Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity

100 YEARS
1925 - 2025

In Vision

The magazine of Devon in Sight

Summer 2025 Issue 43



Children & Young Person's Counselling Service Launched

FREE MAGAZINE

Summer 2025 - Issue 43

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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 Summer Edition of In Vision Magazine.

It's twelve years since I started working at Devon in Sight. It's crazy how fast time flies.

I'm really proud of what the team here at Devon in Sight have achieved and continue to achieve for the benefit of people affected by sight loss in Devon.

We are only a small staff team supported by our volunteer trustees and some sessional counsellors. I am delighted that more people affected by sight loss are involved in the charity through our Sight Loss Forum, as Sight Loss Ambassadors and Voting Members.

We've included some of the headline statistics from our recent Client Satisfaction Survey. Whilst it's pleasing to hear that our services remain relevant to you, it's hugely disappointing that many of the people questioned still think that Devon in Sight is part of the RNIB Group or receives statutory funding. Many clients make monthly donations or make legacies to national charities believing that they fund us. **They do not!**

All of our services are free to you at the point of delivery but we have to fundraise to do this. This is why we are keen to promote ways that you can support us with a donation no matter how small. Please consider supporting your local charity.

Onwards and upwards!

Grahame Flynn
Chief Executive Officer

Staff & Volunteer News

'Team work... makes the dream work!'



◀ Photo Credit: Devon in Sight

▲ Linda Garaway with the staff team at Head Office

Linda Garaway

On Wednesday 26th February 2025 the Devon in Sight staff team held a surprise celebration for our Finance Volunteer Linda Garaway.

Prior to her retirement Linda was an accountant at the British Embassy in Caracas, providing services to British nationals in Venezuela. She also worked for Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS). Since 2003 Linda has undertaken treasurer, bookkeeping and payroll duties for Devon in Sight.

It was unanimously agreed that a Victoria Sponge Cake with fresh cream and strawberries was the cake of choice! New staff member Sarah Small undertook baking duties and judging by the size and quality of the cake she'll complete her probationary period with flying colours!!

On behalf of everyone at Devon in Sight we would like to thank Linda for twenty-two years of service and her ongoing support for the charity.

Grahame (Gray) Flynn

On 2nd April 2025 the team at Devon in Sight celebrated 12 years of leadership from our Chief Executive Officer Grahame Flynn. Throughout his time with the Charity, Grahame's determination and commitment have been instrumental in expanding the charity's reach and strengthening support for those affected by sight loss across locally, regionally and nationally.

In addition to his dedication to our clients, Grahame is also extremely encouraging and supportive of us, his staff team, and for that we are truly grateful!

From us all, here at Devon in Sight, we would love to say a huge congratulations to Grahame on this remarkable achievement, and we can't wait to see what the future holds.

Frank Letch MBE

On a more sombre note, we were sad to learn of the passing of former volunteer Frank Letch which was announced on Tuesday 8th April. Frank was born with no arms and was a popular local figure in Crediton politics.

His tales of taking a blind gentleman food shopping were hilarious. His blind client would push the shopping trolley while Frank would select food with his bare feet from the chest freezers! The 'Great' British public didn't know what to make of it! Frank was a remarkable and inspirational man.

Frank Letch MBE R.I.P.

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

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2025

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

Devon in Sight recently conducted its randomised biennial Customer Satisfaction Survey. This project was lead by Tessa Barrett our Head of Services.

Tessa explained, "We undertake the survey to ensure that the services we provide remain relevant and of high quality. The survey is one of the tools that we use to inform Devon in Sight's Strategic Priorities and allows us to make changes to services, if required.

We randomly selected 100 service users. These service users had been in contact with the charity for support during the past year. Some of the headline figures include the following."

- **100% of clients surveyed said that their sight loss had impacted on their daily life and continued to do so.**
- **28% of people said they had asked the Sight Loss Helpline about their sight loss, whereas 64% of clients contacted the helpline for other areas of support.**
- **47% said Devon in Sight had helped them feel more confident about their sight loss.**
- **36% of clients received information from Devon in Sight that they had not received from another source.**
- **36% of clients said Devon in Sight had helped them maintain greater independence.**
- **41% of those surveyed said we had made a positive contribution to their life going forward.**
- **30% of clients surveyed said that we had helped them feel less lonely and isolated.**
- **26% of surveyed clients are returning customers to Devon in Sight. These clients said that we had helped them with their ongoing sight loss journey.**
- **34% of clients surveyed said they had attended one of our community based Living Well with Sight Loss Events.**
- **12% of clients surveyed have attended a Devon in Sight County Sight Loss Conference and AGM.**
- **28% of clients reported having benefitted from Devon in Sight's Equipment Bursary. However, many reported that they thought this equipment had been supplied by the RNIB.**
- **17% of clients surveyed phoned in to listen to and participate in our Telephone Speaker Events.**
- **47% of those surveyed contributed positively to identify gaps in service provision in Devon.**

We would like to like to extend our sincere gratitude to those of you who took the time to engage with the survey. We would also like to thank Trustees Paul Hannan, Marilyn Minter-Newson and Steve Muncer for conducting the interviews.

