



# SpecialEffect Media Pack 2024

*Updated August 2024*

## **Short Description**

SpecialEffect is a UK-based charity that brings fun and inclusion into the lives of physically disabled people across the world by helping them to play video games.

## **Full Boilerplate**

Nobody likes being left out. That's why UK-based charity SpecialEffect put fun and inclusion back into the lives of people with physical disabilities by helping them to play video games.

By using technology ranging from modified games controllers to eye-control, we're finding a way for people of all ages to play to the very best of their abilities. There's no one-size-fits-all way of doing this, so our specialist assessment teams match or modify technology to create and loan truly personalised gaming control setups, and back this up with lifelong follow-up support.

Founded in 2007, we're now providing lifelong face-to-face support on an individual basis to hundreds of people across the UK. We're also answering thousands of enquiries from around the world and having an increasing global influence through our collaboration with hardware and software developers. Our own freely-available accessibility utilities are bringing the magic of gaming within reach of thousands more worldwide.

We don't charge for anything we do. We simply aim to do whatever it takes to raise the quality of life of as many disabled gamers all over the world as possible.

Discover more at <http://www.specialeffect.org.uk>

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## **118 Word Gaming Boilerplate**

UK-based charity SpecialEffect put fun and inclusion back into the lives of people with physical disabilities by helping them to play video games. There's no one-size-fits-all way of doing this, so our specialist assessment teams match or modify technology to create and loan truly personalised gaming control setups, enabling people of all ages to play the games they love to the very best of their abilities. We share everything we learn through advice and accessibility resources for players and developers across the globe, and all of our support is completely free of charge. We simply aim to do whatever it takes to raise the quality of life for as many disabled gamers as possible all over the world.

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## More about what we do

### It's your turn to play

If you have a physical disability that limits or stops you from playing video games, get in touch. If you're in the UK we have a range of accessible gaming equipment to try out in our Games Room in Oxfordshire, and there's also the option of a video call assessment or a home visit from our specialist assessment team if your disability limits your ability to travel. We may also be able to lend you equipment for trialling following an assessment so that you're sure it's the best solution. We'll do our utmost to help you enjoy the games you want to play, and if your needs change over time our lifetime service means we're here to look at alternative ways to keep you in the game.

<https://www.specialeffect.org.uk/can-we-help>

### Our worldwide impact

We freely share the insight and detailed knowledge we gain from our one-to-one assessment work through online advice and resources like our **GameAccess** website. Our direct collaboration with hardware and software developers means that a feature that's worked successfully for just one individual can benefit thousands of disabled people with similar access needs right across the world. In addition, our own freely-available accessibility utilities like **EyeMine** and the **SpecialEffect DevKit** are bringing the magic of gaming within reach of thousands more.

<https://gameaccess.info/>

<https://www.specialeffect.org.uk/eyemine>

<https://specialeffectdevkit.info/>

### Play games with your eyes

We're finding ways to play for people with complex disabilities who use eye movement as their main or only way of accessing technology. Our **EyeMine** software grants full access to the infinite worlds in Minecraft, and our ground-breaking Eye Gaze Games website contains a range of games specifically designed with eye-gaze control in mind - a place where people across the world can play free and accessible web games together on a level playing field.

<https://www.specialeffect.org.uk/eyemine>

### Use your eyes for independence

You wake up after an accident. You can't move anything except your eyes, and you can't speak. That's when our **StarGaze** team can help, providing the introduction, support and loan of cutting-edge eye-gaze technology when it matters most - in intensive care right after an accident or sudden illness. It's a powerful face-to-face service that has the potential to open the door initially for emergency communication, but can lead to independence in education, work and leisure.

<https://www.specialeffect.org.uk/stargaze>

### Tackling medical isolation

Many children with cancer-related immunodeficiency can't go to school for months or even years because of a high infection risk – which means they're no longer able

to learn and play with their friends when they need them most. Our **BubbleBusters** project tackles this long-term isolation through small, friendly, home-controlled desktop robots that place the child's eyes, ears and voice right back into the classroom and playground. It's providing life-changing reconnections that are overcoming loneliness, reuniting friends and rekindling access to education.

