

Chapter 9

Resources – People and Money

People and People Policies

I have already mentioned my scepticism about the significance of restructuring and reorganisation as a means of improving organisational effectiveness. I now go even further and say that functions close to my heart, such as marketing and strategic planning, come second to developing an organisation's people – through inspiration, support, delegation, and occasionally reining in, of staff, volunteers and trustees. These activities have to happen in the line, through management and leadership across the whole organisation. However, the functional support is crucial. Human resources statistics and policies are discussed chronologically in Part I. In this chapter I pull out more personal reflections on what has made RNIB function over the years 1970-2010.

The transformation and development of HR inside RNIB, and, I suspect, most charities, was revolutionary. In the early 1970s the personal assistant to the director general was the only corporate person with personnel responsibilities apart from payroll. As far as I can find out, all other personnel functions such as they existed were undertaken by line managers. By 2000 the corporate personnel/HR department numbered 23 posts. In earlier chapters there are more statistics on staff make up and staff development practices.

In this section I describe more the ambiance of RNIB and how this changed over the period.

Relationships were much more formal in the 1970s. When I arrived in 1983, long-standing support staff still called me and other senior managers by our surnames, that is, 'Mr Bruce'. Until I could abolish the system in 1984/85, we had two staff canteens at headquarters, one for senior managers and one for the rest of staff. Intriguingly, my primary opponents to their merger were not the most senior but those newly arrived in the senior managers' dining room (as in, 'I have spent ten years waiting to be allowed in and now you are abolishing it!').

As late as 1983, while there was detailed corporate supervision of holiday entitlement, there was still virtually no corporate personnel or staff development function – only 1.5 posts under pressure as reported by a consultant (Walsh 1984). We quickly consolidated resource functions (for example, finance, personnel and estates management) under the director of finance and administration. Barry Gifford held this post for over half this history and appointed Ken Lavey as personnel officer in the mid 1980s. They made an outstanding team, together building up the substantial HR function as one of our most important critical success factors over the period. Staff training and development was impressive, way ahead of most other charities as I could observe through founding in 1992 and running (*pro bono*) the postgraduate charity management programme at City University London's Bayes (then Cass) Business School, attended by many hundreds of charity managers. Equally impressive were the RNIB professional development programmes and appraisal systems. Regular reporting included summary information on appraisals, diversity, training, recruitment, turnover, exit information, grievances, disciplinaries and tribunals (see, for example, RNIB 2003).

Personnel was associated with a shift in RNIB culture to become a less cautious, more ambitious organisation. On arrival, I found an organisation where the culture favoured being cautious. Fred Reid, a long-standing trustee and reliable

commentator in my experience, told me this had been around for many years – he cited the initial opposition of RNIB to white canes and guide dogs as examples from before the start of this history. My mantra was ‘let a thousand flowers bloom’, don’t blame the gardeners when some of the flowers die and certainly don’t say, ‘I told you so!’ It is just so difficult to be sure in advance which initiative is going to succeed. If you plant many seedlings, some will blossom gloriously. Examples from the period are eye health services and benefits rights advice which started out as just two equals among 20 or so development projects in 1987. Along with this push to have as much a ‘no blame’ culture as possible was a concerted effort to build on people’s strengths rather than criticising weaknesses. It is often said that it takes at least half a dozen pieces of praise to wipe out the hurt and disincentivisation of a single criticism. The aim should be for all staff to be both excited and confident when they come to work.

At various points in the text I have mentioned individuals who have been involved in various initiatives but I am conscious of the many thousands whom I have not named. They are in this book because they have created the work described. Allowing for staff coming and going over the 40 years, probably in excess of 10,000 people were employed by RNIB, in addition to the many hundreds of thousands of volunteers, including fundraising volunteers in telephone raffles. For most of the period there were between 2,500 and 3,500 full- and part-time staff in RNIB. One of the things you learn as you get older is that organisations are dependent on all the people in it. However, wherever we are located in an organisation, we tend to assume that is the focus of attention. Also records tend to be made by staff and volunteers further up the hierarchy. For ordinary blind and partially sighted customers of RNIB, the most important people are the staff and volunteers they meet at the front line who are often further down the hierarchy. It is those people they will want acknowledged and I can think of no way of doing this individually, so I can only do so in spirit, with examples. Anyone who feels left out should please contact me via RNIB.