The full Executive Summary including quotes and suggestions for future service development is available on our website under 'About Us'. We can also send out a paper copy in large print.

Living Well with Sight Loss Events 2025



◀ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ Mrs Leigh from Okehampton with Adviser Louise Millington

This year's schedule of Living Well with Sight Loss Events kicked off at Honiton and Okehampton in March and April.

Our community events are run 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. We were delighted to welcome Technology Specialist Graeme Marden and Iain Kennedy, Development & Partnerships Manager from Sight and Sound to their maiden events.

Visitors were able to meet the Devon in Sight Team and our partners in Health & Social Care, the Third Sector and Community Groups.

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



▲ Iain Kennedy with clients

Living Well with Sight Loss Event Schedule 2025

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

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.

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

Independent Living Partnership Feature

WeWalk 2 into Independent Mobility

Introducing an innovative navigation aid in partnership with Sight & Sound Technology Ltd.

At last years' Devon Sight Loss Conference our Assistive Technology Partner Sight & Sound Technology gave us the first glimpse of the WeWALK Smart Cane 2.

The WeWALK team, inspired by a deep-rooted passion, is dedicated to revolutionising the mobility experience for those living with visual impairments.

Fueled by their personal and professional journey through visual impairment, WeWALK's cutting-edge technology stands as a testament to their unwavering commitment.



◀ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ Mandy with WeWalk 2

The new enhanced **WeWalk Smart Cane 2** offers excellent navigational guidance in the guise of a stable long, white cane. It is available through our Assistive Technology provider **Sight & Sound Technology.**

Connected via Bluetooth, the cane enables accessible navigation with turn-by-turn instructions and live public transport updates. Its solid design, including good audio performance and all-weather durability, ensures reliability in all conditions. The WeWALK Smart Cane 2 redefines mobility for visually impaired people with its wide range of revolutionary features and new, sleek and lighter handle.

With enhanced obstacle detection capabilities, it ensures safety by alerting users to overhead obstacles while maintaining ground-level feedback. The addition of an intelligent voice assistant allows for hands-free navigation and instant access to information. The smart handle weighs only 152 grams (as light as a standard white cane) and is 128 grams lighter than its predecessor.

Mandy Darling, our Community Engagement Officer is a Guide Dog user but was keen to field test the device and compare it with a standard long cane.

Mandy said, "Using the WeWALK Smart Cane 2 was a real learning experience with so many positive features to adapt to but once I became competent in understanding the vibrations and bleeps I really felt this was a real step to independence and safety. No longer was I worrying about something hitting me at eye level, which a standard white cane would not pick up. It was a relief to no longer have branch hitting me in the face as the cane was notifying me of these in advance.

I am so enthralled at the potential level of independence the WeWALK Smart Cane 2 may furnish me with but I still have such a lot to learn."

For a referral to Sight & Sound Technology please ring:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

The Nimbus Access Card

Revolutionising the way people living with a visual impairment experience entertainment



◀ Photo Credit:© 2025 Nimbus Disability

The Nimbus Access Card is revolutionising the way people living with a visual impairment experience entertainment.

This card, developed by Nimbus Disability simplifies the process of booking tickets and securing accessibility at theatres, concerts, theme parks, museums, and other venues, ensuring full enjoyment with dignity and independence.

The card, the size of a credit card, displays the holder's picture along with their specific access needs via a series of intuitive symbols that represent a range of requirements–from visual and audible assistance to mobility support and beyond. The Nimbus access card is accepted at over 3,000 venues across the UK and beyond, the scheme makes available a wide array of cultural, musical, theatrical, and recreational experiences, from West End theatres to local festivals and even theme parks.

Mandy Darling, Devon in Sight's Community Engagement Officer explained, "This scheme has really opened doors to entertainment for me. Recently I attended two West End shows, Mamma Mia and Les Misérables. On both occasions we were met outside the theatre and guided, without going through the crowds, to our seats.

The booking process was seamless with just one phone call we were allocated very good seats at the front. My seat price was heavily subsidised, and my companion was free."

Fiona Hess, Mandy's sighted companion said, "Knowing that the theatre staff would be waiting for us and guiding Mandy took some of the responsibility off my shoulders and lead to two extremely enjoyable evenings."

The card is available for a modest fee of typically £15 for three years of access. This one-time investment not only unlocks discounted ticket prices but also ensures a seamless experience across a wide range of events.

