



Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity



**NATIONAL EYE
HEALTH WEEK**
MONDAY 19 - SUNDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2022
YOUR VISION MATTERS

In Vision

The magazine of Devon in Sight

Autumn 2022 Issue 32



Helping people with little or no sight
respond to the Fuel Crisis!

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To subscribe please call our Helpline.

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Chief Executive Officer's

Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of In Vision Magazine.

It seems a little strange writing the introduction to our Autumn Edition when we are enduring the hottest summer since 1976 and much of the country is in drought conditions!

With extreme weather conditions, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the ongoing COVID threat and huge inflation it is a very worrying time for us all.

Therefore, much of this edition of In Vision Magazine is given over to our comprehensive **Cost of Living Guide**. This guide has been designed to help you live through the Energy Crisis this winter. I would like to thank Judy Pride for pulling this information together.

This year's National Eye Health Week (NEHW) will take place from 19 to 25 September, promoting the importance of good eye health and the need for regular eye tests for all. This includes those of you with long term sight conditions.

We are therefore very grateful to M&S Opticians who have provided us with a FREE Eye Test and Hearing Test Voucher for you to use or share with family and friends. This voucher can be used at Exeter, Torbay and Plymouth branches of M&S Opticians before the end of the year.

Finally, after nine years of badgering the NHS I finally have some fantastic news regarding appointment letters.

Onwards and Upwards!



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 Friday

Supporting You

An Overview of Our Services

Devon in Sight offers a range of holistic services for anyone affected by sight loss across Devon. We can provide support to people who are blind or partially sighted, their families, friends and carers.

Information, Advice and Guidance Service

We are committed to providing accurate and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance. You can access our comprehensive information resources through our Helpline.

Our website is available at www.devoninsight.org.uk

This magazine is available FREE in a range of accessible formats - large print, digitally via email and in audio.

Independent Living Service

We work with you to identify the equipment, support and training that will help you maintain your independence and live life to the full. We undertake this valuable work in partnership with Health and Social Care and the voluntary sector.

We have a unique partnership arrangement with Sight and Sound, the UK's leading provider of equipment, software and services for people who are blind and partially sighted.

Health & Wellbeing Service

Our Health and Wellbeing Service aims to help keep you physically and mentally fit and safe in your home.

We can help you make some healthy lifestyle choices such as smoking cessation or arrange a FREE home safety check with the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.

We can also provide **emotional support** and in some cases **formal counselling**.

For fun, friendship and really useful information about living life with low vision you can join our FREE telephone based **Chit-Chat Calls** every Wednesday at 10.30am.

Our **Telephone Speaker Events** take place monthly with speakers from across the sight loss sector.

You can find the schedule of events and joining instructions over the page.

Influencing Change

We believe that it is important that people who are blind or partially sighted, their family and carers have a voice in the development of sight loss services and other community services across Devon. We therefore provide a **Sight Loss Forum** and other ways for you to influence change.



▲ Tessa Barrett



▲ Jennie Benham



▲ Judy Pride

For more information about our services please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Events Calendar 2022

Meet up Calls 0808 169 79 30

Calls from your home telephone or mobile are FREE

Telephone Chit-Chat Calls take place every Wednesday at 10.30am on **Freephone 0808 169 79 30**. Fun, friendship and really useful information about living life with little or no sight.

[Tuesday 13 September 2022](#)

'Getting the Best Out of Your Optician' Telephone Speaker Event (10.30am to 11.30am)

Our Guest Speaker is Paul Bradford,
a Devon in Sight Trustee and Optometrist.

Call 0808 169 7930 to join.

[Tuesday 11 October 2022](#)

Telephone Speaker Event: 'Glaucoma Support' (10.30am to 11.30am)

Our Guest Speaker is Robyn Asprey the Development Manager
at Glaucoma UK covering southern England.

Call 0808 169 79 30 to join.

[Tuesday 18 October 2022](#)

Technology Drop In Event, Honiton (10am to 2pm)

The Beehive, Dowell St, Honiton EX14 1LZ

Come along with your technology questions whether you
want to make better use of your mobile phone, tablet or

try out some popular Daily Living Equipment. This event is
run in partnership with Sight and Sound Technology Ltd.

Ring us now to book your consultation on 01392 876 666.