An example of these front-line services were those which have variously been called customer services, the helpline, the resource centres – all those who speak or otherwise communicate with blind and partially sighted people and their families, in our education services, homes, hotels, benefits rights, eye clinics, libraries, employment support etc., etc., etc. Our visually impaired customers are often going through a traumatic period of one sort or another and the information, support and practical help these staff and volunteers give can be crucial – from explaining to someone who has macular degeneration that she will, almost certainly, not go totally blind, retaining some peripheral vision, through to helping someone claim a substantial social security benefit because of his blindness, through to making sure a customer gets a replacement white cane quickly because his current one is broken.

Another group which goes, undeservedly, unsung are the porters, receptionists, telephonists, secretaries and assistants and others at information points. Take the example of the porters in RNIB's headquarters and national service centre in Kings Cross and before that in Great Portland St. The traditional name, 'porter', does not nearly convey the range of duties. For the tens of thousands of blind and partially sighted people and their organisations who have held meetings at RNIB headquarters in the evenings over the 40 years, the porters were and are vital. They are the ones who stay at night to keep the rooms open, to help people to the correct room, especially when several groups are meeting at once, to clear up after a guide dog if it is sick on the floor, to get more chairs if extra people turn up. Over the years, in the evenings RNIB headquarters regularly had between 10 and 150 blind people meeting in various rooms with just one sighted porter and the occasional staff member working late. It was a blind world and the face of RNIB was not the director general or chief executive, it was the porter.

Another group I would single out in this history are all the RNIB professional staff, examples of which are the optometrists, rehabilitation workers, teachers, physiotherapists, social

workers, as well as the policy workers and the myriad of other professionals in communications, planning, finance, surveying, HR, IT and so on. For anyone who is still under the illusion that charities are somehow less efficient than the private or public sector, I can correct them. Having worked in all three sectors, my experience is that charities are just as efficient (or inefficient).

I have struggled to find a fair way of acknowledging individuals and have failed, except to mention a very small proportion in the preceding chapters. Here, in this overview chapter, I mention one or two more in contrasting positions in the formal hierarchy to whom I have been close. Writing about the porters reminds me of two of our porters – Mick and Jim Mahoney, father and son, who between them cover the whole 40-year period of this history (and more). I remember vividly in 1983 coming anonymously to RNIB, prior to applying for the CEO post, to check it out to see whether it was the kind of organisation I should like to work in. Exiting Regents Park tube station, I was unsure which direction to walk to find RNIB. I rang from a public call box (no mobiles then!) and reached Mick (whom I obviously had never met). I think he assumed I was blind and immediately he offered to walk a quarter of a mile round to where I was and fetch me. That alone convinced me RNIB was an organisation I wanted to work for!

At the other end of the conventional organisational hierarchy, we have the titular heads of RNIB, two above all others, our Patrons Her Majesty The Queen for this whole history and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother for much of it. We have been well served over the years by our presidents, Lord Cobham, Lord Head, the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Westminster and, from 2012, Dame Gail Ronson. For most of my time the president was the Duke of Westminster. He arrived with a completely unfounded reputation as a young unformed figure, not particularly committed to public life. I cannot believe that was ever a reality because like all our Presidents he threw himself into helping and encouraging RNIB. He immediately started visiting our establishments and services, raising morale through his evident interest in

what the staff and volunteers were doing. He was always there for me if I was troubled or in need of advice, as I am sure his predecessors and successors were and are for other RNIB leaders.