Applying for the Nimbus Access Card is straightforward. Visit the official Nimbus Disability website and complete the online registration form. If needed, assistance is available via the phone number below to help guide you through the process.

Once approved, your card will be issued–ready to open up a world of accessible entertainment.

To apply for a **Nimbus Access Card** please ring:

Nimbus Helpline 0330 808 5108

Alternatively visit their website at www.accesscard.online

Independent Living Partnership Feature

‘Works for Me’ – Employment Hub

Our innovative employment programme in partnership with Thomas Pocklington Trust



◀ Photo Credit: Ridofranz (iStock)

▲ A visually impaired person at work

Devon in Sight in partnership with Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT) ‘Works for Me’ Programme has established an Employment Hub supporting clients to get back into work and those considering a change of career.

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 offers a one-to-one service that spans the whole of Devon.

Maria can support with job search tips, advice on completing application forms and writing covering letters and CV’s. She provides valuable interview tips and can offer mock interviews to help you prepare for the real thing.

You can be connected with experienced career coaches who are dedicated to providing coaching and mentoring at no cost to yourself. Your computer skills can be assessed by experts and advice given on identifying the best assistive technology programmes to get you into work and where to get training.

TPT offer internships, webinars and anything else that is relevant to your employment, education or voluntary pursuits.

We are delighted to have been able to introduce a number of clients looking to return to work, or in the process of changing career, to Maria.



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, or use the QR code opposite on your smart phone.

SCAN ME

If requested we can also send you a copy of the recording on USB datastick.

‘Works for Me’ – Anne’s Story

Our innovative employment programme in partnership with Thomas Pocklington Trust

Feedback from our clients entering the ‘Works for Me Programme’ has been excellent so we thought we would ask Anne, who was our first referral to Maria, if she would be prepared to share her story and she has kindly agreed.

Anne was a Chef and following sudden sight loss found she was unable to continue in this line of work. Anne was devastated to have to leave her job doing something she loved.

Anne’s experience of her first conversation with Maria was a good start. She recounted, “We talked about myself, where I was emotionally and what I had been doing. I found this helped me see just how much I had been achieving despite my sight loss.

We looked at what I should include when writing my Curriculum Vitae (CV). Maria asked many questions particularly about my role as a Chef and we were able to identify what transferable skills I had and how to build them into my CV. This also identified if I needed further support from Maria and where the gaps in my skill set were. We then discussed how to address these gaps.

I created my CV and submitted it to Maria for review. Her feedback was valuable, providing constructive suggestions for improvement and clarifying the application of my transferable skills in the job search process.

We then discussed what roles might be suitable for me, whether I wanted full or part time work including how far I was prepared to travel to work.

Since then, Thomas Pocklington Trust have offered me the opportunity for residential training in using Assistive Technology and enrolled me on a Leadership and Management Course. This really boosted my confidence.

They have also offered me the opportunity to have Coaching and Mentoring in London over three days. I am very much looking forward to this.

I have since had a mock interview with Maria and Armandeep (her line manager) who also leads on the ‘Works for Me’ programme. This interview felt like the real thing! They had taken the time to research the roles I am interested in and conducted the interview in a way that allowed me to draw on my previous experience and present this to them. Whilst I was nervous, I found the interview to be very enjoyable.

I feel that the whole service has boosted my confidence and meant that I was able to go out and look for opportunities to work or volunteer.“

Devon in Sight is delighted to share that Anne is going to be volunteering for two great charities. She will be supporting callers to the Retinitis Pigmentosa UK Helpline and supporting the RNIB too. We send our congratulations to Anne and wish her well in her future roles.

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

"Mummy, things are getting better aren't they!"



▲ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ Children & Young People's Counsellor Kristy Bale

It is very fitting that our first area of service development for our Centenary Year was establishing a Counselling Service for Children and Young People.

Joining our Counselling Team was Kristy Bale, a qualified Counsellor who specialises in this area of work.

Kristy said, "Person Centered Counselling provides children, young people and adults with a safe, confidential space to explore their thoughts, emotions, and experiences with a qualified therapist. A place where all feelings are acknowledged and processed in a congruent manner, without fear of judgment, interruption, or expectation.

The young person is offered the opportunity to feel heard and supported, which has great importance, especially when it is a struggle to express themselves to parents, caregivers, teachers, tutors, and/or peers.

Through creative play, emotional exploration, insight and reflection, therapy helps children and young people recognise, name, and express their emotions in a healthy way. The process nurtures self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-awareness whilst building strength, self-care, and self-worth. It empowers individuals to take ownership of their emotions and find balance, allowing them, when they are ready, to share their feelings with others in a way that feels safe and authentic.