[Friday 28 October 2022](#)

Devon in Sight's 97th Annual General Meeting (10am)

We have taken the decision to conduct a virtual AGM over Zoom
again this year. If you would like to become a Voting Member
and participate in our postal Proxy Vote please call the Helpline
for more information.

[Tuesday 8 November 2022](#)

Telephone Speaker Event: An introduction to 'My Sighted Guide'

(10.30am to 11.30am)

Our Guest Speaker is Danielle Fletcher a Community
Development Officer for Guide Dogs and she will be talking
about the mobility service provided by Guide Dogs.

Call 0808 169 79 30 to join.

[Wednesday 23 November 2022](#)

Technology Drop In Event, Torbay (10am to 2pm)

Jasmyn House, 1 Midvale Rd, Paignton, TQ4 5BD.

We are pleased to be hosting a Technology Event in partnership
with Sight and Sound Technology and Torbay Social Club for
the Blind and Visually and Impaired at Jasmyn House.

This would be a great opportunity for you to meet Graham
Leach, the Chairman of Torbay Social Club for the Blind and
Visually Impaired which meets at Jasmyn House, on the 2nd &
4th Wednesday of the month between 2-4 pm.



Devon in Sight supports National Campaigns

Devon in Sight is supporting two national petitions which will be submitted to the Government by The National Federation of the Blind of the UK (NFBUK).

The first is to challenge proposed changes to the staffing at railway stations and on train services across the UK which would see the closure of some ticket offices, reducing staff and removing guards on trains. The impact of this on travellers using the Assisted Travel Scheme is potentially huge.

The second petition challenges changes to new and existing Bus Stops to introduce more cycle lanes. This may force passengers to cross a cycle lane to get on to the Bus. We know how important being able to travel safely is to our clients and although we are not aware of any changes to our Bus Stops in Devon, those clients who travel by train rely on help at our Railway Stations.

“Devon in Sight is committed to making the world a better place for people with sight loss”

Technology Drop In Events

Our FREE Technology Drop In Events held in Exeter, Newton Abbot and Torrington have been a huge success so we have decided to continue our tour of the county.

If you have any questions about how to make better use of your own mobile phone, tablet or computer or want to know what equipment might help you with day-to-day living, drop in and meet our team and our Assistive Technology Partner, Sight and Sound Technology who are the largest provider of low vision equipment in the country.

Please let us know if you would like to attend so we can book a consultation for you.



Future Technology Drop In Events

Tuesday 18 October 2022 (10am - 2pm) - The Beehive, Dowell Street, Honiton, EX14 1LZ

Wednesday 23 November 2022 (10am - 2pm) - Jasmyn House, 1 Midvale Rd, Paignton, TQ4 5BD.

We are currently planning further Technology Events in South Molton, Kingsbridge, Tavistock, Tiverton and Exeter during 2023.

For more information about these stories please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Introducing the Oxsight Onyx Glasses



Our recent Assistive Technology Drop In Events have been the perfect opportunity for our clients to experience the latest Assistive Technology thanks to our partnership with Sight and Sound Limited.

The **OXSIGHT Onyx Central Vision Loss Smart Glasses** offer the perfect balance between Wearability, Usability and Functionality. The most advanced smart glasses ever made, they can be used straight out of the box.

The Smart Glasses were designed by Stephen Hicks, University of Oxford Research Fellow in Neuroscience and Visual Prosthetics, Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences and co-founder of OXSIGHT.

Designed for any occasion, the smart glasses can offer constant use by attaching the arms and support band, which is ideal for activities such as watching TV.

“The OXSIGHT Onyx have been developed with customer experience at its heart.”

For occasional use a lanyard is supplied, meaning you can easily reach the device to look closely at an object or piece of text, such as when you’re cooking from a recipe. It’s also discreet enough to tuck away into a bag or pocket and use on demand, for example to read a menu in a restaurant.

How does OXSIGHT Onyx work?

These smart glasses work by capturing an image with the inbuilt camera, processing and enhancing it using the on board computer and displaying it on bright, colour-rich OLED screens within the smart glasses. This image is then visible to the part of the eye with suitable remaining vision.

Users have found that the OXSIGHT Onyx led to...

