# RNIB stamp recycling program FAQS

## Question 1 - How are funds raised from donations of used stamps?

Fundraising from donations of stamps has been an invaluable method of fundraising for many charities over the past few decades. By working with our partner Xchange Master, the RNIB is able to accept and convert postage stamp donations into usable funds for the charity. The majority of donations are consequently sorted into countries and sold to collectors for philatelic use. A small portion is also sold on to artists who make huge canvas pictures using different coloured stamps as pixels. Many of these works can be worth a lot of money but require the use of thousands of stamps to make the picture in the first place. A tiny fraction is also sold on to foreign buyers as GB stamps are still by far the most desirable as they were the first to produce stamps.

## Question 2 – What type of stamps are the most valuable?

Generally speaking the more modern the stamp the better. New issues by the post office are less likely to have been obtained by collectors and as such are more desirable. Many collectors want used stamps for the postmarks or cancellations so the odds of finding a newer issue that has gone through the post is considerably less likely than an older issue hence why these carry more value. When it comes to albums or special collections of stamps, valuable stamps tend to be ones in which they were a considerably high value for its time period. For example a £5 Victorian stamp in 1900 would be worth the equivalent of £100 in spending power today. Given the large value of these stamps and their low usage means they were produced in very small numbers and even smaller numbers have been saved and survived the 100+ years in storage.

## Question 3 – What type of stamps are not valuable?

Old stamps usually carry little to no value for many reasons. The post office have produced most series of stamps in huge volumes (billions) and as such there is an abundance of these stamps and by now all collectors will either have them or be able to obtain them very cheap. As a general rule we suggest that most donations that are pre 2008 carry little value as a donation unless it is a special edition. We also frequently get sent the large gold postal labels which the Royal Mail tend to use as default nowadays however we would like to stress these do not count as postage stamps. Collectors have little to no interest in them and given their size and weight, it generally makes any bulk donation of these not worthwhile.

## Question 4 – Can the RNIB accept donations of albums, postcards etc?

Yes donations of stamp albums, postcards, presentation packs and first day covers are more than welcome. We do however advise that finding a valuable item is quite unlikely. Due to the reasons listed above, the majority of stamps by an average collector will be very common which can make them carry little value even if mint. Presentation packs and mint stamps do carry a premium as these are more desirable. Postcards and first day covers again were produced in the billions and tend to carry little value but they do attract a certain amount of interest and we can still convert these into usable funds.

## Question 5 – Do the stamps need to be prepared in a certain manner?

Yes, we ask that people trim the stamps to leave an approximate margin of around 1cm around the stamps. This will ensure the perforations of the stamp aren’t damaged but will leave sufficient paper for the collector to hold and utilise. If stamps are donated with huge excesses of paper this will result in a reduced price for the stamps. We would like to stress that this is just a guide and doesn’t need to be exact and stamps that have been trimmed less or more will still be accepted.

## Question 6 – What if I am unable to trim the stamps?

We do appreciate there are people that are not in a position to be able to trim stamps due to a variety of reasons. We can still accept your donation but we need to make the supporter aware that the usual price will be reduced due to the excess paper and the labour required to trim the stamps down to a level at which they can be sold onwards.

## Question 7 – I want to collect stamps and I work in a large office / public building, can you provide materials to help aid this?

Yes we can. We can provide a few things to make any campaign more likely to succeed and all items are provided completely free of charge. Firstly we provide a small collection box which has all the relevant RNIB graphics printed on them to be utilised in offices, reception desks or communal spaces. These boxes aren’t intended for being sent back through the post but to be used as a central collection point and to make people that are passing aware that such a campaign is in place. The boxes can hold up to about 2kg of stamps which can then be poured into the freepost envelopes to be donated and then reused. We can also provide you with posters to strategically place around your workplace or building to make other employees or residents aware such a scheme is in place.

## Question 8 – How does the RNIB make use of these funds to aid people with sight loss?

When you lose your sight, you can lose more than your ability to see.

Currently we can only reach one in three blind and partially sighted people in the UK. With your support, it doesn’t have to be like this.

**Here are just a few of the ways that your donation could help make every day better for blind and partially sighted people:**

* **£10** could enable our advisers to answer a call to the Helpline.
* **£15** could allow us to work with publishers to make an accessible textbook available through RNIB Bookshare at a teacher’s request.
* **£20** could enable someone living with sight loss to get helpful, tailored and friendly advice from a Sight Loss Adviser.
* **£40** would help provide RNIB's Talking Book Service to one blind or partially sighted customer for an entire year.
* **£50** could help an Eye Care Liaison Office (ECLO) provide practical and emotional guidance to people coming to terms with a sight loss diagnosis.

As you can see every stamp really does make a difference.

Thank you for your support.