# Jobs that blind and partially sighted people do

RNIB are frequently asked; **“What jobs do blind and partially sighted people do?”** A recent report published by RNIB attempts 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, the 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.

## Sources of data

Whilst the main body of the report draws evidence from records of RNIB's Employment Services, we have also reviewed academic papers, large-scale population surveys, and personal case studies 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.

## Key findings

Findings in the report support those in other published research, which demonstrates that blind and partially sighted people are employed across all major occupational groups (Standard Occupational Classification - UK Office of National Statistics). 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.

* People with sight loss work in every major category of employment.
* Blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB typically work in professional, associate professional, and administrative roles.
* Blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB are most commonly employed by 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.
* Blind and partially sighted people who received a work-based assessment from RNIB between 2001 and 2008 typically worked in the public sector.
* A typical destination for blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB into new jobs between 2011-2013 was the non-profit sector.

## Strengths of the report

The main strengths of the report are 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 (UK Office of National Statistics). All 571 jobs are listed in appendix 2. The report also brings together 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 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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