- Improved ability to read and identify text
- Improved ability to recognise faces
- Improved TV and screen watching
- Improved readability of mobile phone screens
- Increased independence across a range of daily tasks
- Better low light vision

The OXSIGHT Onyx can be seen at our Technology Drop In Events and by appointment with Sight and Sound.

For information about **Assistive Technology** please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

OXSIGHT Onyx Glasses



Every now and again the team at Devon in Sight experience an event which reminds us why we are so committed to serving people in Devon with sight issues. It was made even more powerful when the moment was captured on video.

Alan a client from North Devon attended our Technology Event in Torrington to see if there was any equipment that could help him with his sight loss. His wife Jenny had dropped him off and went shopping in the town.

Alan has Age-related macular degeneration which is an eye condition resulting in the loss of central vision.

Tony Shrubbs our partner from Sight and Sound Technology was there demonstrating some of the latest technology which included the OxSight Onyx Glasses. Alan asked if he could try them not expecting them to work. When he put the glasses on he was amazed! For the first time in a long time he could see detail and colour.

He noticed that Devon in Sight staff member Judy Pride was wearing a pearl necklace and that Jennie Benham our Office Manager was wearing orange nail varnish.

We gave him a book to write in and he was able to write his name and see what he had written. Tony from Sight and Sound took him outside and he was able to see the time on the town clock. He called his wife on his mobile and asked her to come along as there was something he wanted to show her.

When she sat down opposite him he put the glasses on and said, "I like your bracelet!" She was amazed that he could see her face, rings and her bracelet. After some tears from all of us Alan ordered the glasses and said he was going to enjoy watching the football again!

Alan said, "You don't know how much being able to see detail and colour means to me. That is going to make such a massive difference to my life!"

Since taking delivery of his OXSIGHT Onyx glasses Alan has watched his favourite football team play on television and he is so impressed that he has packed the glasses for his holiday in France.



For information about **Assistive Technology** please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Accessing Talking Newspapers



Many Talking Newspapers and Devon in Sight's In Vision Magazine can now be listened to on your Smart Phone through the British Wireless for the Blind App.

You can download the App on Android or Apple by searching for the Talking Newspaper App. Once downloaded, open the App and follow these instructions.



- You will need to confirm that you are prevented from reading print because you have a disability.
- Then confirm that you are using the app because of Sight Loss.
- Select the **South West Region**
- Then select either your local Talking Newspaper or Devon in Sight
- This will then play the latest edition of your chosen Talking Newspaper or In Vision Magazine.

We would like to thank David Beard (British Wireless for the Blind) and Ian Southwell for their support in setting up this new service for us.

“In Vision Magazine can now be listened to on your Smart Phone and Alexa Smart Speaker.”



Many Talking Newspapers and In Vision Magazine can now be listened to on an Alexa Smart Speaker through the Talking Newspaper Skill.



Smart Speakers are becoming more and more popular with blind and partially sighted people.

Once the Alexa Smart Speaker is connected to the WiFi and ready to go, you can enable the Talking Newspapers Skill by using the enable command, “Alexa enable Talking Newspapers”.

You then follow the prompts given by Alexa, until confirmation is provided that the ‘skill’ has been enabled.

You can then say, “Alexa ask Talking Newspaper for Devon in Sight Talking Newspaper” (or any other publication name). This will immediately play the Talking Newspaper selected.

For those of you with an Alexa Smart Speaker we have prepared a comprehensive self-help guide to help you set up your speaker to listen to Talking Newspapers and this magazine.

For information about Assistive Technology please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Assistive Technology Feature

Digital Inclusion Project



Do you live in the Moretonhampstead and Chagford areas and need help with technology?

We are trialling a new service in partnership with wellbeing charity Wellmoor to offer one to one support with technology for those with visual impairments. Wellmoor's friendly and patient volunteers can help you become more familiar with your smartphone, laptop or computer, and show you accessibility features that can help you navigate them.

This service is only available for those people residing in Moretonhampstead and Chagford, so get in touch early to avoid disappointment! The pilot ends in December.



WELLMOOR

For more information about this project please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

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

Cost of Living Guide

A supplement of In Vision Magazine



**Your
Pull Out
Guide**

Helping you live through the Energy Crisis this Winter

Chief Executive Officer's Introduction



Welcome to this special 'Cost of Living' supplement of In Vision Magazine.

