

## OVERVIEW

Evidence shows that sight loss for children and young people impacts on their independence, social skills, self-esteem and ability to fully participate in society. Following consultation with children and families, and a successful pilot scheme, Henshaws developed our ground-breaking programme. The aims are for children and young people to:

- Demonstrate increased life skills and independence
- Show an improved ability to interact socially and make friends
- Display greater self-esteem and confidence

"I had a really good time on the course last week, I learnt so many new things that are going to help me in my life."  
Course participant  
- age 19



## METHODS

Funded by BBC Children in Need and delivered in partnership with Guide Dogs, 144 children and young people aged 8-12 and 13-18 will benefit through 24 courses over three years.

Delivered as six sessions during school holidays, courses include:

- Social and emotional skills
- Kitchen Skills x 2
- Daily Living Skills
- Mobility
- Transitions, Hopes and Aspirations

Parent workshops are also delivered so families can support their children to develop their new skills.

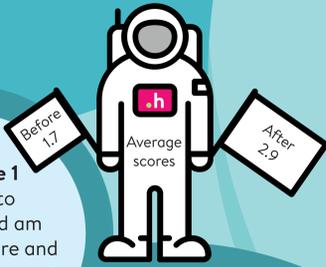


### Outcome 3

**A society in which people with sight loss can fully participate.**

Ensuring that children and young people with sight impairment can take their place in society.

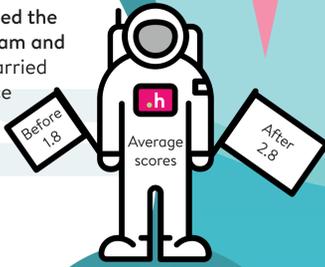
**Top Outcome 1**  
I know ways to keep safe and am spatially aware and confident when out and about.



## RESULTS

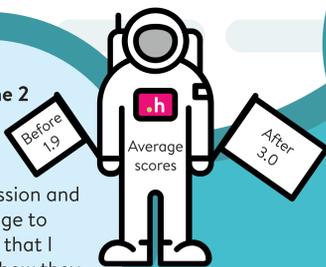
In Year 1, 34 children and young people accessed the programme across 8 courses in Trafford, Oldham and Stockport. Pre- and post- assessments were carried out to assess existing skills, to measure distance travelled using a specially designed tool for monitoring progress for children and young people with sight loss. Findings so far show:

- **90%** of participants showed progress across all three outcomes
- **61% increase** in skills developed and progress made across both age groups and all three outcomes



**Top Outcome 3**  
I can talk about my visual impairment and what this means for me (to people I don't know/friends).

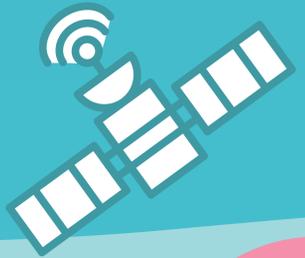
**Top Outcome 2**  
I can use appropriate voice tone, facial expression and body language to show others that I understand how they are feeling.



## CONCLUSIONS

Our innovative skills-based training programme specifically aims to increase children and young people's ability to participate fully in society. Our evidence shows that they are:

- Less dependent on family
- Less isolated
- Have progressed on to university, volunteering and training



# ● Independence Matters Programme for Children and Young People



**henshaws**  
*beyond expectations*

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**References:** Blind Children UK (2015) Parents and the Playground: A study of attitudes to children and young people with sight loss. Guide Dogs for the Blind (2008) Research into the Independence and Functionality of Blind and Partially Sighted Children and Young People. Easy-Easier Tool (Positive Eyes) [www.positiveeye.co.uk/easy-easier-posting-box/](http://www.positiveeye.co.uk/easy-easier-posting-box/) Jepps, C and Bacon, J (2014) Children and Young People Research, Blind Children UK and Guide Dogs. Vision 2020 (2015) Key facts about vision impairment in children and young people.

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