



Devon in Sight

Your local sight loss charity

Newsletter

Spring 2021 - Issue 25



Introducing our new services for 2021

Contents

Spring 2021 - Issue 25

	Page
Chief Executive's Update	3
Community Support Service	4
Sight Loss Helpline	4 - 5
Emotional Support Service	6 - 7
Sight Loss Speaker Events	8
Programme of Events	9
Independent Living	10
Assistive Technology Hub	10
Equipment Bursary Fund	11
COVID-19 Update	12 - 13
Social Distancing	12
Vaccinations	13
Restrictions Update	13
Community Fundraising	14
Fire Home Safety Visits	15
Contact us	Back Cover

Editors & Designers

Grahame Flynn
Jennie Benham

Disclaimer

Devon in Sight does not endorse or recommend any product or service that advertises in this newsletter.

Copyright

This newsletter is copyright © Devon in Sight 2021.

Subscriptions

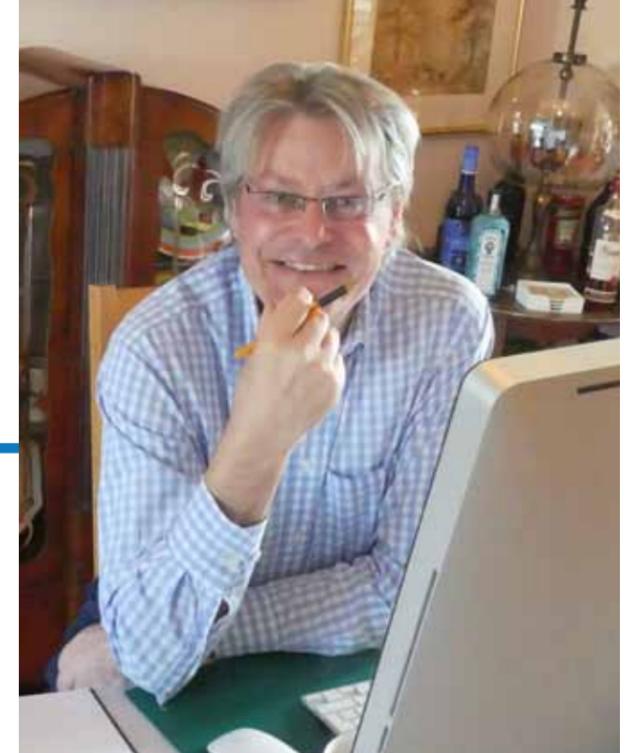
Our **FREE** Newsletter is our way of sharing with you what we are doing in the world of Visual Impairment in Devon and beyond.

The Newsletter is available as a high quality, full colour, large print publication, digitally via email and in audio USB format.

To subscribe please call our Helpline on 01392 876 666.

Chief Executive's Update

Welcome to the Spring 2021 Edition of the Devon in Sight Newsletter.



With excellent progress being made with the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme and the announcement of the easing of COVID-19 restrictions over the coming months...there is a light at the end of the tunnel for us all.

Nothing stands still at Devon in Sight! In this issue we showcase our new Emotional Support Service, our Telephone Sight Loss Speaker Events and FREE Equipment Bursary Fund. We are also delighted to launch our Exclusive Assistive Technology Partnership helping you access technology based solutions from the UK's leading provider, Sight & Sound Technology. All of our services can be accessed through our **Helpline on 01392 876 666** or through your Support Worker.

Charities have been hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis. Could you spare the cost of a takeaway coffee once a month to support someone else with sight loss? Please consider making a small monthly donation by becoming a **Friend of Devon in Sight**. Joining is easy, so please give us a call on the helpline or visit the website and press the 'Donate to Devon in Sight' button.