Kristy has just completed her first case supporting the daughter of a young mother called Anne who has experienced rapid sight loss. Anne had been supported through our Adult Counselling Service and this had highlighted that her daughter also needed help to adapt to life with a blind mother.

Anne said, "Through counselling my eight year old daughter has learnt to deal with her emotions and fears about my sight loss. She has been able to see that the future can still be positive. Only this morning she said, "Mummy, things are getting better aren't they! I'm so grateful for the support that Devon in Sight has given our family."

This pilot project would not have been possible without the support of Devon Sight Loss Charity **See the Future,** the **Estate of Anita Fearnside** and **St.George's Freemasons Lodge No.112 (Exeter).**

Health & Wellbeing Feature

Sight Loss Speaker Seminars

Devon in Sight's Telephone-based Sight Loss Speaker 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 10 June 2025

'Visual Hallucinations Explained'

Do you have sight problems and are you seeing things which aren't there?

This is called Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS). What you are seeing are called visual hallucinations. These images can appear suddenly and look very real, which can be confusing and frightening - but they are not real.

Back by popular demand, our Guest Speaker is **Judith Potts, Founder of Esme's Umbrella.**

Website: www.charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk



▲ Judith Potts

Tuesday 8 July 2025

'Ask the Crime Commissioner'

The role of a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to be the voice of the people in policing, and to hold the Chief Constable to account for how they discharges their functions.

The aim of all PCCs is to ensure the delivery of an effective and efficient police service within their force area.

Our Guest Speaker is **Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.**



▲ Alison Hernandez

Tuesday 12 August 2025

'Good Nutrition and Eye Health'

Good nutrition is very important for both general health and eye health. It helps the body to grow, repair wear and tear, protect against infection and function properly.

Making a return visit, our Guest Speaker is **Marilyn Minter-Newson a Nutritional Therapist** and **Devon in Sight Trustee.**



▲ Marilyn Minter-Newson

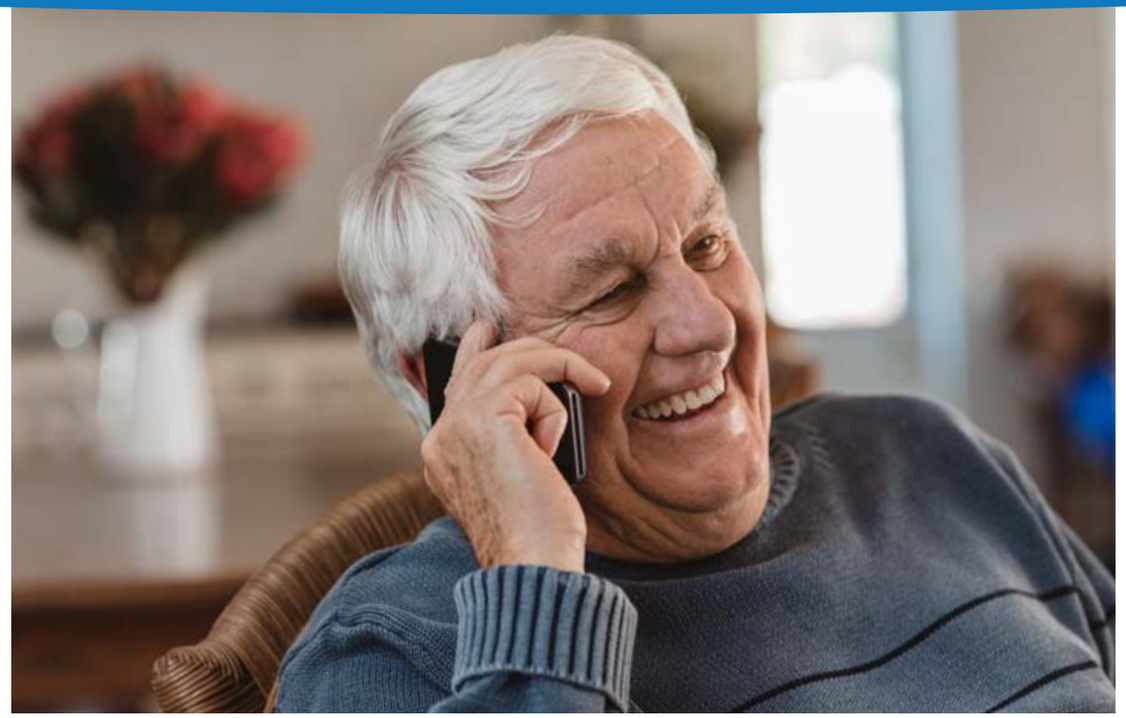
To access **Telephone Sight Loss Speaker Seminars** ring:

Tel: 0808 169 79 30

Calls from your home telephone or mobile are FREE

Weekly Telephone Chit-Chat Calls

Peer support can help people feel less isolated, develop coping skills & build confidence



◀ Photo Credit: Goodboy Picture Company (iStock)

Being told you are losing your sight can be difficult to come to terms with, with common effects being depression and reduced wellbeing.

