


Safer streets, safer operatives, mitigating impacts on visually impaired people.



Mitigating the Impact of Street Works on Blind and Partially Sighted People

 Seema Flower

 blindambitionuk

 Blind Ambition

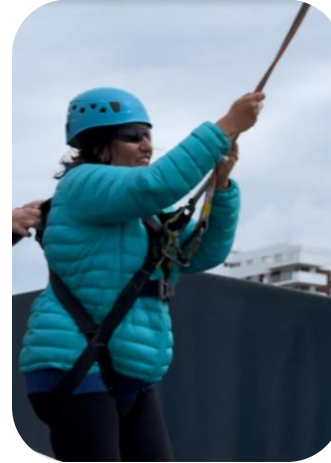
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About Me

- MD of Blind Ambition, specializing in disability awareness training and advocacy.
- An award-winning advocate, working with major organisations to promote accessibility
- Affiliate member of Streetworks UK
- Recognised for leadership, shortlisted for the Shaw Trust Power 100, nominated for Heroes awards 2025 and won the CXO 2.0 Outstanding Leadership Award in Dubai
- Qualified Careers Guidance Practitioner



Introduction to Blind Ambition



- Blind Ambition is an award-winning leader in Disability and Inclusion consultancy
- Through advocacy, training, and employment initiatives, we empower disabled individuals to succeed
 - We support disabled individuals to help them integrate into the workplace
 - We equip organisations with strategies to better support disabled customers, employees and service users, and enable them to unlock untapped talent
 - We help organisations interact with their disabled audiences safely and in a compliant manner
- **Blind Ambition Community** not-for-profits supports Visually Impaired People directly
- **Blind Ambition Recruitment** – recruitment.blindambition.co.uk
- As an affiliated member of Street Works UK and also working closely with ShHiFT, HAUC, we have a dedicated focus on building awareness and driving best practice operations within highways and utility companies

The Reality: What Street Works Feel Like

- 🚫 A pavement blocked by barriers is not an inconvenience — it is a hazard.
- 🚫 Blind and partially sighted people rely on route consistency to navigate safely.
- 🚫 Unexpected obstacles, missing tactile paving or unclear diversions can cause falls, disorientation and distress.
- 🚫 Visual-only signage — cones, boards, flashing lights — communicates nothing to someone who cannot see them.
- 🚫 The impact starts before operatives even notice someone approaching.



The Impact on Blind and Partially Sighted People



Loss of Independence

Blocked routes mean cancelled journeys — hospital appointments missed, work avoided, social isolation increased.

Physical Danger

Falls into open excavations, trips over unsecured barriers, and collisions with unmarked equipment are real risks.

Fear and Anxiety

The unpredictability of altered streets creates anticipatory anxiety — people stop going out altogether.

Broken Routines

Blind and partially sighted people learn routes in detail. Disruption without notice can make a familiar journey impossible.

Invisible Barriers

Dust, noise, reduced contrast and cluttered surfaces all add to the cognitive and sensory load of navigating a site.

Dignity and Respect

Being ignored, spoken over or not offered help at a street works site sends a clear message: you are not welcome here.

What Partially Sighted People Actually See

Understanding Through Lived Experience

- Our training is unique because it's grounded in the lived experience of individuals with disabilities. It's one thing to know the rules, but it's another to understand why they're important.
- Through our practical, hands-on sessions, your team will gain insights that can only come from seeing the world through the eyes of those with disabilities.



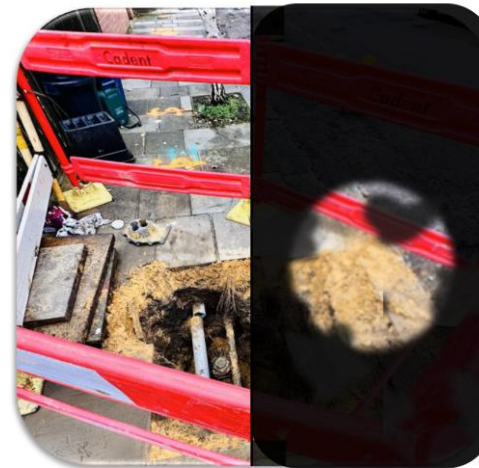
Normal

Diabetic Retinopathy



Normal

Macular Degeneration



Normal

Glaucoma



Normal

Retinitis Pigmentosa

Real Consequences, Real People

2M+

blind and partially sighted people in the UK

75%

of visually impaired people are unemployed — street works add barriers to already inaccessible commutes

