



Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity



In Vision

The magazine of Devon in Sight

Winter 2022 Issue 33



connecting
you

Tackling Loneliness
with Transport

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Chief Executive Officer's

Welcome



Welcome to the Winter Edition of In Vision Magazine.

The following words have been widely attributed to the French writer and philosopher Albert Camus who was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1957.

Don't walk behind me, I may not lead.

Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow.

Just walk beside me and be my friend.

As we come to the end of another turbulent year with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine and economic crisis, it is important to take time to reflect and plan for the future.

A key piece of work that I undertake at Devon in Sight with the Board of Trustees is to formulate our Strategic Plan. I have included an overview of the plan in this edition of the magazine. This might seem a little 'dry' to the casual reader but underpinning all of our work is our vision to **make Devon a better place for people who are blind or partially sighted to live and work.**

Despite all the challenges that life throws at you please remember **we are here to walk beside you, as your friend.**

On behalf of the team at Devon in Sight may I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year!

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

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 on **01392 876 666**.

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

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

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 **Assistive Technology Partnership** with Sight and Sound Ltd., the UK's leading provider of equipment, software and services for people who are blind and partially sighted.

We offer **Living Well with Sight Loss Events** across the county where you can meet partners in Health & Social care, the voluntary sector and community groups.

Supporting people affected by sight loss in Devon

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 free **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.

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.

For more information about our services please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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



▲ (Left to Right) Jenny Benham, Judy Pride and Tessa Barratt

Judy Pride Retires

We first met Judy when she was the local Area Manager for the Macular Society. We enjoyed some very productive partnership working with her over a number of years. In 2017 Judy joined Devon in Sight as a Trustee.

As we were emerging from the COVID-19 Lock downs Judy joined the Devon in Sight Team staff team as Head of Development and Operations in November 2021. She set up our telephone-based peer support Chit-Chat Calls which have been supportive to many clients.

We always knew that Judy was going to be part of the team for a limited time. We would like to wish her all the very best for her retirement.

Keeping you informed

Devon in Sight Christmas Opening Hours

The Devon in Sight Helpline will be closed from 2pm on Friday 23rd December 2022 and will open again at 10am on Tuesday 3rd January 2023.



Emergency Support

Please remember, you should seek urgent medical help as soon as possible if you:

1. Have a sudden serious change in your vision.
2. Lose all or part of your vision in one eye or both eyes.
3. Have an accident involving your eyes
4. Suddenly start seeing flashing lights or 'floaters' in your vision.

NHS 111 can help if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do. Call 111 by phone, visit the 111.nhs.uk website. If you're Deaf and want to use the phone service, you can use the NHS 111 British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter service by visiting nhs.uk/111. You can also call 18001 111 on a textphone.

NHS 111 is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For more information about these stories please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2022



Every two years Devon in Sight conducts a randomised Customer Satisfaction Survey to ensure that the services we provide remain relevant and of high quality. The results of the survey help inform the charity's Service Development Strategy and allows us to make changes to our services, if required.

Below are some examples of some of the responses you gave.

84% of you said your sight loss has a significant impact on your daily life.

This reaffirms that people need-to-know what services are available across the County. 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 aims to amplify the voice of anyone in Devon living with sight loss

60% of you said that our support had helped to reduce your feelings of isolation.

Emotional Support is paramount to our Health and Wellbeing Service, we continue to fundraise to ensure this vital service reaches more people than ever.

48% of you said that you had engaged with Devon in Sight over a longer period than a year.

This means that you are engaging with our services at all points in your sight loss journey. We recognise that our services cannot always provide you with the support you need so we signpost to other organisations who can. Our ability to refer you to partner organisations forms an important part of our service.

Other Feedback

We were most grateful for all the additional information you provided that fell outside of the scope of the questionnaire but is helping us to shape our services for the future.

Many of you have highlighted the same issues that affect your daily lives including accessing information in accessible formats from Health and Social Care providers, using public transport, accessing Assistive Technology and getting information about sight loss services earlier in your sight loss journey.

