Brownlie Charitable Trust
- Carmen Butler Charteris Charitable Trust
- C Charitable Trust
- Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust
- Clover Trust
- Mr Cyril Dennis MBE
- Mrs Lisa Dennis
- Eveson Charitable Trust
- Hugh Fraser Foundation
- Mrs Michèle Freedman
- GC Gibson Charitable Settlement
- B & P Glasser Charitable Trust
- Ada Hillard Charitable Trust
- Albert Hunt Charitable Trust
- Jordan Foundation
- JWC Hands Charitable Trust
- Natalie and Ian Livingstone
- Ms Ruth McIntosh
- Man Group plc Charitable Trust
- WT Mattock Charitable Settlement
- Brian Mercer Charitable Trust
- Microsoft
- Millennium Stadium Charitable Trust
- Dr Samad and Mrs Zaibie Munshi
- Northwood Charitable Trust
- Novartis
- Philip and Marjorie Robinson Charitable Trust
- Cecil Rosen Foundation
- Mr Albert Roux OBE
- Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation
- Ms Lyn Schlesinger
- Smith Charitable Trust
- The Souter Charitable Trust
- Doug Squires
- The Tabor Foundation
- Waynflete Charitable Trust
- Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers
- Worshipful Order of Stationers
- WPH Charitable Trust
- Doreen Wragg
- Lennox Wyfold Charitable Trust
- Elizabeth and Prince Zaiger Trust

Many other people have helped RNIB and if we had space we'd like to mention everyone by name.

Contacts

Helpline

For information for you or anyone you know with a sight problem contact our Helpline. You can also order from our extensive range of products and publications. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Calls are charged at local rate although mobile rates may apply and all calls are treated in the strictest confidence.

Telephone 0303 123 9999

Email helpline@rnib.org.uk

Visit **rnib.org.uk** for all the latest information about RNIB.



Leaving a legacy

Including a legacy to RNIB in your Will helps us support people with sight problems for years to come. Our regional Wills and Legacy Advisors offer confidential, impartial advice on the phone or in person:

Telephone 0845 600 0313

Email legacyservices@rnib.org.uk

Visit rnib.org.uk/legacies

Get involved

Fundraising

For information on how you can help us raise the funds we need to keep our services running contact:

Telephone 0845 345 0054

Email fundraising@rnib.org.uk

Visit rnib.org.uk/fundraising

Volunteer

Find out about all our volunteer roles available near you:

Telephone 0845 603 0575

Email volunteering@rnib.org.uk

Visit rnib.org.uk/volunteer



A brief look at our finances

During 2009/2010, £3,519,000 was spent on services for blind and partially sighted people in Northern Ireland. These services were financed by a service income of £1,615,000 with a deficit of £1,904,000 being met by RNIB's voluntary income.

In 2009/2010 RNIB Northern Ireland focused resources on the following areas of work:

Stopping people losing their sight unnecessarily **£176,000**

Supporting independent living **£3,014,000**

Creating an inclusive society **£321,000**

Governance costs **£8,000**

This gives a total expenditure of **£3,519,000**

Extracted from the full Trustees' report and financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2010, as audited by Price Waterhouse Coopers LLP, and available from RNIB's Helpline on 0303 123 9999.




**Great Expectations
Bookmarking success
2009/10**

Audio CD
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226227



**supporting blind and
partially sighted people**



Find out more by visiting us at
rnib.org.uk/northernireland

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