1 in 5

people in the UK have a disability — operatives interact with disabled people every single day



Key Laws Overview



Equality Act 2010:
must make reasonable adjustments

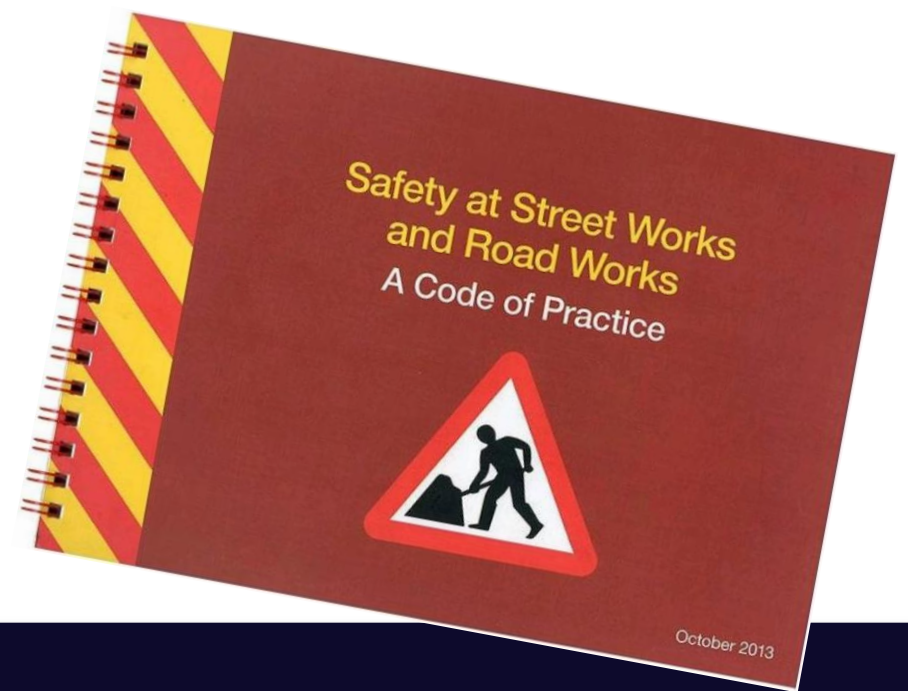
Highways Act 1980:
illegal to obstruct public use of footways

New Roads & Street Works Act 1991:
signage and access must comply

Code of Practice for Safety at Street Works: all workers are responsible for safe, accessible layouts

Building Regulations Part M: requires temporary routes to remain accessible

The Limits of the Red Book



"The Red Book is essential — but it was not written by someone who cannot see the cones."



Compliance ≠ accessibility

A site can meet every Red Book requirement and still be impassable for a blind or partially sighted pedestrian.



Guidance vs behaviour

Rules describe what to install. They do not determine how operatives respond when someone approaches the site.