A full report of the 2022 Customer Satisfaction Survey can be found on the Devon in Sight website under About Us at...

www.devoninsight.org.uk

Strategic Plan 2022-2025

“A clear vision for Sight Loss Services in Devon!”

Devon in Sight’s CEO Grahame Flynn presented our revised Strategic Plan at the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2022.

He said, “As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and respond to the on-going economic crisis, we have identified seven Strategic Priorities that will take us up to, and include, our Centenary in 2025.

It is imperative that we have a clear vision for sight loss services in Devon, This means including people with sight loss in our decision making, consolidating our service offer, having plans for income generation and build capacity, and driving forward change to make Devon a better place for people affected by sight loss to live and work.”

Priority 1: We will develop a Clear Vision for Sight Loss in Devon to make Devon ‘a Sight Loss Friendly County’.

We will identify gaps in service provision for people affected by sight loss in Devon and pilot initiatives that will make life easier for more of the population living with sight loss.

Devon in Sight is keen to develop information resources and/or services which tackle digital exclusion, accessible information, accessible transport, support for younger people transitioning into adult services, employment, and carers.

We will look at ways that we can raise awareness of sight loss with the public and service providers to make their services more accessible for everyone.

Priority 2: People in the Lead

We will continue to promote a culture of listening and participation at all levels of the charity by encouraging participation from our stakeholders. We will encourage people affected by sight loss to take a more active role in service development by encouraging them to become Voting Members, participate in our Devon Sight Loss Forum and Client Satisfaction Surveys.

We will actively take issues raised by people living with sight loss to decision makers to make services better.

We will celebrate outstanding customer service given to people who are blind or partially sighted by encouraging our clients to nominate individuals and organisations for our Community Champion Awards.

Priority 3: We will consolidate our Sight Loss Service so that it has the most impact for people who are blind or partially sighted.

Our revised Sight Loss Service will focus on the four key areas of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), Independent Living, Health & Wellbeing, and Influencing Change (Making the world a better place for people with sight loss).

Priority 4: Funding our existing services will remain a key priority.

Our ability to sustain our services will depend largely on being able to secure significant multi-year funding in a highly competitive environment.

Strategic Plan 2022-2025

We will continue with our broad fundraising strategy developing Trusts and Grants, Business & Corporate fundraising, and Community Fundraising.

We will ensure that our reserves are used wisely to support the charity's operations and development.

Priority 5: We will develop a Vision for Volunteering within the charity to help build capacity.

Volunteers support our organisation on many levels including Patronage, Trustees, Head Office functions, the Devon Sight Loss Forum, and Community Fundraising.

We will review our Vision for Volunteering in light of the changes to our Service Delivery Model and update our Volunteering Strategy before embarking on a recruitment campaign to give more opportunities for volunteering.

Priority 6: We will contribute to the development of policy and best practice at a local, regional, and national level through effective partnerships with other sight loss charities, healthcare providers and commissioners.

Although our priority is local service delivery, we can achieve wider impact by helping to shape policy and practice at a local, regional, and national level.

We will continue to develop formal strategic partnerships with key Statutory and Voluntary Sector partners strengthening referral pathways and partnership working to achieve this.

We will continue to take an active role in the Devon & Torbay Vision Impairment Network, the South West Associations

“A clear vision for Sight Loss Services in Devon!”

Network (SWAN) and Visionary (The national umbrella organisation for Sight Loss Charities).

We will work closely with One Devon (the new Integrated Care System for Devon). This sees the three local authorities, NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), NHS trusts, general practice, community services, mental health services, and the voluntary and community sector working together to improve the health of all residents, better support for people living with multiple and long-term conditions, prevent illness, tackle variation in care and deliver joined up services while getting maximum impact for every pound spent.

We will lead on the development of a 'Devon Sight Loss Guide' in partnership with our stakeholders for NHS England.

Priority 7: We will optimise the potential of our Centenary in 2025.

