# The jobs that blind and partially sighted people do

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**February 2015**

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## 1. Executive summary

### 1.1 Purpose of this report

RNIB are frequently asked; **“What jobs do blind and partially sighted people do?”** The purpose of this report is an attempt to answer that question by presenting an extensive range of jobs performed by people with sight loss. By adding to the existing evidence base, and consolidating what we already know, this report illustrates how blind and partially sighted people succeed in a wide variety of jobs in almost all employment sectors.

The report presents new findings from an analysis of data taken from the records of RNIB's Employment Services, for more than 500 blind and partially sighted people in work, plus a review of existing knowledge and published data. It also highlights areas where further research could take place.

We hope the report will provide encouragement to blind and partially sighted people trying to find or stay in work; those planning or wishing to develop their career; and for employers and employment professionals supporting individuals on this journey (for example, employment advisors, vocational rehabilitation workers, occupational health providers). It may also help counterbalance preconceived ideas about what careers are suitable for people living with sight loss.

### 1.2 Overview

Blind and partially sighted people are significantly less likely to be in paid employment than the general population or other disabled people. Only one in three people of working age registered as severely sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted) is in paid employment. They are nearly five times more likely than the general population to have had no paid work for five years.

Blind and partially sighted job seekers face additional barriers to employment due to the functional impact of sight loss. As a result, people with sight loss need specialist support on their journey towards employment.

Those in employment also face serious challenges. A significant number of non-working registered blind and partially sighted people said that the main reason for leaving their last job was the onset, or deterioration, of sight loss. Many in this situation also said that they might have been able to continue in their job, given the right support.

However, despite these challenges, blind and partially sighted people succeed in a wide variety of jobs in almost all employment sectors. This report confirms this by presenting new evidence from records of RNIB's Employment Services, relating to over 500 blind and partially sighted people in work. For the first time, there is a breakdown of occupation to 25 sub-major categories of standard occupational classification (SOC) as defined by the UK Office of National Statistics. This is well illustrated in appendix two, where each of the individual job titles has been listed.

At this stage it has not been possible to compare the findings from records of RNIB's Employment Services with those of disabled people as a whole, nor with the general population, as found in the Labour Force Survey. Further research is therefore recommended to make this comparison.

Nevertheless, when data from RNIB's Employment Services is combined with the inventory of job titles, job descriptions and personal testimonies described in appendices three and four, this huge body of evidence provides insight into almost 1000 different jobs being carried out by people living with sight loss. Our findings support those in other published research, which demonstrates that blind and partially sighted people are employed in all nine major SOC occupational groups. At the same time, it challenges prescriptive notions about the kinds of industries and types of jobs blind and partially sighted people might be working in.

It should be noted however that presenting evidence about the types of jobs blind and partially people actually do, in no way infers that these are the only types of jobs that this group of people **can** or **should** do.

### 1.3 Key findings

The following key findings have been drawn from the original research outlined in this report, and therefore relates to those blind and partially sighted people who have been supported by RNIB's employment services in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales from 2011 - 2013, or for whom RNIB carried out a work based assessment in the South West region of England between 2001 and 2008.

* **People with sight loss work in every major category of employment.** Data from RNIB's Employment Services add to published findings from the Labour Force Survey, the Network 1000 reports and from the Association of Guidance and Careers Advisory Services, which show that blind and partially sighted people are employed in all nine major occupational groups.
* **Blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB typically work in professional, associate professional, and administrative roles**. Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) of all work-based assessments carried out were for blind and partially sighted people working in just three of the major occupational categories: administrative and secretarial occupations; professional occupations; and associate professional and technical occupations. Fifty-six per cent of employment outcomes (ie people who found new jobs or were supported to remain in their existing job), were in those categories also.
* **Administration is a common employment destination for people with sight loss supported by RNIB**. Administrative occupations were the single largest sub-major category of employment for blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB.
* **Blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB are most commonly employed by large organisations**. Eighty-two per cent of work-based assessments carried out were for blind and partially sighted people working for large organisations. Fifty-six per cent of people supported into new jobs were also destined for large organisations.
* **More than half of blind and partially sighted people who received a work-based assessment from RNIB between 2001 and 2008 were professionals or associate professionals**. People working in professional occupations accounted for approximately one-in-three work-based assessments (31 per cent) carried out by RNIB between 2001 and 2008. A further 20 per cent were in associate professional and technical occupations.
* **Blind and partially sighted people who received a work-based assessment from RNIB between 2001 and 2008 typically worked in the public sector**. Fifty-six per cent of work-based assessments carried out were for blind and partially sighted people working in the public sector.
* **One in four employment outcomes for blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB are in administrative and secretarial occupations**. The largest employment category was in administrative and secretarial occupations, accounting for more than a quarter (25 per cent) of all employment outcomes for blind and partially sighted people.
* **A typical destination for blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB into new jobs between 2011-2013 was the non-profit sector.** During this time, forty-six per cent of new job outcomes were for blind and partially sighted people working in the non-profit sector, with only 11 per cent in the public sector.

### 1.4 Methods

This report presents new evidence, drawn from records of RNIB's Employment Services, about the jobs blind and partially sighted people do. There are two main data sources:

* **RNIB employment outcomes data**: an analysis of data from 2011-2013 recording new job outcomes, plus jobs that people retained as a result of RNIB support, in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. From 2011-2013 employment teams across those three countries supported 207 people into new jobs and 303 people to retain their existing job.
* **RNIB assessment data**: work-based assessments carried out in the South West region of England from 2001-2008. There are 282 records in this data set.

Both data sets were analysed using SOC, produced by the UK Office of National Statistics (ONS 2000; ONS 2010) - a widely accepted framework for categorising jobs. The jobs performed by blind and partially sighted people are presented at the level of 9 **major** and 25 **sub-major** classification groups (listed in appendix one).

Any ambiguous records were removed from the samples (for example, where it was difficult to categorise the job role according to the ONS classifications). Each job title was compared with, and then allocated to, a unit group level, of which there are 369. Further analysis was carried out (when available), which categorised each job according to job sector (public, private, non-profit, self employed), and size of the employer (micro, small, medium, large). Further details can be found in the relevant sections.

Caution should be exercised in generalising these findings however, as the records of RNIB's Employment Services are limited to specific geographical areas, and restricted to those people referred to, or presenting as customers or clients of, RNIB. The sample is therefore not necessarily representative of the wider UK population or other countries.

Whilst the main body of this report draws evidence from records of RNIB's Employment Services, we have also reviewed academic papers, large-scale population surveys, and personal case studies, drawn mainly from third sector organisations working with blind and partially sighted people. Although the research primarily focussed on the United Kingdom, we also considered the jobs that blind and partially sighted people are doing in other countries as well. This review of knowledge is summarised in the main body of the report, with more detailed information contained in the appendices.

Appendix two, for example, includes extensive lists of the types of jobs blind and partially sighted people carry out in the UK, and appendix four describes the type of jobs carried out in different parts of the world. The appendices also contain evidence that compares the occupations of blind and partially sighted people with that of other disabled people, and with the general population. Appendix three contains sections on the UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Association of Guidance and Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), which are especially useful.

### 1.5 Terminology

The following terms and definitions are used in this report:

* **RNIB employment outcomes data**: this is the general term used to describe data collected in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland from 2011-2013. It includes two different kinds of outcomes achieved by RNIB employment professionals working with blind and partially sighted clients. These are new job outcomes, and clients supported to remain in their existing jobs, described as retention clients.

* **New job outcomes**: a new job is any role, regardless of hours worked or length of contract, that a client has secured with RNIB support.
* **Retention clients**: a retention client is someone RNIB has supported to remain in work.
* **RNIB assessment data**: this is the general term used to describe work-based assessments carried out in the South West region of England from 2001-2008.
* **Work-based assessments**: a work-based assessment is a specialist service delivered by RNIB, which involves a visit to a workplace by an employment or access technology specialist, to evaluate the potential for workplace adjustments that allow a blind or partially sighted person to better fulfil their role. Work-based assessments are carried out for a range of blind and partially sighted people, such as:
* individuals who have just started in a new job
* individuals who have been in a role for some time and are adjusting to recent sight loss
* individuals who have changed jobs as a result of recent sight loss.
* **Large employers**: defined as having more than 250 employees.
* **Medium-sized employers**: defined as having between 50 and 250 employees.
* **Small employers**: defined as having between 10 and 50 employees.
* **Micro employers**: defined as having less than 10 employees (European Commission, 2014).

## 2. Introduction to the main report

RNIB are frequently asked; **“What jobs do blind and partially sighted people do?”** The purpose of this report is an attempt to answer that question by presenting an extensive range of jobs performed by people with sight loss. By adding to the existing evidence base, and consolidating what we already know, this report illustrates how blind and partially sighted people succeed in a wide variety of jobs in almost all employment sectors.

The report presents new findings from an analysis of data taken from the records of RNIB's Employment Services, for more than 500 blind and partially sighted people in work, plus a review of existing knowledge and published data. It also highlights areas where further research could take place.

We hope the report will provide encouragement to blind and partially sighted people trying to find or stay in work; those planning or wishing to develop their career; and for employers and employment professionals supporting individuals on this journey (for example, employment advisors, vocational rehabilitation workers, occupational health providers). It may also help counterbalance preconceived ideas about what careers are suitable people living with sight loss.

## 3. Employment statistics

### 3.1 UK working age population

There are approximately 84,000 registered blind and partially sighted people of working age in the UK (RNIB 2014a). However, according to the LFS, around 113,000 people of working age in the UK self-report that they are “long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty”. Included in this population are people with the most severe sight loss (ie people on the register), and in addition, those who may not be eligible for registration but whose sight loss still impacts on their ability to work or the job they can do (Hewett with Keil, 2014).

### 3.2 UK working age employment figures

There are two main research studies that focus on the employment status of people with sight loss. The Network 1000 reports (Douglas et al, 2006; 2009), which draw from a representative sample of people who are registered as blind or partially sighted; and RNIB's secondary analysis of the LFS (Hewett, 2013; Hewett and Douglas, 2011; Hewett with Keil, 2014; Hewett with Keil, 2015; Meager and Carter, 2008).

#### 3.2.1 Network 1000

The main report from Network 1000 (NW1000) presents a summary of data collected through 1,007 interviews with blind and partially sighted people in Great Britain. The interviews were carried out between spring 2005 and spring 2006.

