

In Vision

The magazine of Devon in Sight

Autumn 2023 Issue 36



**Book
Now!**

The Devon Sight Loss Conference 2023
“Making Devon a Sight Loss Friendly County”

Contents

	Page
Chief Executive's Welcome	3
News Features	4 - 11
Independent Living Features	12 - 17
Introducing the Sensory Team	18 - 21
Devon Sight Loss Conference	22 - 27
Community Champion Awards	28 - 29
Sight Loss Speaker Seminars	30 - 31
Fire Home Safety Visits	32 - 33
Chit-Chat Calls	34 - 35
Connecting You Update	36 - 37
National Accreditation	38 - 39
Community Fundraising	40
Friends of Devon in Sight	41
An Overview of Our Services	42 - 43
Contact us	Back Cover

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Chief Executive Officer's

Welcome

Since joining Devon in Sight ten years ago I have been driving the charity forward, to ensure that it remains relevant in a fast changing world.

Despite our small size we are recognised nationally for our innovative work in the field of sight loss. However, we can always do better.

We have recently been scrutinised in great detail by two bodies that independently evaluate services nationally. These third party assurances ensure that our stakeholders are receiving services of the highest possible standard. A number of you have been involved in this process and I would like to thank those staff, clients, partner agencies and Trustees who have participated. We look forward to hearing if we have 'passed the test'. You can find out more in the pages of this magazine. Fingers crossed!

One of Devon in Sight's Strategic Priorities is to develop a clear vision for sight loss in Devon with the aim of making Devon 'a Sight Loss Friendly County'. Whilst we will always support individuals, their families and carers, we also advocate for everyone living or working in Devon with sight loss. This is a bold ambition.

Devon in Sight will be hosting our first **Devon Sight Loss Conference** on Friday 20th October in central Exeter, based on this theme. This event will include some leading speakers both nationally and locally, feature a **Living Well with Sight Loss Exhibition** and our first face-to-face **Annual General Meeting** since the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We look forward to welcoming you!



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

Louise Millington joins the Team



▲ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ New Staff Member Louise Millington

In July we were delighted to welcome Louise Millington to the Devon in Sight Team as our new Sight Loss Adviser.

Louise has been working with visually impaired students in secondary mainstream education for over 17 years. She has overseen their education, developed their independence and confidence, supported their mental health and wellbeing, and helped educate peers and staff around sight loss in the process.

After spending so much time in the education system Louise was looking for a new challenge and spent six months as a call taker for Devon and Cornwall Police. This was a very challenging and enjoyable role but Louise felt that the level of help she could invest was too small and began to look for a new challenge that would merge these two careers together.

“We’re thrilled to have Louise on the team and I’m sure you will all make her very welcome”

Louise said, “I am delighted to have joined the Devon in Sight team. I am joining the charity at an exciting time as it is looking to develop services for young people transitioning into adult services”.

Devon in Sight’s CEO Grahame Flynn said, “We have been trying to recruit a new Sight Loss Adviser since December last year. Whilst we have welcomed a number of temporary agency staff we really needed an employee with the skills required to support our client group to the standard that you have come to expect. Even before she started her employment with Devon in Sight, Louise joined us voluntarily at our Tavistock Living Well with Sight Loss Event. What a very welcome additional pair of hands she was.

As well as registering new clients and staffing the helpline Louise has been updating our database and checking that we have accurate and up-to-date information. The statistics that we generate from the database help us evidence the work that we undertake with people living with little or no sight across Devon for funders.

With her extensive experience, Louise will take an active part in shaping our **Young Person’s Pilot Project** to help youngsters with sight loss transitioning into Adult Services.

We’re thrilled to have Louise on the team and I’m sure you will all make her very welcome.”

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Rail Minister: On the Wrong Track!



▲ Photo Credit: nevenmn (iStock)

Railway Station Ticket Office Closures

Following the announcement from the Government that they were looking to close 974 Ticket Offices, our clients immediately started to make contact with us. There was great concern about the impact this would have on their independence and ultimately mental health.

Consequently, our Head of Services Tessa Barrett launched a PR campaign aimed at all of our stakeholders, encouraging them to voice their concerns to Transport Focus and their local Members of Parliament. We engaged with 1500 clients, stakeholders and Counsellors and received an encouraging response.

“I have written to the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Rail Minister, Huw Merriman on behalf of all people living with little or no sight in Devon, to express our concerns.”

