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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Zambian teenager travels thousands of miles to receive new artificial eye from Blackpool experts**

A teenager from Zambia has travelled thousands of miles to be given a new artificial eye by experts in Blackpool.

Mark Lombe, who comes from Kasisi Children's Home near Lusaka, travelled to the resort to see specialists from the National Artificial Eye Service (NAES) to be fitted for his new eye after a visit was arranged by a number of charities.

The 15-year-old, who lost his eye at birth, is no stranger to staff at the NAES after visiting the area and having an artificial eye specially made for him five years ago.

But after going through a major growth spurt the eye no longer fitted him and he was given a new bespoke one made by Orbital Prosthetist, Paul Charlesworth and Ocular Technician, Jane Haslem, to perfectly match his good eye.

While in the area football-mad Mark was treated to a special day out by Blackpool Football Club who invited him to their Championship game with Crystal Palace at the weekend.

He said: "I am really thankful to everyone who has helped me and the eye is perfect. I am a very lucky boy to get the help I have had and I loved watching Blackpool play football. Everyone was really kind to me."

Helen Loddington, Operational Manager at the NAES, said: "We have close links with Zambia and are delighted to have been able to help Mark again.

"He came here five years ago and many of the staff still remember him. They really took him to their hearts and were only too happy to help again.

"All the work they did for him was in their own time. It was a very tight schedule because we only had a couple of days but they really pulled out all the stops to help."



**Caption: From left: Mark Lombe, from Kasisi Children's Home in Zambia, with Ocular Technician, Jane Haslem and Orbital Prosthetist, Paul Charlesworth.**

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