Devon in Sight was established in 1925 and has a long and proud history of serving people who are blind and partially sighted. 2025 marks our Centenary. We will ensure that we use the build up to this milestone as an effective tool to build effective partnerships, develop sponsorship opportunities, recruit patrons, and raise awareness of our charity to the general public.

Our Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 can be found on the Devon in Sight website under About Us at...

www.devoninsight.org.uk

The Devon Sight Loss Forum



Despite legislation that aims to protect the rights of people who are blind and partially sighted, the accessibility of products, information and services is still not an area where people with sight loss have equality of experience.

Whether this is being able to independently read instructions on grocery packaging, being able to enjoy favourite TV shows with audio description or getting information from health services in accessible formats, people who are blind and partially sighted experience a significant information and inclusion gap because of their vision impairment.

Transport systems, pavements and built environments are often not designed to be fully inclusive of people with a vision impairment. People with sight loss are unable to drive so, for journeys that cannot be made by walking, rely on public transport, taxis and lifts from friends or relatives.

“Devon in Sight aims to amplify the voice of anyone in Devon affected by sight loss.”

Navigating streets, public spaces and buildings can be a challenge for people with sight loss, particularly if the environment is unfamiliar, changeable or not designed in an accessible way.

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.

Devon in Sight promotes a culture of listening and participation at all levels of the charity. Keeping ‘client voice’ at the heart of our charity will ensure that we continue to do the very best for people affected by sight loss in Devon.

One of the ways that you can help to influence change is through our **Devon Sight Loss Forum**. The Forum plays a significant part in this ambition and brings people with differing sight loss life experiences together, who can speak from a unified perspective.

We seek to make **Devon a Sight Loss Friendly County** and with your help we can evidence the need for change and work with service providers to make life better for everyone affected by sight loss in Devon.

Would you like to help represent people affected by sight loss in Devon? We are recruiting new Sight Loss Forum Members now!

For information about the **Sight Loss Forum** please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

The Devon Sight Loss Guide

Devon in Sight is keen to support people at every stage of their sight loss journey.

As a charity we address the issues faced by local people living with sight loss by providing non-clinical community support which complements that of Optometrists in the High Street, Ophthalmologists in the Hospital Eye Units and Rehabilitation Officers in the Local Authority Sensory Teams. We provide emotional support, information, equipment advice and training to enable people to live full and rewarding lives and to be actively engaged in their local community.

People often describe receiving a diagnosis of sight loss as a traumatic experience. Therefore, Devon in Sight supports people at the earliest possible opportunity to navigate the help that is available from the sector as a whole, and we provide a listening ear as people adjust to the prospect of losing some or all of their sight.

We make sure that people fully understand their diagnosis, that they receive all the support, which is available, and that they can make best use of their residual sight through the correct use of lighting and magnification.

The good news is that even during the pandemic there has been a lot of support available to help people adapt to living with sight loss; if only they know about it and are able to access it.

Therefore, the most important role for us as a charity is to be able to support people as soon as possible after their diagnosis, to help people navigate the support that is available from across the health, social care and voluntary sectors, and for people to know that they are not alone as they deal with the huge emotional impact of sight loss.

Living well after your diagnosis

Grahame Flynn, Devon in Sight's Chief Executive Officer says, "For many years I have recognised the need to bring together an accessible guide for people who are living with sight loss in Devon. Devon in Sight is taking the lead in producing a **Sight Loss Guide** specifically for people living or working in Devon.

If you have been recently told that you have sight loss or have been living with sight loss for many years, this guide will be for you. You may have any type of sight loss, such as Age Related Macular Degeneration, Diabetic retinopathy, Glaucoma, Cataract or total sight loss.

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

How can you help?

We are now working on the first draft of **The Devon Sight Loss Guide** in partnership with **NHS England** and all of our partners in the sight loss sector.

However, we need your help. Please ring the helpline with your answer to the following question.

What is the one thing that you wish you had known sooner in your sight loss journey?