In July, local MP Richard Foord (Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for Tiverton & Honiton) raised Devon in Sight’s concerns in Parliament with Mark Harper, Secretary of State for Transport during Transport Minister’s Questions. He later said, “The Transport Secretary didn’t seem to understand why people with sight loss might be opposed to the closure of ticket offices.” Richard also spoke about us on BBC Radio 4’s ‘Any Questions?’ hosted by Alex Forsyth.

Devon in Sight’s CEO Grahame Flynn said, “It is somewhat ironic that news of the proposed closures came as we were concluding a pilot project funded by the Department of Transport to encourage people to use Public and Community Transport to tackle loneliness!

I was pleased to be interviewed by BBC Radio Devon for their coverage of the petition being delivered to No 10 on 19 July 2023. Subsequently, we were encouraged to learn that due to pressure from the public, the consultation was extended until the 1st September 2023.

I have written to the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Secretary of State for Transport Mark Harper and Rail Minister, Huw Merriman on behalf of all the people living with little or no sight in Devon, to express our concerns. We believe these proposals will represent a deterioration in the quality of service received by the blind and partially sighted and would violate both the Equality Act (2010) and the Secretary of State for Transport’s Ticketing and Settlement Agreement guidance.

We would like to thank everyone who engaged with the campaign and we will keep you informed of any future developments.

Beware of Scammers!



▲ Photo Credit: Daisy-Daisy (iStock)

Tessa Barrett, Devon in Sight's Head of Services, reports:

Many of you will be aware of the BBC TV programme "Scam Interceptors".

Presenters Rav Wilding and Jim Browning together with a team of ethical hacker's endeavour to intercept cyber criminals in the act of scamming, helping to prevent vulnerable people becoming victims.

The BBC have produced and published on their website much information to raise awareness. They have also printed Top Tips on how to prevent a hack.

Scams come in many guises and not just computer hacking!

"We are aware that being the victim of a scam causes distress and can impact on your mental health and wellbeing."

We are aware of calls supposedly from family members on holiday purporting the family being involved in an accident or they have lost a passport. This then comes with a request for money to be paid into a bank account to help the family out.

Devon in Sight would suggest that if you have a family member going away, you agree a password with them in advance. Then if you are called you can ask the caller for the password if they are unable to provide it, it is highly likely they are not representing your family.

Put the phone down and call your family for yourself.

What is an ethical hacker?

An ethical hacker is a cyber expert who is able to use their skills to expose serious criminality. Rav Wilding works closely with ethical hacker Jim Browning, who was able infiltrate the scammers computers to enable them to literally see what the scammers could see.

The BBC have produced the following information on their website:

How to prevent a computer or telephone hack

- Be wary of unsolicited emails and text messages claiming to be from legitimate companies, asking for you to click a link and provide personal information.

This is a very popular route for scammers and often the start of elaborate fraud attempts. STOP if you receive one of these and check to see if it is genuine.

Beware of Scammers!

If you have any doubt take a contact name and telephone number and consult a family member or friend.

- **Check an email sender's address at the top of the screen by hovering your cursor over it.** This is often a quick way to see if it is or isn't the genuine company they are claiming to be. A quick search on the internet will show you the company's genuine address and this will differ from what a scammer may send you.
- **Read the message carefully.** If it's genuine it will address you personally by name. If it says dear "user", "Sir/Madam etc. it is almost certainly not real and may be a scam.
- **Poor spelling and grammar** is also another give-away that its likely a fake email or text. If in doubt, do your own research to find the name of the company they claim to be from and contact them. DON'T use contact details on any text or emails they send you out of the blue.
- **Don't be fooled into paying a small amount of money via an unsolicited email or text message for apparent reasons such as a missed delivery.** This is a common tactic used by scammers, who then retain all your banking and personal information for this payment to attempt more high value fraud attempts on you in the weeks to come via cold calling.
- **Be very aware of cold callers claiming to be from big companies such as internet providers or your satellite TV company.** These often stem from your previously unwittingly passing them your personal details via web links on fraudulent texts or emails you may have received. They may say you are due a refund or you need to cancel a pricey subscription you didn't know you had. This is a scam tactic widely used.

"We are aware that being the victim of a scam causes distress and can impact on your mental health and wellbeing."

If in any doubt simply say, "I am aware of numerous scams like this. I will be reporting you, don't contact me again. Scammers work in call centres and will mark calls individually if its worth calling back, at a later date. Letting them know you are on to them will mean they are more likely to not try you again.

