



**Devon in Sight**  
Your local sight loss charity

Summer 2021  
Issue 26

# In Vision

The magazine of Devon in Sight



**Light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel**

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## Editors & Designers

Grahame Flynn  
Jennie Benham

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

To subscribe please call our Helpline.

## Chief Executive Officer's

# Update



**Welcome to the Summer 2021 Edition of the Devon in Sight Magazine.**

With the National Vaccination Programme proving to be very effective and restrictions being eased, there is light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel.

Throughout the pandemic we have continued to provide services in creative and innovative ways. Our Telephone Sight Loss Speaker Events, Emotional Wellbeing Service and Equipment Bursary Fund have proved very popular.

As we emerge from the dark cloud that is COVID-19 we are working hard to resume home visits and community based Talk and Support Groups.

Like many charities we have been unable to hold any fundraising events for over a year. **We need your help.**

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.

We are looking forward to meeting up with you again soon!

*Grahame*

**Grahame Flynn**  
Chief Executive Officer

Devon in Sight is Registered with the Helplines Partnership

# Helpline 01392 876 666

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

## Keeping you connected



▲ A typical 'Talk and Support Group' in 2019

### Grahame Flynn, Devon in Sight's Chief Executive reports...

**In line with many organisations we had to cancel all our face-to-face work with clients at the start of the COVID-19 crisis in March 2020.**

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic we are pleased to announce that we are working with venues across the county to plan a programme of new Community Talk and Support Groups. These are likely to be starting again from September and for the first time will include Exeter. We will be publishing a full programme of Talk and Support Groups across Devon in the Autumn Edition of this magazine.

Whilst the Government seems adamant to ease all COVID-19 restrictions from 21 June 2021, it does seem likely that we will

**“Devon in Sight has a duty of care to you and our staff.”**

still need to observe some degree of social distancing and face masks may have to be worn. One thing is clear. Whatever happens as we move forward Devon in Sight has a duty of care to you and our staff.

### COVID-19 Vaccinations

All of the Devon in Sight Team have completed their course of COVID-19 vaccinations and Proof of Vaccination Records are held on file. Please remember that COVID-19 vaccinations do not stop people catching the virus but are effective at reducing the impact of the virus on our bodies and reduce the chances of infecting others.

### COVID-19 Checklist

Before we meet face to face with you we will run through a COVID-19 Check-list. This is a form of risk assessment that is designed to keep you and my team safe with some simple questions.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Depending on the published guidance at the time we will comply with Public Health England Guidance when engaging with clients in community settings, at Head Office or in people's homes.

Please be assured that our aim is to keep you safe and well and to keep our team and their families safe too.

**If you would like more information please speak to your Community Sight Loss Coordinator or phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666**

## Telephone Speaker Events

As COVID-19 restrictions are being eased we have moved our Telephone Speaker Events to monthly so that the team can focus on re-starting our community based groups and undertake home visits.

**Tuesday 22nd June 2021 (10.30am -11.30am)**

**Guy Newman - The Northcott Theatre, Exeter**

Guy is an Audio Describer and Ticket Manager for the Northcott Theatre and will talk about the audio described performances and exciting opportunities coming up at the theatre in terms of their Audio Description offering.

**Tuesday 27th July 2021 (10.30am -11.30am)**

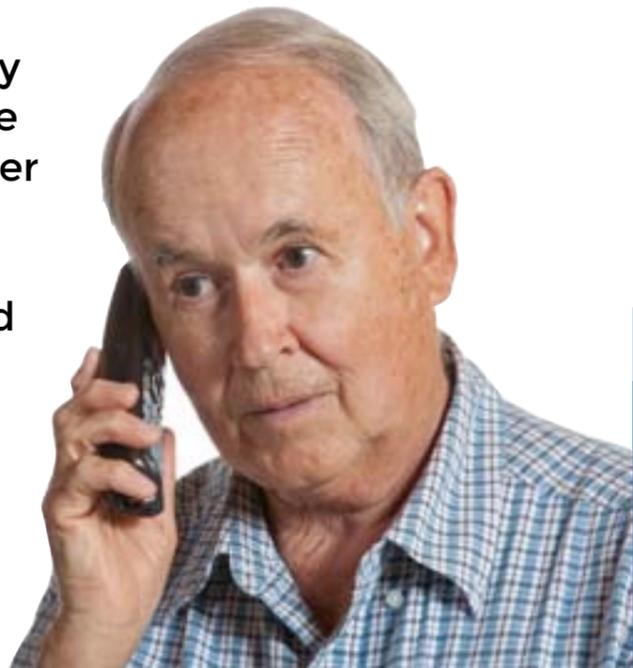
**Helen McIntosh - Talking Newspapers and Magazines**

Talking Newspapers and Magazines bring audio recordings of local news and current events to blind and partially-sighted people across Devon. Helen from the Mid Devon Messenger gives an overview of the types of services available.

