Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity

FREE MAGAZINE

In Vision

The magazine of Devon in Sight

Spring 2025 Issue 42



A century of proudly supporting people with little or no sight in Devon

Spring 2025 - Issue 42

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Editors
Grahame Flynn
Tessa Barrett

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Devon in Sight is a Member of **the Helpline Partnership**

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Chief Executive Officer's

Welcome



Welcome to the Spring Edition of In Vision Magazine.

New Year symbolises new beginnings, fresh starts, reflection, and hope for the future. It's a time to leave behind the past year and embrace new opportunities.

2025 is a particularly important milestone in Devon in Sight's history as it marks our centenary!

There is a burden when you lead an organisation that has existed for decades. When I took over the leadership of the charity in April 2013 our centenary was a distant thought. Subconsciously I'd think to myself, "Will we survive to make our 90th, will we make our 95th?"

I took up the challenge and said to myself, "Whatever happens I will make sure that we are still here supporting blind and partially sighted people and their families in 2025!"

Despite Recession, COVID-19 and the Cost of Living Crisis, Devon in Sight continues to be an award-winning charity known for its excellence in service provision and innovation locally, regionally, and nationally.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported me to make this happen over the last 12 years. It's been a monumental team effort.

Happy 100th Birthday Devon in Sight!

Grahame Flynn
Chief Executive Officer

Supporting You Feature

An Overview of Our Services

Helping You Navigate Your Sight Loss Journey!

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 designed to help you navigate your sight loss journey.

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 Third Sector.

We have a unique **Assistive Technology Partnership** with **Sight and Sound Technology Ltd.**, the UK's leading provider of equipment, software and services for people who are blind and partially sighted. We provide an **Employment Hub** in partnership with **Thomas Pocklington Trust** to support people into work or change careers.

Our **Living Well with Sight Loss Events** take place across the county where you can meet partners in Health & Social care, the Third Sector and Community Groups.

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 weekly 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 22 and 23.**

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. **If you would like to support the charity to make Devon a Sight Loss Friendly County give us a call.**

To receive our new Welcome Pack please ring:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Matrix Standard Maintained

Our ongoing Matrix Standard accreditation success confirms that Devon in Sight is working to provide the best possible support to our clients.



◀ Photo Credit: The Growth Company

▲ The Matrix Standard Logo

In August 2023 Devon in Sight was accredited to the Matrix Standard, the international quality standard for organisations that deliver information, advice and guidance (IAG).

The Matrix Standard is owned by the Department for Education and ensures the delivery of high-quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) services that enable people to reach their full potential. This independent evaluation confirmed that at the heart of high-quality advice and support services are strong leadership, excellent service, and a focus on continuous improvement.

A mandatory part of maintaining Matrix Standard Accreditation is a comprehensive Annual Continuous Improvement Check.

The annual Matrix Continuous Improvement Check was conducted in August 2024 with Devon in Sight's CEO Grahame Flynn and Head of Services Tessa Barrett.

Grahame Flynn said, "The review allows us to demonstrate on an ongoing basis the developments we are continuing to make to the Information, Advice and Guidance Service to support individuals with little or no sight.

Working with the Matrix Standard enables us to further improve our Information, Advice and Guidance services so we can unleash the full potential of those recipients' we serve making a wider impact within the community.

I would like to thank Tessa Barrett for her diligence in preparing for the review. I am pleased to report that our Accreditation has been maintained.

Our ongoing Matrix Standard accreditation success confirms that Devon in Sight is working to provide the best possible support to our clients."

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2025

Head of Services Tessa Barrett would like to thank those of you who have participated in our recent Customer Satisfaction Survey. 100 people were randomly selected for interview. We would also like to thank Trustees Paul Hannan, Marilyn Minter-Newson and Steve Muncer for conducting the survey.

We will share the Executive Summary in the next edition of In Vision Magazine.

Jennie Benham Retires

'It's not where you start, it's where you finish!'



◀ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ Jennie Benham pictured at her retirement party

Jennie Benham

In December 2024 we bid a fond farewell to our Head Office & Marketing Manager Jennie Benham who has been one of our longest serving members of staff.

Jennie had been the Marketing and Development Manager at St. Margaret's School in Exeter before joining the Devon in Sight family on Monday 10th July 2013 as our Administration Co-ordinator.

Jennie took a major role in developing our Information, Advice and Guidance Service creating much of our website and supporting us in the production of our marketing literature.

It wasn't long before we were able to utilise all of Jennie's invaluable skills and she was promoted to Office Manager.

Grahame Flynn CEO of Devon in Sight said, "Jennie was an extremely loyal, hardworking and talented member of my staff team. We were able to combine Jennie's retirement do with our staff and trustee Christmas Lunch in December. On behalf of everyone here at Devon in Sight we would like to send our warmest best wishes to Jennie for her retirement."



India Luther

Also leaving us in December was Mandy Darling's Support Worker **India Luther.** India has returned to Africa before commencing a Master's Course at The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. We wish her well with her studies.



Tony Shrubb

Talking of retirements we also have to send our best wishes to **Tony Shrubb of Sight and Sound Technology, our Assistive Technology Partner.**

Tony has supported us at many of our Community Living Well with Sight Loss Events and our conferences. We wish him a healthy and happy retirement. We look forward to meeting his successor shortly.