The Impact of being Scammed

We are aware that being the victim of a scam causes distress and can impact on your mental health and wellbeing. It is often vulnerable people who are victims of scamming and in some cases victims have lost their life savings.

If you have been the victim of a scam act quickly particularly if it involves a transaction through your bank.

Devon in Sight would like to credit the BBC and the RNIB with the information contained in this article.

Please remember if you want reduce the amount of unwanted sales and marketing calls you receive you can register with **The Telephone Preference Service (TPS)**. This is the UK's only official 'Do Not Call' register for landlines and Mobile numbers. It allows people and businesses to opt out of unsolicited live sales and marketing calls. It's free and quick to register a telephone number.

Source: BBC

If you would like to register with The Telephone Preference Service (TPS) please ring their Helpline:

Tel: 0345 070 0707

Assistive Technology Partnership



▲ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ Stefanie Davies at Tiverton

We were delighted to welcome Stefanie Davies, Head of Sales and Marketing from Sight and Sound Technology to our Tiverton Living Well with Sight Loss Event. Stefanie was filling in for our regular representative Tony Shrubbs who was on holiday.

Stefanie said, “It was great to meet the team at Devon in Sight, and to be able to give advice, support, and demonstrations of some of the latest technology designed for those encountering sight loss. I always try to listen to what visitors are struggling with, whether it’s reading-related, using a mobile phone or general guidance.

A number of visitors were keen to try out our Kapsys phones, designed with speech and big buttons, and customisable screens – we have both a smartphone and “basic” model.

Some visitors enjoyed trying out our different-sized hand-held electronic magnifiers, such as the Ruby 7 and Ruby 10. Designed for those experiencing low vision, both magnifiers enabled users to magnify from 2x to 24x, as well as being able to adjust the high-contrast colour viewing modes, a feature most useful when they were looking at the local newspaper or viewing a document.

One gentleman was delighted to learn about the OrCam READ Smart, he already had a big CCTV magnification device at home, but wanted something portable that could read text when he was out and about. I told him how the OrCam READ Smart can take a full-page capture of a document, so he could enjoy his morning paper, or favourite book but also use it to read any printed or digital text.

Whilst I was demonstrating the OrCam, he was astounded by the Smart Reading feature, which enabled him to request text of interest! I’d given him the menu from where I’d stayed the night before, and after capturing the page on the OrCam, he proceeded to ask it the cost of the breakfast – to which it told him £9.99 for full English! He was delighted he didn’t need to listen to lines of text, and how easy it was to use the device.”

These examples of assistive technology are just a few of the many products, both hardware and software, our partners Sight and Sound can demonstrate. Please get in touch with us to book-in for a consultation and also to request a home demonstration.



Sight and Sound will be exhibiting at The Devon Sight Loss Conference in October.

To access our **Assistive Technology Partnership** ring:

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Have you Registered your Sight Loss?



▲ Photo Credit: Andres (iStock)

In a recent Times on Sunday article, Ethan Ennals, writes about raising awareness of the importance of a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) and the benefits of Registering your sight loss with your local authority.

It is well known that many people who are blind and partially sighted know nothing about CVI's or how to become registered.

“Registration” simply means being on your local Social Service’s register of people who are either severely sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted). It’s voluntary and is completely confidential so your details won’t be shared.

Research by RNIB tells us that in the Devon Integrated Care System (ICS) area there are 6,020 people registered as blind or

“It is well known that many people who are blind and partially sighted know nothing about CVI's or how to become registered.”

partially sighted. Roughly half are registered as blind and half as partially sighted.

What are the advantages of registering?

There are some very significant advantages to getting registered. Firstly, it can make life more affordable by enabling you to claim a wide range of concessions.

These include:

- Help with NHS costs
- A half-price TV Licence
- Help with your Council Tax bill and tax allowances
- Leisure discounts
- Free public transport
- Disabled Blue Badge
- Some home adaptations

Which concessions you are entitled to depends on whether you are registered as severely sight impaired (SSI) or sight impaired (SI). Although being registered does not automatically entitle you to any particular welfare benefits, it does often make it easier for you to claim some of them. Your registration confirms your sight loss and helps as evidence in your claim.

Your local council will give you a registration card that proves your registration status. Having this can help to prove your entitlement to concessions, including when you are visiting places of interest.

The Benefits of Registration

“There are some very significant advantages to getting registered.”

How do you get registered?

