

Widening the network of help is Terry's mission

A MAN with a mission is aiming to make life better for blind and partially sighted people in the Highlands and Western Isles through his organi-

sation's friendly and professional support.

He is Terry Cullingham, chairman of Sight Action, the new name for Visual Impairment Ser-

vices Highland, who is himself registered blind.

Terry said: "It is enormously traumatic for someone to lose their sight, so Sight Action is

currently running an advertising campaign to highlight the vital work it does.

"We provide services, support, help and advice

to blind and partially sighted adults and children throughout the Highlands and the Western Isles.

"We have currently around 1600 adults and children on our books, but we reckon we only reach about a quarter of those who would meet our criteria, which means that 4000-5000 slip through the net. That is why we are advertising to raise awareness about the organisation.

"I would seriously urge anybody who believes that they have a sight problem, or a carer or relative who knows someone with such a problem, to contact us for advice.

"I am concerned about the need to offer support to people, preferably before they become registered, when they still have useful vision."

Terry explained: "As a registered blind person myself, I recognise there is a need for a drive to encourage people to take more responsibility for their eye health, especially when eye checks are available freely for adults from opticians. Around 50 per cent of eye disease is treatable, but early intervention is vital.

"I would stress that our staff are very friendly and dedicated and that we employ a number of visually impaired staff so

that we have a good understanding of the day-to-day problems visually impaired people have to face.

"Our rehabilitation officers can provide emotional and practical support and help and advice with daily living skills, in the home, at work and for leisure activities including things such as cooking, shopping and getting around."

As well as being chairman of Sight Action, Terry is a volunteer IT trainer who teaches blind and partially sighted people to use or continue to use their computers. That includes blind people who have never used a computer or partially

sighted people who have used a computer but are afraid they might have to give it up.

Terry said: "Sight Action aims to keep individuals as safe and as independent as they would wish to be through the introduction of individually tailored training programmes to ensure they are fully integrated into society.

"Our message is a positive one — we are here to help those who are blind or partially sighted and we can make a difference!"

The latest statistics show that around 180,000 adults and children in Scotland are blind or partially sighted, and ev-

ery day in the UK another 100 people start to lose their sight.

Sight Action currently receives funding from Highland Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and NHS Highland. It also receives supplementary funding from The Highland and Islands Society for Blind People, but is looking to increase its funding from other sources.

Terry said: "We can be contacted by phone at 01463-233663 or by e-

mail: admin@sightaction.org.uk or by our website: www.sightaction.org.uk

"Our website is specifically designed to be easily accessible for people with a sight problem."

He added: "We are always looking for people to help with fundraising and other activities, so if anyone has time to spare and would like to lend a hand they should give us a call, we will be delighted to hear from you."

Who would you turn to if you started to lose your sight?

You are not alone.

We are an established local charity making life better for blind and partially sighted people in the Highlands and Western Isles.

Remember our new name:



sight action

making life better for blind and partially sighted people

FIND OUT HOW WE CAN HELP:

Call us on 01463 233663

VISIT US AT

38 Ardconnel Street, Inverness

(next to Highland BlindCraft showroom)

We are open 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday

www.sightaction.org.uk

Sight Action is a charity registered in Scotland, No: SC030765



□ Terry Cullingham (second from right) with general manager John Gill and the Sight Action staff.

**Inverness Courier
Advertising Feature**