Registered blind and partially sighted people are significantly less likely to be in paid employment than the general population or other disabled people. Looking at people of working age in 2008, 33 per cent of registered blind and partially sighted people were in paid employment, compared to 77 per cent of the general population (Clements and Douglas, 2009).

People registered as blind or partially sighted are more likely to have been without paid employment for longer than the general population. In 2008, 55 per cent of registered blind or partially sighted people were "not in paid employment for five years or more" compared to 12 per cent of the general population (Clement and Douglas, 2009).

#### 3.2.2 Labour Force Survey

The LFS divides blind and partially sighted people into two groups:

* People who through self-report are defined as “long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty”.
* People who through self-report are defined as not disabled, but who have a seeing difficulty. These people state that their sight loss does not affect the type of work they can do or the number of hours they can work.

The employment statistics taken from the LFS relate to people defined as, “long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty”. The LFS found that employment rates were approximately 46 per cent for people “long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty”, compared to 72 per cent of all working age people. Lower levels of employment amongst people who were “long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty” were found even when age was taken into account. That is, across all age bands in the LFS, people who were “long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty” were less likely to be in employment compared to all working age people (Hewett with Keil, 2014).

People who are “long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty” are also more likely than the general population to have been out of work for 12 months or more. Hewett with Keil (2014) reported that 46 per cent of people “long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty” were out of work compared to 34 per cent of all people of working age.

## 4. Methodology

This report presents new evidence, drawn from records of RNIB's Employment Services, about the jobs blind and partially sighted people do. There are two main data sources:

* **RNIB employment outcomes data**: an analysis of data from 2011-2013 recording new job outcomes, plus jobs that people retained as a result of RNIB support, in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. From 2011-2013 employment teams across those three countries supported 207 people into new jobs and 303 people to retain their existing job.
* **RNIB assessment data**: work-based assessments carried out in the South West region of England from 2001-2008. There are 282 records in this data set.

Both data sets were analysed using SOC, produced by the UK Office of National Statistics (ONS 2000; ONS 2010) - a widely accepted framework for categorising jobs. The jobs performed by blind and partially sighted people are presented at the level of 9 **major** and 25 **sub-major** classification groups (listed in appendix one).

Any ambiguous records were removed from the samples (for example, where it was difficult to categorise the job role according to the ONS classifications). Each job title was compared with, and then allocated to, a unit group level, of which there are 369. Further analysis was carried out (when available), which categorised each job according to job sector (public, private, non-profit, self employed), and size of the employer (micro, small, medium, large). Further details can be found in the relevant sections.

Caution should be exercised in generalising these findings however, as the records of RNIB's Employment Services are limited to specific geographical areas, and restricted to those people referred to, or presenting as customers or clients of, RNIB. The sample is therefore not necessarily representative of the wider UK population or other countries.

RNIB employment outcomes data relates to people who have been supported by RNIB employment services in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales between 2011 and 2013. We don’t have any data for England during this time, and therefore cannot say that the jobs described here are representative of all new jobs, or retained jobs, by blind and partially sighted people of working age throughout the UK. Nor can we say that the people supported by RNIB during this time are representative of all working age blind and partially sighted people as a whole. They are simply the people who sought support from, or referred to, RNIB at that time.

Similarly, RNIB assessment data relates to people of working age who received a work-based assessment in the South West region of England between 2001 and 2008. Again, the jobs described here may not be representative of all jobs undertaken by blind and partially sighted people in the South West region at that time, or indeed throughout England (or the UK). Furthermore, the individuals who received a work-based assessment may not be representative of all blind and partially sighted people in work.

By way of comparison, the Network 1000 research described earlier was based on a sampling process carefully designed to generate a random sample, stratified and weighted for age, which is therefore statistically robust (ie unbiased), while still containing a range of people of different ages. As a result, the information can be generalised to the registered blind and partially sighted population in England, Wales and Scotland.

The LFS is similarly robust; it is a large scale survey carried out on behalf of the UK government on a quarterly basis, and is the main source of official employment data in the UK. In spite of the undoubted strengths of the LFS probability-based sample, the number of people who describe themselves as having a seeing difficulty every quarter is relatively small. Therefore, the secondary analysis carried out by RNIB aggregates the data over 12 quarters, which considerably increases our confidence that the findings are representative of working age blind and partially sighted people as a whole (Hewitt with Keil, 2014).

Data from records of RNIB's Employment Services is indicative only of the types of jobs that blind and partially sighted people do. The limitations of this evidence and recommendations for further research are outlined in section 10.

## 5. Definitions and terminology

The following terms and definitions are used in this report:

* **RNIB employment outcomes data**: this is the general term used to describe data collected in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland from 2011-2013. It includes two different kinds of outcomes achieved by RNIB employment professionals working with blind and partially sighted clients. These are new job outcomes, and clients supported to remain in their existing jobs, described as retention clients.

* **New job outcomes**: a new job is any role, regardless of hours worked or length of contract, that a client has secured with RNIB support.
* **Retention clients**: a retention client is someone RNIB has supported to remain in work.
* **RNIB assessment data**: this is the general term used to describe work-based assessments carried out in the South West region of England from 2001-2008.
* **Work-based assessments**: a work-based assessment is a specialist service delivered by RNIB, which involves a visit to a workplace by an employment or access technology specialist, to evaluate the potential for workplace adjustments that allow a blind or partially sighted person to better fulfil their role. Work-based assessments are carried out for a range of blind and partially sighted people, such as:
* individuals who have just started in a new job
* individuals who have been in a role for some time and are adjusting to recent sight loss
* individuals who have changed jobs as a result of recent sight loss.
* **Large employers**: defined as having more than 250 employees.
* **Medium-sized employers**: defined as having between 50 and 250 employees.
* **Small employers**: defined as having between 10 and 50 employees.
* **Micro employers**: defined as having less than 10 employees (European Commission, 2014).

## 6. Review of current knowledge

There is no single data source that tells us what types of jobs, or what sectors of the economy, blind and partially sighted are employed in. We discovered information in academic papers, published reports, large-scale population surveys and a number of case studies, drawn mainly from third sector organisations working with blind and partially sighted people. The journal articles offer an international perspective; UK statistical data provide the means to make comparisons between major job categories based on standard occupational classifications, whilst individual case studies from around the world bring personal experience to life.

There was a lot more information than expected, but significant differences in content and structure posed particular difficulties. For example, different sources invariably used contrasting methodologies for grouping jobs, and so were not always comparable to each other. The report highlights potential areas for comparative analysis between records of RNIB's Employment Services and any of the listed sources, for example with the LFS or NW1000 data. Due to the large amount of information available, and the wide variation in style and academic rigour, this review of current knowledge presents a summary of each resource under three general headings:

* RNIB and Action for Blind People sources
* Other UK sources
* International sources

The appendices contain a great deal more information from each source. For example, sections on the LFS and AGCAS contain tables that compare the employment destinations of blind and partially sighted people with other disabled people, and with the general population as a whole. There are also extensive lists of individual job titles; all 571 jobs from the records of RNIB's Employment Services described here are listed in appendix two, whilst appendix three and appendix four contain job details from other UK and international sources respectively.

### 6.1 RNIB and Action for Blind People sources

#### 6.1.1 Labour Force Survey

RNIB commissions an annual, secondary analysis of the quarterly LFS (Hewitt with Keil, 2015). These reports provide detailed analysis of the employment status and economic activity of blind and partially sighted people compared with the general population. The LFS uses the SOC system to categorise different jobs according to the set of major and minor sub-groups (ONS 2000; ONS 2010). These reports show that blind and partially sighted people are employed in all nine major occupational groups. Appendix three contains tables that compare the types of jobs performed by blind and partially sighted people with the general population, and there is scope to compare the data from RNIB's Employment Services presented in this report with the LFS data.

#### 6.1.2 RNIB

RNIB has published five reports from around the UK under the title, “This IS working personal stories” (RNIB, 2014b). These 45 case studies show how blind and partially sighted people are developing and sustaining different careers. The RNIB website also contains a further ten employment success stories (five audio clips and five written accounts) (RNIB, 2014c).

#### 6.1.3 Action for Blind People

The Action for Blind People (Action) website showcases 16 employers who have received its ‘See the Capability, Not the Disability’ award, and within each presentation there is information about the jobs blind and partially sighted individuals perform for these employers (Action for Blind People, 2014a). There is also a podcast on the website, which can be downloaded and listened to, in which an individual describes their role as a support worker (Action for Blind People, 2014b).

#### 6.1.4 RNIB employment outcomes data

In 2008/09 RNIB began to systematically record and categorise the job titles and employers of people supported into work by RNIB (Davies, 2014; Sital-Singh, 2013; Slade, 2009).

### 6.2 Other UK sources

#### 6.2.1 Network 1000

The NW1000 reports (Douglas et al, 2006; 2009) give a snapshot of working age people’s perceptions of employment and employability, as well as some general information about the types of jobs blind and partially people were doing at that time (Douglas et al, 2006). There is scope to compare the data from RNIB's Employment Services presented in this report with Network 1000 data.

#### 6.2.2 Association of Guidance and Careers Advisory Services

AGCAS produces an annual report, **'**What Happens Next', which summarises the first destinations of disabled graduates. Since 2008 the report has shown the employment destination of blind and partially sighted graduates based on the SOC tables. As with the LFS data, these reports show that blind and partially sighted graduates are employed in all nine major occupational groups. Appendix three contains a table describing the employment destinations of blind and partially sighted graduates from 2006 to 2010, as well a table from 2010 comparing the employment destinations of blind and partially sighted people with graduates with other disabilities.

### 6.3 International sources

#### 6.3.1 European Blind Union

The European Blind Union (EBU) website contains an extensive database of over 100 case studies, highlighting a large range of jobs undertaken by blind and partially sighted people across Europe. The site further identifies those jobs that are undertaken by people who are totally blind (European Blind Union, 2014).

#### 6.3.2 World Blind Union

The World Blind Union (WBU) is the global organisation that seeks to represent the estimated 285 million people worldwide who are blind or partially sighted. Project Aspiro, WBU’s career planning and employment resource, contains seven short films based around personal interviews with blind and partially sighted people in work (World Blind Union, 2014).