Step 1: Getting a referral to an Eye Specialist

If you are having problems with your sight, visit a High Street Optician (an Optometrist) or your GP for an initial check-up. If necessary, they will then refer you to an eye clinic for an appointment. At your appointment in the eye clinic, an eye specialist (called an ophthalmologist) will examine the health of your eyes and your eyesight.

Step 2: The Ophthalmologist decides if you can be certified.

Your eye specialist will measure how good you are at seeing detail at a distance (your visual acuity) and how much you can see from the side of your eye when you are looking straight ahead (your field of vision).

If your ophthalmologist judges that you can be certified, they will complete an official certificate with the results of your eye examination, as well as information about your circumstances. In England this certificate is called the **Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI)**.

Step 3: Registration with your local social services

After receiving a copy of your certificate, your local social services **Sensory Team** should contact you to ask if you wish to be included on the register of blind and partially sighted people.

If you say “yes” then you can become registered.

What happens after you are registered?

The Sensory Team should contact you to discuss carrying out a needs assessment. The aim of this assessment is for the Sensory Team to find out what help and advice you need to remain independent. For example, this could include help with everyday tasks such as cleaning and cooking, keeping in touch with friends and family, or with transport.

If The Sensory Team don't contact you to discuss your needs assessment, you can contact us at Devon in Sight and we can make a referral into the Sensory Team for you.

More Information

Devon in Sight has a **Registration Fact Sheet** including a comprehensive list of the current entitlements. If you would like a copy of this please give us a call.

To receive a copy of our **Registration Fact Sheet** ring:

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Introducing the Sensory Team



▲ Photo Credit: Monkey Business Images (iStock)

At Devon in Sight we have strong links with many partners in Health and Social Care and the Third Sector who can help you adapt to life with little or no sight.

In this feature we would like to remind you of the specialist support that you can receive from Rehabilitation Officers in Devon's Sensory Teams.

What is a ROVI?

A ROVI (Rehabilitation Officer Visual Impairment) is trained and qualified to work with people who have significant visual impairment.

ROVIs can carry out assessments to discuss difficulties or needs and identify solutions to help you to stay at home and be as independent as possible. These assessments take place over the telephone or where appropriate in your home.

Rehabilitation Officers can help you remain or become more independent

ROVIs can give advice on:

- leisure activities like hobbies, games and sports
- daily tasks such as cooking, making hot drinks, weighing and measuring
- overcoming the problem of disorientation which can occur with poor sight
- specialist aids and equipment, such as adapted phones.

ROVIs can help you learn new skills to offset the effects of visual impairment.

ROVIs can teach you to:

- follow a sighted guide, or use a mobility aid such as a white cane
- use a variety of communication skills such as Braille and specialised computer software
- learn new skills to be able to carry out everyday tasks
- make the best use of any remaining sight you may have by using magnification, correct lighting and colour contrast.

ROVIs can also:

- assess your eligibility for specialist aids and equipment
- adapt household equipment such as cookers and washing machines with tactile markings and advise on using them safely

Introducing the Sensory Team

- complete your registration if an ophthalmologist has confirmed that you have a visual condition which qualifies as sight impaired or severely sight impaired
- work with colleagues or voluntary organisations
- provide informal counselling, guidance and support.

ROVIs can signpost to:

- employment and training
- information on benefits
- housing-related services
- organisations providing support and equipment
- local and national resources.

How can I be referred into the Sensory Team?

To access the service you can be referred by one of the following:

- Self-refer
- Family
- Carers
- Hospital Sensory Services
- Other professionals

Rehabilitation Officers can help you remain or become more independent

Devon Sensory Team

Adult Social Care on 0345 1551 007



Torbay Sensory Team

01803 219 800



Torbay Sensory Resource Centre

If you want to discuss your needs and the help available to you face to face, drop into the Sensory Resource Centre at Jasmyn House in Paignton and speak to one of their specialist team members. They have a range of aids and equipment that they can demonstrate that may assist with daily living.

Jasmyn House, 1 Midvale Road, Paignton TQ4 5BD

Tel: 01803 551 846 Mobile: 07876 398 194

Opening hours:

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (10am – 4pm)

Sources: The Times on Sunday, RNIB Data Tool, Devon County Council, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust and Devon in Sight.

For more information about the Sensory Team ring:

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Devon Sight Loss Conference 2023

The theme for the conference is 'Making Devon a Sight Loss Friendly County.'



▲ Mercure Exeter Rougemont Hotel

▲ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

Devon in Sight is proud to be hosting the Devon Sight Loss Conference on Friday 20th October 2023 at the Mercure Exeter Rougemont Hotel in central Exeter.