The gap is human

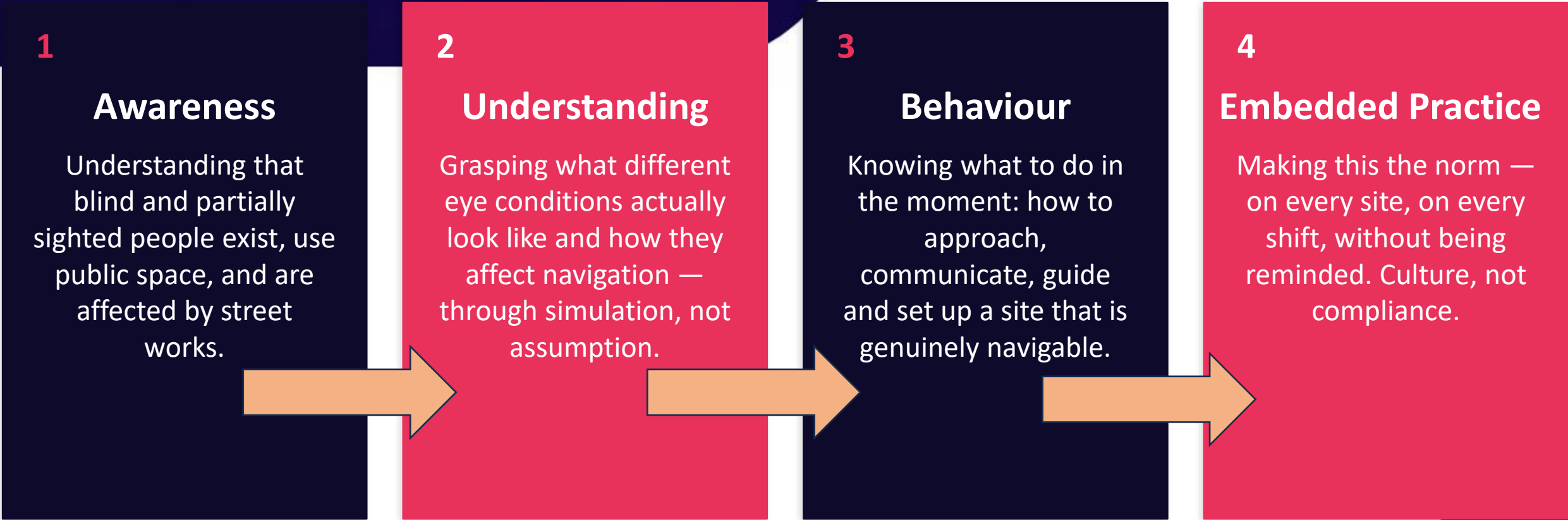
Confidence, awareness and willingness to help are not covered in technical guidance — but they are what matters most.

What Needs to Change Industry-Wide

- 🌀 **Disability awareness embedded in operative induction:** Not optional. Not a one-off. Part of how every team member is trained before they go on site.
- 🌀 **Accessibility reviewed at Traffic Management Plan stage:** Not as an afterthought when barriers are already in place.
- 🌀 **Disabled community consulted on local works:** Sight loss charities, guide dog owners and local disability groups notified in advance of significant disruption.
- 🌀 **Accessibility made a key performance indicator:** Measured, audited, and reported alongside safety and traffic metrics. What gets measured gets managed.
- 🌀 **Industry-wide minimum standard:** A common baseline across all contractors and authorities — so disabled pedestrians experience consistency, not a lottery.



The Blind Ambition Framework: From Awareness to Embedded Practice



How Blind Ambition Can Help



Visual Awareness Training

Immersive sessions with simulation spectacles — operatives experience common eye conditions while navigating a simulated works environment.

Safety Stand-Down Days

High-impact half-day interventions for operational teams, delivered at depot or on-site. Practical, memorable and immediately applicable.

Train the Trainer Programmes

Build sustainable internal capability so awareness is delivered consistently across your workforce, not just when Seema is in the room.

Traffic Management Plan Review

Independent accessibility audit of TMP submissions before works begin, identifying risk points for disabled pedestrians.

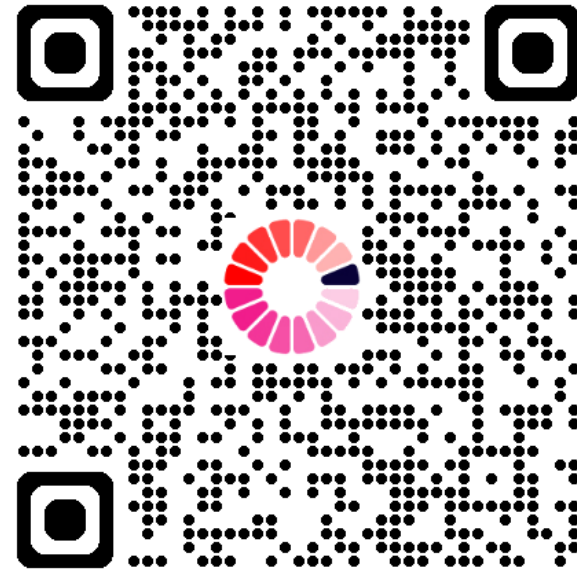
Site Accessibility Walkthrough

On-site assessments conducted by a registered blind practitioner — no checklist can replicate this insight.

Industry Consultancy

Strategic support for SHiFT members seeking to embed disability inclusion into procurement standards, KPIs and contractor briefings.

Thank you! Questions please...



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