Grahame

Grahame Flynn
Chief Executive Officer

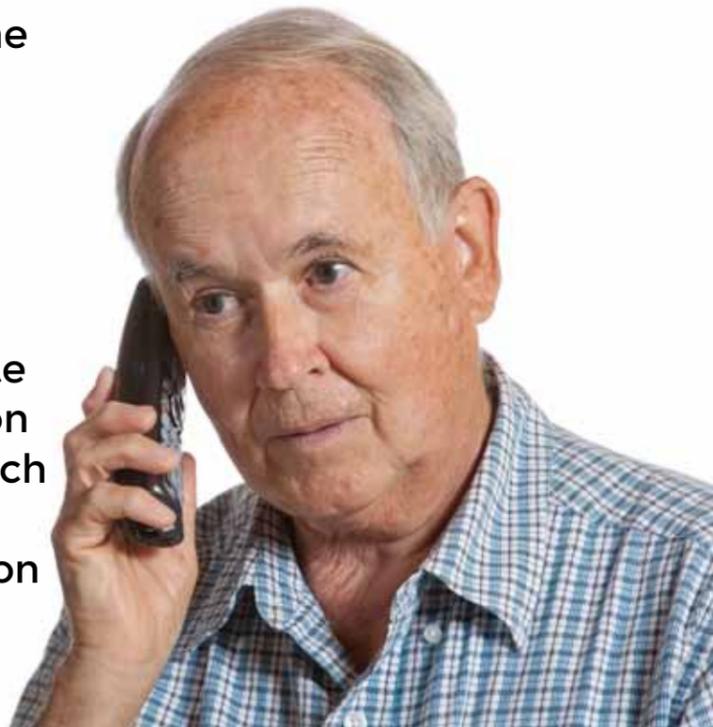
Keeping you informed

During the COVID-19 pandemic we continue to support people individually and in groups over the telephone or over the internet.

The Sight Loss Helpline

Our Helpline will often be your first point of contact with the charity.

We provide information, advice and guidance on a wide range of issues and local, regional and national services, including up to date COVID-19 related information on key sight loss services such as Hospital Eye Units, Low Vision Services, Rehabilitation Support and community based services.



Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is normally open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Thursday.

Devon in Sight is Registered with the Helplines Partnership



“I was the happiest I have been in weeks... thank you for calling me!”

The Helpline is your gateway into Devon in Sight Services.

Charity Registration & Case Management

We manage all of our client work through our secure database. The first time that you contact us we will record some details on the database. If you are an existing client and you ring us we may ask to check that we have up-to-date contact information for you. **This is a legal requirement.**

Sight Loss Fact Find

When people first call us we will undertake a ‘Sight Loss Fact Find’ to find out where you are on the Adult Eye Health and Sight Loss Pathway, whether you are registered as being sight impaired, and whether you are getting the correct support to maintain their eye health.

Data Protection

Devon in Sight takes its duties under **The Data Protection Act 2018** very seriously. **We will never share your information with a third party without your consent.**