The theme for the conference is 'Making Devon a Sight Loss Friendly County'. This event will include Speakers from across the sight loss sector, a Living Well with Sight Loss Exhibition and incorporate Devon in Sight's 98th Annual General Meeting.

Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors we have been able to make tickets only £10 per person. This includes access to the conference, Living Well With Sight Loss Exhibition, our AGM, and includes ongoing refreshments and a light lunch. **Everyone is welcome to attend the event but bookings must be made in advance.**

The Devon Sight Loss Conference 2023 "Making Devon a Sight Loss Friendly County"

Conference Programme

Guest Speakers:



▲ Prof. Stanga

An Introduction to Clinical Research & Trials with Professor Paulo E. Stanga.

Professor Stanga is a leading expert in his field. One of the most qualified surgeons in vitreoretinal surgery and disease, Director of Retina, and Consultant Ophthalmologist at the Retina Clinic London, the UK's first and only private self-contained dedicated retina clinic.



▲ Glenn Tookey

The Latest Innovations around Assistive Technology with Glenn Tookey.

Glenn Tookey is the Chief Executive Officer of Sight and Sound Technology, the oldest and largest company supplying technology and supporting people who are blind or partially sighted in the UK and Ireland.

Devon Sight Loss Conference



▲ Alyson Badnell

Sight Loss Rehabilitation with Alyson Badnell (Sensory Team Manager Visual Impairment, Devon County Council).

The Rehabilitation Officers Visual Impairment (ROVIs) can advise about the certificate of visual impairment (CVI) and registering as sight impaired or severely sight impaired. They can help you learn new skills to continue with everyday tasks, from how to move around with greater safety and more confidence, to cooking.



▲ Karen Rose

Connecting You: Driving Change for People with Disabilities in Devon with Karen Rose (Community Transport Adviser, Transport Co-ordination Service Devon County Council).

Karen Rose leads Devon County Council's Connecting You Project working with Devon in Sight to create an innovative Disability Awareness Training Programme for Public and Community Bus Drivers.



The theme for the conference is 'Making Devon a Sight Loss Friendly County.'

Devon in Sight's 98th Annual General Meeting

Our Chair **Dr Adrian Jacobs** invites you to attend our first face-to-face Annual General Meeting since the COVID-19 pandemic. Our **CEO Grahame Flynn** will give an overview of progress being made against Devon in Sight's Strategic Priorities, highlight achievements over the last financial year and our plans for the future. Our Treasurer **Steve Muncer** will give an overview of our finances and statutory obligations.

Everyone is welcome to join the Annual General Meeting but in order to vote on a resolution or to submit a question you must be a Registered Voting Member.

If you would like to become a Voting Member you will need to register in advance of the event. If you are unable to attend the Conference, Voting Members will still be able to vote by Proxy.

Living Well with Sight Loss Exhibition

Our Assistive Technology Partner, **Sight and Sound Technology Ltd.** will be providing a comprehensive Assistive Technology Stand where you can get a taster of the latest technological innovations. We have invited representatives from the sight loss sector and many others to join our Living Well with Sight Loss Exhibition.

Exhibitors include: Blind Veterans UK, Devon Sensory Team (Rehabilitation Team), The Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, Devon County Council Transport Co-ordination Service, Mid Devon Mobility, Community VI Groups and Talking Newspapers and Magazines.

If you would like to be an exhibitor please contact us now!

Devon Sight Loss Conference

The theme for the conference is 'Making Devon a Sight Loss Friendly County'

Clinical Trials & Research Consultation Space

The **Retina Clinic London** will be providing a Consultation Space where you will have to opportunity to speak to a member of the Clinical Trials Team to find out more about what trials are coming up. *

**Please note Devon in Sight does not endorse or recommend any product or service and the decision to take part in any research or clinic trial should be taken in consultation with your eye consultant or GP.*

Guide Dogs

Fresh drinking water will be available at the venue and the 'spending area' is situated in Northernhay Gardens opposite the hotel and directly next to Central Railway Station.

Tickets & Registration

Tickets for people who are blind or partially sighted and their family and carers are only £10 per person and must be purchased in advance. A ticket will be required for all attendees whether visually impaired or not. Your ticket will entitle you to attend the event and includes ongoing refreshments and a light lunch. You will need to advise us of any special dietary requirements or allergies. **There will only be a maximum of 200 places at the conference and the closing date for bookings is Friday 29th September 2023.**

How to purchase your tickets:

Purchase your ticket over the Telephone

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

Purchase your ticket 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.**

Please include your name and address, the names of all those attending, and dietary requirements with your cheque.