Fuel costs are one of the main reasons UK inflation - the rate at which prices increase - is over 10%. This is higher than at any point in the past 40 years.

Many people are expected to face "fuel poverty" - when a household has to spend a high proportion of its income on energy bills.

Consumer expert Martin Lewis recently said that the situation with energy bills is "a national crisis" on a scale of the COVID pandemic.

A recent survey by the comparison site Uswitch suggested many people are falling behind on energy payments with total debt owed three times higher than in September last year.

The **Devon in Sight Cost of Living Guide** is our way of bringing together some information that could help you save some money in the coming months.

The guide contains some top tips for saving energy, were to get help with your energy bills, the Priority Services Register and Accessible Smart Meters.

I sincerely hope that there is something in the guide that will help you save some money this winter.

Grahame

Grahame Flynn
Chief Executive Officer

Daily Living Feature

Top Tips for Saving Energy



Whether you're a home owner, a private or social renter, a student, or you live with your parents, there are many things you can do to save energy, lower your bills and reduce your carbon footprint.

Top Tips include...

- Use radiator thermostats to set the temperature of each individual room (other than where your main thermostat is). This could save you almost 6% of your energy. Plugging drafts could save 2% of your energy bill.
- Using a slow cooker, microwave or toaster is cheaper than your oven. To take the example of a jacket potato, a microwave uses 25% of the energy it takes to cook it in the oven.

Top Tips for Saving Energy

- Just cutting a minute off your shower time could save £75 a year in energy bills, and a further £105 a year in water bills if you have a meter (That's £180 a year for an average four-person household).
- Don't boil more water than you need in your kettle. This could save £8 a year. You could even buy a smaller kettle or one cup water boiler (around £35), so you aren't tempted to overfill.
- Rather than boiling water on the hob, it's quicker and more energy-efficient to use the kettle to boil water and pour it into a pan on the hob.
- Turning your thermostat down by just a single degree can save you as much as £60 per year, and you probably won't feel the difference but do make sure you are warm enough.
- Install reflective panels behind your radiators so less warmth gets lost through the wall.
- Buy a new boiler insulation jacket with a recommended thickness of 75mm to help keep your water hotter for longer and reduce your energy bills. This should cost you about £25 and it could save upwards of £100-£150 a year.
- Use 'eco' mode on appliances where possible for example on your dish washer or washing machine.
- Fill the dishwasher up. According to the Energy Saving Trust, reducing your dishwasher use by just one run a week could save £14 annually.

“There are many things you can do to save energy, lower your bills and reduce your carbon footprint”.

- If you have a chimney, use chimney balloons to stop cold draughts getting into your home.
- Don't overcharge your mobile phone. Repeatedly charging your phone to 100% actually depletes the battery life over time.
- Arrange your room to let natural light in through the windows, and use mirrors to reflect that light to help keep rooms bright.
- Clean dirty windows, both on the inside and outside - dirt can block up to 10% of natural sunlight.
- If the sun only warms some rooms, leave internal doors open to let the warm air circulate through your home.
- Submitting regular readings to your energy supplier to make sure you are only paying for the energy you use.
- Avoid using the tumble dryer. You could potentially save £60 a year if you never use it.
- Swap to Turkish style “Hammam” towels that are much quicker to wash and to dry if you use a tumble dryer. These cost from around £8-£10.
- Use energy-efficient light bulbs like LEDs or compact fluorescents rather than the commonly-used incandescent types. LEDs in particular use a quarter of the energy of incandescents and can last up to 25 times longer.

Help with your Energy Bills



Energy Bills Support Scheme

The Government are giving every household in England, Scotland and Wales £400 off their electricity bill. You don't need to do anything to get the money and you won't have to pay it back. The £400 will be automatically added to your energy account over 6 months starting from October 2022. If you have a prepayment meter, the £400 will be added to your meter or you'll be given vouchers - the government will confirm how you'll get the money nearer the time.

Other Support

Cold Weather Payments are a £25 payment for every 7 days of very cold weather between November and March.

Cost-of-Living Payments are for anyone receiving low-income benefits (not tax credits), the first payment of £326 was made between 14 July and end of July 2022.

There are a a number of options available to you to help with your energy bills.

There are plans to ramp up publicity in order to reduce the potential for confusion and communications have started via radio adverts and poster campaigns for this payment.