**Tuesday 24th August 2021 (10.30am -11.30am)**

**Tony Shrubbs - Assistive Technology**

As part of Devon in Sight's Technology Partnership, we are delighted to invite Tony the South West Territory Manager for Sight and Sound as a speaker. Sight and Sound Technology are the UK's leading provider of hardware and software to the blind and partially sighted, they will work with you from initial assessment through to lifetime support. See more on page 12.



“Thank you for this wonderful service. It has made me realise I am not alone with my problems.”

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**

The calls are hosted by our Community Sight Loss 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.

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.**

Recordings of previous Sight Loss Speaker Events can be accessed on our Website at [www.devoninsight.org.uk](http://www.devoninsight.org.uk)

## Emotional Wellbeing Service



### Tracey Agutter, Emotional Wellbeing Coordinator reports...

**“We are all aware of the effects that the COVID-19 restrictions have had on our own lives during the last 16 months but for some people these uncertain times have been particularly difficult.**

The Community Sight Loss Team at Devon in Sight have been making referrals into the Macular Society and RNIB Counselling Services on behalf of our clients for a long time. However, we have been aware that these services can at times be stretched and that unfortunately waiting lists have been the norm.

This all changed with COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown restrictions started last year. Demand for these services sky rocketed and Devon in Sight decided to launch our very own **Emotional Wellbeing Service** to support people with sight loss who live in Devon.

**“As a family we would like to thank Devon in Sight for the support you have given our son”.**

Since we launched our Emotional Wellbeing Service last November we have received a steady stream of referrals into the service from our partner organisations such as Guide Dogs, RNIB Eye Clinic Liaison Officers and Rehabilitation Officers from the Sensory Teams.

Common areas of difficulties for those clients we have supported have been; unexpected sight loss diagnosis, anxiety around sight loss diagnosis and deterioration of sight, isolation and loneliness. Very often people don't want to burden their family and friends with their concerns and have found the support from someone outside of their immediate circle supportive and helpful.

We are able to support people using our service by offering a **Wellbeing Telephone Call**. This call is an opportunity to discuss in confidence anything that is troubling a person which is related to their sight loss. Thanks to some generous donors we have funding to refer people to local Accredited Counsellors if this is something that is felt would be beneficial. We can provide 6 one hour funded sessions. These Counsellors have been trained by the RNIB so have an awareness and appreciation of working with people with sight loss.

We are particularly proud of how quickly we can respond to a client's needs. It is not unusual for a client to receive a wellbeing call in the morning and in the afternoon of the same day be contacted by a Counsellor to arrange their first session”.

**This service is available to anyone who lives in Devon and has a diagnosed sight loss condition.**

**If you would like more information please speak to your Community Sight Loss Coordinator or phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666**



**At the height of the COVID-19 restrictions we started our Equipment Bursary Fund. This allowed us to provide our clients with some popular independent living equipment for free.**

Since the Equipment Bursary Fund started in November 2020 we have supported **73** clients with **168** items of equipment to the value of **£2,485.31**.

During the restrictions many clients have discovered the benefits of audio books and magazines which can be played on USB players. The audio version of this newsletter is also available on USB.

One client said, “Just to thank you for the Sonic 2 USB player. I have now joined the RNIB Talking Books and used it for the first time last night to listen to an audio book and it was absolutely fantastic.”