Over the years RNIB was also well served by its trustees, several of whom have been mentioned earlier. Many, and from 2001 a required majority, were blind or partially sighted. The Executive Council (until 2001/02) and the Board (from then on) always had a mix of long-established members and new blood: outstanding examples of the former were Lord Low of Dalston, Sir John Wall and Sir Duncan Watson who served as trustees or equivalent for the whole 40 years as did Bill Poole. Many other people served for several decades in various roles, showing the richness and depth of outreach, including Jill Allen-King, Mike Barrett, Richard Bignell, Carol Borowski, Kevin Carey (chair from 2009), Derek Child, Lisa Charlton, David Clark, Hans Cohn, Michael Crowther, Gareth Davies, Cindy and Rilan Cash, Peter Wilkins, Gill Gorton, Bob Greenhalgh, Benny Foxall, Des Kettle, John Claricoat, David Clark, Jackie Hicks, Steve Plumpton, Jimmy Cook, Gill Burrington, Alan Suttie, Margaret Bennett, Cindy and Richard Godfrey-Mckay, Ray Hazan, Vidar Hjordeng, Don Jackson, Anna Lawson, Janet Lovell, Terry Moody, Tom Parker, Wally Kinder, Arif Khan, Amir Majid, Gwyn O'Grady, Paul Questier, John Ramm, Dr Fred Reid, Terry Robinson, John Spence, Janet Stonehouse, Norma Town, Mike Townsend, Dafton Robinson, Terry Robinson, Careen Bradbury, Louise Wright, Karl Farrell, Profs Fielder and Hill, and many others. Ellie Southwood (chair after Kevin Carey) joined the Board in the last year of this history. Conventional wisdom is that trustees and committee members should not stay too long but I would argue for balance recognising the value of their organisational memory. Their continuing presence was family-like and most knew when to withdraw from active roles.

Someone else at RNIB for virtually the whole period, and whose job spanned meeting porters and presidents to help make things happen, was Carol Bird who joined RNIB in 1961 and retired in 2005. For over 30 of her 44 years there

she was assistant to the chair or chief executive and she helped to manage transitions between incumbents, a critical role if organisations are to maintain momentum as well as stability. A fount of knowledge and wisdom on RNIB's development, she was invaluable in helping me to construct the RNIB chronology of events (Bruce and Bird, in preparation). Examples of other senior support staff who operated similarly were Viv Barnes, Eve Speare, Lisa Godsalve, Jean White, Penny Foulkes, Julie Shephard, Betty Brown, Wendy Graham, Jillian Harvey, Andrew Hodgson and Ruby Underhill.

A more wide-ranging list of senior staff who all made a major difference can be found in the Appendix entitled: 'RNIB Management Conference Attendance – 1985, 1991, 1997 and 2003'. It lists over 250 people who played important senior roles, as selected by their divisional directors. Please note that people's titles related to the year in question and were not necessarily their most senior role with us. These biennial conferences were residential gatherings of senior RNIB staff. I instigated them in 1985 to help us harness a wide range of thoughts and reflections, create a positive atmosphere and galvanise action. They were powerful in all these respects but I rapidly learned they also had unanticipated consequences. One was that, for some, released from the work pressure cooker, it offered an opportunity to let their hair down, as well as work hard. This was particularly the case for heads of residential settings who normally were responsible for keeping vulnerable children and adults safe at all times – a significant stress and pressure from which they were released for three days. At our 1997 conference in Cambridge one of them (David Teager I think) somehow 'borrowed' a pullover from Barry Gifford, the director of finance and administration, and promptly organised a secret raffle with the pullover as the prize and the proceeds going to RNIB. Luckily, Barry took it in good heart!

My last comment here may appear to be through rose-tinted spectacles, but it is a view I have held ever since my early days in RNIB. I have worked in or around more than a dozen charities in my time. None can match RNIB for the feeling

that you are joining an extended family – loyalties, bonds of friendship and, yes, occasional rows – but there is a pulling together. This feeling applies particularly to the blind and partially sighted community within RNIB. During the period when we had a 120-person Executive Council with a very large number of blind members, later a Board with a majority of blind members, I had a sense of being welcomed into a community, almost a family, and being inspired by them to achieve my best. We know and knew why we were there because in RNIB there were and are blind and partially sighted people all around, in governance, staffing, volunteers and customers. The secret of creating this family feeling in a charity is to ensure it is normal to have beneficiaries involved as trustees (or in other roles of governance), staff and volunteers.