#### 6.3.3 A glance at worldwide employment of people with visual impairments (Wolffe and Spungin, 2002)

Articles on employment tend to concentrate on the numbers of blind and partially sighted people in work, and the predictors of employment, as opposed to the jobs they are performing, for example see Clements et al, 2011; Lee and Park, 2008; Wolffe et al, 2013a. However, as part of efforts by the World Blind Union to generate an index of jobs being performed by blind and partially sighted people in membership countries, 102 surveys from 75 countries provided information about:

* the top three jobs in which the greatest number of blind people, and partially sighted people, are employed
* jobs performed by people according to different levels of schooling
* the top three jobs with the highest pay across both groups (Wolffe and Spungin, 2002).

#### 6.3.4 Hidden majority summary report (Simkiss and Reid, 2013)

This report focuses on the operation of employment services for blind and partially sighted people in Sweden, Germany, Romania, Poland, Austria, Netherlands and France, and their impact on that target population. It doesn’t report specifically on the types of jobs blind and partially sighted people do, but there is some useful information within the report (Simkiss and Reid, 2013).

#### 6.3.5 American Foundation for the Blind

The CareerConnect information resource on the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) website provides information on the wide variety of jobs performed by blind and partially sighted people across America (AFB, 2014a). AFB also runs an extensive mentoring service, and the website contains accounts from CareerConnect mentors of working as an employee who is blind or partially sighted (AFB, 2014b).

#### 6.3.6 Working with visual impairment in Nigeria: a qualitative look at employment status (Wolffe et al, 2013b)

One hundred and seventy-two Nigerians responded to a survey exploring the attributes of a group of employed adults who were blind or partially sighted. Although job roles was not the primary focus of the report, the article contained useful information on the jobs people who took part in the survey were performing (Wolffe et al, 2013b).

#### 6.3.7 Vision Australia

Vision Australia (a not-for-profit national provider of services to blind and partially sighted people in Australia) has a website containing three short films, similar to those on WBU’s site (Vision Australia, 2014).

#### 6.3.8 Blind Foundation (New Zealand)

The Blind Foundation (New Zealand's main not-for-profit provider of sight loss related services), has some information about the types of jobs blind and partially sighted people do across the country (Blind Foundation, 2014).

The remainder of this report presents new evidence, drawn from records of RNIB's Employment Services as described above, about the jobs blind and partially sighted people do.

## 7. RNIB employment outcomes between 2011-2013

This section draws on an analysis of outcome data collected by RNIB's Employment Services in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales from 2011 - 2013 (Sital-Singh 2013). During that time, 207 people were supported into new jobs and 303 people supported to retain their existing job (ie retention clients) in those three countries.

More detailed analysis of RNIB employment outcome data can be found in its latest employment outcome report (Davies 2014).

The evidence on the types of jobs blind and partially sighted people have secured or retained has been analysed using ONS standard occupational classifications (ONS 2010). There is additional information relating to the size and type of employer, but only in relation to new job outcomes. The data can be described as a 'convenience sample' (ie. a collection of people that are easily accessible, rather than a cross-section of the population).

### 7.1 Analysis of employment outcomes between 2011-2013

#### 7.1.1 Type of job

Figure 1: A percentage breakdown of employment outcomes in each major occupation group between 2011-2013



##### 7.1.1.1 SOC major occupation groups

Figure 1 shows a breakdown of employment outcomes using the SOC 2010 major groups. This data was available for 289 people; 194 new job outcomes, and 95 retention clients.

In summary, 4.5 per cent of jobs have been classified as management, directors and senior officials (n=13/289), 15.2 per cent as professional occupations (n=44/289), 14.9 per cent as associate professional and technical occupations (n=43/289), 25.6 per cent as administrative and secretarial occupations (n=74/289), 11.4 per cent as skilled trades occupations (n=33/289), 5.9 per cent as caring, leisure and other service occupations (n=17/289), 12.5 per cent as sales and customer service occupations (n=36/289), 2.4 per cent as process, plant and machine occupations (n=7/289), and 7.6 per cent as elementary occupations (n=22/289).

* The largest percentage total of employment outcomes was in administrative and secretarial occupations (25.6 per cent)
* The smallest percentage total of employment outcomes was in process, plant and machine operatives (2.4 per cent).
* Professional occupations and associate professional and technical occupations accounted for over 30 per cent of all employment outcomes.
* Administrative and secretarial occupations; professional occupations and associate professional and technical occupations accounted for more than half (55.7 per cent) of all employment outcomes.

Table 1 below gives the number of people in each major classification group, as well as total number of people overall. The percentage figure this represents is also shown in the table.

Table 1: Percentage and actual number of employment outcomes in each major occupation group between 2011-2013

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Occupational category** | **Number of people** | **Total number of people**  | **Percentage** |
| Managers, directors and senior officials | 13 | 289 | 4.5% |
| Professional occupations | 44 | 289 | 15.2% |
| Associate professional and technical occupations | 43 | 289 | 14.9% |
| Administrative and secretarial occupations | 74 | 289 | 25.6% |
| Skilled trades occupations | 33 | 289 | 11.4% |
| Caring, leisure and other service occupations | 17 | 289 | 5.9% |
| Sales and customer service occupations | 36 | 289 | 12.5% |
| Process, plant and machine operatives | 7 | 289 | 2.4% |
| Elementary occupations | 22 | 289 | 7.6% |

##### 7.1.1.2 SOC sub-major occupation groups

Each major group has been further divided into sub-major groups of occupations. The number of blind and partially sighted people working in each sub-major group is shown in Table 2, below. Percentage figures (in brackets) relate to the number of people within each sub-major group as a percentage of the major category, rather than as a percentage of the sample as a whole.

Table 2: Percentage and actual number of employment outcomes in each sub-major occupation group between 2011-2013

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Occupational category** | **Number and percentage**  |
| **Managers, directors and senior officials** | **13/289** **(4.5%)** |
| Corporate managers and directors | 7 (54%)\* |
| Other managers and proprietors | 6 (46%) |
| **Professional occupations** | **44/289 (15.2%)** |
| Business, media and public service professionals | 24 (55%) |
| Health professionals | 13 (30%) |
| Science, research, engineering and technology professionals | 2 (5%) |
| Teaching and educational professionals | 5 (11%) |
| **Associate professional and technical occupations** | **43/289 (14.9%)** |
| Business and public service associate professionals | 11 (26%) |
| Culture, media and sports occupations | 3 (7%) |
| Health and social care associate professionals | 27 (63%) |
| Protective service occupations | 1 (2%) |
| Science, engineering and technology associate professionals | 1 (2%) |
| **Administrative and secretarial occupations** | **74/289 (25.6%)** |
| Administrative occupations | 59 (80%) |
| Secretarial and related occupations | 15 (20%) |
| **Skilled trades occupations** | **33/289 (11.4%)** |
| Skilled construction and building trades | 1 (3%) |
| Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades | 2 (6%) |
| Textiles, printing and other skilled trades | 30 (91%) |
| Skilled agricultural and related trades | None |
| **Caring, leisure and other service occupations** | **17/289** **(5.9%)** |
| Caring personal service occupations | 11 (65%) |
| Leisure, travel and personal service occupations | 6 (35%) |
| **Sales and customer service occupations** | **36/289 (12.5%)** |
| Customer service occupations | 20 (56%) |
| Sales occupations | 16 (44%) |
| **Process, plant and machine operatives** | **7/289** **(2.4%)** |
| Process, plant and machine operatives | 5 (71%) |
| Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives | 2 (29%) |
| **Elementary occupations** | **22/289** **(7.6%)** |
| Elementary administration and service occupations | 11 (50%) |
| Elementary trades and related occupations | 11 (50%) |

\*Percentages have been rounded up to the nearest whole number

The largest number of employment outcomes were in administrative occupations (n=59/289). This was followed by textiles, printing and other skilled trades (n=30/289), and health and social care associate professionals (n=27/289). The overwhelming majority of jobs in the textiles, printing and other skilled trades category were in catering (n=28/30); for example, baker, chef and a variety of catering and catering assistant roles.

The fewest number of employment outcomes were in: protective service occupations; science, engineering and technology associate professionals; and skilled construction and building trades, with only one in each category (n=1/289).

Only one sub-major category was not represented in the employment outcomes data: skilled agricultural and related trades.

Caution should be exercised in generalising these findings however, as the records of RNIB's Employment Services are limited to specific geographical areas, and restricted to those people referred to, or presenting as, customers or clients of RNIB. The sample is therefore not necessarily representative of the wider UK population or other countries.

#### 7.2.1 Employment sector

Figure 2: A percentage breakdown of new job outcomes according to employment sector between 2011-2013



Figure 2 shows the breakdown of new job outcomes only by job sector. This data was not available for retention clients. The above table relates to 193 new job outcomes reported between 2011 and 2013.

Forty-one per cent of new job outcomes were in the private sector, 11 per cent in the public sector, 46 per cent in the non-profit sector, and 2 per cent in self-employment. The data shows that nearly half of all new job outcomes came in the non-profit sector.

#### 7.3.1 Size of employer

Figure 3: A percentage breakdown of new job outcomes according to the size of employer between 2011-2013



Figure 3 shows the breakdown of new job outcomes according to the size of the employer. This data was not available for retention clients. The above table relates to 179 new job outcomes reported over the two years. Large employers are defined as having more than 250 employees, medium between 50 and 250, small between 10 and 50, and micro as less than 10 (European Commission, 2014).

Fifty-six per cent of new job outcomes were in large organisations, 10 per cent were in medium sized organisations, 26 per cent were in small organisations, and 8 per cent were in micro organisations.

The data shows that across the two years, just over half of all blind and partially sighted people supported into employment, gained work with large employers.

## 8. RNIB work-based assessments between 2001-2008

This section presents employment data from work-based assessments carried out by RNIB in the South West region of England between 2001 and 2008. There are 282 records in this data set, which constitutes a significant number of all work-based assessments carried out by the organisation during this time.

### 8.1 Analysis of work-based assessments between 2001 - 2008

#### 8.1.1 Type of job

Figure 4: A percentage breakdown of jobs held by clients who received a work-based assessment in each major occupation group 2001-2008



##### 8.1.1.1 SOC major occupation groups

Figure 4 shows the classification of job based on SOC2010 Standard Occupation Classification major groups.

In summary, 3.5 per cent of jobs have been classified as management, directors and senior officials (n=10/282), 31.6 per cent as professional occupations (n=89/282), 20.6 per cent as associate professional and technical occupations (n=58/282), 20.9 per cent as administrative and secretarial occupations (n=59/282), 2.1 per cent as skilled trade occupations (n=6/282), 2.5 per cent as caring, leisure and other service occupations (n=7/282), 18.4 per cent as sales and customer service occupations (n=52/282), and 0.4 per cent as elementary occupations (n=1/282).