If you would like input into the **Sight Loss Guide** please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Tackling Loneliness with Transport



Millions of people across the nation are struggling with feelings of loneliness, which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At Devon in Sight we know that being blind or partially sighted has a significant impact on people's independence and emotional wellbeing. People with little or no sight, can become tentative and fearful of going out. They can also feel very wary of engaging with public transport.

Devon County Council is one of the twelve organisations across England that have recently been awarded funding through the Department for Transport, "Tackling Loneliness with Transport" fund. The aim of the funding is to understand how transport can play a role in helping people who are feeling lonely. The pilots will be measured and evaluated rigorously, enabling the Department of Transport to understand more about how transport can be used to help reduce loneliness and share findings with organisations within and outside government.

The Devon pilot, **Connecting You**, focusses on two beneficiary groups particularly affected by loneliness. These are Young People aged 16 - 24 and the over 55s. Learning from the pilots will be used to inform how future transport schemes can contribute to reducing loneliness in communities.

Grahame Flynn, CEO of Devon in Sight, said, "There are around 50,000 people living with sight loss living in Devon. And they need to travel to school, work and to the shops just like everyone else. But some people with sight loss can feel very anxious about travelling on public transport and even find it hard to leave the house at all.

We hope our **Driving Change for People with Sight Loss Project** will remove barriers for people who are blind or partially sighted who wish to use public transport and ultimately help reduce loneliness and social isolation. It's so important that all transport staff understand sight loss and the often small adjustments that can make all the difference to blind or partially sighted passengers.

Devon in Sight is committed to making Devon a better place for people affected by sight loss. We would like to hear from people who are living with Sight Loss who would like to support us with this project.

Would you like to be involved in a social gathering where you will be required to use public transport from your home to get there? Your experiences will form part of our research project".

To be involved in the **Connecting You Project** please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

In addition to the main **Connecting You Project** Devon in Sight is supporting Devon County Council to deliver another initiative as part of the wider project.

The **Driver Awareness Training Programme** recognises how critical the role of the bus driver is to a passenger's journey experience. Helping drivers to overcome their own concerns about offering help to passengers with protected characteristics such as disability.



Devon in Sight has partnered with Devon County Council, Living Options Devon and North Devon Voluntary Services to help our smaller & medium sized commercial bus operators with a first-rate training programme.

We know that since the Covid pandemic, there are many passengers who are anxious about using public transport and/or are unfamiliar with new payment methods and associated technology including timetables and travel apps.

We are working collaboratively to assemble a bespoke half day workshop for our local medium to smaller bus companies and their staff including drivers which can be delivered at various venues across Devon.

The training programme aims to raise awareness of a range of disabilities and Devon in Sight will be providing sight loss awareness training. We would like the Bus Companies CEO's,

maintenance staff, office staff and drivers to get involved, to encourage awareness training throughout their organisations and so that knowledge is not lost when staff move on. The programme will involve evaluation and feedback on content.

Staff participating in the training will increase their knowledge and skills and become 'Sight Wise' when offering support and assistance to anyone living with low vision. They'll also be helping our mission to make **Devon a better place for people who are blind or partially sighted to live.**

How can you help?

We would love to hear your stories about good and bad experiences around public transport. How can things be improved? What works really well?

We are also seeking people who are blind or partially sighted who would like to take part in the following awareness sessions in 2023.

Provisional training dates have been scheduled for **Exeter** on 26 January 2023, **Ivybridge** on 9 February 2023, **Newton Abbot** on 2 March 2023, and **Barnstaple** on 23 March 2023.

If you would like to share your stories or take part in the training please give us a call on the helpline.

To be part of the **Connecting You Project** please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Living with Sight Loss Events



▲ Audience at the Honiton Event

This year we have held **Assistive Technology Events in Exeter, Newton Abbot, Torrington, Honiton and Paignton.**

Many clients have benefited from meeting our Assistive Technology Partner, **Sight and Sound Technology Ltd.** who are the largest supplier of low vision equipment in the country. We have also been supported by a number of partners who have helped you with your computers, tablets and mobile phones.