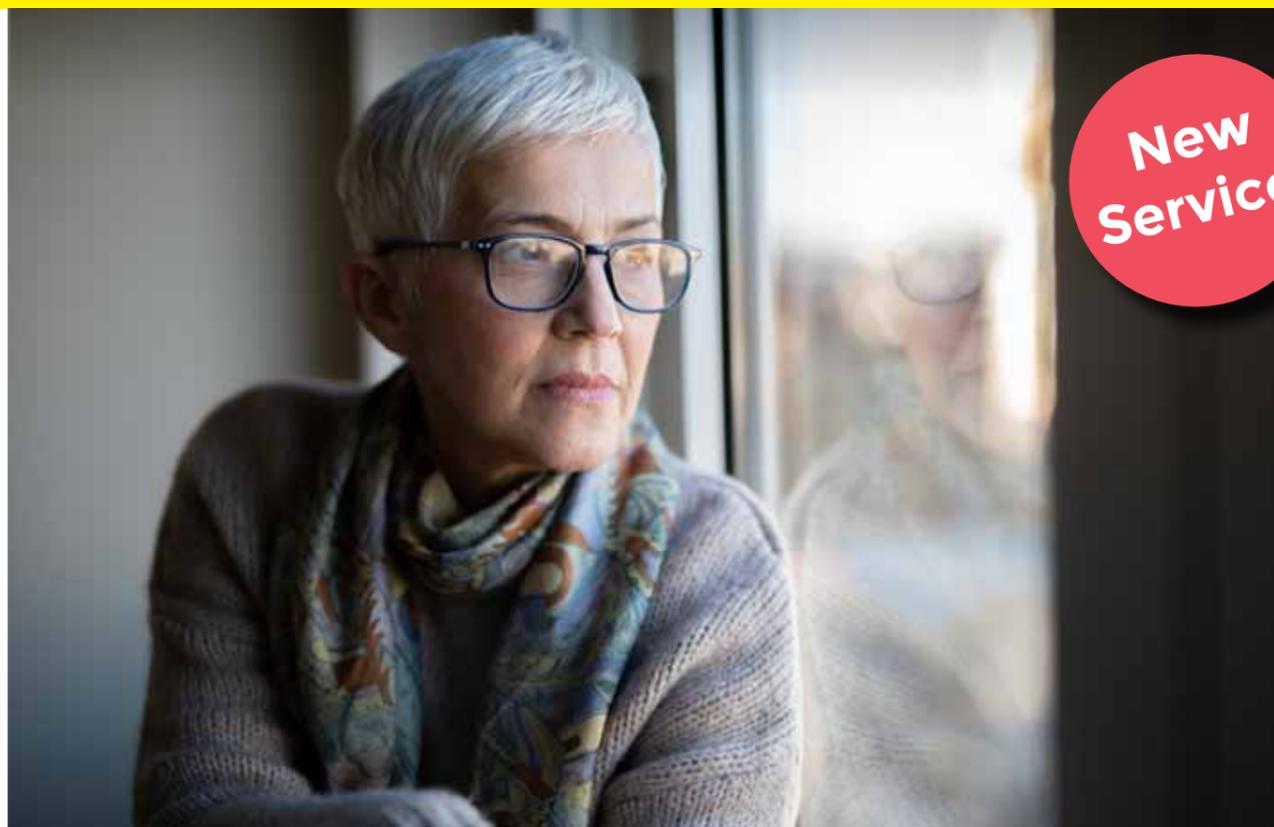
One to One Support over the Telephone

Our Community Support Team continue to support Registered Clients 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.

Safeguarding

All Devon in Sight staff and key volunteers have undergone **Disclosure and Barring (Police) Checks and Safeguarding training.**

Emotional Support Service



New Service!

Sight loss, at any level, has a significant impact on the lives of those who experience it as well as their families and friends.

Being told you are losing your sight can be difficult to come to terms with, with common effects being depression, reduced wellbeing and a process similar to bereavement. Research also shows that older people with sight loss are three times more likely to experience depression than people with good vision.

Our new **Emotional Support Service** provides an opportunity for you to talk in confidence to Tracey Agutter, our Emotional Support Coordinator, about how you are feeling, and explore ways to keep well over the coming months. Tracey will also be able to discuss options for further support or counselling for those who would find it helpful.

“Devon in Sight were the first people who gave me a chance to say how I was feeling!”

If you need formal counselling support we are delighted to be able to offer a number of free one-hour counselling sessions.

These sessions can be in person (following appropriate COVID-19 protocols), over the phone, or using Zoom. Sessions are being delivered in partnership with Living Options Devon, and with a number of local counsellors who have received training and who are accredited with the RNIB.

If you would like to speak to someone confidentially about this service please phone us on 01392 876 666 or speak directly to your Support Worker.

There are some simple steps you can take to help protect your mental health.

- Limit the amount of time you spend reading or watching things which aren't making you feel better. Perhaps decide on a specific time to check in with the news
- stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media
- do light exercise at home, or outside once a day
- try to keep yourself busy - you could try activities like cooking, reading, listening to audio books, online learning and watching films
- There is a lot of misinformation swirling around - stay informed by sticking to trusted sources of information such as government and NHS websites.

Sight Loss Speaker Events

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

To join a Sight Loss 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 and will conclude at 11.30am.

**Dial 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.**

Speaker Event Audio Archive

Recordings of previous Sight Loss Speaker Events can be accessed on our Website at : https://devoninsight.org.uk/latest-news/sight_loss_speaker_events_archive

Programme

Tuesday 2nd March 2021

Judith Potts - Founder of the charity Esme's Umbrella

Judith will be talking about Charles Bonnet Syndrome which is a type of visual hallucinations experienced by some people with sight loss. She will also talk about her experience of caring for her mother who had Charles Bonnet Syndrome and is why she set up Esme's Umbrella.

