



Nick Caplin - CEO

Tackling Loneliness Among the Adult Visually Impaired



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

Ken's Story



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss



Loneliness, Social Isolation & Sight Loss (Thomas Pocklington Trust 2014)



- Not an inevitable consequence of sight loss
- Results from a complex interactive process, especially difficulty with everyday functional activities
- Linked strongly to how vision impairment is experienced rather than clinical assessment
- Difficulties with communication and social interaction contribute
- Relationships and social support help prevent loneliness

(Hodge & Eccles 2014; Loneliness, Social Isolation & Sight Loss)

Barriers



Disability is a significant factor for loneliness



“Invisible” challenges such as acquired brain injury



Deregulation of routines – Blind Veterans UK/Oxford sleep studies

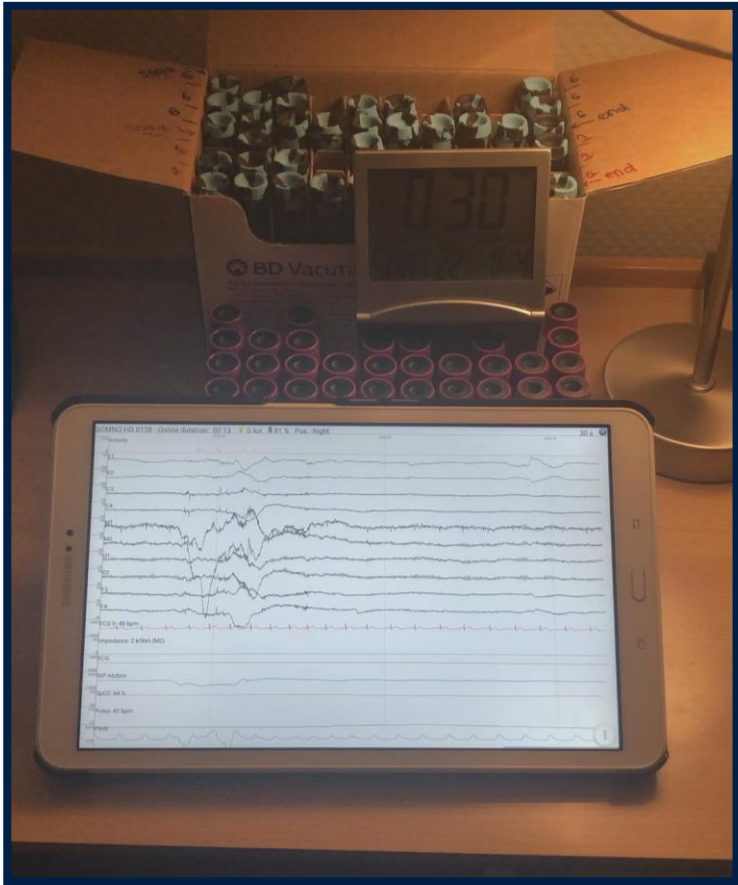


Impact of COVID-19 pandemic – Blind Veterans UK Pandemic Survey



Issues with accessibility – telehealth and remote rehabilitation

Oxford studies



- **Veterans complained of sleep disturbances. Over 79% of members had evidence of significant sleep disturbance (Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index scoring).**
- **Average amount of reported sleep was 5.7 hours (± 2.1 hours), with 51% of members reporting 5 or fewer hours of sleep per night, lower than the recommended hours of sleep**
- **41% of members reported a mental health diagnosis, most commonly, depression and anxiety.**

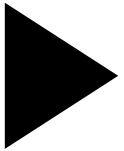
COVID-19 longitudinal survey



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss



The **quantitative and validated methods** survey was developed by Scientists at **Blind Veterans UK** in partnership with scientists at the **University of Oxford**.



It was **launched on the 1st of April 2020**.



The purpose is to **explore the experiences of adults during the current COVID-19 pandemic** situation in order to **foment evidence based decisions/actions**.



Asks about current **status, general health** (including circadian rhythms) and **emotions** (including feelings of isolation).

Some results, *in brief*



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss



48% of current participants have a **disability and comorbidities**. The age range for participants is **18-92 years old**.



Over 53% of participants report **increased alcohol consumption**. There is a notable **change in eating habits**, with body mass indexes increasing overtime. Significant **problems with sleep quality** are reported.



Over 60% of participants **are reporting increased anxiety, feelings of isolation and helplessness**. Those who are members of an organization seem to be more stable.