* The largest percentage total of work-based assessments were for professional occupations (31.6 per cent)
* There were no work-based assessments carried out for process, plant and machine operatives, and less than 1 per cent for elementary occupations (0.4 per cent).
* Professional occupations and associate professional and technical occupations accounted for over 50 per cent of all work-based assessments (total = 52.2 per cent).
* One third, or three of the nine categories, contained over 70 per cent of all work-based assessments: administrative and secretarial occupations; professional occupations and associate professional and technical occupations (total = 73.1 per cent).

Table 3 below gives the number of people in each major classification group, as well as total number of people overall. The percentage figure this represents is also shown in the table.

Table 3: Percentage and actual number of people who received a work-based assessment in each major occupation group between 2001-2008

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Occupational category** | **Number of people** | **Total number of people**  | **Percentage** |
| Managers, directors and senior officials | 10 | 282 | 3.5% |
| Professional occupations | 89 | 282 | 31.6% |
| Associate professional and technical occupations | 58 | 282 | 20.6% |
| Administrative and secretarial occupations | 59 | 282 | 20.9% |
| Skilled trades occupations | 6 | 282 | 2.1% |
| Caring, leisure and other service occupations | 7 | 282 | 2.5% |
| Sales and customer service occupations | 52 | 282 | 18.4% |
| Process, plant and machine operatives | 0 | 282 | N/A |
| Elementary occupations | 1 | 282 | 0.4% |

##### 8.1.1.2 SOC sub-major occupation groups

Each major group has been further divided into sub-major groups of occupations. The number of blind and partially sighted people working in each sub-major group is shown in Table 4, below. Percentage figures (in brackets) relate to the number of people within each sub-major group as a percentage of the major category, rather than as a percentage of the sample as a whole.

Table 4: Percentage and actual number of people who received a work-based assessment in each sub-major occupation group between 2001-2008

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Occupational category** | **Number and percentage** |
| **Managers, directors and senior officials** | **10/282****(3.5%)** |
| Corporate managers and directors | 9 (90%)\* |
| Other managers and proprietors | 1 (10%) |
| **Professional occupations** | **89/282****(31.6%)** |
| Business, media and public service professionals | 37 (42%) |
| Health professionals | 22 (25%) |
| Science, research, engineering and technology professionals | 10 (11%) |
| Teaching and educational professionals | 20 (22%) |
| **Associate professional and technical occupations** | **58/282****(20.6%)** |
| Business and public service associate professionals | 30 (52%) |
| Culture, media and sports occupations | 4 (7%) |
| Health and social care associate professionals | 14 (24%) |
| Protective service occupations | 3(5%) |
| Science, engineering and technology associate professionals | 7(12%) |
| **Administrative and secretarial occupations** | **59/282****(20.9%)** |
| Administrative occupations | 47 (80%) |
| Secretarial and related occupations | 12 (20%) |
| **Skilled trades occupations** | **6/282****(2.1%)** |
| Skilled construction and building trades | None |
| Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades | 3 (50%) |
| Textiles, printing and other skilled trades | 2 (33%) |
| Skilled agricultural and related trades | 1 (17%) |
| **Caring, leisure and other service occupations** | **7/282****(2.5%)** |
| Caring personal service occupations | 4 (57%) |
| Leisure, travel and personal service occupations | 3 (43%) |
| **Sales and customer service occupations** | **52/282****(18.4%)** |
| Customer service occupations | 43 (83%) |
| Sales occupations | 9 (17%) |
| **Process, plant and machine operatives** | **0/282****(0%)** |
| Process, plant and machine operatives | None |
| Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives | None |
| **Elementary occupations** | **1/282****(0.4%)** |
| Elementary administration and service occupations |  1 (100%) |
| Elementary trades and related occupations |  None  |

\*Percentages have been rounded up to the nearest whole number

The biggest number of work-based assessments were carried out for administrative occupations (n=47/282). This was followed by customer service occupations (n=43/282), and business, media and public service professionals (n=37/282).

The fewest number of work-based assessments were carried out for; other managers and proprietors, skilled agricultural and related trades, and elementary administration and service occupations, with only one in each category (n=1/282).

Several sub-major categories were not represented at all in the data. Skilled construction and building trades (skilled trades occupations); process, plant and machine operatives and transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives (process, plant and machine operatives); and elementary trades and related occupations (elementary occupations) had no work-based assessments carried out at all.

Once again, caution should be exercised in generalising these findings, as the records of RNIB's Employment Services are limited to specific geographical areas, and restricted to those people referred to, or presenting as, customers or clients of RNIB. The sample is therefore not necessarily representative of the wider UK population or other countries.

#### 8.2.1 Employment sector

Figure 5: A percentage breakdown of work-based assessments according to employment sector between 2001-2008



Figure 5 shows the breakdown of new job outcomes by job sector.

Fifty-six per cent of work-based assessments were for blind and partially sighted people working in the public sector, 33 per cent in the private sector, 3 per cent in the non-profit sector, and 7 per cent for those who were self employed.

The employment destination of clients who received a work-based assessment is in marked contrast to those finding new jobs, described in the previous section (employment outcome data). Fifty-six per cent of clients who had a work-based assessment were employed in the public sector, compared to only 11 per cent of new job outcomes. Only 3 per cent of work-based assessment clients were employed in the non-profit sector, compared to 46 per cent of new job outcomes.

The work-based assessment data covers the period 2001-2008, when the public sector was much larger than it was at the time the employment outcome data was gathered (2011-2013). The evidence appears to reflect the shrinking of the public sector after the 2008 recession. However, this is not a like-for-like comparison, so caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions from this information.

#### 8.3.1 Size of employer

Figure 6: A percentage breakdown of work-based assessments according to the size of employer between 2001-2008



Figure 6 shows the breakdown of work-based assessments according to the size of the employer. Large employers were defined as having more than 250 employees, medium were between 50 and 250, small were between 10 and 50, and micro were less than 10.

Eighty-two per cent of work-based assessments were for blind and partially sighted people working in large organisations, 4 per cent were in medium sized and also small sized organisations, 7 per cent were in micro organisations. The data shows that just over four out of every five jobs that had a work-based assessment were in large organisations. This compares to just over half of the new job outcomes, described in the employment outcome data.

Less than 15 per cent of clients were in micro, small or medium sized organisations at the time the work-based assessment data was generated (2001-2008), compared to more than 40 per cent in the same sized organisations at the time the employment outcome data was collected (2011-2013). The shift from large scale employers to smaller employers seems to reflect changing patterns in employment trends, although once again, caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from these findings.

## 9. Conclusions

Blind and partially sighted people succeed in a wide variety of jobs in almost all employment sectors. This report adds weight to this claim, by presenting new evidence from records of RNIB's Employment Services, relating to 571 blind and partially sighted people in work. Anyone wishing to learn about the types of job some blind and partially sighted people carry out need only turn to appendix two, where each of these jobs has been listed. Combined with the inventory of job titles, job descriptions and personal testimonies described in appendices 3 and 4, this large body of evidence provides insight into almost 1000 different jobs being performed by people with sight loss. The report also supports published research which demonstrates that blind and partially sighted people are employed in all nine major occupational groups, as defined by standard occupational classification.

Caution should be exercised in generalising these findings however, as the records of RNIB's Employment Services are limited to specific geographical areas, and restricted to those people referred to, or presenting as, customers or clients of RNIB. The sample is therefore not necessarily representative of the wider UK population or other countries.

Beyond this, data from RNIB's Employment Services do suggest some broad trends:

* The work-based assessments data from 2001-2008 appears to suggest that blind and partially sighted people requiring this service were in more senior positions. People working in professional occupations accounted for the largest number of work-based assessments, which combined with people employed in associate professional and technical occupations, accounted for over 50 per cent of all work-based assessments.
* The employment outcomes data from 2011-2013, which is more recent, shows that there are a large number of administrative, and sales and customer service occupations. One in four employment outcomes for blind and partially sighted people were in administrative and secretarial occupations. More recent evidence from RNIB mirrors these findings, suggesting that RNIB clients commonly find work in secretarial and administrative roles or sales and customer service roles (Davies, 2014).

The above observations could be explained by the fact that a significant proportion of work-based assessments are carried out for people who have established careers, and therefore hold more senior positions, but require support to continue in their existing role. Many new jobs on the other hand, tend to be at entry-level or less senior positions. However, further research would be required to test this proposition.

* Blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB who had a work-based assessment, typically worked in the public sector.
* Blind and partially sighted people supported into new jobs were typically employed in the non-profit sector. The latest evidence from RNIB suggests that the non-profit sector continues to be the most common employment destination for people moving into work (Davies, 2014).
* The number of blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB working in smaller sized organisations appears to be increasing. Less than 15 per cent of work-based assessments carried out from 2001-2008 were for blind and partially sighted people working in micro, small or medium sized organisations. However, from 2011-2013 over 40 per cent of blind and partially people were supported into new jobs in micro, small or medium sized organisations.

These observations appear to be indicative of the changing job market, but only in the broadest sense of a shrinking public sector and an increase in small and medium sized employers. However, further research will be required before any such conclusions can be drawn.

### 9.1 Limitations of the evidence

Data from RNIB's Employment Services presented here has not been compared with the wider disabled population, or with the general population as a whole (for example through the LFS data). Therefore it is difficult to ascertain if the number of blind and partially sighted people in each respective occupational group is similar, or markedly different, from what is happening in the wider employment sector. The report does suggest that the types of jobs RNIB clients are doing might be changing over time; but only in the broadest sense, and comes with caution about comparing the two data sets.

More generally, there are no clues as to the impact of Government welfare to work programmes on blind and partially sighted people’s level of employment, or the role of training in disability-specific skills in the recruitment and retention of blind and partially sighted people. Employer perceptions of blind and partially sighted employees, and their effect on recruitment decisions, are not considered.

Finally, the aim of this review is to present all of the information currently available about the types of jobs blind and partially sighted people do. As a result, a variety of very different kinds of evidence, of varying quality, has been described; which makes direct comparisons difficult. As an example, case study stories give no indication of the number of people performing that role in each country, and how this compares with the general population as a whole.