New Beginnings



▲ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ New Office Manager Sarah Small

Sarah Small

On Monday 6th January 2025 Sarah Small joined the Devon in Sight team as our new Head Office and Marketing Manager.

It was always going to be challenging recruiting someone to fill Jennie Benham's boots following her retirement after so many years. We interviewed a number of candidates for the role but it was Sarah who demonstrated the skills and personality that we were looking for.

Sarah is an experienced office manager with a flair for creativity, meaning she is thrilled to combine the two elements of the role, and embark on this new and exciting journey with us.

'I'm delighted to be joining this friendly and dynamic charity'

The Office Manager supports the delivery of Devon in Sight's services, taking a lead on external marketing communications, which includes maintaining the website and our Information, Advice and Guidance Service. Sarah will also be supporting our Chief Executive Officer to ensure the charity is organised and running like clockwork.

Sarah said, "I'm delighted to be joining this friendly and dynamic charity, and I'm looking forward to working with the team. In my spare time I tend to find myself singing on the stages of different holiday parks, relaxing at home with a paintbrush in hand, channelling my creative side, or getting out and about to explore the beauty of Devon!"



Another new face joined the Devon in Sight team is **Ella Morgan** taking on the role of Support Worker to our Community Engagement and Fundraising Officer Mandy Darling. Many of you met her as a Sighted Guide at our Conference last year.

Ella is a student at the University of Bath studying Politics and International Relations and is currently in her placement year, so she will be working with us.

Ella is passionate about social justice and philanthropy, and her role at Devon in Sight allows her to pursue this and gain experience for furthering her studies. She aspires to work within an NGO which provides emergency assistance to people affected by war or natural disaster.

Living Well with Sight Loss Events 2025

Tesco customers support us again!



◀ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ Living Well with Sight Loss Exhibitors at a previous event

In March we start this year's schedule of Living Well with Sight Loss Events around Devon.

We run our community events in partnership with **Sight and Sound Technology,** the UK's leading provider of equipment, software and services for people who are blind and partially sighted. These events have expanded over the years to include our partners in Health & Social Care, the Third Sector and Community Groups.

Registered clients of Devon in Sight will automatically receive an invitation to the event in their area. You can also register your interest in attending these events by ringing the helpline.

Living Well with Sight Loss Event Schedule 2025

East Devon Event - Thursday 6 March 2025
The Beehive Centre, Honiton

West Devon Event - Thursday 10 April 2025
The Ockment Centre, Okehampton

Mid Devon Event - Thursday 8 May 2025
The Cullompton Community Centre, Cullompton

Teignbridge Event - Thursday 5 June 2025
The Courtenay Centre, Newton Abbot

East Devon Event - Thursday 3 July 2025
Woodbury Community Hall, Axminster

Exeter Event - Thursday 18 September 2025
Devon Sight Loss Conference
Mercure Exeter Rougemont Hotel, Exeter

Some of our Living Well with Sight Loss Events this year are supported by the **Tesco Stronger Starts Scheme.**

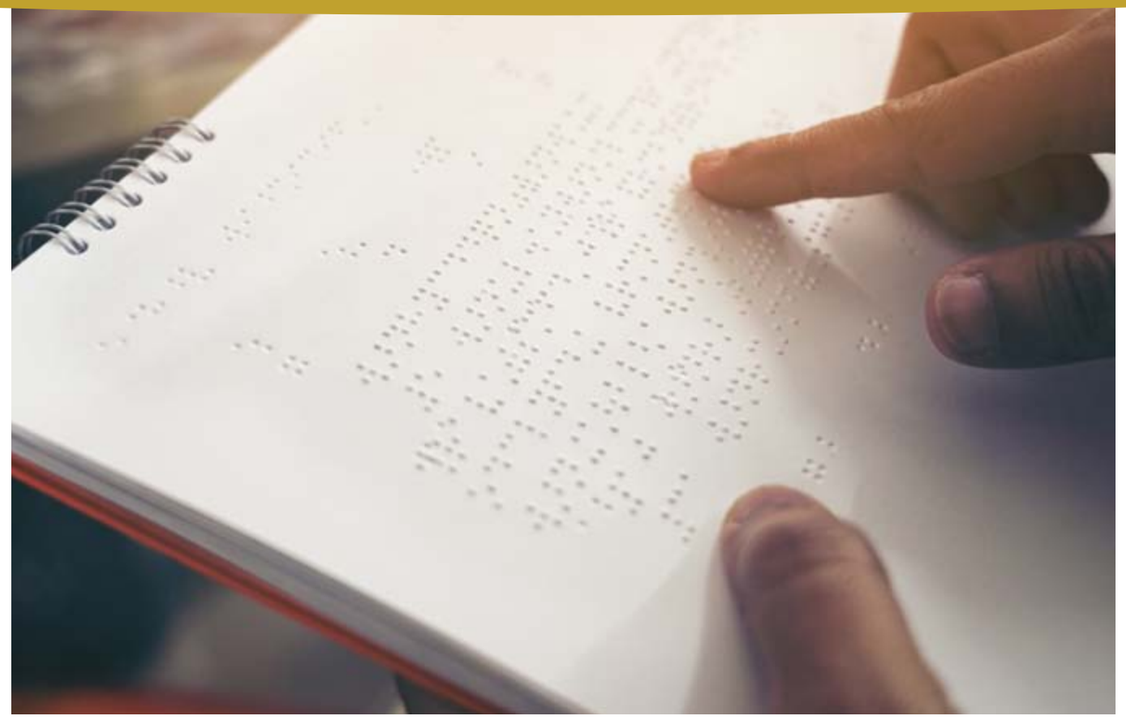
These grants support thousands of local community projects and good causes across the UK.