The Household Support Fund is a funding package to help vulnerable households this winter. Each Council will decide how to use this money and some are making payments automatically to residents on certain benefits. However, other councils may require you provide evidence of your income.

To apply you must be over 16 years of age, and some councils insist that you must be over 18. Single applicants can also apply. You do not need to be living with a partner or children to receive the grant.

Contact your local council for advice and help on accessing the fund.

Exeter City Council - 01392 277888

East Devon District Council - 01404 515 616

Mid Devon District Council - 01884 255 255

North Devon District Council - 01271 327 711

Torrige District Council 01237 428 700

West Devon Borough Council - 01822 813 600

South Hams District Council - 01803 861 234

Teignbridge District Council - 01626 361 101

Devon County Council - 0808 223 1133

Torbay Council - 01803 201 201

Plymouth City Council - 01752 668 000

The Priority Services Register

All large gas and electricity companies offer a range of free services to their most vulnerable customers.

Joining the **Priority Service Register** entitles you to the following free services:

- A gas appliance and installation safety check (if everyone in the home is eligible)
- Quarterly meter readings
- Help in moving a meter if it is in an inconvenient position
- A personal password system for gas and electricity staff to use every time they call at the person's home, to confirm they are genuine
- Help if they have difficulty in using certain appliances
- Bills sent to a friend or family member on their behalf
- Bills supplied in different formats, such as large print or Braille, by cassette or in a different language.

Weston Power Distribution also offers support to those who register as a priority and provides...

- A dedicated and direct number you can call during a power cut to get straight through to them.
- To agree on a password with you before a home visit, so you know you can trust the person at the door.
- Provide special help through the British Red Cross if you need it.
- Keep you up-to-date on any planned interruptions to your power supply.
- Stay in touch with you during an unplanned power cut, including advice on how long it will last.

“Joining the **Priority Service Register** entitles you to a range of free services”

Some energy companies offer extra services to residents. Most energy companies require you to be on their priority service register before offering reduced bills for vulnerable customers, otherwise known as a ‘social tariff’.

10 Minute Benefits Checker

Up to seven million people are missing out on state help - so don't assume you're not eligible.

Use the online ‘Money Saving Expert’ 10-minute Benefits Checker to make sure you're getting the government support for heating bills you are entitled to, as benefits claimants are getting extra help.

If you are eligible for one of the means-tested benefits, not only will you get extra cash coming in, you should also qualify for the second cost of living support payment of £325, due in the autumn.

If your direct debit for energy has increased unnecessarily, check and challenge your payments. In a recent energy direct debits survey, a quarter of those who were in credit and on the price cap saw their direct debit double. This may not have been needed, as the cap went up by just 54% in April. While there are legitimate reasons for above average hikes, for example, if you're now using more energy, but if you think yours has been unfairly increased, you have the right to challenge it.

You can find the 10 Minute Benefits Check at...

www.moneysavingexpert.com

Accessible Smart Meters



As energy prices increase, being able to see how much power you're using in real time could help you save money and save energy too.

Anyone with sight loss can now ask their energy supplier for a free Accessible In-Home Display (AIHD), the name for a new easy to see smart meter.

So, what exactly is a smart meter?

Smart Meters allow you to see how much energy is being used and where so you can take steps to reduce your consumption. They also tell your energy company how much gas and electricity you're using so you don't need to provide meter readings and your bills based on actual rather than estimated meter reading.

“Helping you save money and energy too!”

Energy UK (the trade association for the UK energy industry) and Geo (a leading energy technology business) have worked with the RNIB to develop the Accessible In-Home Display which is much easier to see.

The Accessible In-Home Display (AIHD) accessibility features...

- text-to-speech function for screen navigation
- adjustable volume for the text-to-speech function
- six large, printed buttons with tactile feedback that confirms a button has been pressed
- three coloured LED lights for indicating electricity usage,
- LED push buttons to replay speech
- Large crisp typeface
- display screen with high contrast colour, optimised for sight loss and colour blindness.

Contact your energy supplier to discuss the options available to you as not every home can have a smart metre installed. Your supplier will be able to provide further information on smart meters, including the Accessible In-Home Display (AIHD).

If your supplier contacts you about installing a smart meter, tell them that you need the accessible option.