### 9.2 Suggestions for future research

There are a number of suggestions for future research in the UK.

* Further analysis using this RNIB data, for example by comparing the data with employment trends in the general population.
* Further analysis using this RNIB data, and/or other sources cited in this report, to identify jobs performed solely by people registered as severely sight impaired (blind).
* Further research into the types of new jobs blind and partially sighted people are moving into, compared to people being supported to retain their jobs; with a particular focus on the factors that account for the similarities and differences between the different groups.
* Qualitative analysis to identify enablers and barriers to employment for blind and partially sighted people, illustrated by a focus on specific job roles.
* Employer knowledge of, and attitudes toward, employees who are blind and partially sighted; and the effect this has on the types of jobs available to people with sight loss.

### 9.3 Closing remarks

The main strength of this report is that it presents new data from records of RNIB's Employment Services relating to 571 blind and partially sighted people in work, and provides a breakdown of these jobs to the level of 25 sub-major categories of employment. The report also contains a wider body of evidence, which supports the view that blind and partially sighted people are employed in a variety of jobs, across a broad range of occupational categories. It challenges prescriptive notions about the kinds of industries and types of jobs blind and partially sighted people might be working in.

It does not suggest that blind and partially sighted people are able to do any type of work, even with the right adaptations, practical tools and encouragement. However, the breadth and diversity of jobs described in this report is testament to the ability and motivation of many blind and partially sighted people in overcoming barriers to employment.

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Further information and links to all the references listed in this section can be found at our Knowledge and Research Hub: rnib.org.uk/research

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## 11. Appendix one

#### Standard Occupational Classification 2010

The Standard Occupational Classification consists of the following major groups:

1. Managers, directors and senior officials
2. Professional occupations
3. Associate professional and technical occupations
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations
5. Skilled trades occupations
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations
7. Sales and customer service occupations
8. Process, plant and machine operatives
9. Elementary occupations

These major groups are sub divided into sub-major, minor group and unit group structures. The sub-major groups, referred to in this report, are as follows:

**Managers, directors and senior officials**

1. Corporate managers and directors
2. Other managers and proprietors

**Professional occupations**

1. Science, research, engineering and technology professionals
2. Health professionals
3. Teaching and educational professionals
4. Business, media and public service professionals

**Associate professional and technical occupations**

1. Science, engineering and technology associate professionals
2. Health and social care associate professionals
3. Protective service occupations
4. Culture, media and sports occupations
5. Business and public service associate professionals

**Administrative and secretarial occupations**

1. Administrative occupations
2. Secretarial and related occupations

**Skilled trades occupations**

1. Skilled agricultural and related trades
2. Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades
3. Skilled construction and building trades
4. Textiles, printing and other skilled trades

**Caring, leisure and other service occupations**

1. Caring personal service occupations
2. Leisure, travel and related personal service occupations

**Sales and customer service occupations**

1. Sales occupations
2. Customer service occupations

**Process, plant and machine operatives**

1. Process, plant and machine operatives
2. Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives

**Elementary occupations**

1. Elementary trades and related occupations
2. Elementary administration and service occupations

For more information about the ONS Standard Occupational Classifications 2010 visit:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/index.html>

## 12. Appendix two

This appendix contains a list of all client jobs in the records of RNIB's Employment Services analysed in this report. They have been grouped together according to SOC 2010 major and sub-major occupation categories. Some of these job titles have been changed in order to add clarity, and to preserve anonymity.

### 12.1 Work-based assessments data: job titles

#### Managers, directors and senior officials: Total = 10

##### Corporate managers and directors: 9

* Associate business manager
* Clinical manager
* Co-director
* Commodity manager
* Head of commercial services
* Occupation banking manager
* Operations support manager
* Transport manager
* Workforce planning project manager

##### Other managers and proprietors: 1

* Shop keeper

#### Professional occupations: Total = 89

##### Business, media and public service professionals: 37

* Accountant
* Advocate
* Advocate / mediator
* Appeal panel member
* Assistant information analyst
* Assistant solicitor
* Audit assurance officer
* Barrister / arbitrator
* Commercial policy & business planning advisor
* Employment co-ordinator
* Employment officer
* Face to face officer
* Internship
* Magistrate
* Management accountant
* Pricing manager
* Probation officer
* Project manager
* Researcher
* Senior crown prosecutor / high courts advocate
* Senior lawyer
* Senior library assistant
* Senior social worker (x 2)
* Service desk analyst (x 2)
* Social work assistant (x 2)
* Social worker (x 5)
* Solicitor (x 2)
* Trainee solicitor
* Visiting officer

##### Health professionals: 22

* Assistant psychologist
* Child and adolescent mental health therapist
* Clinical nurse specialist in mental health
* Community mental health worker, helpline team leader
* Community occupational therapist
* Community-based psychiatric nurse
* District nurse
* Endoscopy unit sister (x 2)
* Musculoskeletal physiotherapist
* Nurse advisor
* Occupational therapist
* Physiotherapist
* Physiotherapy lead manager
* Rehabilitation officer (x 2)
* Senior physiotherapist (x 3)
* Sports therapist
* Staff grade psychiatrist
* Staff nurse

##### Science, research, engineering and technology professionals: 10

* Deputy corporate communications manager
* Information project co-ordinator
* Integrated systems manager
* Project manager
* Science intern
* Senior systems developer
* Statistics analyst / programmer
* System security officer
* Web consultant

##### Teaching and education professionals: 20

* Assessor - tutor
* Assistant lecturer
* Classical guitar teacher
* Lecturer
* Peripatetic teacher
* Professor (Doctor)
* Public programme branch worker
* Schools and education advisor
* Senior lecturer
* Teacher (x 7)
* Teaching assistant (x 2)
* University lecturer
* University professor

#### Associate technical and professional occupations: Total = 58

##### Business and public service associate professionals: 30

* Accounts assistant
* Accounts executive
* Accounts handler
* Business advisor (x 2)
* Business development manager
* Conveyancer
* Costing analyst
* Court presenting officer (x 3)
* Distribution controller
* Drug worker
* Finance manager
* Financial advisor
* HR consultant (x 2)
* Human resources officer
* Investment advisor
* IT procurement officer
* Recruitment assistant
* Recruitment consultant
* Risk and governance officer
* Senior technical officer
* Staff development officer
* Tax consultant
* Tax manager
* Trainer / facilitator (x 2)
* Volunteer development officer

##### Culture, media and sports occupations: 4

* Artist
* Braille transcriber
* Illustrator
* Text creator

##### Health and social care associate professionals: 14

* Benefits delivery officer
* Community support worker
* Crystal healer
* Direct payments service advice manager
* Disability consultant
* Disability information advice service co-ordinator
* Disability trainer
* Neighbourhood renewal fund development worker
* Project development worker
* Relocation advisor
* Resource worker
* School health assistant
* Senior counsellor / project co-ordinator
* Support worker / team leader

##### Protective service occupations: 3

* Detective constable
* Police constable (x 2)

##### Science, engineering and technology associate professionals: 7

* Building control officer
* Consultant technician
* Development tools asset controller
* Draughtsman
* Help desk agent
* Planning engineer
* Technician

#### Administrative and secretarial occupations: Total = 59

##### Administrative occupations: 47

* Administration assistant (x 6)
* Administration clerk
* Administration officer (x 8)
* Administration support
* Administration support worker (x 2)
* Assistant accountant
* Centre bookings administrator
* Clerical
* Clerical officer
* CMT officer
* Course administrator
* Deputy team manager
* Director's assistant
* Document management assistant
* Employment officer
* Finance officer (x 2)
* GRA officer
* Human resources assistant
* Information and advice officer
* Library manager
* Library service manager
* Payroll operator
* Pension administrator
* Revenue assistant (x 2)
* Stock control clerk
* Storekeeper
* Team clerk
* Trainee intranet administrator
* Trainee membership and events assistant
* Trainee team support officer
* Visit booking officer
* Ward clerk

##### Secretary and related occupations: 12

* Audio typist (x 4)
* Executive assistant
* Note taker
* Personal assistant
* Receptionist
* Receptionist / telephonist
* Secretary (x 3)

#### Skilled trades occupations: Total = 6

##### Skilled agriculture and related trades: 1

* Grower

##### Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades: 3

* Parts technician (x 2)
* Skilled machinist

##### Textiles, printing and other skilled trades: 2

* Piano tuner / technician
* Second chef

#### Caring, leisure and service occupations: Total = 7

##### Caring personal services occupations: 4

* Care assistant
* Home manager
* Nursery nurse
* Residential child care worker

##### Leisure, travel and personal service occupations: 3

* Fitness instructor
* Front of house assistant
* Visitor information assistant

#### Sales and customer services occupations: Total = 52

##### Customer service occupations: 43

* Call centre handler (x 2)
* Call centre operator
* Complaints officer
* Computer operator
* Contact centre advisor
* Contact centre clerk
* Customer advisor (x 2)
* Customer service
* Customer service advisor (helpdesk)
* Customer service advisor (x 8)
* Customer service assistant
* Customer service representative (x 2)
* Customer services manager (x 2)
* Customer services officer (x 2)
* Customer services representative
* Customer support officer
* Customer support programme manager
* Interviewer
* Motor claims assistant
* Sales and customer service advisor
* Service manager
* Service squad
* Store telephonist
* Switchboard operator (x 2)
* Team manager
* Technical leader (CAI team)
* Telephone canvasser
* Telephone switchboard operator
* Telephonist (x 2)

##### Sales occupations: 9

* Cashier (x 2)
* Customer sales representative
* Sales co-ordinator (x 2)
* Telemarketing executive
* Telesales and general assistant
* Telesales worker
* Vending team leader

#### Elementary occupations: Total = 1

##### Elementary trades and related occupations: 1

* Postal assistant

### 12.2 Employment outcomes data: job titles

#### Managers, directors and senior officials: Total = 13

##### Corporate managers and directors: 7

* Campaigns team leader
* Decision maker for pension credit
* General manager
* Head of policy and learning
* Manager
* Store manager
* Transport coordinator

##### Other managers and proprietors: 6

* Assistant manager (x 2)
* Centre manager
* Family team leader
* Manager family services
* Volunteer service coordinator