These events have been expanded to include more partners from the sight loss sector including Blind Veterans UK, RNIB Technology Support Volunteers, Talking Newspapers, Sensory Team Rehabilitation Officers, local Blind Clubs, Lions Clubs and the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.

Tony Shrubbs from Sight and Sound Technology gives a presentation at each event to showcase the latest technology available.

One client recently described our community based events as being, "Better than Sight Village!"

Future Living with Sight Loss Events

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

We will write to our registered clients who live in the vicinity, closer to the dates once the venues have been confirmed.

If transport is a barrier to you attending community based events we want to hear from you.



▲ Jenny Gaywood from Blind Veterans UK



▲ Wendy & Peter Eagles from Sid vale Talking Newspaper

For info about our **Living with Sight Loss Events** please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Stop The Drop!

Following one of the driest and hottest periods in the region for over 130 years, the rainfall across the South West has been very welcome. In recent weeks this, alongside South West Water's proactive steps to increase supplies, has helped river and reservoir levels stabilise and slowly start to recover.



However, reservoir levels remain low in the South West and especially low in Cornwall. As the ground is so dry following months of hot weather it will take much longer for moisture to reach groundwater sources as the dry soil will absorb water.

Think of a dry kitchen sponge getting wet for the first time after sitting on the windowsill in the sun. When you initially run it under the tap water will bounce off it and then the sponge will slowly start to absorb it. This is similar to the ground, so we need sustained rainfall to help restore moisture and then to refill our rivers and reservoirs.

That is why South West Water is asking everyone to help **Stop The Drop** and continue to reduce the amount of water they use to help recharge the region's rivers and reservoirs. The temporary restrictions on the use of hosepipes are still in place in Cornwall and parts of North Devon.

The more water we can collectively save now will reduce the risk of further restrictions being required in Spring or Summer 2023.

Laura Flowerdew, South West Water's Chief Customer and Digital Officer, said, "We have been working around the clock to bring new supplies safely online, find and fix more leaks

than ever before and help businesses and customers reduce their water usage. These proactive steps have helped river and reservoir levels stabilise across our region and recover in Devon. However, in Cornwall reservoir levels remain low. That is why we are asking everyone to help Stop The Drop so we can restore reservoir reserves, ensuring we have enough water today and into next year."

As well as offering tips on how to be more water efficient at home, so far this year South West Water has given more than 45,000 water-saving devices to customers ranging from water butts to flow-reducing shower heads. These can be found on their website.

Day-to-day activities around the house can use a lot of water from 50 litres a cycle on a washing machine and up to 9 litres every time you flush the loo, to using 14 litres for a dishwasher cycle or even 30 litres for hand washing dishes.

Small steps can make a big difference

- Cutting shower time by just 1 minute across the South West would save over 16 million litres a day. That's enough water to supply over 100,000 additional people each day
- Simply turning off the tap when brushing your teeth can save approximately 9,000 litres a year. That's the equivalent of 37,000 cups. Or enough water to shower almost 100 times
- A dripping tap wastes around 5,500 litres of water a year.



For information and to order water saving devices visit...

www.southwestwater.co.uk/save-water

South West Water Priority Services



Need a little extra help?

At some stage in our lives we can all benefit from a bit of extra help. This could be due to a physical or learning disability, illness, age or communication requirement, or other reasons.

South West Water's Priority Services are available to anyone living within the region, even if you are not the bill payer. The help available doesn't have to be for you, if you're an account holder or nominated carer you can register on behalf of someone else.



“At some stage in our lives we can all benefit from a bit of extra help.”

Communicating with you in different formats

As part of Priority Services, South West Water can communicate with you in a range of formats.

If you have specific communication requirements, or you find it hard to understand your bill, they can send your bill in large print, Braille or read and explain this to you over the telephone.

You may prefer them to send your bills to a nominated person, for example, a carer, relative or friend, provided they agree. If you have hearing or speech difficulties, you may want to use Text Relay or minicom when contacting them.

