

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2022

Executive Summary

The Purpose

During July and August 2022, Devon in Sight conducted its randomised biennial Customer Satisfaction Survey. We undertook this to ensure that the services we provide remain relevant and of high quality. It also helps highlight the issues for people living with sight loss in Devon post COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey is one of the tools that we use to inform **Devon in Sight's Strategic Priorities** and allows us to make changes to services, if required.

Devon in Sight randomly selected 100 service users. These service users had been in contact with the charity for support during the past year.

The Survey

Q1. Would you say that your sight loss has a significant impact on your daily life?

84% of those surveyed said their sight loss has a significant impact on their daily life.

This re-affirms that people need-to-know what services are available for people living with a vision impairment across the County of Devon. We are working actively with all the referring agencies to ensure that everyone knows how to access our services or can be referred directly to our Information, Advice, and Guidance Service.

Devon in Sight helps people **navigate their sight loss journey.**

Q2. Has Devon in Sight's support helped you understand your condition better?

72% of those surveyed said our support had helped them understand their sight condition better.

Our staff are trained to help callers understand their sight loss condition and the impact on their lives.

Devon in Sight only provides generic information and will always ensure that those experiencing changes in their vision are referred for appropriate medical advice from Health Care Professionals.

We review our Information Resources annually and provide staff training to ensure that we are providing the most appropriate information from trusted sources such as the NHS, the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, and voluntary organisations such as the Macular Society.

Q3. Has Devon in Sight helped you feel more confident about living with your sight loss?

84% of those surveyed said we had helped them feel more confident.

We understand that many callers to the Helpline feel that that they are confident. It is only through talking to our clients using our **Client Fact Find** that we establish what they struggle with. By providing coping strategies and signposting to other service providers we know we support them to become even more confident and the survey

reflected this. Devon in Sight recognises that supporting people to feel confident living sight loss, is a large part of the service we provide.

Q4. Did Devon in Sight provide you with information that you had not received from anyone else (e.g., the Eye Clinic or Opticians)?

56% of those surveyed said we provided them with information that they had not received from anyone else.

We are aware that people want to receive information about their sight loss and services available to them at the point of diagnosis but sometimes, for whatever reason, this does not happen.

We are raising awareness with Eye Clinics across Devon to improve access to our service so that we can reach even more people when they are diagnosed and throughout their sight loss journey.

We are committed to providing accurate and impartial **Information, Advice and Guidance**. People can access our comprehensive information resources through our Helpline on 01392 876 666 and through our website at www.devoninsight.org.uk

Our Magazine '**In Vision**' is available in a range of accessible formats - large print, digitally via email and in audio. It can also be accessed on smart phones through the British Wireless for the Blind App and Alexa Smart Speakers through the Talking Newspaper Skill.

We are working on a comprehensive resource called, '**The Devon Sight Loss Guide - Living well after your**

diagnosis' in partnership with NHS England and our partners in the sight loss sector. This will be available in a range of accessible formats in 2023.

The aim of **The Devon Sight Loss Guide** is to give people with sight loss a general overview of a range of topics. It will help them understand more about sight loss and the treatments, support and services that are available to them locally, regionally, and nationally. It will also include information about how they can live as well as possible with sight loss and feel confident about making plans for the future.

Q5. Do you feel our services have helped you to maintain greater independence in your life?

76% of those surveyed said we helped them maintain greater independence in their lives.

We know that small interventions, access to Daily Living Equipment and Accessible Technology can greatly increase independence and provides our clients with choice.

Through our **Independent Living Service**, we work with clients to identify the equipment, support and training that will help them maintain their independence and live life to the full. We undertake this valuable work in partnership with Health and Social Care and the voluntary sector.

Many clients have benefited from meeting our Assistive Technology Partner, **Sight and Sound Technology Ltd.** who are the largest supplier of Independent Living Equipment in the country.

During 2022 we held community based **Assistive Technology Events** in Exeter, Newton Abbot, Torrington,

Honiton, and Paignton. We are currently planning future **Living Well with Sight Loss Events** for 2023 in South Molton, Kingsbridge, Tavistock, Tiverton and Exeter.

Q6. Has our support helped you feel more positive about your life going forward?

84% of those surveyed said we had made a positive contribution to their lives going forward.

Devon in Sight is delighted with this outcome. We strive very hard to ensure that anyone with sight loss lives their life to the fullest, in the way they want. By providing the right type of support our clients make their own informed decisions about their future.

Our **Health and Wellbeing Service** aims to help keep people physically and mentally fit and safe in their own homes.