#### Professional occupations: Total = 44

##### Business, media and public service professionals: 24

* Assistant employment advisor
* Assistant registrar
* Auditing / monitoring officer
* Auditor (x 2)
* Employment service officer
* Probationer minister
* Project manager (x 2)
* Project officer (x 2)
* Project officer assistant (x 2)
* Project worker
* Radio presenter
* Social care worker
* Social worker (x 4)
* TGS trainee project assistant
* Trainee case worker
* Trainee solicitor (x 2)

##### Health professionals: 13

* Assistant psychiatric nurse
* Assistant psychologist
* Holistic therapist (x 2)
* Occupational therapist
* Psychiatric medical research assistant
* Registered nurse (x 3)
* Rehabilitation assistant
* Self-employed physiotherapist
* Self-employed psychotherapist
* Sessional child counsellor

##### Science, research, engineering and technology professionals: 2

* ICT assistant
* Web programmer

##### Teaching and education professionals: 5

* Classroom assistant (x 2)
* LDC coordinator
* Lecturer
* Teacher

#### Associate technical and professional occupations: Total = 43

##### Business and public service associate professionals: 11

* Account manager
* Business development and communications assistant
* Careers adviser
* Communications assistant
* Employment advisor (x 2)
* House wares buyer
* Human resources (x 2)
* Legal assistant
* Productivity manager

##### Culture, media and sports occupations: 3

* Braille transcriber
* Gym instructor (x 2)

##### Health and social care associate professionals: 27

* Activity leader (community access)
* Assistant youth officer
* Children’s mobility officer
* Club co-ordinator
* Community access worker
* Community support coordinator
* Community volunteer coordinator (x 2)
* Data associate
* Eye care liaison officer (x 2)
* Falls prevention officer
* Health care assistant
* Locality development assistant (x 3)
* Play worker co-ordinator
* Sensory support officer
* Trainee services and volunteer support officer (x 2)
* Training officer
* Transitions officer
* Vision support assistant
* Vision support officer (x 2)
* Volunteer coordinator
* Ward manager support officer

##### Protective service occupations: 1

* Prison liaison officer

##### Science, engineering and technology associate professionals: 1

* Integration service coordinator

#### Administrative and secretarial occupations: Total = 74

##### Administrative occupations: 59

* Administration (x 4)
* Administration / volunteer coordinator
* Administration officer (x 11)
* Administrative assistant (x 21)
* Campaigns assistant
* Cash office worker
* Charity worker
* Clerical officer II
* Distribution co-ordinator
* Filing clerk
* Finance officer
* Higher professional & technical officer
* Mortgage assistant administrator
* Office assistant (x 3)
* Office worker (x 4)
* Payroll supervisor
* Politics and research assistant
* Senior clerical officer
* Service support officer
* Temporary administration assistant
* TGS campaigns assistant

##### Secretary and related occupations: 15

* Benefits data input
* Data entry (x 2)
* Legal secretary
* Medical secretary
* Receptionist (x 9)
* Secretary

#### Skilled trades occupations: Total = 33

##### Skilled construction and building trades: 1

* Floor manager

##### Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades: 2

* Computer engineer
* Operator

##### Textiles, printing and other skilled trades: 30

* Baker
* Caterers (x 4)
* Catering assistant (x 21)
* Kitchen assistant
* Manager and chef
* Piano tuner
* Print assistant

#### Caring, leisure and service occupations: Total = 17

##### Caring personal services occupations: 11

* Activity coordinator
* Care assistant (x 3)
* Care worker
* Nursery assistant (x 2)
* Playgroup assistant
* Support worker (x 3)

##### Leisure, travel and personal service occupations: 6

* Function room assistant
* House keeper
* Leisure attendant (x 2)
* Museum assistant
* Tourist information assistant

#### Sales and customer services occupations: Total = 36

##### Customer service occupations: 20

* Call advisor (x 3)
* Customer service advisor (x 12)
* Customer service assistant
* First line technical support
* Service manager
* Telephonist
* Trainee resource centre assistant

##### Sales occupations: 16

* Cashier
* Floor manager
* Food and beverage assistant
* General assistant
* Personal advisor
* Retail assistant
* Sales / administration
* Sales assistant (x 5)
* Sales assistant / buyer
* Sales representative (x 3)

#### Process, plant and machine operatives: Total = 7

##### Process, plant and machine operatives: 5

* Machine operator
* Plant attendant
* Production operator
* Tester
* Vacuum technician

##### Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives: 2

* Delivery Assistant
* Lorry Driver

#### Elementary occupations: Total = 22

##### Elementary administration and service occupations: 11

* Car valet assistant
* Driver / laundry assistant
* Laundry assistant (x 4)
* Postal worker
* Security
* Traffic attendant
* Waitress
* Warehouse assistant

##### Elementary trades and related occupations: 11

* Factory worker (x 5)
* Farm assistant
* Industrial cleaner
* Labourer
* Polly tunnel installer
* Self-employed agricultural contractor
* Sorter / packer

## 13. Appendix three

### 13.1 Review of current knowledge: UK sources

#### 13.1.1 RNIB

RNIB has compiled personal stories from 45 blind and partially sighted people from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland who are developing and sustaining different careers. The five publications show how the challenges of sight loss are tackled in the workplace by individuals and employers alike (RNIB, 2014b).

Blind and partially sighted employee’s stories are described in greater detail than those on the EBU website, although they do not follow a prescribed layout. Each person has described their journey in their own words, but common themes emerge including: background information, level of sight loss, finding work, employer support and hopes for the future. Below is a list of jobs described within the series.

**This IS working Northern Ireland – 11 jobs:**

* Licensing and installation support, IT.
* Staff officer, Public Safety Department.
* Community access / Activity leader, RNIB.
* Ward support officer, NHS.
* Distribution and complaints administrator, HR.
* Physiotherapist, self employed.
* Customer care ambassador, Boots.
* Domestic assistant, Housing Association.
* Administration, Northern Ireland Water.
* Campus administrator, Belfast College.
* Careers advisor, North West Regional College.

**This IS working [Scotland] – 10 jobs:**

* IT project manager, Standard Life.
* Human resources, ARK Housing Association.
* Senior conference and events sales coordinator, Holiday Inn.
* Major accounts development director with a global insurance broker.
* Researcher, BBC Radio Scotland.
* IT support engineer, Aeroflex.
* Senior systems analyst, Prudential Insurance.
* Team Leader, Careers Scotland.
* Community support worker, Visibility.
* Policy and research officer, Fair for All.

**This IS working 2 [Scotland] – 10 jobs:**

* Corporate Development Director, Apex Scotland.
* Senior physiotherapist, Royal Victoria Hospital.
* Sales and marketing manager, ESC packaging.
* Small businesswoman, African foodstuffs.
* Senior policy officer, Health Directorate.
* Development and funding officer, City Building.
* Learning support teacher, Braeview Academy.
* Support assistant (homeless team), Housing Department .
* Development outreach worker, Roshni.
* Postgraduate PhD student.

**This IS working in England – 7 jobs:**

* Cardiology nurse, Royal Liverpool University Hospital.
* Football coach, Newcastle United Foundation.
* Administrator, East Durham Homes.
* Systems Manager, Jacksons Financial Services.
* Administrator, Gateway Family Services.
* Customer services, Traidcraft.
* Quality assurance inspector, ASDA.

**This IS learning and working in Wales – 7 jobs:**

* Assistant psychologist, NHS.
* Cleaner, Grand Theatre.
* Fitness instructor / massage therapist, Crown Fitness.
* Human resources assistant, Hospitality industry.
* Trainee children’s mobility instructor, Guide Dogs.
* Trainee services and volunteer support officer, RNIB.
* National quality administrator, Shaw Trust.

The RNIB website hosts an additional set of case studies, including five audio clips and five written accounts (RNIB, 2014c). The jobs described through these stories are as follows:

**Audio clips:**

* Corporate director (also described in This IS working 2 [Scotland] – see above).
* Co-ordinator at the Amateur Swimming Association.
* Senior conference and events sales coordinator at the Holiday Inn (also described in This IS working [Scotland] – see above).
* Freelance consultant.
* Administrator.

**Written accounts:**

* HR manager.
* Information systems advisor.
* Lecturer at a Further Education college.
* Self-employed entrepreneur.
* Self-employed catering business.

#### 13.1.2 Action for Blind People

Action is a national charity, providing practical help and support to blind and partially sighted people of all ages. In England, Action works with RNIB to provide specialist support to help blind and partially sighted people find employment, start their own business or stay in their jobs if they are losing their sight.

Action recognises employers who have helped blind and partially sighted staff to work on a par with their sighted counterparts through its ‘See the Capability, Not the Disability’ award. Action’s website showcases 16 employers who have received this award, and within each presentation there is information about the jobs blind and partially sighted individuals perform. Seven of these jobs are also described in the “This IS working in England” series (see above), but there are 9 additional jobs on the website (Action for Blind People, 2014a). The jobs that are not part of the “This IS working” series are as follows:

* Care worker, Quay Court Care Home.
* Sales assistant, Clarks shoe shop.
* Healthcare assistant, Boots.
* Customer support assistant, Community Support Centre.
* Internship, BHS Home Ltd.
* Shift leader, Weatherspoons.
* Draftsperson, Quadrant Security Group.
* Shop manager, Oxfam.
* Telephone-based research, Viewpoint.

There is also a podcast on the site, which can be downloaded and listened to, from an individual working as a support worker (Action for Blind People, 2014b).

#### 13.1.3 Labour Force Survey

In 2008 RNIB commissioned the Institute of Employment Studies to complete a secondary analysis of data from the UK’s quarterly LFS (Meager and Carter 2008). The report provides detailed analysis of the employment status and economic activity of blind and partially sighted people compared with the general population, although blind and partially sighted people only make up a tiny proportion of the respondents.

Since 2011 this secondary analysis has been carried out by researchers at the University of Birmingham on an annual basis, following the same methodology used by Meager and Carter in 2008 (Hewett, 2013; Hewett and Douglas, 2011; Hewett with Keil, 2014; Hewett with Keil, 2015). This allows an opportunity to follow changes in employment trends over time.

The LFS relies on self reported measures to identify a person as having a seeing difficulty. The population is divided into two groups, defined as follows.

* People who through self-report are defined as “long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty”. Included in this population are people with the most severe sight loss (i.e. the same population as in Network 1000 research described above) and in addition, those who may not be eligible for registration but their sight loss still impacts on their ability to work or the job they can do
* People who through self-report are defined as not disabled, but who have a seeing difficulty. These people state that their sight loss does not affect the type of work they can do or the number of hours they can work. We would not expect anybody in this group to be eligible for registration.