On a more light-hearted personal note, while sorting my files, I came across a letter from the time in 1970 when I was preparing for my departure from Unilever before entering the charity world. I had been offered jobs by what I subsequently relaunched as Age Concern and by Mind, but the courteous reply from RNIB (Ruby Underhill, assistant to the then director general, John Colligan) said that at RNIB there were ‘no openings within my sphere of interest’.

On reflection, I believe it showed that RNIB was one of my preferred charities some thirteen years before I did actually join as director general.

Finances

So, from people to money, quite a contrast! However, to rephrase a song, ‘you can’t have one without the other’!

Growth – Three Times Larger

RNIB finances fared well over the 40 years (1970-2010), income and expenditure approximately trebled in real terms – with most of this growth in the 1980s and 1990s. In cash terms they rose by 40 times but so much of this was the impact of inflation. For the organisation to be three times the size it was 40 years before is no mean feat, especially as the amount

spent on services also trebled in real terms. Over this period both the primary income components of earned income from service fees (*circa* 39 per cent of the per annum total) and voluntary income (*circa* 56 per cent) trebled also and stayed in near constant proportion to each other.

The income table below (Table 9.2) gives the percentage income growth rates by decade in real terms: namely, eleven per cent growth in the 1970s, 56 per cent in the 1980s, 47 per cent in the 1990s, dropping to seventeen per cent in the 2000s. This last decade's lower growth rate is explained in part by: the increased emphasis on lobbying and campaigning after 2004 (with little associated fee/earned income); and the significant reduction in direct service delivery from 2005 onwards with the concomitant loss of fee income (for example, spinning off RNIB New College Worcester in 2008, which comprised three per cent of RNIB income).

In 2009/10 income was boosted by the absorption of Action for Blind People (which represented fourteen per cent of RNIB in income).

Growth Compared to Other Charities Working with Sight Loss

Throughout this period RNIB was by far the largest charity helping blind and partially sighted people in the UK (measured by total income, Wells 1971 and Caritas 2011).

Maintaining its pre-eminent position was not a foregone conclusion. For example, in 1970 the top 50 voluntary income charities contained four UK blindness ones –RNIB, St Dunstons (now Blind Veterans UK), the Jewish Blind Society and the Greater London Fund for the Blind. Of these only RNIB (nineteenth) remained in the top 50 by the end of this history (Pharoah 2011).

Growth Compared to Other Disability Charities

In 1970 RNIB was the largest disability charity (measured by total income), roughly equal to Scope, then called the Spastics Society. (Wells 1971). By 2010 Scope had dropped

back to fourth, RNIB to third, with both overtaken by Mencap (first) and Leonard Cheshire (second) which were powered by earned income from the statutory sector, constituting over 80 per cent of their income (Caritas 2011). The significance of this will become clear in a few pages.

Growth Compared to All Charities

RNIB retained a position in the top 20 of all charities measured by total income for the whole of this history. This was no mean feat against a background of seven charities dropping out of the top 20, including Christian Aid, Scope and the Children's Society (Caritas Data 2011) and the decline of disability as a charitable fundraising cause (Pharoah *et al.* 2004).

The importance of staying a major income charity is emphasised by the extraordinary income distribution among general charities shown in the NCVO Almanac. In 2009/10 only 500 charities out of 151,000 commanded nearly half (46.4 per cent) of all charity income (NCVO Almanac 2012). This pattern remains the same today. Small and medium-sized charities need more help to grow, perhaps building on their relatively greater involvement of volunteers (Kendall, Mohan, Brookes and Yoon 2018).

The NCVO Almanac has been mentioned several times in this history and provides essential market data for the charity sector. It was a major innovation in 1996 under Sir Stuart Etherington's watch; he was an outstanding chief executive (1994-2020) of the influential National Council for Voluntary Organisations. Until the Almanac arrived there had been virtually no longitudinal sector data.

Sources of RNIB Income

There were two main sources of income for RNIB throughout the 40 years. These were voluntary income, such as legacies, direct mail, telephone raffles, major donors and so on, and fees for services, sometimes called earned income.