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

#### Items available under the scheme include:

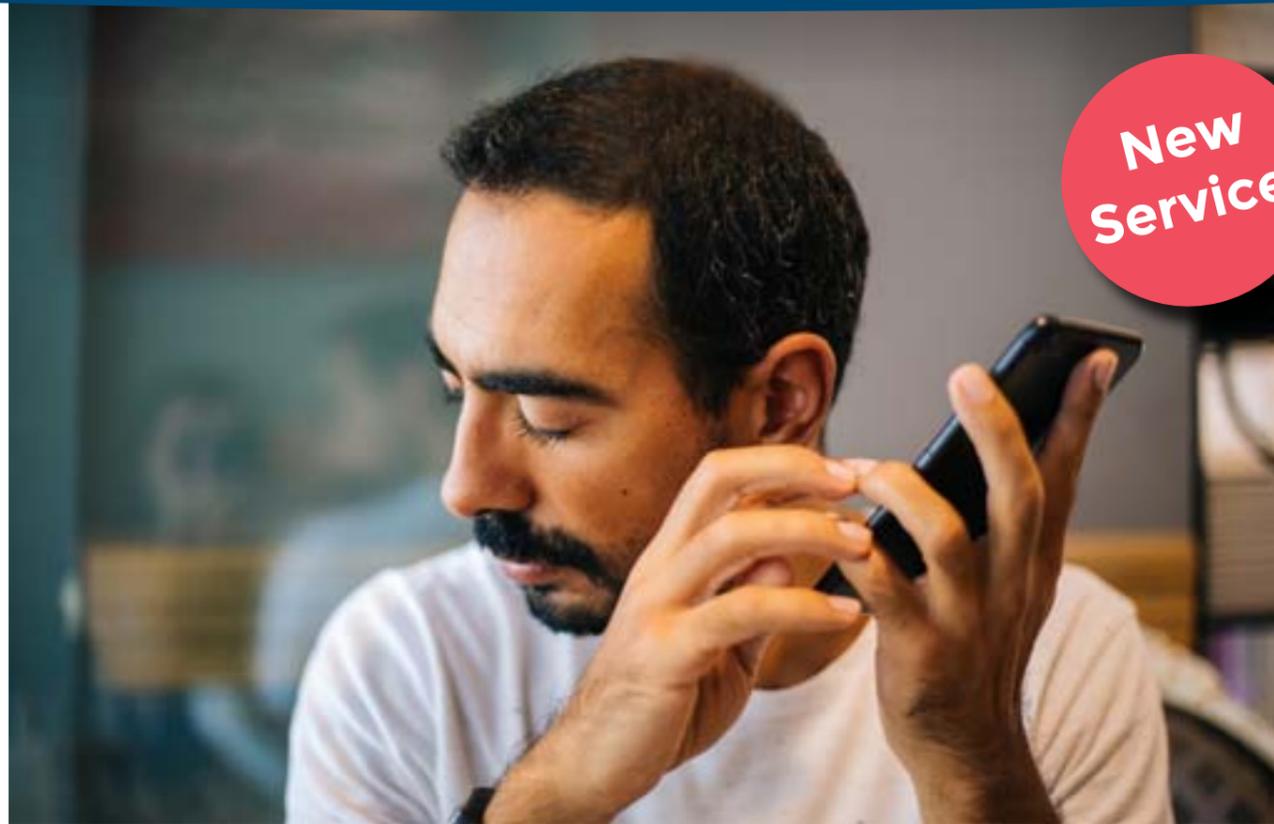
- Task Lighting
- Liquid Level Indicators\*
- Bumpons
- Devon in Sight Signature Guides
- Smartlite easy to see Analogue Alarm Clocks
- Communiclock - Talking Calendar Clocks
- Sonic 2 USB Memory Stick Players for Audio Books
- Voice Activated Smart Speakers (Very limited supply)
- Partially Sighted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

\*Please note: Liquid Level Indicators are only made available to people who have been trained to use them as a replacement or under close supervision of a friend or relative.

Many of the beneficiaries of this service have gone on to make one off donations or have set up a regular monthly donation by becoming a Friends of Devon in Sight. This helps top up the fund to maintain this highly valuable service.

**To access the Equipment Bursary Fund please phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666**

# Assistive Technology Partnership



**Our Assistive Technology Partnership is the first formal partnership with Sight and Sound Technology, the UK and Ireland's leading supplier and master distributor of hardware and software to the blind, visually impaired and those with learning and reading difficulties.**

The team at Sight and Sound share our vision of helping clients fully realise their potential. Their product solutions have been specifically designed to improve quality of life at work, at study or in the home.

Tony Shrubbs, the South West Territory Manager explains, "Our specialist trainers are all fully accredited in each of the software titles that they support, allowing us to offer a personalised service to each of our customers and to assist them in their day-to-day activities.

Sight and Sound can also help employers meet their legal obligations, advise on the best accessible technology solutions available and provide consultation on how reasonable adjustments can be made. We work with employers and employees, providing training and technical support to both the end user and technical support teams.