To **Register your interest in attending** these events please ring:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Happy 200th Birthday Braille!



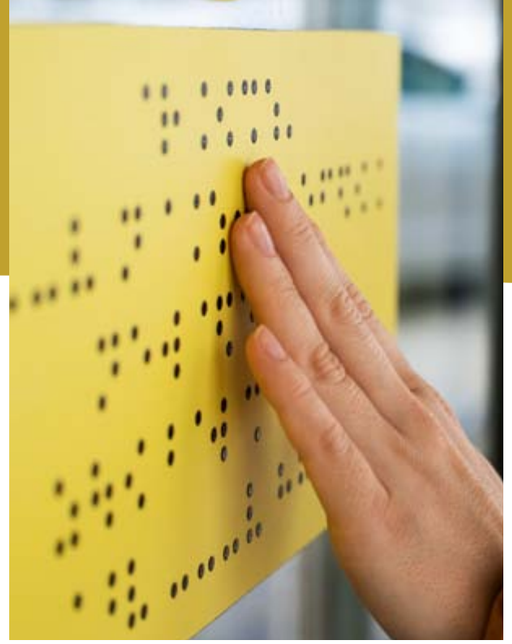
◀ Photo Credit: tongpatong (iStock)

▲ Image of a person using Braille

Devon in Sight's Sight Loss Adviser Louise Millington is a keen advocate of Braille to enable the sight impaired to access the written word.

Louise says, "This year marks the 200th Birthday of Braille, the tactile writing system that empowers people who are blind and vision impaired to read.

Thanks to the determination of Louis Braille, a Frenchman who lost his sight at a young age, his invention opened doors for millions of visually impaired & deafblind individuals around the world.



Braille allows blind and partially sighted people to access reading and writing. People read it through touch using the pads of their fingers to feel the letters and symbols. It can take a while to learn but it is well worth it!

To enable those who cannot access print, Braille is used in education to allow pupils to access the curriculum (once they have mastered the mathematic and scientific symbols). It is also used by healthcare manufacturers and food packaging companies. You may have spotted the dots in shops!

Braille is not just to inform - it is even used in the Arts! You can make tactile pictures and write Braille music, read literature and plays, as well as play board games that have been 'Brailled' so you can join, and beat, your sighted friends.

The dots that make up each braille character, or 'cell', use up to six dots arranged in a grid of two columns and three rows.

By varying the placement of these dots, the system creates a unique combination for each alphabetical and punctuation character, numbers and approximately 189 contractions. An amazing code – thank you Louis Braille!

For information about **Learning to Braille** please ring:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Devon in Sight's Community Engagement Officer, Mandy Darling was a reluctant Braille pupil in her teens.

"As a young teenager with a useful amount of vision I questioned my teachers when they encouraged me to try and learn to read through my fingers. I fought even more when I was badgered to dip my fingers in talcum powder to "make the dots stand out." Did they realise though that often I would cheat, just attempting a few words and making up the rest.

But, looking back now, I can't thank my teachers enough for bearing with me and enduring my moans and groans to enable me to now have a skill that set me up for the rest of my life and a skill that I have spent time teaching to others.

Many say that Braille is old fashioned, on its way out and not really up to much – I disagree. Yes, we can all listen to our audio books, talk to our phones and use AI but none of this retains the ability to sit and read a book silently and privately. In these times with noise all around it is the quiet times that one can appreciate and it is then that Braille comes into its own.

Learning Braille is like learning a language. Once you excel at it there is no holding you back and with Braille contractions, a type of shorthand, things become much quicker. Unfortunately I am not a fast Braille reader as, having seen the written word in my early years, I convert the Braille to its written equivalent in my mind before processing. As with everything, the more you do it the faster you get. It is only now that I realise the independence that Braille has given me. When my eldest son was toddler (he is 30 now), I struggled to read to him at night. Yes I could have played audio tapes or made something up but I really wanted to read the books that he was reading at nursery.

The Clear Vision Project from Lindon Lodge School would provide childrens' books with clear Brailled sheets in them so, the sighted child could still see the picture and read the words but the parent could read the Braille.

This was a great service which I took advantage of for both my children for many years even encouraging my local library to have a stock of these Braille books on their shelves. I still treasure the book I read to my son.



Nowadays it can certainly be said that Braille is not on its way out! It is great to see our medicines labelled with braille though often the challenge is to stop the printed label being stuck over the essential identifying raised dots. The Co-Op has now produced braille labelling on their packaging, restaurant chains such as Beefeater provide braille menus and all bleach bottles are labelled in Braille. We must not forget that Braille is also used in our navigation when it is found in our lifts and on tactile signage.