Purchase your tickets by Bank Transfer

You can purchase tickets through Online Banking to:

'Devon County Association for the Blind'

Sort Code: 30-80-37

Account Number: 62326768

Please mark your payment: 'Surname AGM'

Your ticket(s) will be sent to you in advance of the Conference.

Please remember, you will need your ticket to access the conference and exhibition, to enter the prize draw and to claim your lunch.

We would like to thank, and Devon County Council, Retina Clinic London, Sight and Sound Technology Limited and for sponsoring this event.



For Devon Sight Loss Conference Bookings please ring:

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Community Champion Awards

In a world where people are quick to complain, 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.

Shine Hair and Beauty in Exeter

Devon in Sight client Jane Arklay is nominating Bo Marks who is a hair stylist with 'Shine Hair and Beauty' in Whipton Village Road, Exeter for a Community Champion Award.

Jane says, "From the time I walk in the door Bo shows me to my seat, there is never any fuss and she makes me feel like any other customer. I don't feel blind. I trust Bo and I can relax as I know she is always doing what is right and good with my hair. I leave with a big happy face."

Jane has had Bo looking after her hair now for some time and says, "I can relax knowing Bo will be looking after me."

It is so good to hear of such exemplary support for people with sight impairment. We send our congratulations to Bo at Shine Hair and Beauty on this well-deserved award.



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

Iceland Supermarket, Exmouth

David Gailey speaks very highly of Iceland Supermarket in Exmouth.

He would like you all to know about the personal service he receives when shopping.

David says, "When I arrive at the store and ring a bell, either Gavin Baker or Helen Andrews comes to help me do my shopping.

They put all my purchases through the till and load my bags for me and deliver them to my home. They are so polite, helpful and kind that I felt I wanted to nominate them for a Community Award they really do deserve it."

We know that when you have a vision impairment, shopping can sometimes be a real chore so to find a supermarket where customer care is at the fore is amazing - congratulations Gavin, Helen and Iceland.



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

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Speaker Seminars Autumn 2023

Devon in Sight's Telephone-based Sight Loss Seminars are an opportunity for you to hear from our partners across the Health and Social Care and Voluntary sectors, in the comfort of your own home.

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.

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.

Audio recordings of previous seminars are available through the Devon in Sight Website under the Events section or using the QR Code.



Tuesday 12 September 2023

'Introducing Blind Veterans UK'

Formally known as St. Dunstan's, Blind Veterans UK has been helping those who have served their country to rebuild their lives after sight loss for over 100 years.

Our Guest Speaker is **Aaron Garratt**, Community Team Leader from Blind Veterans UK.



▲ Aaron Garratt

Tuesday 10 October 2023

'Globe Trotting with George Jones - A Blind Man's Adventures Around the World'

Despite being Severely Visually Impaired George set himself the challenge of visiting 30 countries before his 30th Birthday. George shares his inspirational tales of visiting countries like Alaska, Iceland and New Zealand.

Our Guest Speaker is **George Jones**, a Client of **Devon in Sight**.



▲ George Jones

Tuesday 14 November 2023

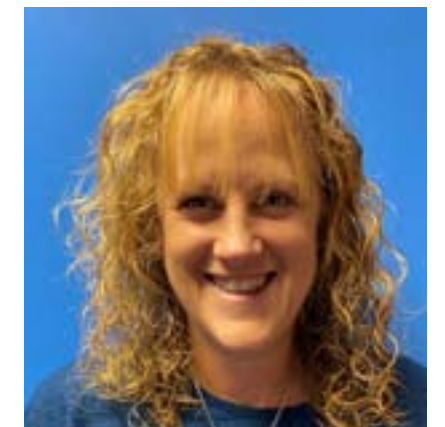
'Combating Loneliness & Isolation'

Helping to increase the independence, mobility and peace of mind of older and disabled people, combating the problems of loneliness and isolation.

Our Guest Speakers are **Faye Ashton**, Mid Devon Mobility CEO and **Jackie Hammond**, Volunteer Coordinator from Mid Devon Mobility.



▲ Jackie Hammond



▲ Faye Ashton

To access Telephone Sight Loss Speaker Seminars ring:

Tel: 0808 169 79 30

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

Fire Home Safety Checks



▲ Photo Credit: Jennie Benham (Devon in Sight)

▲ (Left to Right) Grahame Flynn & Ian Johnston

Devon in Sight was one of the first members of the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Home Safety Partnership that was established in 2018.