You can find more **Top Tips** on the Devon in Sight Website...
www.devoninsight.org.uk



Innovation News

Baby Cancer Test



A life-saving test that allows doctors to spot a rare form of eye cancer in babies in the womb is being rolled out by the NHS in England.

Thanks to a new NHS test developed at Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust, babies identified as being at risk of developing retinoblastoma can be monitored and treated sooner - increasing the chance of saving their eyesight and potentially their lives.

Symptoms of retinoblastoma are hard to detect and a diagnosis can normally only be made once the tumour has progressed and the eye can't be saved.

The new non-invasive test can detect changes in the genes in DNA and is likely to identify around 50 infants with retinoblastoma each year. This also means parents can be informed early in pregnancy if their child is at risk.

The blood sample test is taken from the mother before birth which can determine with almost 100% accuracy if the baby will develop retinoblastoma.

Treatment can then start on the affected eye as soon as the baby is born. The test can also predict if the disease might develop in their siblings and will be offered to families where there is a confirmed case of retinoblastoma in the family.

Taken and amended from the NHS England Website 3 May 2022, www.england.nhs.uk

Devon in Sight is registered with the **Helplines Partnership**

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Community Fundraising



Abbie makes a surprise visit to Splatford

In the last edition of In Vision Magazine you may recall reading about the incredible Blindfold Snowdon Climb.

Snowdon is the highest mountain in Wales, at an elevation of 1,085 meters (3,560 ft) above sea level, and the highest point in the British Isles outside the Scottish Highlands. It is located in Snowdonia National Park in Gwynedd.

Fundraising Volunteer Abbie Arnull scaled the mountain in April wearing a blindfold in memory of her late friend and former Devon in Sight beneficiary Chris Wells.

We were delighted that Abbie and her partner Vicki dropped into the office whilst travelling through the county to say, "Hello".

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

Apart from raising £2,000 for Devon in Sight it is interesting to hear that her Blindfold Climb is now helping her in her role as a paramedic when dealing with people with little or no sight.

It was lovely to meet our inspirational fundraiser face -to-face for the first time.

Co-op Local Community Fund Update

Devon in Sight was chosen as one of the Co-op Local Community Fund causes for 2021-22. This means that until October 2022, you can support Devon in Sight everytime you shop at your local Co-op.

All you need to do is become a Co-op member and support Devon in Sight by choosing us as your Local Community Fund Project. If you have internet access this can be done through your account or if you'd rather speak to someone on the phone you can call their call centre on 0800 0686 727.

We'd like to say a big thank you to all those who have chosen to support us. The fund currently stands at £982.74.



To receive our **Ultimate Fundraising Guide** please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Supporting us

How you can help us



Devon in Sight has been providing help and support to people who are blind or partially sighted and their families for nearly 100 years.

Recent quotes from clients include...

“I was not aware of your service, but I will be forever grateful for finding my way to Devon in Sight.”

“I am very grateful for all your help and advice and it is so reassuring to know that I can always contact Devon in Sight if I have any queries in the future”

We can only continue to undertake our work with your support.

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

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

Friends of Devon in Sight

Our Regular Giving Scheme ‘Friends of Devon in Sight’ is the best way that you can support your charity during these very challenging times. Give as little or as much as you would like.

Make a One Off Donation by over the Telephone

You can make a card donation over the telephone by ringing the main Helpline number.

Make a 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.**

Make a 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

Leave us a gift in your Will

Ask for a copy of our **Ultimate Guide to Leaving a Lasting Legacy to Charity**. This 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.

For help making a donation please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Community Champion Awards

Devon in Sight is keen to recognise outstanding customer service from an individual or business for people who are blind or partially sighted in Devon.

We would like to thank those of you who have taken the time to share your positive experiences of customer service.

All nominees will receive a Community Champion Certificate.

Railway Staff at Honiton and Exeter Central Stations

Anne Keynes would like to nominate the staff at Honiton and Exeter Railway Stations who helped with her rail journey on Tuesday 24 June 2022 to attend our first Technology Event.

Anne says, "I hadn't booked Assisted Travel in advance, so got to the station early. Justin who was working that day, helped me get the best value ticket and called ahead to Exeter Central Station to let them know I was on my way and which seat I would be in. When the train arrived, he showed me to the train door and the guard was already there to help me to my seat.

