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Revolutionary Glasses for Visually Impaired Athletes Shortlisted for Blackwood Awards

INNOVATIVE new glasses which could revolutionise the way in which visually impaired athletes train and compete are one of the many exciting entries for an innovative design competition.

The as yet unnamed concept is the brainchild of Andrew Taylor, a 24-year-old graduate from the University of Bath who had his eureka moment while in the final year of his design project.

His design works in a similar way to parking sensors in that it tracks an athlete's position in their lane and running direction which is then translated into an audio signal.

The audio gets louder dependent on where the runner is on the track, allowing them to maintain a steady line around the circuit.

His ingenious design is one of the shortlisted entries in the Blackwood Design Awards, which aim to celebrate the great and good of innovations to help disabled people.

Andrew said: "I've always been interested in designing ideas for people with disabilities and had a real think about what would make a real difference to people's lives.

"You often see runners in competitions using guide runners to direct them around a track but this can introduce problems with availability, funding, injury and illness at all levels of abilities.

"These issues are resolved by the glasses and will allow for far greater freedom for disabled athletes to get out and practice whenever they wish to do so."

The product looks similar to typical running glasses, with the addition of a camera and headphones, as the camera uses clever algorithms to track lane position while the camera relays this to the user.

And the scope of the design isn't limited to athletes, with hopes that success in the Blackwood Design Awards will enable the product to be taken forward and eventually adapted for general, day-to-day use.

Andrew added: "If my design was lucky to win, it'd open up so many avenues for engaging conversations with designers, academics and disabled athletes to really take it on from the prototype stage.

"Benefitting from Blackwood's experience would massively help develop the idea and the business around it while the prize money would help fund the next iteration of the concept.

"I hope that in the future the scope of the product can be extended to other sporting events and even everyday life to transform people's lives.

Max Brown, Chair of Blackwood Board, said: "The level of entrant this year has been incredibly high across the board.

"Andrew's design has incredible potential and you can really appreciate the level of thought and design that has gone into.

"We're all excited to see which concept comes out on top when the Awards are announced and wish the best of luck to all those shortlisted.

Andrew's idea is shortlisted in the Best New Concept category, with the winner announced on May 30.

To find out more, visit: <https://www.blackwoodgroup.org.uk/blackwood-design-awards>

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Notes to Editors

Edinburgh-based charity, Blackwood, has more than 1500 homes throughout the country making it a leader in helping those who are disabled, elderly or with sensory impairments to live more independently.

As it works in 29 of Scotland's 32 local authorities, it is more widely dispersed than most other care or housing providers and has embraced the challenges of taking housing and care into innovative areas at a time when funding is increasingly limited.

Blackwood is also renowned for constantly pushing the boundaries of technology to allow property adaptations which make a huge difference to people with disabilities.

Issued on behalf of Blackwood by Holyrood PR. Further information, contact Fraser on 0131 561 2241 or fraser@holyroodpr.co.uk