Examples of fee income include: contracted work undertaken on behalf of the NHS; school fees from local authorities; Talking Book memberships; individuals with sight loss buying, for example, white canes or watches; and the commercial sector buying consultancy and training (for example, on DDA implementation).

Most large charities have income from both of these sources but RNIB consciously tried to maximise both in order to have two 'legs' of income on which it stood. If fees/earned income suffered a hit, it was hoped that this would be cushioned by voluntary income and vice versa. The split between these two sources stayed remarkably constant over the 40 years, always within the following ranges:

Fees/earned income	38-40 per cent of total income
Voluntary income	53-59 per cent of total income
Investment income	one to five per cent of total income

Growing both earned and voluntary income threefold in real terms and keeping them in proportion was not inevitable. I remember well in the 1990s when voluntary income was doing well, there was a strong internal argument for keeping fee/earned income growth low, below inflation. For example, 'How can we justify raising fees when legacies are doing so well?' This is an attractive argument but would have soon led to fee income declining in real terms with less money to grow services to meet unmet need. The extra voluntary income would have been swallowed up further, increasing donation subsidy of fee/earned income services. Even worse, as so much of fee/earned income was from the state (local or national government), we would have been using voluntary (donated) income to subsidise the statutory contracts. Many donors, especially major givers, are opposed to charities that they support subsidising statutory contracts. They argue that they have paid their taxes and they do not wish their donations to subsidise the state; they see this as a 'second tax'. They want their money to be

doing something extra. Second, as business people, they noted the growing trend of state outsourcing. Charities can be competing with commercial bids and entrepreneur donors can be uncomfortable with their donations having the effect of subsidising a charity bid and so ‘undercutting’ a commercial bid.

Earned Income

That RNIB maintained a fairly constant balance between the three sources of income makes it look ‘normal’. However, in comparison with the wider charity market RNIB was an outlier. In summary and generalising, for 1970-90 the sector as a whole had a smaller proportion of earned income than RNIB’s 38-40 per cent. Starting from 1979 in policy terms and the middle 1980s in implementation effect, statutory grants to the general charity sector were increasingly replaced by contracts or fees for services. By around 2000 the sector had increased average earned income such that it constituted 39 per cent and RNIB and the sector were at the same level. By 2010 the sector as a whole had increased its reliance on earned income even further; it now represented 49 per cent, significantly above RNIB’s 39 per cent. The sources of these figures are RNIB’s accounts and the NCVO Almanac.

This was a dramatic shift which RNIB anticipated in its strategy review of 2001 (RNIB 2001):

The other disability charities have achieved their significant service income growth through rolling out largely new services which are beneficial

Table 9.1. Charity Sector Earned Income

	2000	2010
Voluntary Sector	39%	49%
RNIB	39%	39%

to their end customers and are paid for by the statutory authorities ...

So one conclusion is that we need to identify a shortlist of services that are needed by blind or partially sighted people; are being under attended to currently in the statutory sector but for which we believe statutory funding can be grown; and where we have the capacity in terms of knowledge, skills, distribution potential to meet need.

(Bruce and Milligan 2001, pp. 219-20)

What were these shortlisted services? One was eye health services. The decade saw the major expansion of contracts for low vision services and for eye clinic liaison workers who help people newly diagnosed with sight loss to steer their way through the range of services there to help them at a time when the patient is at her or his most vulnerable. Another was the contracts for low vision clinics set up to help people use their residual vision more successfully. Then there was the JMU, the unit which brought in income from training and contracts to advise statutory and commercial organisations on how better to serve people with sight loss and other disabilities under the auspices of the Disability Discrimination Act. A third was the expansion of RNIB local rehabilitation services under contract to local authorities.

Why did these earned income initiatives not steer the percentages in the direction of the wider charity market? This would take further investigation, perhaps examining the following hypotheses: from 2004 RNIB shifted priorities significantly in favour of investing more in campaigning and lobbying; the income market for the growth of RNIB direct services was not there; and/or the loss/closure of mature direct services (e.g. RNIB New College and RNIB Redhill College) outstripped the growth of new earned income such as eye health and ECLO services.