**Devon in Sight 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
- Equipment for students in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance and employees in receipt of Access to Work Allowance.
- A wide range of supported IT services.



▲ Tony Shrubbs



**To access the Assistive Technology Partnership please phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666**

# Sight Loss MOT Update

## Julian Garner, Devon in Sight's Business Development Manager reports...

To ensure that everyone who comes to Devon in Sight gets the very best support, in 2016 we developed a new Assessment and Outcome Framework called the Sight Loss MOT.

Based on national research and best practice, the Sight Loss MOT looks at over 50 key issues; such as making sure that people understand their diagnosis, have access to the right statutory care, access to the latest assistive technology, social activities, financial support and emotional support. The Sight Loss MOT has had a powerful impact on the people we support here in Devon.

We shared our model with delegates at the National Visionary Conference in 2017 where it won the National Inspirational Service Delivery Award. Interest in our work grew in the sight loss sector. It has now been adopted by over 20 local sight loss charities across the UK who have also been keen to improve the quality of their services and evidence the impact of their work. This work has been supported by a grant from the Thomas Pocklington Trust.

Alison Oliver, Director of Partnerships at Thomas Pocklington Trust commented, "Thomas Pocklington Trust provided grant funding to Devon in Sight to roll out the Sight Loss MOT to other sight loss charities and to further develop it throughout 2020 and 2021. We have been really impressed with the approach taken to sharing this work more widely and with the results achieved so far. This project, under the strong leadership of Chief Executive Officer Grahame Flynn and Business Development Manager Julian Garner, has been

an excellent example of an organisation sharing its own work for the benefit of others.

This has been reflected in the consistently positive feedback from the various organisations, and service users, across the UK who have benefited from their training and support. It is always a pleasure to work with the team at Devon in Sight and we look forward to hearing more as the project continues."

As part of the project we are developing a specific version of the Sight Loss MOT for Children, Young People and their families (CYPF). This version reflects the different care and support available to children and young people with sight loss, and provides information and resources to help people navigate issues around Special Needs Education, and the transition into work and independent living. The CYPF version is being co-authored with Laura Hughes of Moorvision, a Devon-based charity providing a range of support to children and young people affected by sight loss, and their families.

We would like to thank Thomas Pocklington Trust for their support with this project.



▲ Julian Garner

If you would like more information about the Sight Loss MOT phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666

## Devon Sight Loss Forum



**Our aim here at Devon in Sight is to help people who are blind or partially sighted to live life to the full, and we do that by providing a range of services which offer both practical help, emotional support, and opportunities for groups of people to meet and support each other.**

In 2016 we consulted service users on the design of our new Community Support Service and we value the feedback we continue to receive from Voting Members at our Annual General Meeting, from people that attend our Talk and Support Groups or Telephone Speaker Events, and through the many lovely letters and messages we receive on a weekly basis. When things occasionally don't go as planned then we welcome constructive feedback so we can put things right.

**“The Devon Sight Loss Forum will be a valuable opportunity for people with sight loss to influence change.”**

As we move into the next stage of the charity's development we are keen to increase opportunities for you to get more involved in shaping new services and reviewing how we are doing, so we are therefore setting up a **Devon Sight Loss Forum**.

Chief Executive Officer, Grahame Flynn explains, “The Devon Sight Loss Forum will be a valuable opportunity for people with sight loss to influence change within Devon in Sight and sight loss services in Devon.

To make the forum as accessible as possible for people across the county we will probably use the same telephone-based system that has been popular for our Telephone Speaker Events, or we can just give you a quick call to chat through some ideas and to hear what you think - it's as easy as that - but would be really valuable for us as a charity.

It would also be lovely to meet up with people over tea and cake once that is possible, and we will pay travel costs for people to get to Forum meetings”.

We would love to hear from anyone who would like to contribute to the Forum. Just call Jennie on 01392 876 666 or email [jennie@devoninsight.org.uk](mailto:jennie@devoninsight.org.uk)”

**Keeping the ‘user voice’ at the heart of our charity will ensure that we continue to do the very best for people with sight loss in Devon.**

**To learn more about the Devon Sight Loss Forum please phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666**

Supporting us

# Volunteering



**Volunteering can be a rewarding way to help in your local community at the same time as meeting new friends, developing skills and exploring hobbies.**

**There are many different volunteering opportunities available depending on the time you are able to give: whether you have an hour or so each week or can give much more.**

## **Fundraising Volunteers**

We are looking for people to join our team of **Community Fundraising Volunteers** helping us to raise the funds we need to support blind and partially sighted people across Devon and Torbay. **Please encourage your family and friends to do something amazing for charity this year.**

**“Volunteering can be a rewarding way to help in your local community”**

## **Helpline Volunteers**

We would like to train a couple of volunteers to be the first point of contact for visitors to our Head Office at Splatford or people making telephone enquiries.