The LFS uses SOC, produced by the Office of National Statistics, to categorise different jobs according to a set of major and minor sub-groups. This system was updated in 2010 (SOC2010).

Table 5, below, is based on LFS data aggregated over 12 quarters from October-December 2011 to July-September 2014. It compares the types of jobs carried out by blind and partially sighted people with those of the general population (Hewett with Keil, 2015).

Table 5: LFS secondary analysis: employed working age population, seeing difficulty and disability, by occupation - aggregated over 12 quarters from Oct-Dec 2011 to Jul–Sep 2014

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Occupation | Long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty(%) | All people with a seeing difficulty(%) | Other long-term disabled (%) | Not disabled and without a seeing difficulty (%) | Total (%) |
| Managers, directors and senior officials | 8.7% | 9.0% | 10.2% | 10.1% | 9.9% |
| Professional occupations | 15.2% | 16.8% | 20.3% | 19.8% | 20.1% |
| Associate professional and technical occupations | 16.0% | 12.5% | 14.4% | 14.2% | 14.3% |
| Administrative and secretarial occupations | 12.4% | 10.9% | 10.4% | 10.5% | 10.2% |
| Skilled trades occupations | 9.4% | 11.1% | 10.8% | 10.9% | 11.0% |
| Caring, leisure and other service occupations | 7.3% | 11.1% | 8.9% | 9.1% | 9.3% |
| Sales and customer service occupations | 10.9% | 9.0% | 7.9% | 8.0% | 7.8% |
| Process, plant and machine operatives | 7.4% | 7.2% | 6.3% | 6.4% | 6.4% |
| Elementary occupations | 12.7% | 12.4% | 10.8% | 11.0% | 11.0% |
| N (weighted) | 50,058 | 3,459,029 | 24,327,737 | 27,880,407 | 28,440,047 |

People with a seeing difficulty were in a wide range of occupations. The occupational groups of people “long-term disabled with a seeing difficulty” were:

* Managers, directors and senior officials: 8.7 per cent
* Professional occupations: 15.2 per cent
* Associate professional and technical occupations: 16 per cent
* Administrative and secretarial occupations: 12.4 per cent
* Skilled trades occupations: 9.4 per cent
* Caring, leisure and other service occupations: 7.3 per cent
* Sales and customer service occupations: 10.9 per cent
* Process, plant and machine operatives: 7.4 per cent
* Elementary occupations: 12.7 per cent

Table 5 shows that people with a seeing difficulty (irrespective of whether they are disabled or not) are under-represented in managerial, professional and technical occupations, when the comparison is made with other disabled people, and with the non-disabled population. Around 40% of long-term disabled people with a seeing difficulty, and approximately 38% of all people with a seeing difficulty, are employed in these occupational groups. This compares with almost 45% of other disabled people, and 44% of the non-disabled population, employed in managerial, professional and technical occupations (Hewett with Keil, 2015).

#### 13.1.4 Network 1000

The main report from Network 1000 presents a summary of data collected through 1,007 interviews with blind and partially sighted people in Great Britain. The interviews were carried out between spring 2005 and spring 2006. It gives a snapshot of working age people’s perceptions of employment and employability, as well as some general information about the types of jobs blind and partially people were doing (Douglas et al, 2006).

Thirty-four per cent of working age blind and partially sighted people were in some kind of employment. Of these, the vast majority (94 per cent) described their work as being permanent rather than temporary. Sixty-eight per cent said that they worked full-time. Of those who worked part-time, 26 per cent said it was mainly due to their sight loss.

In terms of self-reported registration status, people who were registered partially sighted were much more likely to be employed or self-employed than those who were registered blind (43 per cent compared with 25 per cent respectively).

Participants were asked about the type of industry in which they worked, their job title and the nature of their work. A wide range of occupations was reported, with examples from all nine categories of SOC occupational groups (ONS 2000), ranging from:

* Managers and senior officials (e.g. service manager for a voluntary organisation, branch managers);
* Professional occupations (e.g. teachers, software designer, social worker);
* Associate professional and technical occupations (e.g. nurses);
* Administrative and secretarial occupations (e.g. accountants, secretary, receptionist, clerical worker);
* Skilled trades occupations (e.g. bakers, telecommunications engineer);
* Personal service occupations (e.g. care assistants);
* Sales and customer service occupations (e.g. general retail assistant);
* Process, plant and machine operatives (e.g. bridle stitcher, assembler of valves);
* Elementary occupations (e.g. warehouse assistant, cleaners).

The majority of working people (82 per cent) said that, overall, they were happy with their job.

#### 13.1.5 Association of Guidance and Careers Advisory Services

AGCAS produces an annual report, “What Happens Next”, which summarises the first destinations of disabled graduates. It provides evidence of the impact of disability on a graduate’s employment prospects.

In 2012 it published its tenth and most recent report, based on 2009/10 graduates. Since 2008 the report has shown the employment destination of blind and partially sighted graduates based on the SOC tables. (Prior to 2008, it did not break down employment sector destination according to specific disability groups; merely “disabled” and “non-disabled”.)

Table 6: SOC destination of blind and partially sighted graduates from 2006-2010

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2009/2010 | 2008/2009 | 2007/2008 | 2007 | 2006 |
| Managers and administrators | 7.7 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 7.0 | 4.5 |
| Professional occupations | 27.7 | 24.5 | 29.8 | 30.7 | 30.7 |
| Associate professional and technical occupations | 23.6 | 31.9 | 33.2 | 24.7 | 29.0 |
| Clerical and secretarial occupations | 8.2 | 10.6 | 7.7 | 15.3 | 16.5 |
| Craft and related occupations | 2.7 | 1.6 | 1.0 | 1.4 | 1.1 |
| Personal and protective service occupations | 5.9 | 7.4 | 5.8 | 4.7 | 7.4 |
| Sales occupations | 17.7 | 14.9 | 12.0 | 10.7 | 8.5 |
| Plant and machine operatives | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Other occupations | 5.9 | 4.3 | 5.3 | 5.6 | 2.3 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Graduate employment marker** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Graduate employment (SOC 1-3) | 59.1 | 60.6 | 65.9 | 62.3 | 64.2 |
| Non-graduate employment (SOC 4-9) | 40.9 | 39.4 | 34.1 | 37.7 | 35.8 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

Table 6 compares the employment destination of blind and partially sighted graduates from the last five AGCAS reports (AGCAS 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012), and shows some interesting employment trends:

* Graduate employment declined overall, from 64.2 per cent in 2006 to 59.1 per cent in 2010
* The number of managers [directors and senior officials] rose overall during this period, from 4.5 per cent to 7.7 per cent
* The number of blind and partially sighted people entering clerical and secretarial jobs halved over the same period, from 16.5 per cent to 8.2 per cent
* This was largely explained by a doubling of sales occupations over the five years, from 8.5 per cent to 17.7 per cent
* Graduates entering professional occupations remained relatively constant, fluctuating by only 3 per cent over five years.

The latest “What happens next” report (AGCAS 2012), which reflects on the first destinations of 2009/2010 disabled graduates, offered the following key findings in relation to blind and partially sighted graduates:

* 40.6 per cent of blind / partially sighted graduates were in full time employment. This marks a significant improvement in the fortunes of these graduates with last year’s figure standing at only 34.2 per cent returning this group to prerecession levels of employment (40.4 per cent in 2008). This year’s figure is still much lower than the proportion of disabled graduates as a whole (45.5 per cent) and lower than the 49.0 per cent of non-disabled graduates who entered full time employment after graduation.
* 14.6 per cent of blind / partially sighted graduates were assumed to be unemployed. This is slightly higher than last year’s figure of 14.2 per cent. The proportion of this group who were unemployed was also greater than the corresponding percentage for disabled graduates as a whole (11.4 per cent) and much higher than the percentage of non-disabled graduates who were unemployed (9.3 per cent).

Table 7, below, compares the employment destination of 2009/10 graduates according to disability:

* 7.7 per cent of blind / partially sighted graduates went into manager and administrator occupations, marking a significant increase on the 4.3 per cent figure recorded in both 2009 and 2008. This figure is particularly impressive as it indicates that graduates in this category are outperforming both disabled graduates overall and non disabled graduates (both 7.3 per cent) for the first time.
* 27.7 per cent of this group entered professional occupations. This is a clear improvement on last year’s figure of 24.5 per cent and higher than the percentage of disabled graduates (23.1 per cent) as a whole that went into professional occupations and the figure for non-disabled graduates (25.9 per cent).
* Despite the positive figures above only 59.1 per cent overall of employed graduates in this group entered graduate level employment, the joint lowest figure for any group in this survey comparing with the overall average for disabled graduates of 63.3 per cent and 62.9 per cent of non disabled graduates.

Table 7: Standard occupational classification of disabled graduates by disability 2009/10

|  | No known disability | Disabled | Specific learning difficulty | An unseen disability e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma | Blind / partially sighted | Deaf / hearing impairment | Wheelchair use / have mobility difficulties | Mental health issues |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Managers and administrators | 7.3 | 7.3 | 7.9 | 6.3 | 7.7 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 5.2 |
| Professional occupations | 25.9 | 23.1 | 21.7 | 26.7 | 27.7 | 27.4 | 27.1 | 21.5 |
| Associate professional and technical occupations | 30.5 | 33.3 | 35 | 29.3 | 23.6 | 31.4 | 30.4 | 32.7 |
| Clerical and secretarial occupations | 9.4 | 8.2 | 7.2 | 9.6 | 8.2 | 7.9 | 9.6 | 10.9 |
| Craft and related occupations | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 0.9 | 2.7 | 1.4 | 0.8 | 1.8 |
| Personal and protective service occupations | 6.1 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 7 | 5.9 | 7.6 | 9.6 | 8.6 |
| Sales occupations | 13.2 | 11.6 | 11 | 13.7 | 17.7 | 7.6 | 11.7 | 12.1 |
| Plant and machine operatives | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.4 |
| Other occupations | 6.3 | 7.1 | 7.6 | 6.1 | 5.9 | 8.3 | 2.9 | 6.8 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Graduate employment marker |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Graduate employment | 62.9 | 63.3 | 64.6 | 62.3 | 59.1 | 66.7 | 65.4 | 59.4 |
| Non-graduate employment | 37.1 | 36.7 | 35.4 | 37.7 | 40.9 | 33.3 | 34.6 | 40.6 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

#### 13.1.6 RNIB employment outcome data

In 2008/09 RNIB began to systematically record and categorise the job titles and employers of people supported into work, who were previously unemployed. Table 9, below, summarises this first data set, whilst further information can be found in section 7 of this report, and in RNIB's latest employment outcome report (Davies 2014).

