



Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity



News Update - December 2020

This year has been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic but there is a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel.

It is fantastic news that the United Kingdom has started a **National Vaccination Programme**. This not only prioritises front line workers but the elderly and those most at risk. A reminder of Devon's Tier 2 COVID restrictions are included in this issue.



At Christmas coronavirus restrictions will be eased further to allow people to mix with a slightly wider circle of family and friends. This is welcome news for us all. A summary of all the guidance is also enclosed in this update.

Our new **Telephone Sight Loss Speaker Events** have received tremendous feedback and we have devised a programme of weekly events till the end of February 2021. Do try and join us.

As 2020 draws to a close the team here at Devon in Sight would like to extend to you our warmest best wishes for Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

Grahame

Grahame Flynn

Chief Executive Officer

Helpline 01392 876 666

Helping you stay connected

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

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 |

Feeling Well, Keeping Well Service

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.

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.

Entering the world of Audio

Did you know that Audiobook sales are the fastest-growing sector of publishing?

Accessing audio services is very important for the people who are blind or partially sighted.

- **RNIB Talking Books Service** is absolutely **FREE**. Giving you access to over 32,000 fiction and non fiction books for adults and children.
- Most areas of Devon have **Talking Newspapers and Magazines** available to you for **FREE**.
- **Devon in Sight's Newsletter and News Updates** are available in a range of accessible formats including audio USB for **FREE**.
- There are a number of **Subscription Services** available to you too which are very reasonably priced.

FREE equipment

The cost of USB Players can sometimes be a barrier to accessing these services.

We have a limited number of Sonic 2 Players available for FREE.

If you would like to try audio for the first time please contact your Community Support Worker or ring the Helpline.



Helpline 01392 876 666

Sight Loss Speaker Events 2021

The response to our new telephone based service where you can hear speakers from across the sight loss sector has been magnificent. Your comments included;

Alyson Badnell from the Sensory Team was “excellent”.

“Louise Isaac’s Low Vision talk was brilliant.”

Grahame Flynn, Devon in Sight’s CEO was “absolutely brilliant; it was better than listening to a chat show on television!”

To join a Speaker Event

Choose the event that you would like to join from the programme opposite. A couple of minutes before the start time dial the number below. All talks start promptly at 10.30am.

**Dial New number 0330 606 1118
and when prompted enter the
Room Number 473 425**

Calls are hosted by our Community Support Team. 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. If there is time available at the end of the presentation the host may open the call up to questions from listeners.

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. **All events should finish within 60 minutes.**

2021 Speaker Programme

Tuesday 12th January 2021 (10.30am - 11.30am)

Tess Williams - Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, RNIB

Eye Clinic Liaison Officers act as an important bridge between health and social services and helpful local and national services.

Tuesday 19th January 2021 (10.30am - 11.30am)

Sally Yigit - Service Manager, Guide Dogs

My Sighted Guide is a service that helps people with sight loss get out of their homes and into the community with a volunteer as their sighted guide.

Tuesday 26th January 2021 (10.30am - 11.30am)

Yvonne Brooks - RNIB

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) is one of the UK’s leading sight loss charities and the largest community of blind and partially sighted people.

Tuesday 2nd February 2021 (10.30am - 11.30am)

Phil Smith - Community Support Worker, Blind Veterans UK

Blind Veterans UK support blind veterans to lead independent and fulfilling lives by helping them with their in-depth expertise, experience and full range of services.

Tuesday 9th February 2021 (10.30am - 11.30am)

Simon Parsons - Regional Development Manager, British Wireless for the Blind

British Wireless for the Blind provides the equipment on a free loan to those who are unable to afford a specially adapted radio.

Tuesday 16th February 2021 (10.30am - 11.30am)

Glenn Tookey - CEO Sight & Sound Technology

Sight and Sound Technology is the one-stop-shop for all your assistive technology needs. They provide hardware and software to people who are blind and partially sighted, they work with you from initial assessment through to lifetime support.

COVID-19 Restrictions Update

On Wednesday 2 December 2020 we came out of the Second National Lockdown. Devon is now subject to COVID Tier 2.