Voluntary Income

On voluntary income, often called fundraised income (legacies, donations, collecting tins, fundraising events etc.), RNIB remained a major player across 1970-2010. In 1970 its voluntary income was the tenth largest after the following in order of rank: Joint Palestine Appeal, Christian Aid, Barnardo's, Oxfam, Imperial Cancer (now CRUK), the Spastics Society (now Scope), Save the Children, RNLI, Cancer Research (now CRUK) and RNIB (Wells 1971).

Forty years later RNIB voluntary income was fifteenth following in order: CRUK, British Heart Foundation, Oxfam, RNLI, NSPCC, Macmillan Cancer Support, British Red Cross, RSPCA, the Salvation Army, Sightsavers International, PDSA, Marie Curie, Save the Children, RSPB and RNIB (Pharoah 2011).

The fact that six of the original 1970 top ten are, 40 years later, still in the top fifteen shows the strength and longevity of the leading charity brands.

Fundraising is a highly competitive business in the charity world. In the 1960s and the early 1970s RNIB had a very successful fundraising operation perhaps because the then director general, John Colligan, came from a fundraising background. In the late 1970s and 1980s non-legacy fundraising became lacklustre – good solid performances but few spectacular successes. Introducing a strong marketing approach, Mike Lancaster, a commercial marketer with a penchant for risk and investment, loosened up fundraising thinking amongst staff during the 1990s and early 2000s and the situation was dramatically improved. This position was driven further forward under the leadership of the successor directors, Paul Amadi and Wanda Hamilton.

How did the make-up of our voluntary income develop over the period? The star in the firmament across this history and earlier has been legacy income which contributed over half of voluntary income throughout: 52 per cent in 1969/70; 64 per cent in 1979/80; 69 per cent in 1999/2000 and 56 per cent in 2009/10. RNIB has traditionally worked hard on promoting its need for legacies. However, it is salutary

to remember the apocryphal adage of the advertising world: ‘Half of advertising is a waste of money but which half?’ From 1975 RNIB’s blind chair, Duncan Watson, wrote ‘from one solicitor to another’ to all English solicitors about the helpfulness of legacies to our cause. In the early 1980s, under Barry Gifford’s prompting, we produced a legacy leaflet. By the early 1990s, under Mike Lancaster’s leadership, we had one then a team of legacy officers holding information receptions for potential legators, who had responded to RNIB advertisements. Yet, despite this work and regular research trying to connect legators’ names to lists of people who had used our services, we could never find a causal link between us and our largest legators.

Over the same period fundraised income (that is, non-legacy voluntary income) changed dramatically. In the early 1970s RNIB relied on two major methods, local (mainly blind) fundraisers with guides (often their wives) and national press advertising. By the beginning of the 1980s local fundraising was showing a decline, with costs ratios rising unacceptably. Started by Barry Gifford in the late 1980s and then driven much further by Mike Lancaster in the early 1990s, local fundraising was wound back but with much higher income targets per fundraiser. This was a difficult time, especially for those fundraisers who lost their jobs, amongst whom were blind employees. Mike introduced, or radically developed, newer methods, such as capital appeals, telephone promoted raffles



RNIB supporters pull a jumbo jet 100 yards at Gatwick (a world record) and raise £50,000 in 1990.

(pioneered by Kath Howard in the north of England), direct mail, major donor fundraising and expanded legacy fundraising.

Over 2000 to 2010 Mike Lancaster was in post until the middle of the decade, succeeded by Paul Amadi and Wanda Hamilton by the end. All the aforementioned methods were in place but by then we had grasped the central importance of instituting a relationship fundraising approach. At the smaller donation end, this was driven by how much more cost effective it is to retain and develop an existing donor than to recruit a new one.