The writing of Braille has also undergone somewhat of a revolution. The Perkins Brailler, heavy and very noisy was the machine used to produce Braille. I remember in our classroom when all the Braillers were going at the same time it was like a herd of elephants running. Now we have electronic silent braille machines and the ability to input Braille on a smart phone screen.

Having never really wanted to learn Braille I am now so thankful that I was encouraged to persevere as it is a skill that maintains my independence, though even now, I appreciate the saying "Use it or Lose it."

For information about **Learning to Braille** please ring:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

‘Works for Me’ – Employment Hub

Our innovative employment programme in partnership with Thomas Pocklington Trust



◀ Photo Credit: Sturti (iStock)

▲ A young visually impaired person at work

Last year Devon in Sight partnered with Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT) to provide an innovative new employment programme.

Works For Me is a free service dedicated to supporting blind and partially sighted individuals in their pursuit of paid employment or a change of career. Thomas Pocklington Trust’s personalised approach caters to your unique needs and their team of employment experts is here to offer one-to-one support.

TPT provide a range of resources to help you including job search tips, advice on completing application forms and writing cover letters and CVs. They also provide valuable interview tips and offer mock interviews to prepare you for the real thing.

In addition, they can connect you with experienced career coaches who are dedicated to providing coaching and mentoring at no cost to you. If you require specialised services such as counselling, rehabilitation, or training, they can also refer you to the appropriate resources.

They offer the opportunity to have your IT skills assessed by their experts, advice on identifying the best assistive tech programmes to get you into work and where to get training.

They will also keep you informed via email about available opportunities, internships, webinars, and anything else that is relevant to your employment, education, or voluntary pursuits.

Thomas Pocklington Trust’s Local Employment Coordinator for Devon is Maria Moorhouse. Maria has lived with sight loss since the age of five, having been diagnosed with advanced Glaucoma and had various eye operations over the years.

Maria says, “I enjoy my role at Thomas Pocklington Trust in supporting visually impaired clients with their job search as I understand at first-hand how challenging their journey is.”

Maria joined us for a Telephone Speaker Event on Tuesday 11 February 2025 to tell us more about this new service. You can hear the recording on our website under EVENTS. We can also send you a copy of the recording on USB datastick.

For information about the **Sight Loss Employment Hub** ring:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Young People's Counselling

Helping young people transition into adult services



◀ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ Children & Young People's Counsellor Kristy Bale

One of Devon in Sight's stategic priortities is to make Devon a Sight Loss Friendly County.

We undertake this work by identifing 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 little or no sight.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we started our Emotional Support Service which includes a formal counselling provision. This service has proved very effective with nearly everyone who completes their counselling course demonstrating a clinical improvement. However, this service was for adults only.

Through our relationship with Devon's Children and Young People's Rehabilitation Officers of Devon's Sensory Team we were advised that there was a significant need for emotional support for young people as they transition into adulthood.

It is very fitting that our first area of service development for our Centenary is a Counselling Service for Young People.

Joining our Counselling Team is Kristy Bale, a qualified Counsellor who specialises in this area of work. Using part of a legacy from the estate of the late Anita Fearnside we have created a Counselling Room at Spaltford Barton. To honour her memory we have called the space **The Fearnside Room.**

Devon Charity **See the Future** has given us a £500 grant towards this service too. The primary aim of **See The Future** is to promote the importance of regular eye tests and the value of eye care in detecting other health conditions such as diabetes, mini-strokes and eye cancer. See the Future's founder Leanne Herret has been a keen supporter of Devon in Sight and our work for many years. She has seen the worth of the pilot and supported us with this grant.

We would like to thank the **Estate of Anita Fearnside** and **See the Future** for supporting us with this pilot project to provide counselling to young people living with little or no sight transitioning into adult life.

For information about our **Emotional Support Service** please ring:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Health & Wellbeing Feature

Speaker Seminars

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

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.

The full archive of Sight Loss Speaker Events can be accessed through our website at www.devoninsight.org.uk (under Events) or by using the QR code opposite on you smart phone.

SCAN ME

Tuesday 11 March 2025

'How will the Digital Switch Over Affect Me?'

It's arguably the biggest social project since analogue television was retired some 12 years ago, the UK's telephone network is also going digital.

What does this mean for you?

Our Guest Speaker is **Christopher Hockley, Digital Voice Engagement Manager, EE.**

Website: ee.co.uk

Tuesday 8 April 2025

'The West of England Eye Unit'

Introducing the services offered at the West of England Eye Unit (WEEU) including Low Vision Assessments and Certificates of Visual Impairment (CVI).

Our Guest Speaker is **Louise Issac, Specialist Optometrist, WEEU.**

NHS
Royal Devon University Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



▲ Louise Issac

Tuesday 13 May 2025

'The Blind Gardener Strikes Again!'

We are delighted to welcome back Andrew Hesser. Andrew is blind and draws on his personal experiences of gardening, volunteering for the National Trust and getting out and about in nature to produce videos and a library of resources for gardeners, in order to highlight how the natural world can be experienced without sight.