On Tuesday 13 June we were delighted to be joined by Ian Johnston from the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service for our Sight Loss Speaker Event.

Ian gave us an update on their FREE Home Visit Service for people with sensory issues.

When they visit, a friendly Home Safety Adviser will help you identify and assess any fire risks and provide fire safety equipment where needed. They will also advise on escape plans and what to do in the event of a fire.

‘I had a Home Safety Visit about three weeks ago. It was excellent!’

The visit usually takes around 45 minutes and covers:

- checking smoke alarms are set up correctly and haven't passed their expiry date.
- making a fire escape plan
- electrical safety
- cooking safely
- keeping children safe from fire
- identifying and discussing any further support, including fitting specialist fire safety equipment where required.



Our Client David Gailey from East Devon was quick to praise the service. He said, “I had a visit about three weeks ago, it was excellent. He talked me through it all, replaced two smoke alarms, a heat detector in my kitchen and fitted carbon monoxide detector in one of the bedrooms where the boiler is situated. I couldn't fault it, it was an excellent service”.

More detailed information is available on our website under Independent Living or use the QR Code.

We would like to thank Ian Johnston from Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service for his thought provoking presentation.



To access our **Speaker Event Recordings Archive** please visit:

www.devonninsight.org.uk

Audio recordings can be found on the home page under **EVENTS**

Health & Wellbeing Service

Chit-Chat Calls



▲ Photo Credit: Goodboy Picture Company (iStock)

For fun, friendship and really useful information about living life with sight loss you can join our free telephone based Chit-Chat Calls which take place every Wednesday from 10.30am to 11.30am.

Our Weekly Telephone Chit-Chat Calls are your opportunity to air thoughts, concerns, ideas and to share your recent stories in a safe space. We are also able to share news about Devon in Sight and its ongoing development.

Regular host Tessa Barrett said, “Chit-Chat Calls provide such a diverse range of topics from hints and tips about living with sight loss to the University of the Third Age (U3A). Our callers ask questions and educate us at the same time. As a facilitator I can honestly say I have found the calls make me happy, humble and better educated. Why don’t you join the call to find out more and to be part of the Devon in Sight family? “

“Chit-Chat Calls are a great opportunity for callers to share their tips for living with sight loss.”

Do you ever struggle to remember when Devon in Sight is holding a Telephone Chit-Chat Call or Sight Loss Speaker Seminar?

Devon in Sight’s **FREE Reminding You Text Alert Service** is a convenient and flexible way to keep in touch with Devon in Sight, no matter where you are. **This is an opt in service** that allows us to send text messages to your mobile or landline telephone.

Jennie Benham, Office Manager at Devon in Sight said, “This service is available to clients and professionals reminding you of our telephone-based Chit-Chat Calls, Speaker Seminars and community-based Living Well with Sight Loss Events. This is a trial service and will be reviewed in three months.”

You will only receive a limited number of texts a month reminding you of the weekly Chit-Chat Calls and monthly Sight Loss Speaker Seminars. This is an average of 5 texts in a month.

If you would like to join the list please give us a call on the helpline.



Telephone Chit-Chat Calls start every Wednesday at 10.30am

Tel: 0808 169 79 30

Calls from your home telephone or mobile are FREE



▲ Photo Credit: Monkey Business Images (iStock)

Last year we successfully bid to Devon County Council to be a partner in their Connecting You Project which was funded by the Department of Transport, 'Tackling loneliness through transport' Fund. Our work has been part of a national pilot and will inform future government policy.

Connecting You Bus Driver Disability Awareness Training took place across Devon for Public and Community Transport providers. The pilot was run by CEO Grahame Flynn and Head of Services Tessa Barrett. The training was praised highly by our partners and the participants. This has been a huge piece of commissioned work with Devon County Council building on our excellent reputation gained during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Grahame said, "Following the success of the pilot we have been commissioned to produce a Connecting You 'Moving Forward' Legacy Project.

As lead partner we have produced a **Public & Community Bus Driver Disability Awareness Training Manual** which is being distributed to every Public and Community Bus Driver in Devon. This is designed to raise awareness amongst Bus Drivers of this issues faced by people with disability including people who are blind or partially sighted. Furthermore, we have made all the training materials including Video Tutorials available through our website for Bus Drivers who struggled to attend the training.

