

## Paratriathlete World Champion backs charity for blind young people

Tuesday 4 February, 2014

The Royal London Society for Blind People welcomes world no.1 Paratriathlete and Rio hopeful Melissa Reid as ambassador

RLSB is proud to announce world no.1 and 2013 World, European and British champion in paratriathlon, Melissa Reid as our latest high-profile supporter.

As arguably the most accomplished young paratriathlete in the UK Melissa will be a crucial role model and inspiration to the blind young people RLSB works with.

The World Champion, who is blind in one eye and partially sighted in the other has a string of first places behind her following an incredible 2013 which ended on a high when she won both the World Aquathlon and World Paratriathlon Championship (in the Tri-6 category for VI athletes). Reid also holds the title of the European and British champion and has recently been awarded the 2013 BBC South West Disabled Athlete of the Year.

23 year-old Melissa will help champion RLSB's efforts to ensure blind young people and their families are given the support they need to live their life without limits.

In particular Melissa will be helping promote RLSB's Sports without Limits: Active. This Sport England Inclusion Fund backed programme aims to get 100s of blind young people into sport. She will use her own experience and skills to motivate young people to find a sport they love through RLSB and get into regular activity. The organisation hopes that through sports, young people can gain confidence, improve communication and team working skills and start to overcome some of the problems caused by sight impairment. These include high levels of unemployment, poverty and isolation.

The World Champion and RLSB Ambassador said: "RLSB is a charity that reflects my own belief, that with the right mind-set, determination and support, you can live beyond sight loss and achieve your dreams. I can't wait to work with the young people RLSB supports.

I want to use my own story as well as the momentum from the World Championships and upcoming Winter Olympics and Commonwealth Games to show that sport can have an incredible impact on a young person's life in so many ways."

Dr. Tom Pey, RLSB Chief Executive added: "When I heard on the radio that Melissa had won the World Champion title I knew that we should ask her to be an ambassador. To get where she is at just 23 shows real grit, ambition and self-belief. These are characteristics we hope she will inspire in the young people we work with, who currently feel they don't have a future, to take control of their life."

Melissa Reid joins, Paralympians Ben Quilter and Darren Leach; cricketer David Gower; ice-skater Jayne Torville; and actresses Anita Dobson, Carly Stenson and Jodi Prenger as an RLSB Ambassador.

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