



News Update - November 2020

“Keep Calm and Carry On!”

‘Keep Calm and Carry On’ was a motivational poster produced by the British Government in 1939 in preparation for World War II.

The poster was intended to raise the morale of the British public, threatened with widely predicted mass air attacks on major cities and ports. The poster campaign was largely forgotten until an original poster was found in a book shop in 2000.

Since March 2020 the United Kingdom has faced its largest peace time threat since World War II with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The words, ‘Keep Calm and Carry On!’ ring true today as they did over 80 years ago.

We hope that you find our summary of the **new COVID Lockdown Rules** useful. On a lighter note, the team here at Devon in Sight continue to be here to help you **stay connected, stay safe and stay positive**.

Please do give us a call even if you just need someone to chat to during these difficult times.



Grahame
Grahame Flynn
Chief Executive Officer

NEW COVID-19 RULES EXPLAINED

COVID-19 Update

The UK is currently experiencing a public health emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In all areas of England, you should remember 'Hands, Face, and Space':

- **hands** - wash your hands regularly with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- **face** - wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- **space** - stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible.

This guidance is for people who are fit and well. There is separate guidance for:

- households with a possible or confirmed coronavirus infection.
- people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus

New lockdown rules for England come into force on Thursday 5 November 2020

- People will be told to stay at home except for education, work (if it can't be done from home), exercise and recreation, medical reasons, shopping for food and other essentials, or to care for others.
- All pubs and restaurants will have to close (takeaways and deliveries can continue).

STOP PRESS

- All non-essential shops will have to close (supermarkets can sell non-essential goods).
- Households will not be allowed to mix with others indoors, or in private gardens.
- Individuals can meet one person from outside their household in an outside public space.
- Support bubbles for people who live alone and households made up of single parents and children can continue.
- Children will be able to move between homes if their parents are separated.
- Schools, colleges and universities will remain open.
- Workplaces will be asked to stay open if people cannot work from home - including construction and manufacturing.
- Outdoor exercise and recreation will be allowed, but gyms will have to close.
- The clinically vulnerable are advised not to go to work if they are able to work from home.
- After 2 December, different regions will return to the tiers one to three, depending upon the rates of infection.

To find out the most up to date information about the rules to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 listen out for news updates on the radio or visit the BBC Website:

www.bbc.co.uk/news/coronavirus

Helping you stay connected

Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.)

Devon in Sight's 2020 Annual General Meeting took place on Friday 16th October but it was a very different event from usual.

With special dispensation from the Charity Commission we conducted the meeting over the internet using the conferencing application ZOOM.

We were delighted to welcome a number of guests who would not normally be able to attend the event physically. We were also pleased to see some familiar faces from across the charity, health and social care sector. We would like to extend our special thanks to all those who made presentations on the day. We very much hope that by this time next year we will be able to meet face to face again.

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2020 are available now on the Devon in Sight Website on the **About Us** page. Alternatively, a print version can be sent out to you by ringing our **Helpline on 01392 87 66 66**.

Voting Membership

Voting Members are part of a supporting community who understand what it's like to live with a sight problem and help shape and inform Devon in Sight's work. Voting Members can submit questions for the AGM and can also vote on key issues. Proxy Voting was made available to Voting Members again this year. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to vote.

If you would like help shape and inform Devon in Sight's work please give our Membership Secretary, Elizabeth Twining a call on 01392 87 66 66. Elizabeth normally works on Thursdays.

We're still here for you

Whilst our Talk and Support Groups are unlikely to start again for the foreseeable future, we continue to support people individually and in groups over the telephone or over the internet.

One to One Support over the Telephone

Navigating the Sight Loss Pathway is complicated, particularly for people newly diagnosed with sight loss or during times of crisis. Our Community Support Team continue to support people over the telephone. If you are an existing client please contact your Support Worker via their mobile or give us a call through the Helpline if you need help.

Contact our Community Support Team directly on...

East Devon	Tracey Agutter	07718 651 629
Torbay & South Devon	Cathy Duffy	07972 286 061
Mid & West Devon	Louise Camies	07580 787 308

Group Telephone Call Service

Group Telephone Calls are available in some areas of Devon in partnership with the Macular Society. Please contact your Community Support Worker to find out about the service closest to you.

Sight and Sound Webinar Wednesdays

Sight and Sound Technology Ltd. are the UK's leading provider of hardware and software to people who are blind or partially sighted or have learning and reading difficulties. You can catch up with a whole host of webinars and walkthrough videos and listen to their latest podcasts on their website.

www.sightandsound.co.uk/media/

Sight Loss Speaker Events 2020

From November 2020 we are launching a new telephone based service where you can hear speakers from across the sight loss sector.

Calls are hosted by one of our Community Support Workers. You will be able to hear the conversation but not participate in the call. However, questions can be submitted in advance by ringing the Helpline.

[To join a Speaker Event](#)

To join a Speaker Event dial
0203 051 3255 and when prompted
enter the Room Number **123 123**

Call Charges

Calls from your home telephone are charged at the standard rate or are FREE if daytime calls are included in your supplier agreement. Calls from mobiles are charged at the standard network tariff.