I am pleased to say that following a due diligence process Devon in Sight has become a CPD Group Approved Provider and the course is being assessed for CPD Accreditation.

Councillor Andrea Davis, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport at Devon County Council said, "The Connecting You project has enabled us to trial a series of innovative schemes designed to target support in communities across Devon. Our pilot programme was designed to help combat loneliness in Devon through transport opportunities, and try to make life a little brighter for residents. **The Bus Driver Disability Awareness Training** is very impressive and I hope many Bus Drivers take up the training."



For more information about **Connecting You** please ring:

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

National Accreditation



▲ Photo Credit: Monkey Business Images (iStock)

Devon in Sight is committed to providing accurate and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to people who are blind or partially sighted, their family, friends and carers.

CEO Grahame Flynn said, "Having charter marks or nationally recognised accreditations can help us with funding bids and partnership working with Health & Social Care. Not having one is a barrier to commissioned services.

When Tessa Barrett became our new Head of Services she was recruited to help me to achieve a national accreditation that would be recognised by our peers in Health and Social Care and other government agencies.

Devon in Sight is committed to providing accurate and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance

The 'Matrix' Standard is the Department for Education's (DfE) standard for ensuring the quality of the delivery of high-quality information, advice and guidance. This is a recognised standard across all government agencies such as the NHS, local government and Care Quality Commission (CQC).

It is the international quality standard for organisations that deliver information, advice and or guidance (IAG). Either as their sole purpose or as part of their service offering."

Tessa added, "Since July 2022 we have been working toward The 'Matrix' Standard. We have completed the Self-Assessment process and undertaken a comprehensive review of all our Policies and Procedures and Information Resources. It has been a massive team effort."

Grahame concluded, "Since The Matrix Standard is an outcome-based standard, the Assessor is looking not only at processes used to support IAG delivery but also at the results we achieve.

We would like to thank all of those clients and other stakeholders who are being interviewed as part of the assessment process.

Devon in Sight remains committed to raising standards across the low vision sector and achievement of this standard will show our commitment to quality and best practice for the benefit of our callers, funders, staff and everyone impacted by the services we provide."

We hope to have achieved The Matrix Standard prior to our Conference in October.

Tesco Community Grants

Since 2016 Tesco grants have supported over 50,000 community groups with more than £100 million in grants. The funding aims to make a positive difference – because where communities thrive, Tesco’s business and colleagues thrive too.

Devon in Sight receives no statutory funding so we have to fundraise to provide all of our services. We are therefore delighted to have secured £4,000 of local grants under the Tesco Community Grants Scheme.

It is not given that you will automatically be selected for a grant so we were delighted to hear that the staff had elected Devon in Sight’s clients to benefit. These grants cover large areas of Devon and we will shortly be allocating funds to the projects.

The funding will help us deliver two Living Well with Sight Loss Events next year, purchase equipment for our Equipment Bursary Fund and provide some Counselling Sessions.

We would like to thank Tesco for their ongoing support for our work with people who are Blind or Partially Sighted in Devon.



Tesco Community Grants are managed by the community charity Groundwork UK.



Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon

Friends of Devon in Sight

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 our vital work.

Our Regular Giving Scheme ‘Friends of Devon in Sight’ is the best way that you can support your local sight loss charity during these very challenging times. You can give as little or as much as you would like with a monthly direct debit.

Could you spare the cost of a cup of coffee to help fund future editions of this magazine, to provide counselling sessions for people in crisis, to keep our telephone support services running?

Everyone who joins our Regular Giving Scheme ‘Friends of Devon in Sight’ will receive a limited edition, ‘I’m a Friend of Devon in Sight’ enamel badge.



Other Ways to Donate

If you would like to make a donation over the telephone, by cheque, by Bank Transfer or leave us a gift in your Will, you can speak confidentially about the options available to you with our Office Manager, Jennie Benham.

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

An Overview of Our Services

Devon in Sight offers a range of holistic services for people who are blind or partially sighted, their families, friends and carers who live or work in Devon.

This is a summary of our core services.

Our 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**.

Our 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 also 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.

Devon in Sight - Supporting people affected by sight loss in Devon

Our 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**. To access the calls simply dial **0808 169 79 30** at **10.30am every Wednesday morning**.

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. **A schedule of events and joining instructions can be found on pages 28 and 29.**

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 are pleased to hear your thoughts about how services across Devon can be improved.**

For more information about our services 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



SCAN ME

01392 876 666

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

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