Table 8: RNIB 2008/09 job outcomes by employment sector

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Employment sector** | **Number of outcomes** | **Percentage of total outcomes** |
| Sight loss organisations | 64 | 29.6% |
| Government | 32 | 14.8% |
| Education | 25 | 11.6% |
| Other | 22 | 10.2% |
| Voluntary sector | 13 | 6% |
| Retail | 13 | 6% |
| Healthcare | 13 | 6% |
| Telecommunications | 11 | 5.1% |
| Leisure, Sport and Tourism | 9 | 4.2% |
| Self-employed | 7 | 3.2% |
| Manufacturing | 5 | 2.3% |
| Banking  | 2 | 0.9% |
| **Total**  | **216** |  |

## 14. Appendix four

### 14.1 Review of current knowledge: International perspectives

#### 14.1.1 A glance at worldwide employment of people with visual impairments (Wolffe and Spungin, 2002)

This article provides a breakdown of employment roles revealed by 102 surveys, completed in 75 countries. The survey divided roles according to whether an individual was blind or partially sighted, the level of schooling an individual received (eight or more, or fewer than eight, years of schooling), and whether they were living in a developing or developed country. The responses were clustered into nine occupational categories: executive, administrative, and managerial; professional specialty; technician and related support; marketing and sales; administrative support, including clerical service; agricultural, forestry,

fishing and related jobs; precision production, craft and repair; and operators, fabricators, and laborers (Wolffe and Spungin, 2002).

* In both the developing and developed countries, the most frequent occupational category for people who were blind with eight or fewer years schooling was; operators, fabricators, and labourers.
* In both the developing and developed countries, the most frequent occupational category for people who were blind and who had more than eight years of schooling was; professional or specialty occupations, followed by administrative support, including clerical work.
* In both the developing and developed countries, the most frequent occupational category for people with low vision who have eight or fewer years of schooling was the same as for people who were blind; operators, fabricators, and labourers.
* In both the developing and developed countries, the most frequent occupational category for people with low vision who had more than eight years of schooling was also the same as for people who were blind; professional speciality and administrative support.

The above analysis was further sub-divided according to whether blind or partially sighted people lived in the developing or developed world.

* The top three jobs with the highest pay performed by people who are blind, across all countries, were lawyer, teacher, and professor.
* The top three jobs for people with the highest pay performed by people with low vision across all countries was the same as for blind people, but in a slightly different order; teacher, lawyer and professor.
* The top three jobs that employed the greatest number of people who were blind, and with low vision, were as follows. Teacher was listed as the leading job, followed by telephone operator and factory worker for both people who are blind and those with low vision.

#### 14.1.2 Working with visual impairment in Nigeria: a qualitative look at employment status (Wolffe et al, 2013)

This study presents the perceptions of 172 employed individuals with sight loss in Nigeria. Participants conveyed their thoughts on what helped, or hindered, their employment prospects; with a special focus on parental support and the acquisition of disability-specific skills (Wolffe et al, 2013). The article does not concentrate specifically on the types of jobs blind and partially sighted people in Nigeria are doing, but there is information on this within the report.

Table 9: Research from Nigeria - the number of people employed in each employment area, and details of specific jobs in that field

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Main role | Including | Number of people employed |
| Teaching or education-related jobs | Thirty-three were primary school teachers (two also listed themselves as braille transcribers), 19 were secondary school teachers, 11 were lecturers in post-secondary settings, and 15 either did not specify a role (simply listed “teacher”) or worked in a related area such as vice-principal, guidance counsellor in a secondary school, computer instructor, rehabilitation teacher and therapist, or as a rehabilitation officer.  | 78 |
| Crafts or instructed others in craft-making | 16 made crafts, including indigenous handicrafts such as woven bags or wastepaper baskets; 8 instructed others in craft making | 24 |
| Civil servants | Including a lawyer and a social welfare worker | 22 |
| Telephone operators |  | 11 |
| Poultry keepers or poultry and pig farmers |  | 7 |
| Journalists |  | 5 |
| Islamic religious teachers |  | 2 |
| Minister |  | 1 |
| Independent lawyer |  | 1 |
| Miscellaneous | For example, caterer, labourer, petty trader, image maker and a pepper mill operator | 21 |

#### 14.1.3 Hidden Majority Summary Report (Simkiss and Reid, 2013)

This report is concerned with the operation of employment services for blind and partially sighted people in Sweden, Germany, Romania, Poland, Austria, Netherlands and France; and their impact on that target population. It is based on study visits made by the authors between 2008 and 2012 and reports on the situation in each member state at the time of those visits. It doesn’t report specifically on the types of jobs blind and partially sighted people do, but there useful information within the report. For example:

* In 2006 the Swedish Association for the Blind started a new job introduction company called Iris Bemanning which offered a job matching service for people with disabilities. “Iris Bemanning employed visually impaired people directly at the telephone switchboard, running customer services, such as complaints, and was also able to arrange direct recruitment of people with disabilities by some employers.”
* Newly blind or partially sighted people in France typically “entered one of the seven training centres specialising in visual impairment…[however] the training available in these centres is limited, over-concentrated on physiotherapy, secretarial work, low level ICT skills and traditional crafts like chair caning”.
* In Vienna, Austria the Social Welfare Office part-sponsored firms, such as Café Noir, Four Senses and Dialogue in the Dark. A total of 50 blind and partially sighted people were employed in these firms, with the Social Welfare Office providing a wage subsidy.

#### 14.1.4 World Blind Union

WBU is the global organisation representing the estimated 285 million people worldwide who are blind or partially sighted. Members are organisations of, and for, blind and partially sighted people in 190 countries, as well as international organisations working in the field of sight loss.

Project Aspiro, WBU’s career planning and employment resource for individuals who are blind or partially sighted, contains 7 short films based around personal interviews with blind and partially sighted people in work (World Blind Union, 2014). Individuals discuss education, interview techniques, reasonable adjustments, overcoming barriers and a raft of other issues. The seven jobs and the main focus of each film are as follows:

* Lawyer - highlights the importance of mentoring and pursuing goals.
* Diversity and inclusion officer – discusses the value of a rewarding career, leading to increased confidence and independence.
* Radio production manager – reflects on how computer skills led to a job in radio production.
* Research assistant - focuses on a professional and educational journey, resulting in a role as a research assistant.
* Union awareness trainer - explains how perseverance and learning new skills resulted in a return to the workforce after sight loss.
* Entrepreneur - outlines the key to success as a business owner with sight loss.
* High school student - talks about a passion for cooking and dreams of becoming a professional chef.

#### 14.1.5 American Foundation for the Blind

The CareerConnect information resource on the AFB website provides information on the wide variety of jobs performed by blind and partially sighted people in America (AFB, 2014a). There are 21 employment categories (listed below), each containing a combination of personal profiles, interviews with employees, news items about an employee, plus the occasional blog, speech or essay. As a result, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of people and jobs profiled on the website, but it is likely to be in excess of a hundred.

The employment categories and number of profiles, interviews or other type of entry per category are as follows:

* Business – 21.
* Communications and media – 13.
* Corporate jobs – 12.
* Culinary arts and food service – 4.
* Education – 18.
* Engineering – 4.
* Government jobs – 15.
* Healthcare – 12.
* Hobbies and recreation – 12.
* Hospitality – 3.
* Law – 12.
* Legendary and historical figures – 3.
* Mathematics – 7.
* Mental health, psychology and therapy – 3.
* Pop, culture, arts and entertainment – 15.
* Rehabilitation – 12.
* Science – 6.
* Skilled trades – 10.
* Sports and athletics – 7.
* Technology – 5.
* Writing – 9.

AFB also runs an extensive mentoring service, and the website contains accounts from CareerConnect mentors of working as an employee who is blind or partially sighted (AFB, 2014b). There are 51 mentors’ stories on the site, but these are not listed here as many are duplicated in the list above.

#### 14.1.6 Vision Australia

Vision Australia is a not-for-profit national provider of services to blind and partially sighted people in Australia. It supports approximately 33,000 clients through 28 Vision Australia centres and 29 outreach services throughout the country. Its website contains 3 short films, which similar to those on the WBU website, use personal interviews and film footage at work to highlight different aspects of each person’s job role, the support they receive and the challenges they face in employment (Vision Australia, 2014). Administrative, manual and professional type roles are represented through the case studies:

* Call centre associate (administration).
* Butcher (manual).
* Global technology accessibility manager (professional).

#### 14.1.7 Blind Foundation (New Zealand)

The Blind Foundation is New Zealand's main not-for-profit provider of sight loss related services, working with more than 11,700 people. The website contains some information about the types of jobs blind and partially sighted people do across the country (Blind Foundation, 2014).

"People who are blind or have low vision can be found working in most industries, from the farm to the board room…Our clients work in a diverse range of roles including lawyers, HR managers, psychiatrists, music teachers, care workers and more."

#### 14.1.8 European Blind Union

EBU has 44 member countries, representing millions of blind and partially sighted Europeans. The EBU job website contains an extensive database of case studies, highlighting a huge range of jobs undertaken by blind and partially sighted people across Europe (European Blind Union, 2014). The EBU job website has assigned different roles into fifteen broad job categories, which are:

* Administration – Telephony.
* Agriculture.
* Arts – Entertainment.
* Crafts Industry.
* Commerce – Sales.
* Education – Teaching.
* Hospitality – Reception.
* Industry.
* Law.
* Medical – Healthcare.
* Personnel and Human Resources.
* Politics.
* Press – Audio-visual – Media.
* Science – Research – Engineering –Information Technology.
* Social work.

Each job category contains a list of individual jobs undertaken by blind and partially sighted people, many of which are described in detail. These case study descriptions are arranged under different sub-sections: job title; job description; getting the job; adjustments; quotes (from the individual performing the job); whether the person is blind or partially sighted; source country; and where the information came from.

It is difficult to quantify the exact number of case studies on the website, but it is likely to be more than a hundred. These simple, one-page summaries are intended “to tell visually impaired people, employers, and policy makers across Europe about the huge range of jobs undertaken by visually impaired people”.

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