We can help people make some healthy lifestyle choices such as smoking cessation or arrange a home safety check with the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service. We also provide emotional support and, in some cases, formal counselling.

In September 2022 we evaluated our Formal Counselling Service to see how effective it was. Of the people referred into the service 18% were male and 81% female. Two people did not complete the closed sessions and withdrew.

Of the people who completed the six closed sessions, **100% demonstrated a clinically significant change evidencing recovery or improvement.**

Q7. Has our support helped you feel less isolated or lonely?

60% of those surveyed said that we had helped them feel less isolated.

Tackling isolation and reducing loneliness features throughout all our services. This statistic did not surprise us. We know that many of our clients are older people many of whom live alone. COVID-19 has further impacted on their lives. Many of them continue to fear going out and mixing with other people. This has further impacted feelings of isolation and loneliness.

In response to this we introduced our free **Telephone-based Chit-Chat Calls** every Wednesday that anyone can call into. These provide fun, friendship and really useful information about living life with low vision.

Our **Telephone Speaker Seminars** take place monthly with speakers from across the sight loss sector and beyond. These are structured so that following a formal information sharing presentation; listeners can contribute by asking questions and share their lived experiences of sight loss.

Reducing Isolation and Tackling Loneliness features highly in our Service Strategy for 2023 -2025.

Q8. If you have received support from Devon in Sight over a longer period, has this helped you with your ongoing sight loss journey?

48% of those surveyed said we had helped with support over a longer period.

Devon in Sight has been supporting people for nearly 100 years. We have callers who regularly contact us throughout their sight loss journey at times when their sight changes or they are finding life challenging. The staff team are pleased that so many of our clients re-engage with our services and that we continue to provide support in the long term.

Q9. During the COVID-19 pandemic we set up the Equipment Bursary Fund to help our clients access Daily Living Equipment. Did you know about this equipment before?

12% of those surveyed said that they knew about the Equipment Bursary Fund.

We were surprised that only 12% of the people surveyed knew about the Equipment Bursary Fund.

Devon in Sight attracted Trusts and Grants funding to support those who were unable to access Daily Living Equipment when the pandemic struck. We identified the top low value items of equipment that have the most impact for people who are blind or partially sighted in Devon. Equipment included Task Lighting, Easy to See & Talking Clocks, Liquid Level Indicators, Partially Sighted Badges, Disability Lanyards, USB Memory Stick Players, Devon Access Wallets and Trading Standards 'No Cold Callers' Stickers. This service was restricted by the funding received and we could have reached even more people with more funding.

Between November 2020 and November 2022, we supported **231** clients with over **743** items of equipment to the value of **£7,513**.

Many of the beneficiaries of the Equipment Bursary Scheme made donations to help support others. Devon in Sight is continuing to seek funding to support its clients access daily living equipment when financial penury impacts.

We would very much like to be able to do more but the current economic climate and reduction in donations being received impacts what we are able to achieve.

Q10. Would you have been able to purchase this equipment independently during lockdown?

40% of those surveyed said they would not have been able to purchase Daily Living Equipment during lockdown.

There are many barriers to people who are blind or partially sighted COVID-19 people accessing Daily Living Equipment. including affordability, knowing equipment exists to digital exclusion.

Access was compounded by COVID-19 restrictions and many people with sight loss being digitally excluded. During the COVID-19 pandemic Devon in Sight were no longer able to provide equipment demonstrations at public events or through one-to-one appointments.

40% chose not to answer this question and we have assumed for the purposes of the survey that many of these did not wish to disclose personal information.

Q11. Has the equipment you received helped you maintain your independence?

28% of those surveyed said the equipment had helped maintain their independence.

Our survey spanned those who had either purchased or applied for equipment through the Equipment Bursary Fund.

We know from our interaction with our clients that many did not feel that they were not already independent but agreed the equipment purchased had made improved their lives.

Q12. Has the equipment you received had a positive impact on your life?

28% of those survey said this had made a positive impact on their lives.

Knowing how to use Task Lighting to undertake tasks is vital to ensuring anyone with sight loss maximises the opportunity to continue to be able to read.

Simple pieces of equipment such as a Liquid Level Indicator can massively support someone living alone with a sight impairment make a hot drink safely.

The provision of a USB player was one of the most popular pieces of equipment. This enabled people to access Talking Books, Talking Newspapers and our own In Vision Magazine.

Providing people with Devon Access Wallets has helped some people access support with buses and trains.

Q13. During the COVID-19 pandemic we set up telephone-based Sight Loss Speaker Seminars. Have you ever called into a Sight Loss Speaker Seminar?