Tuesday 9th March 2021

Nick Collins - Optima Low Vision Services

Nick will be talking about the Low Vision Assessment services provided by Optima, what may be involved in the assessment and how to access these services.

Tuesday 16th March 2021

Ian Johnston - Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service

Ian will be talking about the FREE Home Safety Visit offered by the Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, who can access this service and what it involves

Tuesday 23rd March 2021

Jason Sculthorpe - South West Project Coordinator , Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID)

Jason will be talking about his role within the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) and the different services and support they offer to people who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus.

Tuesday 30th March 2021

Judy Pride - South West Regional Manager, Macular Society

Judy will be talking about how even small aids can make a huge difference to people with sight loss and sharing some of her life tips that can help make day to day life easier.

Independent Living

Assistive Technology Hub

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic we have set up a unique partnership arrangement with the UK's leading provider of equipment, software and services for the blind and visually impaired.

Sight and Sound Technology has a Technical Support Team who strive to provide the best solution and support to improve the lives of those who have a sensory or age related disability.

We can refer you into this service which includes:

- Braille notetakers
- Video magnifiers and scan and read solutions
- Hand picked new technology solutions
- A wide range of Apps and Smart Home Solutions
- Accredited suppliers for students in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance and employees in receipt of Access to Work Allowance.
- A wide range of supported IT services.

If you would like more information please speak to your Support Worker or phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666.

Sight and Sound Technology Limited is the exclusive Assistive Technology partner of Devon in Sight.



“Thank you for my Audio Player... it is wonderful! I didn't know these things existed.”

Equipment Bursary Fund

We are able to help clients during the COVID-19 crisis with some FREE basic equipment with instruction sheets and telephone support.

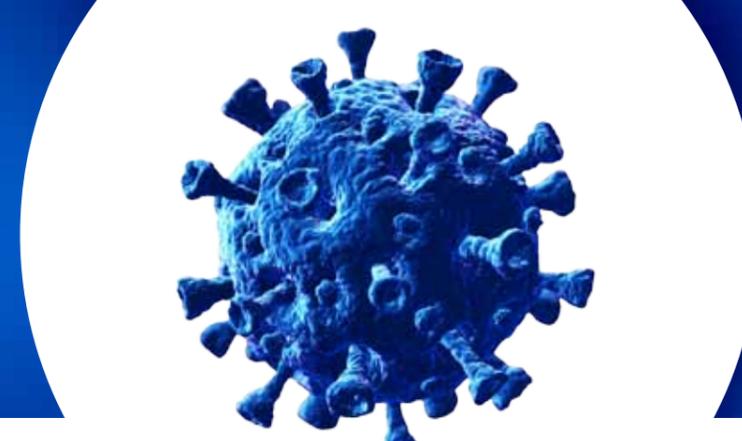
Items include:

- Task Lighting
- Liquid Level Indicators
- Bumpons
- Signature Guides
- Smartlite easy to see Analogue Alarm Clocks
- Communiclock - Talking Calendar Clocks
- Sonic 2 USB Memory Stick Players
- Voice Activated Smart Speakers (Very limited supply)
- Partially Sighted Badges
- Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyards and Visual Impairment ID cards
- Devon Access Travel Wallets
- Trading Standards 'No Cold Callers' Window Stickers



If you would like more information please speak to your Support Worker or phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666.

Social Distancing & Vaccinations



Living with a hidden disability like a visual impairment can make daily life more demanding for many people, but it can be difficult for others to identify, acknowledge or understand the challenges you face.

Social Distancing

We are aware of a number of cases of people who have limited vision who have been verbally abused for not following the recommended two metre social distancing rules.

Understandably, someone with limited vision may struggle to estimate two metres. There are two simple practical ways that we can help.

Wearing a Partially Sighted Badge discreetly indicates to people around you including shop staff, health professionals and the general public that you may need additional support, help or a little more time.