Our Guest Speaker is **Andrew Hesser, The Blind Gardener.**



▲ Andrew Hesser

To access **Telephone Sight Loss Speaker Seminars** ring:

Tel: 0808 169 79 30

Calls from your home telephone or mobile are FREE

Macular Disease Update



◀ Photo Credit: ronstik (iStock)

▲ Image of vitamin & mineral supplements

Recent research by the Macular Society shows that taking a daily vitamin and mineral supplement can slow the progression of geographic atrophy (GA) which is an advanced from of dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

AREDS2 Supplements had been previously recommended for those with early stage AMD.

What are AREDS2 supplements?

As reported by 'Ophthalmology,' the study, led by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the United States of America, shows widely available AREDS2 supplements, containing vitamins C and E, lutein, zeaxanthin, zinc and copper, could slow down the progression of sight loss in GA patients by 55% over an average of three years.

This is exciting as it is a cheap, safe, and well tolerated treatment

AREDS2 supplements take their name from two large clinical trials, AREDS (Age-Related Eye Disease Study) and AREDS2, carried out by the NIH National Eye Institute between 1992 and 2012.

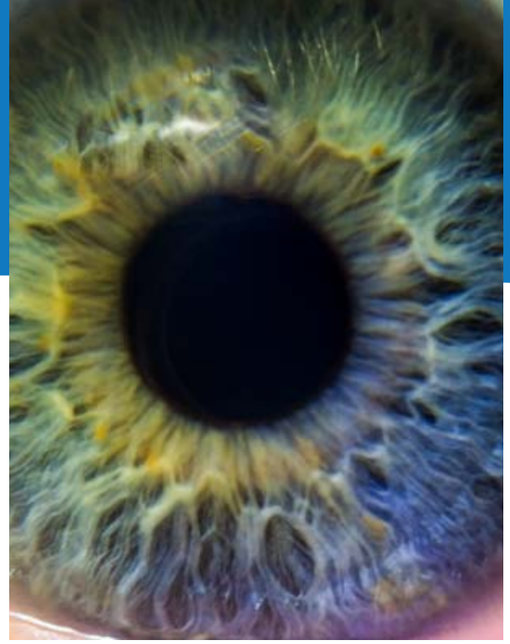
Researchers reviewed the retinal scans of 1,209 people who were part of the original study. They found AREDS2 supplements also appeared to slow the disease progression in people with the later stages of the disease. This effect was particularly noticeable when the area of damage, or GA, was located outside the central area of the macula, known as the fovea. Inside the fovea, there was less noticeable slowing of the disease.

Since Geographic Atrophy often starts outside the fovea, taking AREDS2 supplements early may help delay the progression into the fovea, where central vision loss occurs. In most people, GA begins outside the fovea, implying that if AREDS2 supplements are taken early enough they can delay the progression of GA into the fovea.

The Macular Society's Head of Research Grants, Geraldin Hoad, said, "These findings are encouraging for people with GA. Until now AREDS2 supplements weren't thought to be effective for those with late-stage dry AMD. By slowing vision loss, they could help people stay independent longer and improve their quality of life and we would welcome the results being confirmed in a clinical trial."

Lead author of the study, Tiarnan Keenan of the NIH National Eye Institute, said, "We've known for a long time that AREDS2 supplements help slow the progression from intermediate to late AMD. Our analysis shows that taking AREDS2 supplements can also slow disease progression in people with late dry AMD. These findings support the continued use of AREDS2 supplements by people with late dry AMD."

Macular Disease Update



Co-author Pearse Keane, a consultant ophthalmologist at Moorfields Eye hospital said, “Although AREDS2 supplements are used widely in the UK, we don’t typically recommend them to patients who already have late AMD in both eyes. I think this paper will lead us to recommend their use more widely in people with late AMD. This is exciting because it is a cheap, safe, and well tolerated treatment.”

AREDS2 can be found in most high street pharmacies or on line from reputable organisations. Products include Macushield Gold, Macusave Preserve Vision. Beware of who you are buying from. Always purchase through a reputable provider.

Clinical Trial Update: Is Red Light Therapy for Macular Degeneration getting closer?

A recent research study carried out by Professor Glen Jeffrey of the Institute of Ophthalmology, Empire College London, provides hope for the future of treating dry Macular Degeneration.

Red light has been shown to improve declining eyesight, with one particular study showing promise for patients diagnosed with dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

A clinical trial called LIGHTSITE III is nearing conclusion with results showing that red light is reducing the rate of progression of intermediate AMD to late-stage dry AMD (otherwise known as geographic atrophy).

Professor Jeffrey says that, “Very significantly, the patients that were selected had relatively early disease and it has shown that the rate of geographic atrophy in the eye is reduced.”

The benefits of red-light treatment to boost mitochondria in general has been proven when used in the mornings, with exposure only needing to be for three minutes, two or three times a week.

As a caution Professor Jeffrey insists in his report that people should avoid any red-light devices which include the word laser. There will be more to follow as the project progresses and we will keep you informed.

CREDIT: We would like to thank the Macular Society for these updates.

Macular Society
Beating Macular Disease

For more information about Macular Disease please ring:

Macular Society 0300 3030 111

Visit: www.macularsociety.org

Totnes Centaurs: VI Cricket Club



◀ Photo Credit: Tobias Robshaw (Totnes Centaurs)

▲ White Cricket Stumps for the Visually Impaired

The RNIB recently reported that blind and partially sighted people are less physically active compared to the general public – they are twice as likely to be inactive. People under 35 and living with sight loss have similar levels of activity to sighted people, but participation levels decrease after this age.