A selection of leaflets are also available on request in alternative formats, such as large print or audio CD formats.

To Register for South West Water Priority Services

Call South West Water on **0344 346 1010** to register directly or request a copy of their registration form.

Register online by completing the form at www.southwestwater.co.uk/help/priority-services/

Minicom users can call **0800 169 9965** (Text Relay is also available).

Telephone Speaker Seminars

In November 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic we introduced a programme of free Telephone-based Sight Loss Seminars where people could hear from our partners across the Health and Social Care Sectors and voluntary sector, in the comfort of their own homes.

These events are far from passive and are structured so that following a formal information sharing presentation; listeners can contribute by asking questions and share their lived experiences of sight loss. This service has proved to be so well received that it continues monthly, attracting speakers from across the sight loss sector and beyond.

An archive of previous seminars is accessible through the Devon in Sight Website.

Sight Loss Speaker Seminars take place every second Tuesday of the month at 10.30am on Freephone 0808 169 79 30. Calls from your home telephone or mobile are FREE.

Tuesday 13 December 2022

'Some Christmas Folk tales'

Rarely do we allow ourselves time in our hectic schedules to simply sit and listen to a story. The oral storytelling tradition goes back thousands of years.

Author and academic **Jenny Moon** joins us to share some festive stories.



▲ Jenny Moon

Tuesday 10 January 2023

'Supporting Independence Through Technology'

Sm@rt Technology, provides many technological innovations to help to restore the independence and quality of life of people who are visually impaired.

Our Guest Speakers are **Steve Pearson & Peter Speight**, the CEO & Director of Disability Engagement at Sm@rt Technology Ltd.



▲ Steve Pearson



▲ Peter Speight

Tuesday 14 February 2023

'Blue Peter: Behind the Badge'

Our Guest Speaker is **Alex Leger** a Television Producer, Director and Cameraman. For 36 years Alex worked on the classic BBC Television programme 'Blue Peter' as the show's most prolific film maker.

We hope to be joined by veteran Blue Peter presenter **Peter Purves** (Subject to work commitments).



▲ Alex Leger

To access Telephone Sight Loss Speaker Seminars ring...

Tel: 0808 169 79 30

Calls from your home telephone or mobile are **FREE**

Telephone Chit-Chat Calls

During the COVID-19 pandemic we developed some new free telephone-based support services to help prevent the spread of the virus and be accessible for everyone across the county.

We provide these free and accessible services through 'together.ly' a telehealth platform that helps organisations who support older or disabled people to facilitate social interaction, create communities and reduce loneliness.

This is a cost effective, safe and sustainable way Devon in Sight to connect people across Devon by phone and measure the impact. Being able to access these free and accessible services from the comfort of our client's own homes has proved very popular.

In January 2022 we established our weekly **Telephone Chit-Chat Call Service**. These calls provide a welcoming and compassionate place where callers can support one another and build confidence. Facilitated by a member of Devon in Sight staff they provide a safe space for callers to air thoughts, share experiences and ask questions.

The first call attracted 9 participants. However, over the months, we have welcomed many new members and now have around 24 clients who call in regularly.



“Chit-Chat Calls are helpful, informative, and encouraging!”

The callers have got to know each other well and have shared in the triumphs and challenges each has experienced. They have gained in confidence and from being scared to go out beyond their own garden, are now planning 'adventures' together or trying out new technology that will help them to live life more easily.

These regular calls have become an important part of the services Devon in Sight offers and of our client's weekly routines. This is not a closed group and all are welcome to join. You can just listen to the conversation or become more involved when you feel ready to do so.

One participant recently said, “I want to let you know how valuable the Wednesday phone call is. To know I'm not alone, and that the group has the same experiences as me has been really helpful, informative, and encouraging!”

To access the calls simply dial the telephone number below at 10.30am every Wednesday.

Christmas and New Year Closure

We will not be holding a Telephone Chit-Chat Call on Wednesday 28th December 2022. The first call for 2023 will be held on Wednesday 4th January.

To access Telephone Chit-Chat Calls please ring...