Alternatively, wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard discreetly indicates to people around you including staff, colleagues and health professionals that you may need additional support, help or a little more time. Hidden Disabilities have produced a Sunflower ID card to hang from your lanyard to explain that you are visually impaired and the hope is that people would be more understanding once they were aware that the wearer has limited vision.

We have a limited supply of Partially Sighted Badges and Hidden Disability Lanyards available FREE OF CHARGE. If you would like more information please speak to your Support Worker or phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666.

Vaccinations

If you are a resident in a care home, are 70 years of age and over or a clinically extremely vulnerable individual and have not received your vaccination please call your GP immediately.

If you would like a copy of our COVID-19 Vaccinations Factsheet which covers a range of commonly asked questions please call the helpline on 01392 876 666.

Restrictions

On 22 February 2021 the Government announced a Road Map for the easing of restrictions. Step One is as follows:



STEP ONE A

- Schools re-open, childcare allowed
- One plus one social meetings outdoors
- One visitor to care home residents
- Stay at home stays on place



STEP ONE B

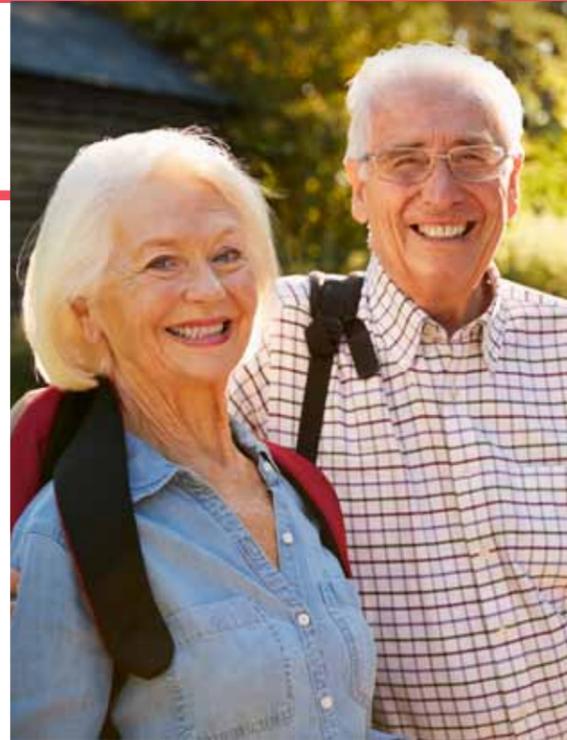
- Rule of Six
- Outdoor sports
- Stay Local
- Work from home where possible
- Still no overseas travel

Community Fundraising News

500 Friends Update

82 people are currently signed up to our **Friends of Devon in Sight Regular Giving Scheme**. Our aim is to have 500 people regularly giving by the end of our Centenary Year in 2025.

If you would like to support our work with a regular donation please visit our website at www.devoninsight.org.uk and press the red 'Donate to Devon in Sight' button at the top of the page or give us a call on the Helpline.



Exeter Company makes Christmas Donation

We were delighted to receive a Christmas donation from the Exeter based digital strategy company Good Growth Limited of £200 in December.

For more information about Good Growth please visit: <https://goodgrowth.co.uk/>



Fire Home Safety Visits

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service continues to work in partnership with Devon in Sight to provide help and advice to people who are blind or partially sighted to prevent fires from occurring.

What is a home fire safety visit?

A FREE home fire safety visit involves a fire and rescue service employee visiting your home to give advice and guidance.

They can help with the following home fire safety needs:

- fit a smoke detector where one is not already present
- provide advice about potential hazards in the home
- talk through an escape plan for your property
- provide additional safety items (subject to criteria).



DEVON & SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE



Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity

Please contact us so that we can refer you for this life saving FREE service.

Please ring the Helpline : 01392 876 666

Articles for the Blind

Return Address: Devon in Sight
Splatford Barton, Splatford, Kennford
Exeter, EX6 7XY



Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity

01392 876 666

enquiries@devoninsight.org.uk
www.devoninsight.org.uk

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

Registered Charity No. 1140978. Devon in Sight is the working name of Devon County Association for the Blind, a Company Limited by Guarantee. Company Registration No. 07371472