20% of those surveyed said they had called into the Sight Loss Speaker Seminars.

Our **Telephone Speaker Seminars** take place monthly with speakers from across the sight loss sector and beyond. These are structured so that following a formal information sharing presentation; listeners can contribute by asking questions and share their lived experiences of sight loss. These Speaker Seminars have been very well received.

Feedback from the survey reported that the themed subject matter had provided information that they had previously been unaware of with their specific sight loss condition.

Q14. If yes, have you found these events informative?

- **20%** said Yes
- **4%** said No
- **76%** did not respond to the question

Q15. If not, what puts you off trying this service?

From those who did not engage with the Sight Loss Speaker Seminars we found that many people forgot or did not know the events were running.

Devon in Sight is looking at ways in which we can remind and inform our clients that these will be taking place. We

are currently looking at options for a text based '**Devon in Sight Telegraph Service**'.

Lack of hearing had also been a barrier to engaging with the call. Many said that they thought that they would be engaging with calls in the future.

Q16. During the COVID-19 pandemic we also set up telephone-based Wednesday Chit-Chat Calls. Have you ever called into a Chit-Chat Call?

4% of those survey said they had engaged with the Chit-Chat Calls.

Our free **Telephone-based Chit-Chat Calls** take place every Wednesday that anyone can call into them via a free phone number. These provide fun, friendship and really useful information about living life with low vision.

We were not surprised that only 4% of the people surveyed said they had engaged with the Chit-Chat calls. These calls have been particularly popular with those clients who are newly diagnosed or needing emotional support.

Like the Sight Loss Speaker Seminars, we feel that a text reminder might help promote the service in the future.

Q17. If yes, have you found these events supportive?

100% of those surveyed (who attended) said these events were supportive.

Devon in Sight will continue to promote the Chit-Chat Calls as we are aware of the difference these calls make to callers' lives.

Whilst the calls are facilitated by Devon in Sight staff, callers provide peer support to one another.

Health and Wellbeing forms a major part of our Strategic Priorities for 2023 - 2025.

Q18. If not, what puts you off trying this service?

From those surveyed we ascertained that many did not know the calls were taking place despite the calls being promoted through our In Vision Magazine and on our website. However, many of those surveyed said they would try to call in the future.

Hearing loss was also a barrier to those who would like to participate. One caller reported that they had tried the call but it was *not for them*.

Devon in Sight continues to develop new ways of engaging with those accessing its services and developing suitable services for everyone with sight loss including families and carers who support people with sight loss.

Q19. Devon in Sight's quarterly magazine (In Vision) is available in a range of accessible formats. Do you receive our In Vision magazine?

64% of those surveyed said they subscribed to In Vision Magazine.

Our Magazine 'In Vision' is available in a range of accessible formats - large print, digitally via email and in audio. It can also be accessed on smart phones through the British Wireless for the Blind App and Alexa Smart Speakers through the Talking Newspaper Skill.

Q20. Do you find our magazine informative?

64% of those surveyed said they found the magazine informative.

We aim to provide information that is relevant and measured that will support clients access information that they might not be aware of.

Q21. Do you find the topics relevant?

76% of those surveyed (who subscribe) said the topics in the In Vision Magazine were relevant.

Devon in Sight strives to provide information that is both of high quality and informative.

We have worked with Devon County Council to ensure that COVID-19 information and Cost of Living advice was available through the magazine in a range of accessible formats.

Q22. Is there anything else that you would like us to include?

- **24%** said Yes (see under additional comments)
- **36%** said No
- **40%** Did not respond to the question

Q23. What puts you off trying the magazine?

Some surveyed said they were not aware of range of accessible formats they could receive the magazine in.

This surprised us as the magazine is offered to all clients on registration and offered in a range of accessible formats.

In Vision Magazine is available in large print, therefore we were surprised that some of our clients commented that they would like the magazine in large print (16pt) as all print and digital materials produced by Devon in Sight are in large print.

Only one person surveyed said that they would have liked to receive the magazine in braille.

Q24. What do you think are the gaps in service provision for people living with sight loss in Devon?

We received many additional comments from those surveyed regarding gaps in service provision in Devon.

Many said they would like to see more **Assistive Technology** promoted in the community.

During 2022 we trialled **Assistive Technology Events** in Exeter, Newton Abbot, Torrington, Honiton and Paignton. These were very well attended. Devon in Sight will continue to provide **Living Well with Sight Loss Events** with our Assistive Technology Partnership around the County of Devon throughout 2023.