Tel: 0808 169 79 30

Calls from your home telephone or mobile are **FREE**

Flu & COVID-19 Vaccinations



Winter Flu

BBC News recently reported that the Winter Flu Season has started early this year and December will see the start of the first full winter with no coronavirus related restrictions since 2019.

During the coronavirus pandemic the United Kingdom saw very little flu due to lockdowns, which meant people mixed far less. However, as a result of this, natural immunity is thought to have declined across the population, prompting the government to push for all those eligible to take up the flu vaccine.

Winter 2017 saw a particularly severe strain of flu which had a large impact on older age groups. The team at Devon in Sight would therefore urge all of you who are eligible for a Flu Vaccination to get vaccinated.

Getting vaccinated is still the best way to protect yourself and others from Winter Flu and COVID-19

COVID-19

The NHS reports that Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms are similar to colds and flu. They include a high temperature, a cough and a loss or change to your smell or taste.

You can help stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) by getting vaccinated and taking care when meeting other people, such as meeting them outside.

Should you contract coronavirus (COVID-19), you can ease mild symptoms by resting, drinking plenty of fluids and taking painkillers.

Get advice from NHS 111 or a GP if:

You're feeling gradually more unwell or more breathless, you have difficulty breathing when you stand up or move around, you feel very weak, achy or tired, you're shaking or shivering, you've lost your appetite, you're unable to care for yourself – for example, tasks like washing and dressing or making food are too difficult, you still feel unwell after 4 weeks – this may be long COVID.

Go to 111.nhs.uk, call 111 or call your GP surgery.

Go to A&E immediately or call 999 if:

You're so breathless that you're unable to say short sentences when resting, your breathing has got suddenly worse, you cough up blood, you feel cold and sweaty, with pale or blotchy skin, you have a rash that looks like small bruises or bleeding under the skin and does not fade when you roll a glass over it, you collapse or faint, you feel agitated, confused or very drowsy, you've stopped peeing or are peeing much less than usual.

Message in a Bottle Scheme

Lions Club of Paignton are supporting us with this great scheme.

What is it?

It is a simple idea designed to encourage people to keep their basic personal and medical details on a standard form and in a common location - the fridge!

What does it do?

It saves the Emergency Services valuable time if they need to enter a property in an emergency.

Not only does it help to identify who you are, it also identifies if you have special medication or allergies. It is not only a potential lifesaver, but also it provides peace of mind to you, your friends and family by knowing that prompt medical treatment is provided and that the next of kin and emergency contacts are notified.

Who is it for?

Anyone. Whilst it is focused on the more vulnerable people in a community, anyone can have an accident in the home, so this scheme can benefit anyone.

Who knows about it?

All Emergency Services are aware of the **Message in a Bottle Scheme**, by displaying the green stickers in your home, the emergency services will find the bottle in the fridge and use the forms inside to ensure you are treated quickly which can save time and save lives.



Lions Club of Paignton supporting people who are blind or partially sighted across Devon

What is in the bottle?

A form you fill in with your name, medicines, allergies & relatives contact details. And two green stickers.

What do I have to do?

Fill in the form, put it in the bottle. Put the bottle in your fridge. Put one green sticker on your fridge door and the other green sticker on the INSIDE of your house door

Where can I get one?

Devon in Sight have secured a supply of Message in a Bottle Packs from our friends at the **Lions Club of Paignton**.

These are available under our Equipment Bursary Fund for FREE. We can send these out to people with a visual impairment under the Articles for The Blind Postal Service.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to John Atyeo (President), and Malcolm & Jan Stone of **Lions Club of Paignton** for supporting us to make the Message in a Bottle Scheme available to people who are blind or partially sighted across Devon.



To obtain your FREE Message in Bottle please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Community Fundraising

Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon



Co-op Local Community Fund

Devon in Sight was chosen as one of the Co-op Local Community Fund causes for 2021 to 2022.

