

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF CHARITY FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
CABINET COMMITTEE**

18TH NOVEMBER, 2013

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES**

Author: Robert Gatis, Service Director, Community Care

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT TRUST FUNDS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform the Trustees of developments affecting the Rhondda Cynon Taf Trust Fund for blind and partially sighted People in RCT (Trust Fund) and to make recommendations for the future administration of the Trust Fund.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Trustees acknowledge the decision by the RCT County Steering Group not to become a constituted trust.
- 2.2 To note that Cardiff Institute For The Blind will use their Big Lottery funding, in conjunction with funding received from Rhondda Cynon Taf Trust Fund for blind and partially sighted people in RCT to support the RCT County Steering Group, and any other willing blind and partially sighted people in RCT, to have the skills and confidence to be an effective voice in their community.
- 2.3 To note that Cardiff Institute For The Blind will trade under the new name of 'RNIB Cymru' within Rhondda Cynon Taf (rather than Cardiff Vale and the Valleys) but will continue to use the funding under the terms of the Agreement detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the report, in order to provide a seamless local service for blind and partially sighted people across RCT
- 2.4 Agree that the Director, Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the appropriate amendments to all relevant contractual documentation to reflect the changes set out in paragraph 2.1 to 2.3 of this report.
- 2.5 Agree that that a further report be prepared for Members' consideration in 2014 addressing the issue of how the remaining trust funds should be used following the end of the agreement with Cardiff Institute For The Blind.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Three elected cabinet committee members are trustees of the Trust Fund. In April 2012 a contract was entered into between the Trust Fund and Cardiff Institute for the Blind (CIB), trading as Cardiff Vale and the Valleys (CVV) which released approximately 40 per cent of the Trust Fund's monies to CIB, over a three year period, in order for them to provide services for people with sight loss within RCT(the 'Agreement').
- 3.2 The Agreement states that CIB will facilitate the delivery of a range of appropriate services within RCT for three years.

These services include:

- Establish and operate a contact telephone line to support people who are blind or partially sighted across RCT
 - Develop a befriending service for people who are blind or partially sighted across RCT
 - Support the establishment of a County Steering Group (CSG) and facilitate the development of this group into a fully constituted independent trust.
 - Facilitate support groups for people who are blind or partially sighted across RCT
 - Facilitate training sessions for people who are blind or partially sighted across RCT
 - Ensuring that the whole range of specialist services provided by the RNIB Group is available to people with sight loss residing in RCT e.g. ECLO support, Digital Inclusion Officer and welfare rights.
- 3.3 As stated the contractual agreement with CIB requires them to support the development of a CSG, led by people with a visual sensory loss. CIB and others, such as Interlink, would be available to support the CSG to develop into a fully constituted independent trust. It was intended following the end of the contractual agreement with CIB the new 'Constituted Trust' would receive the remaining funds to enable it to independently commission services for blind and partially sighted people in RCT.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Over the past twelve months several meetings and workshops have been held with the CSG. CIB, with support from interlink, have fully supported members of the CSG to consider becoming a constituted trust. However, at a recent workshop the members of the CSG agreed that they no longer wished to become a constituted trust due to the responsibilities and time commitment that would be required from them. The members did agree that the CSG should continue to be a group/forum for people who are blind or partially sighted. The current

members of the CSG would like to be consulted on proposed policy changes and to be recognised as a voice for those people with sight loss living in the community of RCT. **(see Appendix 1)**