Blind and partially sighted people can feel cut off from the people and things around them. This is compounded by inaccessible information, difficulty with everyday tasks such as shopping for groceries and problems navigating pavements or using public transport.

Many blind and partially sighted people have reduced opportunities to do the things they would like to take part in. This includes general leisure pursuits, and things like sports and fitness, civic and cultural engagement and access to volunteering opportunities.

Our FREE weekly Chit-Chat Call Peer Support Service was created during the COVID-19 pandemic when people were required to isolate at home. They are your opportunity to air thoughts, concerns, ideas and to share your recent stories in a safe space.

One lady who took part in our recent survey said, “This is the only contact I have with the outside world during the week. I have arthritis and my sight is such I am unable to get out”.

Tessa Barrett, Devon in Sight’s Head of Services explains, ”Peer support is often based on the idea that people who have gone through similar situations can offer valuable insights and encouragement. Having the opportunity to interact with other people who are navigating their own sight loss journey can be hugely beneficial. Peer support can help people feel less isolated, develop coping skills, build confidence, and challenge stigma associated with certain challenges.

We understand that some callers prefer to remain anonymous initially. These individuals have shared that they find excellent value in listening to the calls as they adjust to their sight loss.

Over time, many feel more comfortable participating actively, sharing their experiences and seeking support from the group.”

To access our Wednesday Chit-Chat Call please ring:

FREEPHONE 0808 169 79 30

Calls start at 10.30am prompt and finish at 11.30am

Clinical Trials & Research Update

The Retina Clinic London is dedicated to advancing retinal care through cutting-edge research and clinical innovation.



▲ Photo Credit: The Retina Clinic London

▲ The Retina Clinic London Team

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

Over the last few years we have built up a dynamic relationship with the world famous Retina Clinic London.

The Retina Clinic London is dedicated to advancing retinal care through cutting-edge research and clinical innovation. They actively collaborate with the pharmaceutical industry to bring the latest treatments to patients, ensuring that individuals have greater choice in their ophthalmic care.

All clinical trials conducted at their clinic have full ethics committee approvals, ensuring patient safety, ethical integrity, and scientific validity. In many of these studies, Professor Paulo Stanga serves as the Chief Investigator at a national level, overseeing the trial's implementation across multiple sites and playing a key role in the ethics approval process.

Their clinical trials provide patients with early access to pioneering therapies, often years before they become widely available. Led by Professor Stanga and his team of world-renowned retinal specialists, they focus on developing new diagnostic techniques, advanced treatments, and surgical innovations to improve vision outcomes.

Current Clinical Trials

They are currently recruiting for clinical trials in the following conditions:

- Geographic Atrophy (GA). Dry AMD
- Wet Age-Related Macular Degeneration (Wet AMD)
- Vitreous Floaters & Opacities (VFO)
- Diabetic Retinopathy & Diabetic Maculopathy
- Gene Therapy for Inherited Retinal Diseases (including X-Linked Retinitis Pigmentosa, Usher Syndrome Type 1B, and Stargardt Disease)

Supporting You on Your Research Journey

At The Retina Clinic London, they understand that taking part in a clinical trial is a meaningful decision, and they're here to ensure that your experience is as smooth and supported as possible. All study-related costs are fully covered, including treatments, tests, and follow-up appointments.

Depending on the specific study, allowances may be available to reimburse travel and accommodation expenses, including those for a companion if permitted.

Clinical Trials & Research Update

The availability of these allowances—and the maximum amounts that can be reimbursed—are determined by each individual study. Where included, overnight stays can also be arranged for patients travelling from further afield. This is great news for people living in Devon.

Their goal is to remove unnecessary barriers to participation, so that those who wish to contribute to research—and potentially benefit from early access to innovative treatments—can do so comfortably and with peace of mind.

If you are interested in participating in a trial, their team will guide you through the process to determine if a study is suitable for you.

Who is Professor Paulo E. Stanga?

With over 30 years' experience in Ophthalmology and a focus on Medical and Surgical Retina, including Macular Degeneration, Diabetic Retinopathy, Vitreous Floaters, Cataracts, Retinal Laser, R&D New Therapies, Surgical Technology, Advanced Imaging & Clinical Studies, Professor Stanga is committed to advancing the realm of eye care and is dedicated to transforming lives through pioneering work in Ophthalmology.