<https://www.specialeffect.org.uk/bubblebusters>

### **How you can help us**

We don't charge for our one-to-one support and we don't sell anything. That's why your donation, large or small, really does count. Without your help we wouldn't be able to help physically disabled people to enjoy a better quality of life. You can donate directly, or volunteer, or raise money through your company, friends and colleagues - it's your call. Even a simple tweet about how we're changing people's lives could go a long way. Everything you do is hugely appreciated by the team here.

<https://www.specialeffect.org.uk/get-involved/donate>

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## **Beneficiary Testimonials**

*"I can't thank you enough. You've made gaming fun again." Vivek*

*"I thought my gaming days were over, but thanks to SpecialEffect I can now play FIFA in a different but novel way. Never thought I would play the Xbox using my mouth but if there is a will there is a way!" Chad*

*"SpecialEffect is more than just a charity which helps people play videogames. They change lives. Through their knowledge and expertise, people like myself can now join in on the fun and play with friends on an even playing field, experiencing all the benefits of social interaction. It may be hard for some to imagine, but being included in such activities makes a huge and positive difference in our lives." - Alex Kostov*

*I'm so proud of him... he loves the fact that he can now play against friends and family. He's so happy that it's given him a wider variety of learning and play. It's amazing and we're really pleased it works for him, now he's started high school he's the same as his other classmates, just hanging about on the PlayStation!" - Father of Derry*

*"I was like a kid in a candy shop, wanting to play everything again, because it had been, like, twenty years since I'd been able to play anything." Ajay*

*"I've never seen Addison have so much fun! He's managing to keep up with his sister and his competitive nature is shining through - no more giving up and getting deflated and frustrated! That in itself is a huge, huge achievement. Addison's new found gaming skills have brought them closer together - it's so lovely to see them doing something together on a level playing field." - Mother of Addison*

*“Gaming means so much to me; not only as a fan of video games but also as a disabled person. So many things in life are limited because of my condition, like my inability to play football (my other passion) but when I play a video game, I’m in a world where the only limits are the ones that I allow to be there. As a competitive person, games like FIFA, Battlefield and Need for Speed allow me to compete with everybody else, and that means everything!” - Tom*

*“I’m a competitive person... being able to play games has helped me massively with competition in my life. ...it’s helped me through a tough time and gave me back a platform where I could compete on a level playing field.” - George*

*“I can’t do much by myself, but I now can play video games, which gives me a great sense of independence and achievement.” - Becky*

*As a parent, it’s made so much difference to Chase being able to access video games. It creates a level playing field. He can do an activity that he wouldn’t be able to do in normal day-to-day life. But even better, with gaming, he can play alongside someone. - Nicki, mother of Chase*

*“Thank you for giving me my life back.” - Tom*

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## **Games Industry Testimonials**

*“I’m amazed and inspired by the great work that SpecialEffect does. I’ve always believed that video games have the power not just to entertain, but really reach and connect. Thanks to SpecialEffect, they’re able to connect even more people.” - Tim Schafer, Founder, Double Fine Productions*

*“Play is natural, fun and rewarding and should be enjoyed by everybody. The incredible work that SpecialEffect does by using technology to modify games devices to give people with disabilities a quality of life they would otherwise miss out on is extraordinary.” - Sir Ian Livingstone*

*“Games should be enjoyed by everyone, and SpecialEffect work tirelessly to ensure that those facing physical disabilities get to play too. The impact and positive change that they bring to other people’s lives is huge.” - Tara Saunders, Studio Head, PlayStation London Studio*

*“Because of their unique work, SpecialEffect hold a special place in our heart and indeed the hearts of the whole of the video games industry.” Craig Duncan, Studio Head, Rare Ltd*

