In 2012, people across the Commonwealth celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen. To mark this very special occasion, Heads of Commonwealth Governments agreed that a new, time-limited and ambitious charitable initiative should be established to honour Her Majesty’s lifetime of Service to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Working to a five-year timeframe, the Trust’s mission has been to leave a lasting legacy in all Commonwealth countries. Inspired by The Queen’s commitment to the people she served, the Trust would seek to enrich the lives of people of all backgrounds by working in alliance towards eliminating avoidable blindness and to empower a new generation of young leaders.

By early 2013, with the UK Government matching each pound raised to a ceiling of £50 million, over £100 million had been raised in support of the Trust from Governments, corporate partners, trusts, foundations, community groups and individuals living in Commonwealth nations big and small.
Five years and fifty-three countries

Blindness and poor eyesight affect 85 million people across all countries in the Commonwealth. Globally, four out of five people who are blind are so as a result of causes that can be entirely prevented or treated.

To enable the Trust to make a tangible and sustainable difference in the name of The Queen within five years, its programmes have focused on tackling three major causes of preventable sight loss – blindness caused by trachoma, the world’s leading infectious cause of blindness, blindness caused by diabetes and blindness affecting premature babies. In addition, the Trust has helped establish initiatives designed to tap into expertise across the Commonwealth to propel new and innovative approaches to eye care and to strengthen the eye health sector as a whole.
The Trust created The Queen’s Young Leaders Programme as a four-year initiative to champion and connect young people who are addressing in new and imaginative ways the urgent challenges facing the Commonwealth’s communities – from mental health, to education, to climate change, to employment opportunities and gender equality.

Sixty exceptional Young Leaders were chosen each year from 53 Commonwealth countries to become the Queen’s Young Leaders, with the last cohort awarded this honour in 2018 in recognition of the remarkable changes they had brought about to improve people’s lives.

In addition to providing Awards to young people, The Queen’s Young Leaders programme has given grants to youth-led and youth-focused organisations in Bangladesh, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, the UK and Zambia to help solve the problems affecting many of the Commonwealth’s young people and the communities in which they live.

The Queen was aged just 25 when she ascended the throne in 1952 and became Head of the Commonwealth of Nations. Today, more than 60 per cent of those living in its 53 member countries are under the age of 30. This is the largest youth population the world has ever seen.
A lasting legacy

At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2018, The Queen cited the life-changing eye treatment the Trust is helping provide to many millions as an example of what good can be achieved when nations cooperate with one another. Thanks to the work undertaken with remarkable partners, the achievements of the Trust’s five-year programmes include:

**19 MILLION PEOPLE LIVING IN THE COMMONWEALTH HAVE RECEIVED TREATMENT TO PREVENT BLINDNESS FROM TRACHOMA**

Malawi, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are soon to apply to the World Health Organization to be verified as **TRACHOMA FREE**

Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda – all previously classed as being trachoma endemic countries – are on track to **SUCCESSFULLY ELIMINATE THIS ANCIENT DISEASE**

**India has adopted and implemented national health care guidelines to ensure that babies born prematurely today and in the future whose eyesight is at risk receive SCREENING AND TREATMENT AS A STANDARD part of their neo-natal care.**

**13**

Health systems of Commonwealth countries now provide regular eye screening and treatment for the millions at risk of losing their sight to diabetic retinopathy - a complication of diabetes which is now becoming the fastest growing cause of avoidable blindness.

Commonwealth Heads of Government, in 2018, acknowledged the work of the Trust and committed for the first time to take further action towards achieving **QUALITY EYE CARE FOR ALL**

Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda – all previously classed as being trachoma endemic countries – are on track to **SUCCESSFULLY ELIMINATE THIS ANCIENT DISEASE**

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Queen’s Young Leaders from 53 Commonwealth nations have been connected and empowered to take their life-changing work to the next level so that they can better help effect change today and in the future for their peers and for generations to come.
Now in its final year of operation, the Trust is engaging with governments and partners to ensure that the programmes it has established continue to bring eye health care to millions of people long into the future.

The Trust is also championing the work of the now complete network of Queen’s Young Leaders to help ensure this unique, dedicated and powerful group of young people connect, collaborate and change lives together for years to come.

As its legacy, the Trust will leave behind it a significant, sustainable reduction in avoidable blindness across the Commonwealth and a cadre of exceptional young leaders committed to changing the world - in honour of Her Majesty The Queen.

The Trust will then close to the public as planned on 31 January 2020 and will cease operating as a charitable organisation by 30 June 2020.