Tobias Robshaw, a 47-year-old visually impaired resident of Totnes, is seeking others to join him in forming a visually impaired cricket group. Tobias, who lives with retinitis pigmentosa, is passionate about community wellbeing and is actively involved in his community and truly believes in the power of accessible and supportive activities to enhance both physical and mental health.



Tobias said, “I’ve been thinking about starting a VI Cricket Group for a while now, and what better time than the new year to give it a go! Totnes’ excellent transport links, particularly by train, and the convenient location of the leisure centre next to the station, make it an ideal location for a group that welcomes participants from further afield.”

All are welcome, regardless of experience level, including those who are not visually impaired. The primary focus is on enjoying the game, getting some exercise, and building a supportive community. No prior experience is necessary, and participants will find it surprisingly easy to learn and incredibly rewarding to connect with the ball. The ball itself is a small football with a thick red stripe and internal carbon balls, creating a sound that enables visually impaired players to hear it during play.

Tobias added, “I’m looking for both players and supporters to cheer us on and lend a hand where needed.”

Website: totnesvicricket@gmx.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61571481496199

For information about the **Totnes VI Cricket Group** ring:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Influencing Policy in Devon

Helping to make Devon a sight loss friendly county!



◀ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ The Devon Sight Loss Forum at Splatford Barton HQ

Keeping 'client voice' at the heart of our charity ensures that we continue to do the very best for people with sight loss in Devon.

The Devon Sight Loss Forum

The Devon Sight Loss Forum met on Wednesday 29th January to consider the experiences of blind and partially sighted people accessing GP appointments, and Hospital In Patient and Out Patient Visits. It also provided feedback regarding the Exeter Airport Virtual Tour (See Page 33).

Exeter Street Charter

We have been asked to review the Exeter Street Charter, by Exeter City Council. This document covers a pledge by Exeter City Council and Devon County Council to consider a number of issues faced by blind and partially sighted people living and working and visiting Exeter. We will report on this shortly.

Devon Local Optical Committee

The Devon Local Optical Committee represents Optical professionals and contractors delivering NHS eye care across the county.

The LOC is a statutory Local Representative Committee formed by National Health Service regulation who liaise between clinicians, optical practices, NHS England, the Devon Integrated Care System, all the four acute hospitals in the area and health care professionals across the county.

They also work closely with patient representative groups within the area. They work to improve eye health outcomes by supporting local eye care professionals to deliver services and remove inequality in eye care provision for all patients.

The Devon Local Optical Committee has asked us for our help to produce the **Devon Joint Strategic Eye Health Need Assessment** which was not completed by NHS England some years ago. We hope that this work will be commissioned shortly.

On Thursday 22 May 2025 we have been invited to take an active role in the Devon LOC Annual Training Day. This will include a presentation to High Street Optometrists around our work around Low Vision, our Assistive Technology Partnership with Sight & Sound and also Clinical Trials and Research with The Retina Clinic London.

Devon in Sight's work towards making Devon a sight loss friendly county continues.

Community Engagement

Helping to make Devon a sight loss friendly county!



◀ Photo Credit: India Luther (Devon in Sight)

▲ Support Worker India Luther with Mandy Darling at ASDA

Devon in Sight's Community Engagement Officer Mandy Darling reports...

ASDA Supermarket

We continue to work closely with the ASDA Superstore in Newton Abbot. Following a recent meeting with Elaine, their Community Engagement Officer, Devon in Sight will have a presence in the Newton Abbot Store on Friday 24 April 2025 with a second date later in the year.

This gives Devon in Sight the opportunity to promote the services we provide in a public setting. We look forward to meeting shoppers and making contact with those who may be living with the challenges of sight loss in the local area.

Carers Rights Day

Devon in Sight was pivotal amongst a number of exhibitors promoting their services at a recent Carer's Rights Day held in Paignton Library. This event attracted people of all ages seeking support from a wide variety of both charities and statutory providers.

It was lovely to speak with people living with the challenges of sight loss, their friends and family and to see how positively Devon in Sight could support them on their sight loss journey.

Mandy was able to promote Devon in Sight's 'Centenary Jump for Sight Challenge' which you can read about on page 40.

Exeter Airport

Devon in Sight continues to play an integral role in the 'Passengers with Reduced Mobility Group' at Exeter Airport.

A virtual tour of the Airport is currently in development and we are providing vital feedback on this through the Devon Sight Loss Forum.

It is fantastic that Devon in Sight is at the heart of accessibility with regard to navigating the Airport. We will strive to make accessibility the norm for those living with little or no sight.

Devon in Sight's work towards making Devon a sight loss friendly county continues.

Community Champions Awards

Recognising outstanding customer service in our community!



◀ Photo Credit: monkeybusinessimages (iStock)

▲ Image of a smiling Bus Driver in his cab

One of our strategic aspirations is to make Devon a Sight Loss Friendly County. We achieve this by working in partnership with others to make some small changes to services for the benefit of the blind and partially sighted community at large.