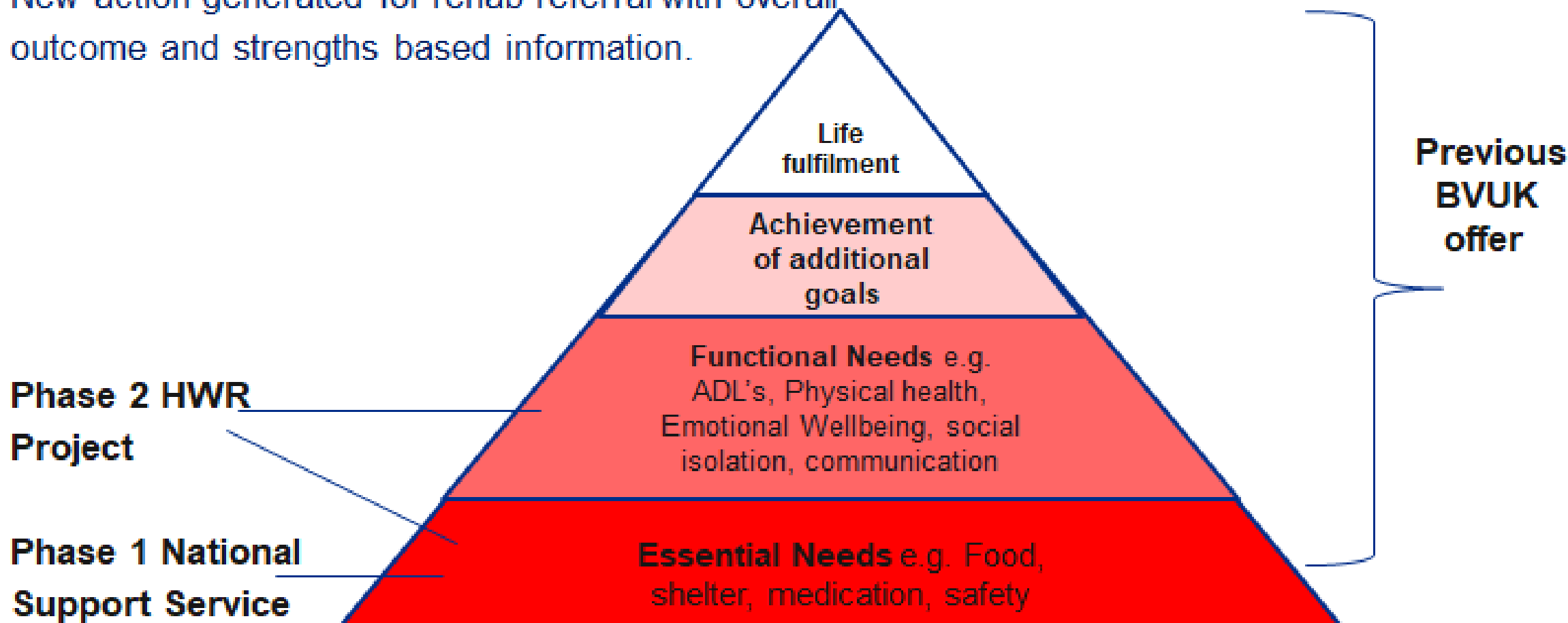
Detailed statistical analysis and cohort grouping is ongoing.

1. Assessment of Need



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

Caseworker identifies need and records on outcome assessment.
New action generated for rehab referral with overall
outcome and strengths based information.



(Adapted from Maslow's Hierarchy of Need)

HWR Project

Health, Wellbeing & Rehabilitation



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

We have mapped the HWR project to the social prescribing values (defined by Kings Fund 2017)

- Individuals take greater control of their own health
- Address needs holistically
- Include a variety of activities
- Involvement of a link worker
- Meeting a wide range of needs

HWR Interventions



- Physical conditioning
- Sleep hygiene
- Diet & nutrition
- Falls prevention
- Emotional wellbeing – **5 Ways to Wellbeing**
- Meaningful activity
- Health promotion



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

Contacts



General:

Nick Caplin (CEO)

Nick.caplin@blindveterans.org.uk

Research:

Prof Renata Gomes (CSO)

Renata.gomes@blindveterans.org.uk



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss



[@nick_caplin](#)

[@RenataSMGomes](#)

[@BlindVeterans](#)