At the major donor end, banged into us by Jeff Shear, it was about stewardship, earning trust and so building commitment and loyalty. Critical to this process of relationship building over the period were the RNIB president and the chair of the fundraising committee. The presidents were Lord Cobham, Lord Head, the Duke of Devonshire, then the Duke of Westminster and, lastly, Dame Gail Ronson. Appeal committee chairs were Sir John Beckwith, Sir Mike Rake, Guy Sangster, Jeremy Bull and Dame Gail Ronson. These committee chairs were hugely important in their leadership roles and in reaching targets, so empowering help to blind and partially sighted people. Vice presidents at the end of this history in 2010 were Sir John Beckwith CBE, the Rt Hon. David Blunkett MP, Richard Brewster, Professor Ian Bruce CBE, Jeremy Bull, Haruhisa Handa, Dr Euclid Herie, Lady Jarvis, Penny Lancaster-Stewart, Lord Low of Dalston CBE, Sir Mike Rake, Dr Dermot Smurfit, Rod Stewart CBE, the Rt Hon the Earl of Stockton and Sir Duncan Watson.

In conclusion, all this time and effort led to the tripling of voluntary and statutory income in real terms over the 40 years. We maintained RNIB as one of the UK's largest charities as measured by total income, earned income and voluntary income, throughout this history – 1970 to 2010.

Service Expenditure Growth

Income growth for its own sake was not the objective and perhaps the most important set of figures across the years were those recording expenditure on services to blind and

partially sighted people and this is also a good news story – which I hope is evident from the detail laid out in earlier chapters. Here we look only at the overall financial picture. Expenditure on services grew from £2 million in 1970 to £111 million in 2010, which meant in real terms, the tripling of service growth. Indirect services (influencing others – see earlier in this chapter) grew massively. Expenditure on direct service also grew, with significant shifts away from residential services to day provision, and away from education (with the rise of inclusive state education).



Reading and writing Braille at Rushton Hall school in the 70s. Later pupils had learning disabilities and would use other communication methods.

There was major growth in expenditure on direct services in the area of eye health, accessible digital information (especially online) and information and advice generally, for example, on benefits rights and social security. The major income gainer was lobbying and campaigning for improved conditions for blind and partially sighted people.

Financial Data in More Detail

The table below gives the actual cash figures and the inflation adjusted total income and expenditure in constant 2004 prices for valid comparison across the 40 years. Why 2004? I could have picked any year but 2004 was the latest available year when I started this first element of the history. The important point is that the decade changes in income and expenditure can be validly compared because each pound has a constant value, that is, equal purchasing power. When we compare like with like, we can see that RNIB

Table 9.2. RNIB Income and Expenditure 1969/70-2009/10

Income	1969/70	1979/80	1989/90	1999/2000	2009/10
Income (£ millions)					
Fees for services	1.16	4.7	14.3	28.6	45.7
Voluntary income	1.61	6.25	19.9	41.5	68.3
Investment income	0.16	0.73	2.7	2.5	1.7
Other	0.13	0	0	0.5	1.5
Total actual	3.04	11.68	36.9	73.1	117.2 ¹
TOTAL at constant 2004 prices [1]	31.7	35.1	54.7	80.2	93.8
Percentage growth, real terms		+11%	+56%	+47%	+17%
TOTAL at constant 2004 prices to base 100 in 1969/70	100	111	173	253	296

[1] Excluding £17 million one-off for 'Fair value of acquired net assets'

Expenditure	1969/70	1979/80	1989/90	1999/2000	2009/10
Expenditure (£ millions)					
Services for blind and partially sighted people	2.29	10.13	32.4	65.2	111.1
Cost of appeals	0.67	0.92	4.3	9.5	17.2
Total	2.96	11.05	36.7	74.8	130
TOTAL at constant 2004 prices (£millions) [2]	30.9	33.2	54.4	82.1	105
Percentage growth, real terms		+7%	+64%	+51%	+28%
TOTAL at constant 2004 prices to base 100 ¹	100	107	176	266	340

[2] UK RPI via the Cleave Calculator

income grew in the 1970s by eleven per cent, in the 1980s by 56 per cent, in the 1990s by 47 per cent and 2000-10 by seventeen per cent, including the absorption of Action for Blind People's income in the second half of the decade. The expenditure figures show a similar growth pattern. See the previous sections of this chapter for the commentary.

SAMPLE