In 2023 we were commissioned by Devon County Council as part of their **'Connecting You Project'** to create a bespoke Disability Awareness package for Public & Community Bus Drivers. This training is available online and those drivers completing the training receive Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Points.

We are delighted to announce that Devon County Council will be funding our accredited course for another 24 months.

One of the big questions for us is whether the training is actually making a difference to our community on the ground.

As you may know 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. Our latest award is being proposed by Mrs Hilary Leigh from Okehampton and in someway helps to highlight the difference our work is making.

Hilary explained, "I would like to nominate the bus drivers on the Number 6 route from Okehampton to Bude operated by Stagecoach.

My husband of 61 years has Alzheimer's Disease and resides at a nursing home in Beaworthy. I travel on the No 6 bus three times a week to see him.

Without exception all the Stagecoach drivers are courteous and caring. They get out of their cab and help me and my walker off the Bus."

We would like to thank Mrs Hilary Leigh for taking the time to share her positive experience of customer service.

Stagecoach

To nominate a **Community Champion** please call:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Community Fundraising 2025

Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon



◀ Photo Credit: Ella Morgan (Devon in Sight)

▲ (L-R) Mandy Darling & Delia Kennedy

Delia's Walk for Sight

In November last year, Delia Kennedy, a lady in her 80th year, walked 100 miles and raised £590 for Devon in Sight.

We are delighted to announce that Delia will be undertaking another walk for us in June this year. We'll let you know more about her Walk for Sight 2025 in the next edition of In Vision Magazine. Thanks Delia for your inspirational fundraising!

Honiton & District Lions Club

Twelve local organisations benefited from the recent Honiton & District Lions Club Annual Draw which concluded at the end of September. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Mr Brian (The Lion) Richards, President of Honiton and District Lions Club for their kind donation of £200.

Devon in Sight Centenary Mascot



At various public events during 2024 we invited people to name our Wise Owl Mascot. Our Owl was designed by our friend Jon Price of Drive Creative Studio.

Suggestions for names included: Artimis, Athena, Barney, Beewise, Bertha, Bob, Mr Owl, Bobby, Bod, Clever Charlie, Clide, Darty, Derek, Duggie, Edith, Floki, Fluffy, Fred, Gandalf, Garfunkel, Geoff, Grahame Flynn, Harry, Hawkins, Hedwig, Higgins, Hooter, Hootie, Hootie M'Dootie, Hootini, Howls, Ian, Lewie, Lily, Mabel George, Marmaduke, Mason, Mr Flyer Print, Mr Hoot, Mr Olly, Mr Owl, Olive, Olly, Orlando, Oscar, Ossie, Oswald, Otto, Owlet, Owlberto, Owlvis Presley, Pepy, Poppy, Potter, Radagast, Seamus, Seymour, Skola, Smokey, Snowy Owl, Sparky, Spectacles, Tashie, Terence Tao Owl, Tess, Tom, Toot Toot, Tooter, Toowit, Toowho, Twoo, Vinny, Vue, Wilfred and Willow.

We would like to congratulate Mrs Sue Hirst who came up with the winning name of Seymour. We all agreed that Seymour (Pronounced See-more) was a clever play on words particularly as maximising the use of residual sight is a key part of our work. You'll be hearing more about Seymour in the coming months.

For more **information about Fundraising for Devon in Sight** call:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Devonshire Freemasons

Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon



▲ (L-R) WBro. Adrian Garrity, CEO Grahame Flynn and Piper WBro. Glenford Bishop at Tiverton Masonic Hall

◀ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

Freemasonry stands out as one of the largest contributors to charitable causes in the country, with nearly £1 million donated per week in the United Kingdom.

Along with integrity, respect and friendship, charity is an integral part of Freemasonry and a fundamental principal in guiding the Freemason on their personal journey.

The Provincial Grand Chapter of Devonshire

On Wednesday 20th November 2024 Devon in Sight's Chief Executive Officer Grahame Flynn was delighted to receive a donation of £250 from Excellent Companion Mark Richardson the Third Provincial Grand Principal of the Provincial Grand Chapter of Devonshire.

The presentation took place at the Exeter Freemasons Hall, in Gandy Street, Exeter.

The gift was a very kind gesture which will be used to purchase items of Daily Living Equipment which we distribute to people with little or no sight through our Equipment Bursary Fund.

All Souls Lodge, Tiverton

On Monday 20 January 2025 Grahame was guest of honour at a Burns Night Supper hosted by All Souls Lodge No.6677 at Tiverton Masonic Hall.



▲ Mark Richardson & Grahame Flynn

The Worshipful Master Adrian Garrity has made Devon in Sight his 'Charity of the Year' and Grahame was invited to talk about our work. The event was very well attended with 70 guests.

A raffle and other donations raised £505 for Devon in Sight which will be match funded by the Lodge. Mr Garrity will be making a presentation at the end of his term of office in October 2025. The Lodge has agreed to support our Counselling Service.

We are delighted to receive donations from individual Masons, Lodges and Chapters across Devon which help us to support more people across the county.

Supporting us

Centenary Jump for Sight Challenge



▲ Devon in Sight's Grahame Fynn jumping in 2018

◀ Photo Credit: Graahme Flynn (Skydive Buzz)

A Tandem Skydive is an easy and enjoyable way to experience the thrills of skydiving.