When I got to Exeter, the guard collected me from my seat and took me to the door where Dave another staff member was waiting for me. Dave took me right to the Station entrance and spotted Tess from Devon in Sight, who was waiting for me.

My return journey was just as easy and now I feel confident to travel to Exeter whenever I want! Thanks so much to Justin in Honiton and Dave in Exeter who made this all possible.



"Recognising outstanding customer service for people who are blind or partially sighted in Devon"

Dartline

Lil Mins would like to nominate her local bus driver Steve, who drives the Tiverton - Tidcombe Circular bus run by Dartline.

Lil says, "He's such a lovely caring person and if he sees me coming up to the bus stop, late again, he waits, he checks I'm sat down before pulling off & generally goes out of his way to help his less able passengers! A real star amongst public service bus drivers."



Tui

Amy Chadwick would like to nominate Julia Tugwell a Tui representative from Brighton.

Amy says, "I phoned to book a flight to Tenerife and got through to Julia from their Brighton office. She was so kind and made sure the seats that I booked were near the front of the plane so they would be nearer to the toilets. She arranged advanced help with my baggage and help with getting on and off the aircraft. She was absolutely brilliant and nothing was too much for her. She wanted to ensure my flight was made as easy as possible".



If you would like to nominate someone for a Devon in Sight Community Champion Award please ring us...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Influencing Change in the Sight Loss Sector

Working with the NHS

Devon in Sight's Chief Executive Officer, Grahame Flynn updates us on the partnership working he is undertaking with the NHS.



“One of the most common complaints we receive at Devon in Sight is that patients struggle to read their hospital appointment letters. I have raised this issue with the NHS on many occasions over the last nine years.

I also wanted the NHS to acknowledge that many patients with sight loss have complex health issues and attend other departments for treatment. Therefore, it has been a long-term aim that all patient letters should have a 16 point message at the end about accessible information.

Earlier in the year I was invited to address the General Council of Devon's new Integrated Care Group (ICG) where I raised the issue again. It was very beneficial to have examples of appointment letters to show the Council and they also got to hear the first hand experiences of one of our clients in the meeting.

Since then, I have been working with NHS Communications Team to address this important and long standing issue.

In early August I received the following news from Nellie Guttman, Deputy Head of Involvement and Inclusion...

“I am writing to update you about the work we are doing to improve the accessibility of our patient letters, specifically for people for people attending eye appointments, but also the wider public. I am pleased to inform you that two significant changes have been made.

“One of the most common complaints we receive is that patients struggle to read their hospital appointment letters!”

1. All letters being sent to ophthalmology patients will now go at font size 16 (Large print).

2. We are adding a line to ALL patient letters, in font size 16, that says...



‘This information can be made available in alternative formats such as easy read or large print and may be available in alternative languages on request. This will include the relevant Devon Referral Support Service contact details.

This is in recognition that more than just our patients requiring eye care could have visual impairments.

I'd like to thank you for raising this really important issue with us and I hope you feel assured that people with visual impairments now have a more equitable service.”

I am sure that you will agree that this is fantastic news for patients across Devon and an excellent example of collaborative working. I would like to thank those of you who responded to my request for examples of appointment letters and for sharing your stories.

So what next?

We are now working hard on the first draft of the **Devon Sight Loss Guide** with NHS England and our partners in Health, Social Care and voluntary sector. Whilst this publication is primarily aimed at the newly diagnosed it will be a helpful reference guide to those of you who have been living with sight loss for many years. We'll keep you posted about how this progresses.

National Eye Health Week



This year's National Eye Health Week (NEHW) will take place from 19 to 25 September 2022, promoting the importance of good eye health and the need for regular eye tests for all.

Vision really matters. Sight is the sense people fear losing the most, yet many of us don't know how to look after our eyes - National Eye Health Week aims to change all that!

Don't take the sight you have for granted. Take these steps to keep your eyes healthy.

Visit Your Optician Regularly

Everyone needs the regular eye tests that are part of a visit to the Optician, even young children. Tests can identify conditions like glaucoma or macular degeneration that may not have an symptoms in the early stage. It's important to spot them early, and to get treatment.

“Don't take the sight you have for granted!”