We were not surprised that **transport** is a major problem for those with sight loss. The rurality of Devon is a major issue, but the survey also highlighted the lack of public transport locally. An example was that some could only access major towns with a bus service once a day.

The lack of announcements for stops on buses and trains was a significant issue for many. Some of those surveyed struggle to know where they are on their journey and do not know when to activate the stop bell on local buses.

Devon in Sight is working with Devon County Council on their Connecting You Project. This is funded by the Department of Transport - Tackling Loneliness with Transport Fund. Our **Driving Change for People with Sight Loss Project** will include sight loss awareness training for Bus Drivers.

A major source of frustration is **Accessible Information** particularly from Health and Social Care Providers. Many clients complained about Eye Clinic appointment letters being inaccessible.

A major success story for 2022 was our work with the **Integrated Care System for Devon** to make patient appointment letters for eye clinic patients large print as standard and all patient letters have an accessibility declaration in large print.

Q25. Do you feel that Devon is an easy place to live with sight loss?

44% of those surveyed said Devon was not an easy place to live with sight loss.

Devon is the third largest County in the UK; therefore, we are aware of the need for better public transport links, and we will be working closely with Devon County Council to support improvements to services.

So many people told us that street furniture is still a major problem for them. Concern was expressed that the

problem of street furniture has been raised over the last 10 years but is still problematic.

The conditions of pavements and roads were also highlighted as a danger to walking.

Q26. If yes to living in Devon question what makes it so easy?

48% of those surveyed felt that living in Devon was easy.

Those who said this highlighted that they lived in towns and cities and that as such public services were more regular, and that staff were more disability aware.

Q27. If no to the Devon question, what are your main challenges?

In addition to the comments in Q25 we received additional comments.

- The opinions, views and stigma of sighted people impacted greatly on our client's confidence. **Less than 5% of registered blind people are totally without sight.** There was a lack of understanding of partial sight with the public.
- The closure of Bank Branches in many villages and towns has caused major problems with many elderly people not being confident to use technology and many fearful of the security of on-line banking.

Q28. The survey is now concluded. On behalf of the team at Devon in Sight may I thank you for taking part. Is there anything else I can help you with today?

Only 12% of those surveyed had additional questions to ask.

Q29. Verbal permission to use quote given.

52% of those surveyed have given Devon in Sight permission to quote them.

Additional Comments

As part of our survey many people wanted to provide additional comments.

- A number of those surveyed reported that they feel shame about being sight impaired and said, *“People don’t know what to say to me”*.
- We were humbled that so many people reported that Devon in Sight’s services had helped reduce isolation.

Other comments included:

“Devon in Sight is fantastic!”

“I now feel less isolated.”

“Devon in Sight cares.”

“Devon in Sight has been a lifeline for me!”

“Devon in Sight’s support is most important to those living on their own - in my opinion.”

“Devon in Sight is the first organisation I will call if I need help.”

“I would like Devon in Sight to do more campaigning for Devon issues”.

“I found Devon in Sight through our solicitor who asked my father to sign several documents and gave him a Devon in Sight signature guide”.

“I look forward to receiving my copy of the In Vision Magazine”.

- We received some suggestions for articles in our In Vision Magazine these included information for parents with children.

In Summary

The **2022 Client Satisfaction Survey** has provided a valuable insight into the services Devon in Sight offers and provides evidence that our services continue to be well received.

The outcomes gathered reflect the sight loss journey our client's experience. We therefore have not been surprised at the level of clients continuing to re-engage with our services.

Devon in Sight’s services all fall into the following categories, Information Advice and Guidance; Independent Living; Health and Wellbeing (including emotional wellbeing); Influencing Change (Making the world a better place for people who are blind or partially sighted to live).

Below is a guide to which questions fell into these categories.

Information Advice and Guidance

Q2, Q4, Q19, Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23.

Independent Living

Q1, Q3, Q5, Q6, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q27.

Health & Wellbeing (including Emotional Wellbeing)

Q7, Q8, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18.

Key Issues

The key issues for our clients include getting good quality accessible information throughout their sight loss journey particularly at the point of diagnosis, Digital Exclusion, Assistive Technology and Accessible Transport.

The findings of this survey have been incorporated into our Strategic Priorities for 2023 - 2025.

Acknowledgements

The 2022 Devon in Sight Client Satisfaction Survey was conducted by Tessa Barrett (Head of Services), Paul Hannan (Trustee) and Judy Pride (Former Head of Development and Operations). The final report was prepared by Tessa Barrett with input from myself.



Grahame Flynn
Chief Executive Officer
15 December 2022