We are working towards the **National Helplines Standard** so people with helpline experience would be most welcome to join the team. You would also be trained to demonstrate some of the Independent Living Equipment that is available and help with the administration of the charity and undertake research.

## **Talk and Support Group Volunteers**

The aim of this role is to support people attending our Community Talk and Support Groups by making them feel welcome, helping with introductions, familiarisation of the building where they take place (toilets etc.), and helping with the provision of light refreshments. You will be helping people to participate in a group that is focussed on the needs of people living with sight loss.

## **Training, Safeguarding & Insurance**

All Devon in Sight Volunteers will receive induction training and depending on the role a Disclosure and Barring (Police) Check. All volunteering at Devon in Sight is covered by our comprehensive insurance cover.

**To receive your Ultimate Guide to Volunteering give us a call on the helpline on 01392 876 666**

## Community Fundraising News



### The Jump for Sight Challenge is back!

Skydive Buzz is one of the UK's leading parachute schools based at Dunkeswell Airfield, Honiton and will be hosting our **Jump for Sight Challenge 2021** on Saturday 11th September.

A Tandem Skydive is an easy and enjoyable way to experience the thrills of skydiving. The exhilarating free-fall combined with the peace and tranquillity of the parachute ride makes tandem skydiving a **unique experience you will never forget!**

Join Devon in Sight's Chief Executive Officer Grahame Flynn, a veteran of Jump for Sight 2018, for this extraordinary experience that you will remember forever.

**"My Tandem Skydive was one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life!"**

Grahame says, "My Tandem Skydive in 2018 was one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life!"

After the thrills of free-fall I will never forget floating high above the Devonshire countryside. I could see as far as the Severn Bridge, over Dartmoor, the coast at Sidmouth and up the Exe Estuary. A magical view."

**To receive your Ultimate Guide to the Jump for Sight Challenge 2021 please give us a call on the helpline.**

### Celebrity Charity Auction 2021

You don't need to jump out of a plane to raise money for Devon in Sight!

We are in the very early stages of setting up an ebay Charity Shop so that we can hold an online auction in September.

We would love to hear from anyone who has any celebrity autographs or memorabilia that they would like to donate. Please give us a call on the Helpline.



**To enter the Jump for Sight Challenge 2021 please phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666**

Supporting us

## Friends of Devon in Sight



**Demand for our services increased dramatically during the first National Lockdown but ongoing COVID-19 restrictions meant that all of our planned fundraising events for our 95th Anniversary Year had to be cancelled.**

Making a regular monthly donation to Devon in Sight is the best way that you can support us during these very challenging times. Could you make a regular monthly donation of as little as £2 to help us support others?

**Friends of Devon in Sight** began in 2018 with our supporters making monthly donations ranging from £2 to £50 a month.

**To become a Friend of Devon in Sight please phone the Helpline on 01392 876 666 or visit the website...**

**“It has never been more important to do your bit to support your local sight loss charity”.**

By becoming one of our **Friends of Devon in Sight** you will help more people to receive the support they need to live happy and healthy lives and be part of their local community.

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

### **One Off Donation by Cheque**

Please make cheques payable to ‘**Devon in Sight**’ and send to: **The Office Manager, Devon in Sight, Splatford Barton, Kennford, Exeter EX6 7XY.**

### **One Off Donation by Bank Transfer**

You can make a donation through Online Banking to: **‘Devon County Association for the Blind’**  
**Sort Code: 30-80-37 Account Number: 62326768**

### **Legacies**

**Our 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 check-list and how legacies have supported our work. **If you would like a Legacy Pack please phone us on the Helpline.**

**Please do something today to help us continue supporting blind and partially sighted people in Devon.**

**[www.devoninsight.org.uk](http://www.devoninsight.org.uk)**

# 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](mailto:enquiries@devoninsight.org.uk)  
[www.devoninsight.org.uk](http://www.devoninsight.org.uk)

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

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