- You must not socialise with anyone you do not live with or who is not in your support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place.
- You must not socialise in a group of more than 6 people outside, including in a garden or a public space – this is called the ‘rule of 6’.
- Businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-Secure manner, other than those which remain closed by law, such as nightclubs.
- Pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals.
- Hospitality businesses selling food or drink for consumption on their premises are required to provide table service only.
- Hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm as long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through.
- Early closure (11pm) applies to casinos, cinemas, theatres, museums, bowling alleys, amusement arcades, funfairs, theme parks, adventure parks and activities, and bingo halls. Cinemas, theatres and concert halls can stay open beyond 11pm in order to conclude performances that start before 10pm
- Public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted, limited to whichever

is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors

- Public attendance at spectator sport and business events can resume inside and outside, subject to social contact rules and limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- Places of worship remain open but you must not socialise with people from outside of your household or support bubble while you are indoors there, unless a legal exemption applies
- Weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies and receptions, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events such as wakes or stonesettings.
- Organised outdoor sport, and physical activity and exercise classes can continue
- Organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes will only be permitted if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or share a support bubble with). There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing.
- you can continue to travel to venues or amenities which are open, but should aim to reduce the number of journeys you make where possible
- if you live in a tier 2 area, you must continue to follow tier 2 rules when you travel to a tier 1 area. Avoid travel to or overnight stays in tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities. You can travel through a tier 3 area as a part of a longer journey.

COVID-19 Christmas Update

At Christmas coronavirus restrictions will be eased to allow people to mix with a slightly wider circle of family and friends.

Across the UK, people will be able to form “bubbles” of three households over a five day period.

Who am I allowed to see?

Between 23 and 27 December 2020, the three households will be allowed to form a temporary “Christmas bubble”. They can mix indoors and stay overnight.

Bubbles will be allowed to meet each other in each other’s homes, at a place of worship and in an outdoor public space, or garden. The bubbles will be fixed, so you will not be able to mix with two households on Christmas Day and two different ones on Boxing Day. Households you are in a Christmas bubble with can’t be in others. There will be no limit to the number of people in a household joining a bubble.

However, the rules about what counts as a household will depend on where you are. In England if you have formed a support bubble with another household, that counts as one household, so you can join with two other households in a Christmas bubble.

People who are self-isolating should not join a Christmas bubble. If someone tests positive, or develops coronavirus symptoms up to 48 hours after the Christmas bubble last met, everyone will have to self-isolate.

Where am I allowed to travel in the UK?

Travel restrictions will be lifted to allow people to visit their families anywhere in the UK. But the government has warned that there will not be extra public transport laid on. It has urged people to plan their travel in advance.

What are the rules for going to the pub or a restaurant?

You will not be allowed to go with your Christmas bubble to hospitality settings, such as pubs and restaurants, or to entertainment venues. You can meet people outside your Christmas bubble, but only in line with tier rules of the area you are staying in.

What if a family member is in an at-risk group?

The virus will not call a truce because it is Christmas, and will be as contagious as at any other time, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said. Even if it is within the rules, meeting friends and family over Christmas will be a “personal judgement,” the government says. People should consider the risks to themselves and others, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Can all my children come home for Christmas?

Children of parents who live apart are allowed to be part of two separate Christmas bubbles. This means they can see both parents without being counted as part of another household.

University students may return to their parents at the end of term and be counted as part of their household straight away.

But if parents have three or more grown up children who are not at university, then they cannot all form a Christmas bubble with their parents. Individual households can split for Christmas. So, if three people are sharing a home they can all go and form separate Christmas bubbles with their families and come back to form a single household again afterwards.

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

A Client Experience

Mrs Goodridge from Babbacombe explains how Devon in Sight has helped with some practical issues during these difficult times.

Having paid for my TV License renewal in full at the Post Office I became aware that I was entitled to a discount if my sight loss was registered with the local authority. I called Cathy Duffy at Devon in Sight and she asked me if I was registered as severely sight impaired as the letter of registration would be needed to claim the discount. Having lost the original letter Cathy contacted the Sensory Team and managed to get the registration letter reissued. Cathy met with me at home with all the safeguards in place, we both wore masks, I kept my windows open and we sat across the dining table from each other. She kindly copied the sight loss document for me, wrote a cover letter and even posted it for me. Once TV licensing had received the registration letter they arranged for the discount to be reimbursed into my bank account.

While Cathy was with me I explained that I wanted to be able to purchase a second magnifier so I could keep one downstairs and one by my bedside. Cathy checked my magnifier was still working for me and then called Optima and ordered the second magnifier which I have now received. It is lovely not to have to keep going up and down the stairs.

Cathy has helped me source a new USB player as my old one has broken and she has offered to visit again if I have any problems setting it up or using the new one. I also talked about the problems I was having with filing my correspondence, as it is now getting more difficult to read the small tabs on each section. Cathy is arranging another date when we can look at other larger labelling options for my files.

What started out as one small problem that was solved has turned into much more and I am so very grateful for all her help.

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 as 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**

Leaving a Lasting Legacy

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.**

Volunteering

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

HELPLINE 01392 876 666



Devon in Sight

Your local sight loss charity

Helpline: 01392 876 666

enquiries@devoninsight.org.uk

www.devoninsight.org.uk

Devon in Sight

Splatford Barton, Kennford,

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