2020 Speaker Programme

[Tuesday 10th November 2020 \(10.30am - 11.30am\)](#)

Alyson Badnell - Manager Sensory Team

Alyson is the Manager of the Devon Sensory Team. She manages a team of Rehabilitation Officers (ROVs) who offer information, support and training to people who are blind or partially sighted. Everyone with sight loss can access this service.

New Service Launched

[Tuesday 17th November 2020 \(10.30am - 11.30am\)](#)

Grahame Flynn - Chief Executive Officer

Grahame became Devon in Sight's Chief Executive Officer in April 2013, and since then has been working tirelessly developing our services and building relationships with partner agencies to ensure that people who are blind or partially sighted in Devon receive the best possible services.

[Tuesday 24th November 2020 \(10.30am - 11.30am\)](#)

Louise Isaacs - N.H.S. Low Vision Clinic

Louise is a Hospital Optometrist in the Low Vision Clinic at the West of England Eye Unit. A free NHS Low Vision Assessment is available to everyone who has a diagnosed sight loss. Low vision aids are available on long term loan to help make daily activities easier.

[Tuesday 1st December 2020 \(10.30am - 11.30am\)](#)

Gill Wyatt - Healthy Homes (Free energy advice)

Gill is the Community Liaison Officer at Exeter Community Energy. She can offer free energy advice, information and assistance on switching energy suppliers.

[Tuesday 8th December 2020 \(10.30am - 11.30am\)](#)

Stuart Ling - Humanware

Stuart is the Area Sales Representative for Humanware.

Humanware supply electronic Low Vision Equipment to people with sight loss.

[Tuesday 15th December 2020 \(10.30am - 11.30am\)](#)

Luke Hoare - Amazon

Luke is a marketing specialist at Amazon. He can offer information about Amazon Alexa voice assistants and how they can be used to help the Visually Impaired Community.

A Client Experience

At Devon in Sight we are delighted when one of our clients shares their story of living with sight loss even if the person wishes to remain anonymous.

To bare or not to bare, that is the question... whether to bare one's soul and reflect on life in not-quite-lockdown...

As a Visually Impaired Person (VIP) it is normal to feel isolated in daily life. The inability to drive and get out and about to shops, see friends, join in with groups or visit beauty spots. The inability to see faces across the room or read facial expressions or see the gestures that enrich any conversation. The inability to sit down and read a good book or read a newspaper, or do a crossword puzzle.

It is normal to panic if you have to go to unfamiliar places or, eg, travel on public transport. Will you get on the right bus, or be able to work out what is required for paying your fare, or count out the money correctly (always useful if you know in advance how much money you need in your pocket). Will you be able to identify where the doors are to get into shops, or miss the sign that says 'use other door'?

It is normal to feel inhibited when going around supermarkets and other shops, when you have to rely on someone else to tell you what is on the shelves and stalls. Have they sold out of toilet rolls, or just put them in another aisle? Is the packaging still the same or has it been transformed, or just mis-read (and you have a cupboard full of lentils instead of kidney beans - exciting recipe opportunities)!

It is normal to be unaware of other people on the street, as one is too busy trying to identify where the edge of the pavement is, or any uneven surfaces, or the unexpected looming of street furniture.



So, you stay home, you rely on phone calls, you don't get to see your family and friends as often, because at some point in your VIP life it is too logistically complicated and too exhausting to organise all those aspects of travel or 'hostessing' that go along with 'normal' socialising. But you do your best, and you try to be upbeat for other people, because they may be having a bad day, and life's gremlins may be sitting on their shoulders too.

So, when the rest of the world is suddenly in lockdown, people cannot travel, cannot go on holiday, cannot socialise as easily or see their family, are in panic about the unknown, you can understand some of what they are going through. Your normality continues, with the added ingredient of not being able to use public transport or have someone with you in the shops particularly when limited to one person per trolley.

Things did improve of course, and local volunteers, sunflower lanyards, kind neighbours etc all helped you get along. And there was one amazing silver lining in the cloud.

Devon in Sight offered group calls on a Wednesday morning. A chance to talk to other visually impaired people share tips and advice on how to get through the new normal, share laughter, reflect on the week's happenings. Something to look forward to as a regular item. No need for anxiety about travelling to a meeting point, no need to leave a sick husband and worry if he was ok on his own whilst you were out of the house, no need to worry about finding your way around an unfamiliar place.

It was uplifting, the group got to know each other, ably facilitated by someone who listened and encouraged, who googled as we chatted to locate information for us, kept us up to date with developments.

Sharing our good moments, our daft moments, our 'would you believe it' moments. A refuge in a period where, quite possibly, we had had conversations with our loved ones and said early 'goodbyes' just in case.

Not only was it something to look forward to - that one hour of 'normality' in difficult times - but it recharged the batteries, and better enabled some of us to support those we loved who may have been even more isolated because of ill-health, shielding, solitary living.

So, please don't ever think it was just a chance for a bit of social chit-chat. Laughter can hide much pain and depression. Mental health issues are not necessarily discussed, but they lie there all the same. It enables us to support each other, AND enables us to offer strength and support to others too.

So thank you, Devon in Sight, for that lifeline.

