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# **Improving the employment prospects of blind and partially sighted people**

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partially sighted people

# Workshop overview

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This workshop will:

- Summarise the current employment picture for blind and partially sighted people
- Lead an interactive session on the key factors that consider the barriers to employment facing blind and partially sighted people
- Present RNIB Group's latest attempt to improve this situation, through the ENabler project.
- Lead a Q&A discussion with a blind and partially sighted job seeker, and an RNIB employment advisor



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# ENABLER Project: Collaboration and aim

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- A three-year research project funded by Big Lottery (BIG) which seeks to improve the employment opportunities of blind and partially sighted job seekers.
- Carried out by RNIB, Action for Blind People (Action) and the Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research (VICTAR) at the University of Birmingham.
- To draw on the experience and expertise of Action for Blind People and RNIB employment co-ordinators (ECs) and clients to develop a means of ‘classifying’ blind and partially sighted job seekers according to their distance from the job market.

# ENABLER Project: Research questions

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- 1. Is there a segmentation model to support the understanding of the needs and barriers of blind and partially sighted people?**
- 2. How can we assess unemployed blind and partially sighted people in a way that identifies individual barriers and highlights potential support needs that will move people closer to their employment potential?**
- 3. What are the most appropriate interventions that can support this journey?**
- 4. Will this wider understanding and the development of targeted interventions enable us to support more blind and partially sighted people move closer or into the open labour market?**



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# ENABLER Project: Methods and activities

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- Phase One: Development of a screening tool and trial involving 60 participants and their employment coordinators, drawing on a range of methods including focus group, discussions and telephone interviews.
- Phase Two: Refining of assessment toolkit and testing a variety of innovative support options through case study work with 14 clients furthest from the labour market over 8 months in England and Scotland
  - To capture experiences of interventions with clients to validate the segmentation model and screen tool
  - To find out how the interventions tell us about the enablers and barriers to moving these clients closer to the labour market

# **ENABLER Project: Assessment toolkit model**

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- Time bound
- Initial interview
- Quick snapshot
- Questions framed to give 1-6 answer
- Score, which could be translated
- 'Action research' - a toolkit the ECs could use
- Still in development
- Now in 2nd major research cycle
- Testing innovative support options for people a long way from employment
- Ruth and Glenn...



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