An appointment should include talking about your personal and family medical history, vision tests to see if you're near sighted, far sighted, have an astigmatism , or any age-related vision changes. Tests to see how well your eyes work together. A Field of vision test, eye pressure to check for glaucoma and an optional OCT Scan of the retina.

Eat Well

Good eye health starts with the food on your plate. Try to include the following in your diet. Dark green leafy vegetables like kale and spinach, salmon, tuna, and other oily fish, eggs, nuts, beans, and other non meat protein sources, oranges and other citrus fruits or juices, oysters and pork.

Stop Smoking

Smoking can increase your chances of developing cataracts, damage to your optic nerve, and macular degeneration. If you've tried to stop before, only to start again, keep trying as the more times you try the more likely you are to succeed. Ask your doctor for help.

Protect your eyes

Sunglasses can help to protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays. Too much UV exposure increases the chance of cataracts and macular degeneration.

- Choose a pair that blocks 99% to 100% of UVA and UVB rays.
- Wraparound lenses help protect your eyes from the side.
- If you wear contact lenses, some offer UV protection, but it's still a good idea to wear sunglasses for extra protection.

National Eye Health Week

Wear safety glasses

- If you are using hazardous or airborne materials at work or at home, wear safety glasses.
- If you play sport that could cause injury to your eyes, wear appropriate eye protection, helmets with protective face masks or sports goggles with polycarbonate lenses to protect your eyes.

Keep Active

Being physically active can improve the blood supply to the eyes, your balance and general wellbeing. You don't need to run a marathon to get the benefits!

- If you are sitting for any length of time, get up, stretch gently and walk around.
- Take a daily walk outside if you can
- If you play a sport, ask us how you could continue, even with some sight loss
- Take part in armchair exercises which are often included as part of TV programmes.

Take time away from computer screens

If you spend a long time on your computer, tablet or smart phone, make sure your glasses prescription is up to date and suitable for looking at a screen.

- If you suffer from eye strain, talk to your Optician about computer glasses.

“Don't take the sight you have for granted!”

- Move the screen so your eyes are level with the top of the monitor. That lets you look slightly down at the screen.
- Try to avoid glare from windows and lights. Use an anti-glare screen if needed.
- Choose a comfortable, supportive chair. Position it so that your feet are flat on the floor.
- If your eyes are dry, blink more or try using artificial tears.
- Rest your eyes every 20 minutes. Look 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Get up at least every 2 hours and take a 15-minute break.

Finally, please share this with friends and family to help them protect their sight too.



If you would like to learn more about National Eye Health Week please visit the Vision Matters website at...

www.visionmatters.org.uk

Beth's Story

Beth is a young woman who works in a Primary School and has lived with diabetes for many years.

Beth confesses, "I have not taken the best control of my diabetes and have made choices and did things to live life in that moment. I didn't like to listen to the doctors or anyone about what that could mean in the long run."

Beth didn't act when she first noticed problems with her vision. She woke up one morning and had no sight in one eye at all, she went to the Moorfields Hospital A&E immediately. She was told that she had a detached retina that it was also "funnelled" and that there was really nothing they could do to improve the sight in that eye. They would concentrate on saving the sight in the other eye. Beth had an operation to remove scarring and some extra blood vessels in her good eye which was successful, but unfortunately she experienced some oozing and had a layer of blood in the eye. She had a second operation to remove this and now she has been able to go back to work.

Beth has a message for everyone "You have no idea how valuable your eyesight is until you don't have it any more or how inaccessible the world is when you can't see and you lose you independence.

Take a leaf out of my book, don't make my mistakes and go and get your eyes checked. If I had gone to my Optician when I had first felt something was wrong, I may have saved my sight".



"If I had gone to my Optician when I had first felt something was wrong, I may have saved my sight!"

Please share Beth's story with your family and friends. Around 50% of sight loss can be prevented if caught by your Optician early enough.

Make an annual appointment with your Optician a regular part of your life.

YOUR FREE VOUCHER

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Visit M&S Opticians to claim your free eye test and free hearing health check

Show our team code **DEVINS22FET** when you arrive for your appointment. Call your local store or visit **mandsopticians.com** to book online today.

Terms and conditions apply. Available from our opticians in M&S Torbay, Plymouth and Exeter. Offer valid until 31st December 2022.

Articles for the Blind

Return Address: Devon in Sight
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Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity

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