Majority of Brits value sight as priceless

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A recent poll by Sightsavers found that 82 per cent of Brits value their sight as priceless, or said they would give everything to get it back if they went blind

Men said they would miss seeing their partners' face the most if they lost their sight (28 per cent), whilst women said it's their children's smiles they would miss the most (44 per cent).

Respondents value their sight more than any other sense (79 per cent).

Three UK volunteers spent the day wearing contact lenses simulating cataracts for a video that aims to help people understand what life is like for people with blindness in developing countries.

International development charity Sightsavers commissioned the research to find out what value people in the UK place on their sight (#ValueOfSight).

The survey comes as three volunteers temporarily experienced near blindness to highlight the plight of people living the with the eye condition cataract in developing countries, where 18 million people are currently affected. The volunteers, from across the UK, struggled to do everyday tasks, such as cooking or caring for children and found coping without their sight very emotionally difficult, as they wore special contact lenses that simulated what their sight would be like with advanced cataracts.

Sightsavers has launched a video of the experience at www.millionmiracles.org [video live from 20 October], to help viewers understand what it is like for people with blinding cataracts in developing countries, where accessing treatment is often not easy. Many people live without hope of ever being able to see again, either because they don't know their condition is treatable, they can't get to a health centre, or they can't afford the operation.

TV presenter Ade Adepitan recently visited Sightsavers' work in Malawi to witness the challenges of accessing medical help to treat blinding conditions like cataract and commented: “I never thought it would come to a time when eyesight is a luxury”.

Yet Sightsavers is able to provide cataract surgery in developing countries for just £30. The survey revealed that four in five people would cut back on expenses such as clothes, meals out and trips to the cinema to help make a donation of £30 to restore someone's sight.

All donations made by the UK public in support of Sightsavers' work to prevent avoidable blindness in developing countries will be matched pound for pound by the UK government until 15 December.

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For further press information, case studies or photos, please contact Julie Jenner in the Sightsavers press office on 01444 446690 or jjenner@sightsavers.org

Notes to Editors

About the survey:

The omnibus survey, of 1,000 people in the UK, was carried out by Ginger Comms between 13-15 October 2015. The full results of the survey can be found here: http://bit.ly/1G99BwT

About Sightsavers:

1.Sightsavers is a registered UK charity (Registered charity numbers 207544 and SC038110) that works in more than 30 developing countries to prevent blindness, restore sight and advocate for social inclusion and equal rights for people with disabilities. www.sightsavers.org

2.There are 39 million blind people in the world; 80% of all blindness can be prevented or cured.

3.In the six decades since its foundation, Sightsavers has:

- supported over 483.4 million treatments for blinding and potentially blinding conditions.

- carried out over 8.4 million operations to restore sight.
- trained more than 0.5 million primary eye care workers.
- carried out rehabilitation training for 149,000 blind or low vision beneficiaries.
- supported 30,000 blind or low vision children to gain a school education.

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- 4. Sightsavers' Million Miracles appeal launched in October 2014 to raise funds over the next three years to perform one million sight-restoring surgeries across Africa and Asia.
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- 5.For as little as £30 Sightsavers can give someone their sight back through surgery. From 15 September to 15 December 2015, donations received from the UK public will be matched pound for pound by the UK government.

About UK Aid Match:

UK Aid Match was set up by the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) to give a boost to public support for charities working in the developing world. It doubles public donations to appeals run by British international development charities, in recognition of both the public's generosity and the wide range of causes they support. For more information, see www.gov.uk/uk-aid-match.

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