If you would like to share a story about the difference that Devon in Sight has made to your life please speak to your Support Worker or call the helpline.

Helping you stay positive

New Service Launched

Feeling Well, Keeping Well Service

Living with the emotional impact of sight loss can affect people in different ways. It can have a significant emotional and psychological impact on people's lives.

Whether you have lived with sight loss from a young age, or acquired sight loss at a later time in your life, the impact is at times more difficult to cope with, and very often side-lined.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic Devon in Sight has been keeping in touch with clients via the phone and it has become clear that many clients have really struggled emotionally during this time. With friends and family not so readily available or indeed with clients not wanting to burden their nearest or dearest with how they are feeling, life has for some taken a turn for the worse. Many have expressed how helpful it has been to have someone independent to talk to.

In response to this Devon in Sight have set up a free new service called 'Feeling Well, Keeping Well'.

This gives you the opportunity to talk to Tracey Agutter, our Emotional Support Co-ordinator, in confidence about how you are feeling. This is not a counselling service but the opportunity to refer onto a local counsellor is an option if needed.

If you feel that you may benefit from this, then either contact your local Devon in Sight Community Support Worker or call our Helpline 01392 876 666, and Tracey will contact you to arrange a time to chat.

Helpline 01392 876 666

Socially Distanced Meetings

In these times of COVID-19 restrictions it is impossible for us to host our usual Talk and Support Groups.

However, three clients from Seaton were keen to meet with their Community Support Worker Tracey Agutter for a catch up. Tracey explains.

We have all been missing the Talk and Support Groups, none more than three Seaton clients who invited me for a socially distanced meeting in a local café. I was keen to see if and how this might work given the Government restrictions which are in place.

Times have indeed changed. Reduced seating areas; QR codes; hand sanitisation; socially distanced seating. All things which now are part of our normal daily life and that potentially adds a barrier for people with sight loss to visiting cafes and restaurants.

However, once settled we were able to have discussions about living with sight loss during lockdown and how all three clients have either continued to receive services from the West of England Eye Unit such as injections for their wet AMD or a successful cataract operation.

I was also able to pass on the contact number details for the Low Vision Service as one client had a faulty magnifier which she had been given at her Low Vision Assessment prior to lockdown.

All in all a completely different but enjoyable meeting.

How you can help us

More than ever, we need your support to help people with sight loss across Devon and Torbay impacted by sight loss.

Gloria, is seventy-nine years of age. She ran Sidmouth Secretarial and Typing Services for fifteen years.

Following her annual eye examination at her optician Gloria was shocked to find out that she had Age Related Macular Degeneration and was told that she would lose her sight within ten years!

Gloria said, “I thought I wouldn’t be able to see trees or flowers or the sea. I wouldn’t be able to cook, do my garden or read or watch television, so what was the point of living?”

Gloria then contacted Devon in Sight and our Community Support Worker Tracey carried out our award winning Sight Loss MOT assessment.

Gloria says, “It helped me through that very bad period. It’s just one wonderful thing after the other. It opened a world to me that I didn’t even know existed.”

During the COVID-19 crisis our face to face Talk and Support Groups have been replaced with Group Telephone Calls to support our clients through these challenging times.

Will you help us support more people like Gloria by becoming a Friend of Devon in Sight? To set up a monthly donation please give as a call on the Helpline.



▲ Gloria

Ways you can help us now

There are a number of ways that you can help Devon in Sight to continue supporting people with sight loss across Devon and Torbay.

Friends of Devon in Sight

By becoming one of our 500 Friends you will help more people to receive the support they need to live happy and healthy lives and be part of their local community. **To set up a monthly donation please give us a call on the Helpline.**

One off Donation by Cheque

You may prefer to send us a donation by cheque. Please make cheques payable to **Devon in Sight** and send to :

Devon in Sight, Splatford Barton, Kennford, Exeter EX6 7XY

Text to Donate from your Mobile Telephone

To donate £5 text **SIGHTLOSS 5** to **70490**

To donate £10 text **SIGHTLOSS 10** to **70490**

To donate £20 text **SIGHTLOSS 20** to **70490**

Volunteering

If you would like to volunteer for Devon in Sight or have a fundraising idea **please give us a call on the Helpline.**

Leaving a Lasting Legacy



Devon in Sight is a Registered Charity which has been providing practical help and advice since 1925 to people who are blind or partially sighted.

If you are planning to make or change your will, you will want first to provide for your family and friends. But when you have done that please consider including a legacy to Devon in Sight.

This could be a share of what is left over, or a specific amount of money. However much it is, it will be carefully used for the benefit of people who are blind or partially sighted in Devon.

Devon in Sight's **Ultimate Guide to Leaving a Lasting Legacy to Charity** is designed to give an overview of the importance of making a will, a will writing checklist and how legacies have supported our work.

If you would like a Legacy Pack please give us a call on the Helpline. The pack is also available to download from the Devon in Sight Website.

HELPLINE 01392 876 666

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Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity

Helpline: 01392 876 666
enquiries@devoninsight.org.uk
www.devoninsight.org.uk

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Visionary
linking local sight loss charities



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