In a relentless pursuit of excellence and with the aim of delivering personalised and bespoke eye care, after leaving the NHS in 2019 following 21 years' experience, Professor Stanga founded The Retina Clinic London. This is the UK's first independent and self-contained with fully equipped on-site operating theatre retina clinic with on-site academic and research activities, including participation in industry sponsored clinical trials.



▲ Prof. Stanga at Conference

These initiatives are dedicated to pushing the boundaries of eye care, fostering innovation, developing new diagnostic and treatment techniques for the betterment of patients and very importantly, providing patient choice outside of the NHS not only in terms of clinical care but also of access to clinical trials.

His contributions extend to having set up an independent Clinical & Research Fellowship Program at The Retina Clinic London.

Prof. Stanga is Fully Registered Medical Practitioner with Specialist Registration, General Medical Council (GMC) UK.

We are delighted to announce that the Retina Clinic London will be exhibiting again at the **Third Devon Sight Loss Conference** in Exeter on **Thursday 18th September 2025.**

THE RETINA CLINIC
LONDON
PROF. STANGA & TEAM
BESPOKE EYE CARE

For more **information about Clinical Trials & Research** please call:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Health & Wellbeing Partnership Feature

Fire Home Safety Visits Update

Working to protect you in your home and give simple ways to help keep you and your family safe from fire.



▲ Photo: Grahame Flynn (Devon in Sight)

▲ Sallie Mckay-Roper at our Okehampton Event in April

In August 2018 Devon in Sight became one the first Community Home Safety Partners with the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service.

Sallie Mckay-Roper, Partnership and Community Engagement Lead says, “Many fires in the home are preventable. The Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Home Fire Safety Team can work with you to protect you in your home and give you simple ways to help keep you and your family safe from fire.”

The Fire Service work closely with Devon in Sight to help identify those most at risk. Most of our clients are automatically eligible due to their age, sight loss or domestic situation.

They will then arrange for one of their friendly staff to visit you and have a conversation about fire safety in your home.”

The Home Safety Visit usually takes around 45 minutes and covers:

- checking smoke alarms are set up correctly
- making a fire escape plan
- electrics and charging safely
- cooking safely
- heaters and heating
- bedtime checks
- identifying and discussing any further support, and may include fitting specialist fire safety equipment where required.

As a public service, they can provide equipment completely free of charge to eligible customers, who are assessed to be the most ‘at risk’ of fire. Any equipment fitted will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Home Safety Visits are carried out from Monday to Friday, between the hours of 9am to 5pm. You will be offered a morning slot (a visit between 9.30am and 1pm) or an afternoon slot (a visit between 1pm and 5pm).

To request a free home safety visit, please call the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service directly on 0800 05 02 999 (Quote Partner Code 004).

For more info or a referral from **Devon in Sight** please ring:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Community Engagement



◀ Photo Credit: Fiona Hess (Devon in Sight)

▲ Mandy & Steve Darling MP with Angela Rippon CBE

In recognition of our work with Exeter Airport Devon in Sight was invited to present at the National and International Perspectives of Dementia Conference held at the Mayflower Grandstand, Home Park Stadium in Plymouth on the 11th April 2025.

This gave us a platform to showcase the work being undertaken to promote independence and accessible travel, although primarily sight loss centred, it covered many other disabilities including dementia.

The conference organised by the University of Plymouth and directed by Ian Sherriff welcomed delegates from all around the world including China, Australia, Japan, and Ukraine, both in person and virtually. The event, hosted by well-known broadcasters, Angela Rippon CBE and David Fitzgerald, focused on the impact of dementia on people's lives.

Helping to make Devon a sight loss friendly county!

Mandy Darling our Community Engagement Officer said "It was a great opportunity to champion the work Devon in Sight has been undertaking with our partners. Elements such as the Devon Access Wallet and our Bus Driver Disability Awareness training manual both provide information and guidance to empower those with sight loss and other disabilities when travelling.

It was also a fantastic chance to promote the collaborative work being undertaken by the Accessibility Team at Exeter Airport as they endeavour to make travelling through the airport a seamless package for those living with the challenges of sight loss and other disabilities."

Mandy was joined on stage at the conference by her husband, Steve Darling, Member of Parliament for Torbay, and his guide dog Jennie.

Steve, who has been registered blind for many years, travels up and down the country on a regular basis in his work and was able to provide positive lived experience of accessible travel.

Steve said, "Travel is so much more accessible in 2025. Transport providers have taken on board the challenges experienced by those living with a sensory mobility or hidden disability and now provide excellent support which I experience on a regular basis when travelling between London and Torbay. Having the Devon in Sight's access wallet with me instils me with that extra level of confidence during my journey and demonstrates the positivity of collaborative working."

The conference was a great opportunity to network with various providers, and it was great to talk about new technologies in healthcare and accessibility along with community supporting services.

