



The fourth annual Sight Loss Council (SLC) Conference - A vision for change

Friday 9 May to Sunday 11 May 2025

Conference Aston, Birmingham

Agenda

Friday – Registration, housekeeping, & networking

Arrivals from 3.00 pm

6.00 pm Dinner – a buffet style meal will be served in the restaurant

7.00 pm Opening plenary by Rachel Wilkinson, Head of Engagement and Volunteering, Thomas Pocklington Trust.

Including sponsor's address by Bayer UK.

7.30 pm Quiz, hosted by the Sight Loss Council Coordinators

9.00pm Free time



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Saturday – Transport and Built Environment focus

- 9.30am Morning plenary: Conference room 1
- Introduction and welcome from Emma Hughes, Director of Services, Thomas Pocklington Trust.
- 9.45am Keynote by Darren Harris, double Paralympian and England footballer.
- 10.15am Sight Loss Council's key achievements in the last 18 months, presented by Iain Mitchell, Nicki Guy and Lu Connop, Senior Engagement Managers, Thomas Pocklington Trust.
- 10.45am Comfort break – 15 mins
- 11.00am Transport panel, with discussion and Q&A – focusing on the future of accessibility in public transport over the next two years.
- Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency – Chaz Wright, Stakeholder Correspondence Manager.
 - Confederation of Passenger Transport – Gav Miller, Operations Manager.
 - Rail Delivery Group – Dominic Lund Conlon, Accessibility and Inclusion Manager.
 - Network Rail – Steven Ireland, Head of Stations, Security and Customer Relationship Management.
- 12.30pm Lunch – a buffet style meal will be served in the restaurant.
- 1.30pm Transport and Built Environment



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Workshops – Volunteers, please check your confirmation email for which workshops you have been booked on to.

Workshop 1: Make Buses Accessible – Bringing our training resources to life (Conference room 1a)

By Gav Miller, Operations Manager, Confederation of Passenger Transport and Jack Moffat, Engagement Manager, Thomas Pocklington Trust.

This workshop will give an overview of our bus driver training resources and how they came about. We will share stories of success from SLCs around the country, in promoting them, as well as think about what can be learned from our good practice to date.

We will explore how our SLCs maximise the impact of our resources both on a national and local level. And discuss what our next steps are over the coming years.

Workshop 2: Make Trains Accessible - How to conduct an accessibility assessment (Conference room 1b)

By Nicki Guy, Senior Engagement Manager and Dave Smith, Engagement Manager, Thomas Pocklington Trust.

In this workshop we'll be diving into the world of access assessments. Using our experiences from the Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) project, we'll discuss how we approached the task, completed the assessments and how we shared our findings at the end. There will be lots of



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opportunities to discuss the process and share ideas on how we can make the access assessments even better going forward.

Workshop 3: Make Streets Accessible – Floating bus stops and their impact on accessibility (Room 145 – upstairs!)

By Mike Bell, Head of Campaigns and Yahya Pandor, Engagement Manager, Thomas Pocklington Trust.

In this interactive session, we will:

- Define what floating bus stops are and discuss their significance.
- Share the Sight Loss Council and Thomas Pocklington Trust positions on floating bus stops and the latest research on bus stop designs.
- Explore strategies for collaborating with local councils and other stakeholders to ensure blind and partially sighted (BPS) individuals are included in planning processes.
- Provide good practice advice and guidance on making consultations and plans accessible.

Come along to learn, share your experiences, and gain practical tips on advocating for more inclusive streets. Let's work together to make our streets accessible for everyone!



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Workshop 4: Partnership working – Maintaining positive relationships with difficult stakeholders (Room 144 – upstairs)

By Kelly Barton and Matt Harrison, Engagement Managers,
Thomas Pocklington Trust

From the manager of your local bus company, to the curator at your nearest museum, or the Chief Exec of the NHS Trust (and anyone in between) all of the relationships we build with stakeholders are vital for the success of every Sight Loss Council project. But what happens when those relationships are difficult? And how do we work alongside stakeholders who aren't as easy to get along with?

Come along to our interactive workshop to find out more. Not only will you learn from each other by sharing your experiences with stakeholders, but we'll also give you some tactics and tips on how to keep relationships going, even when things get tough.

- 2.45pm Break – refreshments will be served in the lounge area.
- 3.15pm Workshops (repeated from above) - once again, delegates choose one of the workshops on the list.
- 4.30pm Conference close
- 5.45pm Drinks reception in the Courtyard Lounge
- 6.30pm Awards dinner in the Courtyard Suites, in the private dining area of the restaurant.
- 8.15pm Comfort break



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- 8.30pm Rodney Powell Awards, opened by Charles Colquhoun, CEO, Thomas Pocklington Trust
- 8.35pm Awards hosted by Claire Sisk, blind content creator, TV presenter, and disability advocate
- Campaign of the Year – Presented by Louise Fairhurst, Director of Resources, TPT.
This award is sponsored by [Foundation Fighting Blindness](#).
 - Volunteering Team of the Year – Presented by Rachel Wilkinson, Head of Engagement and Volunteering, TPT.
This award is sponsored by [Brighton and Hove Buses](#).
 - Volunteer of the Year – Presented by Charles Colquhoun, CEO TPT.
This award is sponsored by [Russell Cooke Solicitors](#).
 - Outstanding Contribution SV – Presented by Emma Hughes, Director of Services, TPT.
This award is sponsored by [Guide Dogs \(UK\)](#).
 - Outstanding Contribution SLC – Presented by Mervyn Williamson, Chair of trustees.
This award is sponsored by [T Vine Conversions](#).
- 10.00pm Awards close – Mervyn Williamson, Chair of Trustees

Sunday – Health focus, starting with an update from Young Voices.

- 9.30am Final day welcome in Conference Room 1.
- 9.35am Young Voices update, led by Kate O’ Hagan.



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10.00am Health session: Working collaboratively with NHS Trusts to improve accessible information.

By Yahya Pandor, Engagement Manager and Lu Connop, Senior Engagement Manager, Thomas Pocklington Trust, and Callum Lancashire, Engagement Manager, Sight Scotland.

This session will include the sharing of good practice from the following:

- Scottish SLCs – knowing your landscape
- West Midlands SLCs – getting to the right people
- South West SLCs – tools and tips to bring the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) campaign to life

There will be discussion points on each table (spending 20 minutes on each point) around the following topics:

1. Being prepared for conversations:
 - Understanding the landscape in your area.
 - Knowing your why
 - Accessibility assessment - what's working and what isn't?
2. Stakeholder management: Identifying and maintaining relationships.
 - Who to contact
 - How to approach
 - Building relationships and balancing between working constructively and working critically
 - Managing expectations
3. Understanding and Overcoming Barriers.



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4. Defining success/outcomes

- Maximising impact.

- 11.30 am Break - refreshments will be served in the lounge area.
- 12.00pm Group feedback and discussions arising from the Health session.
- 12.45pm Launch of our Evaluation and Impact work, by Claire Bastin, Co-founder and Director, Nifty Sustainability CIC.
- 1.00 pm Closing keynote by Dr Mark Fosbrook PLY, Senior Policy Officer for Health and Disability at West Midlands Combined Authority, as well as four-time Paralympian, Gold medallist and world record holder.
- 1.30 pm Closing remarks – Charles Colquhoun, CEO, Thomas Pocklington Trust.
- 1.35 pm Conference close – a packed lunch will be provided for your journey home.



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