The Community Fund supports projects across the UK that Co-op members care about. Every time their members buy selected Co-op branded products and services, they give local causes a helping hand. Co-op members have raised £117 million for local communities nationally in the last 12 months.

On Saturday 5th November, Grahame Flynn visited the Co-op Cowick Street Branch, Exeter. He was pleased to receive a donation of £2,411.29 towards our work.

We'd like to say a big thank you to all those who have chosen to support us through the Co-op Local Community Fund.



South West Water

We were delighted to welcome Olivia Crisp, a Community Outreach Officer from South West Water to our offices on Monday 7 November 2022 where we received a donation of **£380** to support our Telephone Chit-Chat Call Service. We are now looking at new and innovative ways that we can work more closely with South West Water to support you. Olivia has supported us with our Independent Living Service feature about water conservation and the South West Water Priority Services.

For more information about Fundraising 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 organisation 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.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Lil Minns would like to nominate two members of staff from the Citizens Advice Bureaus in Tiverton and Barnstaple.

Lil says, "I would like to nominate the Citizens Advice Bureau in Tiverton for their help & support through a very difficult few months.

I would particularly like to mention Emily from 'Access To Justice' and Coleen based at the Barnstaple office for her help and support filling in various benefit forms.

These two ladies have had a huge impact on my ability to cope with some major ongoing problems I have."



The Body Shop, Exeter

Jane Arklay would like to nominate the entire team at The Body Shop in Exeter to receive a Community Champion Certificate for outstanding customer service.

Jane said, "Their interactions with me are very natural, they treat me as if I am any other customer and I value that.

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

They are not only helpful but they quickly understood the need for me to purchase eye shadow that only had a single colour per palette. I did not need to explain that with sight loss multiple colours was simply impossible.

It is so nice to be spoken to and not be patronized and because of this I simply cannot name anyone person to receive this award as they are all so very good."

Devon in Sight will send a Community Champion Certificate for the whole branch.



Santander Bank

Sylvia Jenkins would like to nominate the Newton Abbot branch of Santander Bank.

Sylvia said, "Whenever I attend the bank to make a withdrawal, the team instantly asks if I require any help. I like to have smaller bank note denominations to use on a daily basis. The team always ensures that I leave Santander with exactly what I need. Nothing is too much trouble. Their help is very valuable to me."



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

Seeing in the New Year



A New Year's resolution is a tradition, most common in the Western World, in which a person resolves to continue good practices, change an undesired trait or behaviour, accomplish a personal goal, or otherwise improve their behaviour at the beginning of a calendar year.

Devon in Sight's CEO Grahame Flynn launched our first **Seeing in the New Year Campaign** in December 2013. The premise is simple. Seeing in the New Year promotes the importance of regular eye tests for everyone.

Eye tests are vital because you may not feel any pain or discomfort when something is wrong with your eyes. A visit to your optician for an examination is an important health check that may detect initial signs of eye conditions before you're aware of any symptoms. It is important to remember that many eye conditions can be treated if found early.

Make having an eye test one of your New Year resolutions...it could save your sight!

Having an eye test won't just tell you if you need new glasses or a change of prescription - it's an important eye health check. An eye test can help identify other health conditions such as high cholesterol, diabetes, high blood pressure and increased risk of stroke.

This December we are launching our 10th Annual 'Seeing in the New Year Campaign' which is being supported by M&S Opticians. Please use this voucher yourself or give it to a friend, family or neighbour.

YOUR FREE VOUCHER

M&S
OPTICIANS

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 May 2023.

Supporting us

How you can help us



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

For nearly 100 years, generations of people have helped Devon in Sight to provide help and support to people who are blind or partially sighted in Devon.

“Thank you for all the help that you have given me. We would be completely isolated if we didn’t have Devon in Sight and their staff. Devon in Sight has opened up a whole new world for me.”

June - Client from Chudleigh

We know that times are hard for everyone, but if you are able to support us with a small donation, it means we can continue this vital work.

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

There are a number of 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 with a monthly direct debit.

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.

To support Devon in Sight with a donation please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

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,
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