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

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

North Tawton Women's Institute (WI)

Helping to make Devon a sight loss friendly county!



▲ Photo Credit: Jacqueline Shields (North Tawton WI)

▲ CEO Grahame Flynn addresses North Tawton W.I.

On Wednesday 2nd April 2025 Devon in Sight's CEO Grahame Flynn gave a rare presentation to over 60 members of North Tawton Women's Institute which meets at the local Rugby Club.

The Women's Institute (WI) is a unique organisation shaped by its members. In 1915, they set out to give women a voice and to be a force for good in the community. This year marks their 110th birthday.

Today, they are the largest women's organisation in the UK and they pride ourselves on being a trusted place for all women of all generations, to share experiences and learn from each other.

Grahame said, "We receive many requests at Devon in Sight to talk to community groups about our work. Sadly, we just don't have the capacity to accept every invitation.

I was made very welcome by the Chair Jan Gray but it was rather daunting giving a talk to a group of women made up of friends and neighbours from my home town. North Tawton WI has a number of members with sight loss and it was inspiring to see how they were actively embraced by the group which was very inclusive. The audience responded well to a myth busting quiz, an overview of sight conditions, daily living equipment and the work of the charity.

Committee Member Sue Knott later said, "Grahame's enthusiasm and passion for this charity left us in no doubt that, under his leadership - and with his dedicated team of staff and volunteers, Devon in Sight will continue to go from strength to strength".

One of the guests at the meeting was County Advisor and WI Trustee Sarah Shorthouse who is championing accessibility at WI meetings.

We are now working with the WI to produce information resources on making WI meetings more accessible to people living with a disability including sight loss.

Contact the **National Federation of Women's Institutes** on:

Telephone 0207 371 9300

www.thewi.org.uk

Community Fundraising 2025

Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon



◀ Photo Credit: Ella Morgan (Devon in Sight)

▲ (L-R) Dr Leo Clarke and Grahame Flynn

St. George's Freemasons (No.112) of Exeter

On the 4th April 2025 Dr Leo Clarke the Immediate Past Master of St. George's Lodge, Exeter presented Devon in Sight's Chief Executive Officer Grahame Flynn with a cheque at the charity's offices in Exeter.

The brethren of St. George's Lodge made a donation of £500 towards the cost of a new Counselling Service for Children and Young People that was launched as part of our centenary.

Grahame said, "Leo and I have shared our masonic journey together. I am always delighted to promote the charitable work of Freemasons across Devon."



◀ Photo Credit: Devon in Sight

▲ Image of Cream Tea from June 2022

Devon in Sight Centenary Devonshire Cream Tea

On **Thursday 19th June 2025** Devon in Sight will be hosting a cream tea in partnership with Kenn and Kennford WI at our Head Office. This will be an opportunity to meet the team over scones, clotted cream and jam! Cream first of course!!!

If you would like to put your name down to attend this ticket only event please give us a call. **Tickets are only £10.**

To **Register for our Centenary Cream Tea** please call:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Supporting us

Centenary Jump for Sight Challenge

Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon!



▲ Devon in Sight's Grahame Flynn jumping in 2018 ◀ Photo Credit: Grahame Flynn (Skydive Buzz)

Devon in Sight will hosting our Centenary Jump for Sight Challenge on Saturday 21st June and Saturday 5th July 2025.

Devon in Sight's CEO Grahame Flynn, a veteran of two skydive challenges said, "Our **Centenary Jump for Sight Challenge** is a fantastic 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 near Honiton. Last years' event raised **£5,376** for our charity.

We would like to thank the following thrill seekers who are taking part this year; Mark Harper, India Luther, Geoff Mann, Ella Morgan, Roseanna Morgan, Deborah Palmer, Edward Pickering, Richard Pickering, Barbara Sojka, Leah Roelich and Devon in Sight Trustee Dr. Dave Adams.

Mark Harper pictured on the right in a mock up photograph will be our second visually impaired participant.

He said, "As someone who has been supported by Devon in Sight I thought that I would do something to help fund their services which remain free to all their clients.



▲ Mark Harper

I would urge everyone to try and make a donation to support those taking part in the Centenary Jump for Sight Challenge. "

If you would like to make a donation can do it online using the QR Code opposite, make a card donation over the telephone or send us a cheque made payable to 'Devon in Sight' to the address on the back page of this magazine.

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.