- 4.2 It is recommended the Trustees acknowledge the decision by the County Steering Group not to become a constituted trust and that a further report be prepared for consideration by Members in 2014 recommending the use to which the remaining trust funds will be put.
- 4.3 CIB has recently been awarded a three year Big Lottery grant (which is supported by RCT Interlink) the purpose of which is to empower the CSG, and any other willing blind and partially sighted people in RCT, to gain the skills and confidence to be an effective voice in their community.
- 4.4 It is recommended CIB use their Big Lottery funding, in conjunction with funding received from the Trust Fund, to support the CSG, and any other willing blind and partially sighted people in RCT, to have the skills and confidence to be an effective voice in their community.
- 4.5 The Council has received a letter from CIB dated 22nd August 2013 **(see appendix 2)**, confirming, it no longer wishes to trade under the name Cardiff Vales and Valleys. It is seeking approval of the Trustees of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Trust Fund for Visually Impaired People to trade as RNIB Cymru in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 1st December 2013.
- 4.6 It is recommended Cardiff Institute for the Blind (CIB) trade under the new name of 'RNIB Cymru' within Rhondda Cynon Taf (rather than Cardiff Vale and the Valleys) and continue to use the funding under the terms of the Agreement, in order to provide a seamless local service for blind and partially sighted people in RCT.
- 4.7 As part of the ongoing monitoring process of the current contract agreement with CIB, officers of the council have held a number of periodical monitoring meetings. Following discussions with CIB and in order to more appropriately reflect the current and proposed work of CIB across RCT a number of amendments to the contract agreement are recommended:
 - The contact line be further developed and manned by CIB staff in the absence of volunteers
 - Develop the Befriending Scheme within RCT matching blind and partially sighted people to local volunteers or organisations (such as Deaf Blind UK and Age Concern) that can provide a befriending service.
 - CIB facilitate four sessions of 'finding your feet' courses within RCT during 2013-2014.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 These proposals represent the best way forward to ensure that the services to be provided are complementary to those statutory services provided by RCT and that they support people with a visual impairment.

- 5.2 Members will note it had previously been intended that after the contract with CIB had expired (i.e. March 2015) the Council would hand over the remainder of the Trust Funds to the new Trust, previously proposed to be the CSG. As this will no longer be the case, a further report will be presented for Members consideration during 2014 bringing forward detailed proposals with regard to the remaining trust funds.

18th July 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you as chair of the County Steering Group in RCT.

This letter is to inform you that we, as the current County Steering Group volunteers, are not in a position at this particular time to become a constituted trust as is requested in the Service Level Agreement with RCT CBC and Cardiff Vale and Valleys.

We are committed to the County Steering Group as it stands, as a forum where we can highlight and tackle issues faced by blind and partially sighted people. However, becoming a constituted trust, we feel, would be impossible for us to manage. Some of us are only able or willing to commit to a few hours per months and we feel that the level of responsibility and accountability that will fall to us a constituted trust is not appropriate at this time.

We feel that CVV are providing the services that are set out in the SLA effectively and we would like to see them continue to deliver these services. We are very committed as an advisory group and would welcome any opportunities to discuss how the trust fund can be best spent.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Grace Jones

County Steering Group Chair Glenview House Courthouse St, Pontypridd, CF37 1JY

Working together to support blind and partially sighted people



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Head Office: Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff CF24 5TD Tel: 029 2048 5414

Cardiff Institute for the Blind (CIB) Trading as Cardiff, Vales & Valleys (CVV)

Registered Charity No: CIB 214131

Company No.149982

The Trustees
Rhondda Cynon Taf Trust Fund for Visually Impaired People
c/o Luisa Bridgeman
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Ty Elai
Dinas Isaf East
Williamstown
CF40 1NY

22 August 2013

Re: Letter of intent to change trading name

Dear Trustees,

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council currently has a three-year contract with Cardiff Institute for the Blind, commissioned via the Rhondda Cynon Taf Trust Fund for Visually Impaired People. The original contract stated that Cardiff Institute for the Blind would trade as Cardiff Vales and Valleys.

Our organisation changed its trading name (but kept its company name) in 2009 to Cardiff Vales and Valleys, after it became an associate partner of the RNIB Group and extended its operations to include Rhondda Cynon Taf and other local authority areas.

This name has proved unpopular and confusing to service-users and other key stakeholders and the decision has been made to stop using the Cardiff Vales and Valleys trading name and just use our Cardiff Institute for the Blind company name in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan because of the considerable recognition and value it has in these areas due to the fact we have been providing services here since 1865.

Cardiff Institute for the Blind

Head Office: Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff CF24 5TD Tel: 029 2048 5414

Registered Charity No: CIB 214131

Company No.149982

The organisation is proposing to operate under the RNIB brand in all other operating areas, including Rhondda Cynon Taf, in order that we and RNIB Cymru can provide a seamless local service for people with sight loss.

With approval of trustees of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Trust Fund for Visually Impaired People, we will trade as RNIB Cymru in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 1 December 2013. We do this with agreement of RNIB Cymru.

Please do contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Kieran Harris
Director of Operations
Mobile: 07881 908 132
Email: kieran.harris@cibi.co.uk