Our **Jump for Sight Challenges** are your opportunity to combine the most exciting and exhilarating moment of your life with raising funds for Devon in Sight.

SkyDive Buzz offers the highest tandem skydive from the highest altitude possible in the United Kingdom from Dunkeswell Airfield, Honiton.

Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon!

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Linda Baker Sue Khela, Geoff Mann, Declan Pearson, Holly Pratten and Joss Webb for taking part in Jump for Sight 2024.

The team raised **£5376** for Devon in Sight.

Geoff Mann, our first visually impaired jumper said, "Jump for Sight was an awesome achievement where I overcame the challenges of my sight loss whilst at the same time raising vital funds for Devon in Sight. Devon's leading sight loss charity has supported both myself and my late mother for many, many years!"



▲ Geoff Mann

We are pleased to announce that we will be hosting our **Centenary Jump for Sight Challenge** on **Saturday 21 June** and **Saturday 5 July 2025.**

Will you take the plunge for us?

For more **information about the Jump for Sight Challenge** call:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

How can you help us?

Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon

You don't need to jump out of an aeroplane or run a marathon to support our work!

Devon in Sight has been supporting people living with sight loss for 100 years.

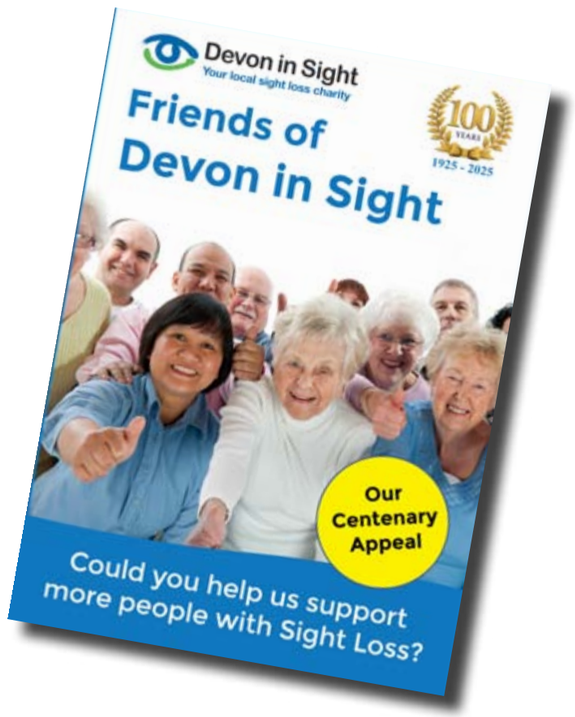
It may surprise you to know that we are not part of a national charity like the RNIB or Guide Dogs, and we do not receive any statutory funding. We are independent and fundraise ourselves to make all our services free for you.

Our centenary is a perfect time to join us in making a tangible difference and help empower people with visual impairments to live fuller, more independent lives.

Friends of Devon in Sight

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

Our new Friends of Devon in Sight brochure is available now!



If you prefer you can also make a one off donation by cheque made payable to 'Devon in Sight'.

Leaving a Lasting Legacy

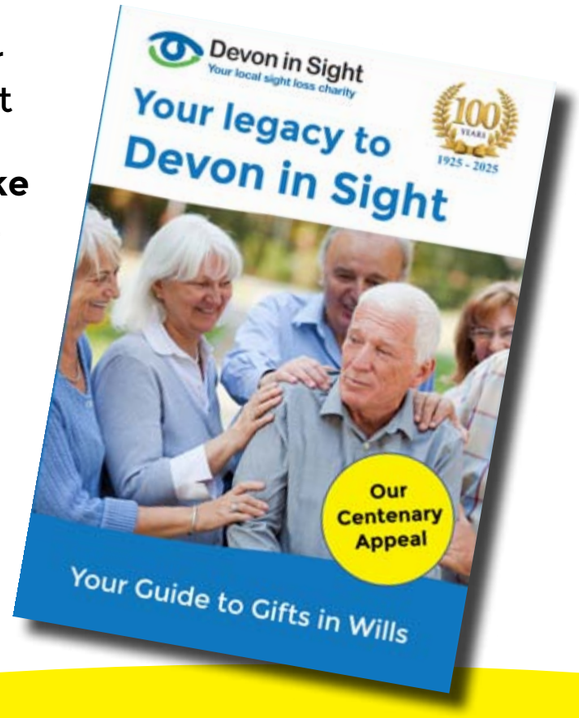
Did you know that making a will is the only way to make sure your money, property, possessions and investments (known as your estate) go to the people and causes that you care about.

One way that you can help support our work is to consider leaving a gift in your Will. Once you have looked after family and friends, a gift to Devon in Sight would be an incredibly special gift.

Together, we can continue to offer vital services that positively impact on those living with sight loss and ultimately realise our vision to **make Devon a sight loss friendly county.**

A gift in your will can help Devon in Sight to support hundreds of people who are blind or partially sighted **live life to the full.**

Our new Guide to Gifts in Wills brochure is available now!



For more **information about how you can help us** please call:

Sight Loss 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

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666
enquiries@devoninsight.org.uk
www.devoninsight.org.uk

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