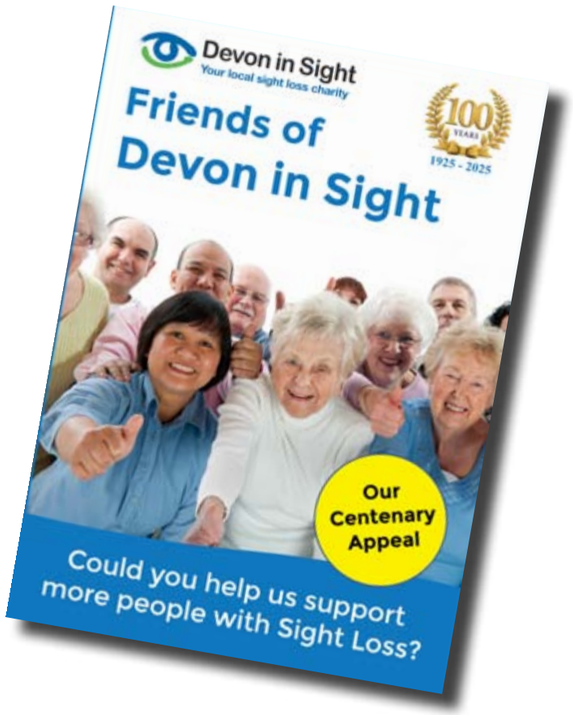
It may surprise you to know that we are not part of a national charity like the RNIB or Guide Dogs, and we do not receive any statutory funding. We are independent and fundraise ourselves to make all our services free for you.

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

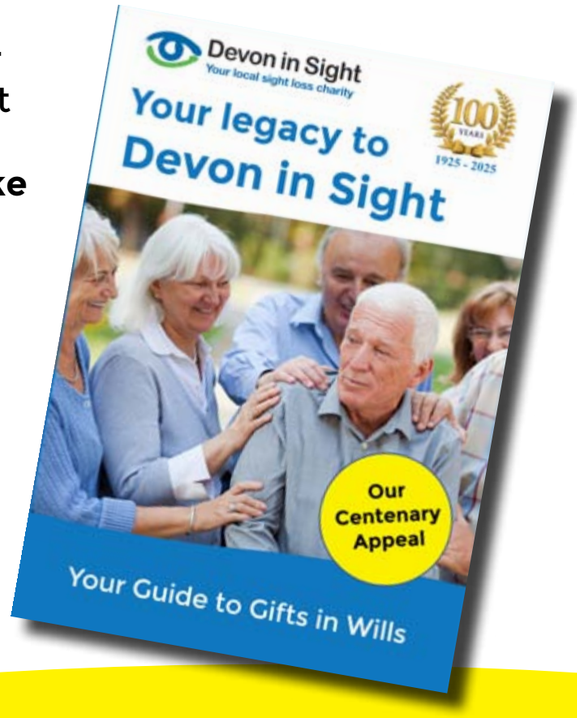
Did you know that making a will is the only way to make sure your money, property, possessions and investments (known as your estate) go to the people and causes that you care about.

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:

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Useful Phone Numbers Directory

Helping you navigate your sight loss journey

Emergency Eye Services

NHS Direct	**111**
Emergency	**999**

Hospital Eye Units

West of England Eye Unit	**01392 411611 (Switch Board)**
Glaucoma Unit	**01392 406045**
Macular Office	**01392 406052**
Torbay Eye Clinic	**01803 655088**
North Devon Ophthalmology	**01271 322577**
Plymouth Royal Eye Infirmary	**01752 431648**

Social Care

Sensory Team (Devon)	**0345 155 1007 (Care Direct)**
Sensory Team (Torbay)	**01803 219800**

National Sight Loss Charities

Blind Veteran's UK	**0800 389 7979** www.blindveterans.org.uk
British Blind Sport	**01926 424247** www.britishblindsport.org.uk
Macular Society Helpline	**0300 303 0111** www.macularsociety.org
Nystagmus Network	**0845 634 2630/0749 332 4218** www.nystagmusnetwork.org
Glaucoma UK	**01233 648 170** www.glaucoma.uk
Retina UK	**0300 111 4000** www.retinauk.org.uk
RNIB Helpline	**0303 123 9999** www.rnib.org.uk
Guide Dogs	**0800 781 1444** www.guidedogs.org.uk

Visual Hallucinations

Esme's Umbrella at the RNIB	**0303 123 9999**
www.charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk	

Young People Sight Loss Charities

Moorvision (Devon)	**07581 566690** www.moorvision.org
Look UK	**07464 351 958** www.look-uk.org

Digital Accessibility

Ability Net	**0300 180 0028** www.abilitynet.org.uk

General Advice

CAB	**0800 144 8848** www.cabdevon.org.uk

Daily Living Equipment

Optima Low Vision Services	**01803 864218** www.optimalowvision.co.uk
Sight & Sound Technology	**01604 798070** www.sightandsound.co.uk

Emotional Distress

Samaritans (24/7)	**116 123 FREE** www.samaritans.org

For **Information, Advice and Guidance** please call Devon in Sight:

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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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Exeter, EX6 7XY

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