*“SpecialEffect have been priceless at inspiring change within the studio. They’ve provided valuable guidance and feedback as we strive to improve accessibility.” - James Thomas, Lead Engineer, Rare Ltd*

*"We've said it before and we'll say it again, SpecialEffect are incredible." Playground Games*

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## Contact details

### SpecialEffect

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[www.specialeffect.org.uk](http://www.specialeffect.org.uk)

X: @specialeffect

Facebook: specialeffectcharity

Instagram: specialeffectteam

LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/364YuVo>

Discord: <https://discord.com/invite/69dQEmkxX2>

*Charity No 1121004*

*Registered Company No 6040232*

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## Logo Pack

Download from <https://bit.ly/4fFqQZt>

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## Brand Guidelines

Download from <https://bit.ly/3SHq04B>

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## Beneficiary images

Download from <https://bit.ly/3SJlyS1>

*Please read the Media Copyright Notice: <https://bit.ly/3FX0qtV>*

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## Video Resources

### 60-second Introductory Video

View on YouTube at <https://bit.ly/40B2QiK> or download HD version at  
<https://bit.ly/3QXQQEY>

## 100-second Introductory Video

View on YouTube at <https://bit.ly/47bLjAp> or download HD version at <https://bit.ly/47nPaKm>

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## Bio of Founder and CEO Dr Mick Donegan:

<https://www.specialeffect.org.uk/what-we-do/founders-message>

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## Games Industry Achievements

Development partner in the groundbreaking **Xbox Accessible Controller**, a Microsoft's Xbox interface that helps people with physical disabilities to access games using alternative input devices:

<https://bit.ly/3TWPYRm>

Development partner in the **Sony Access Controller**, an Sony PS5 interface that helps people with physical disabilities to access games using alternative input devices:

<https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/accessories/controllers/xbox-adaptive-controller>

Developers of **EyeMine**, freely-available software that, when used with a suitable eyetracker, enables severely disabled people to fully access the globally popular game Minecraft using just their eyes.

<https://www.specialeffect.org.uk/eyemine>

Publishers of **Eye Gaze Games**, the world's first dedicated website to feature free-to-play browser-based games that are optimised to be played using eye-gaze hardware.

<https://www.specialeffect.org.uk/eye-gaze-games>

Developers of the **SpecialEffect Devkit**, a freely-available online resource that highlights motor accessibility within game design, offering practical ideas and examples for developers looking to make their games more inclusive to players with physical challenges.

<https://specialeffectdevkit.info>

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## Awards

2008

Winner: TalkTalk Innovation in the Community Award

2009

Winner: IT4C Best Volunteering Project Innovation

2011

Winner: OCVA Best Use of Social Media and the Web

Winner: WOBA Charity and Community Award

2012

Winner: OBA Social Media Award

Winner: TalkTalk Digital Heroes Award, South-West Region (Dr Mick Donegan)

2014

Winner: WOBA Social Media Award

Winner: Tech4Good Accessibility Award

2015

Winner: Digital Innovation Award, SpecialEffect: Twin Town Challenge

2017

Winner: Thames Valley Business Awards: Charity of the Year

Winner: Oxfordshire Business Awards: Charity and Community Award

2018

ID@Xbox Gaming for Everyone Award

2020

BT Power of Better Award

2021

MCV/Develop Accessibility Heroes Award

2022

Dr Mick Donegan awarded an MBE for services to Technology for the Disabled

2024

Ukie Diversity and Inclusion Award

2024

BAFTA Special Award: Outstanding Contribution to Games

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## Guinness World Records

Largest Eye-controlled Video Games Tournament (Eurogamer 2011, 341 participants)

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## In the Media

Eurogamer: **The accessibility charity helping Xbox and PlayStation: SpecialEffect**

<https://bit.ly/4OzDRMZ>

ITV Evening News: **SpecialEffect: The charity levelling the gaming playing field**  
<https://bit.ly/3ufo9dK>

ITV Evening News: **SpecialEffect receive BAFTA award**  
<https://bit.ly/49wIU4L>