

Insight Spring 2021

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National Volunteers Week**

Hello Everyone

I hope you're all continuing to keep safe and well in these challenging times. It's certainly been a very different year and it's strange to think that it's now more than 12 months since the pandemic began. However, hopefully there is now good news and light at the end of the tunnel.

I'm sure by now many of you will have received your vaccinations as have most of Sight Support staff which is great news. This gives us all that bit more confidence and reassurance of protection and the ability to make cautious steps forward to return to more normality.

We're so pleased to have some of our staff back in the offices again, albeit only a few of us at a time and maintaining our social distancing. And in line with government guidelines we are encouraging all staff, volunteers and service users to regularly test themselves using the free lateral flow tests available from local chemists or by calling 119.

I'm also delighted to say that we have a plan to 'resume normal services' and, providing the Governments Road map carries on in the right direction we will be seeing some of you again very soon. Things will obviously be a little different, especially to start with as our first priority will continue to be the health and safety of all our service users, staff and volunteers. We have therefore implemented a number of COVID secure practices to ensure your safety when you return.

Our Drivers/Activity Co-ordinators have been out to see some of you recently and I'm really pleased to hear that the majority of you are really keen to come back and see us again; we've certainly missed you all and look forward to seeing you all again very soon.

The other good news is that we will be continuing with many of the new virtual services which we have introduced during the pandemic, so we have even more to offer you now; including Talking Tech; Audio Book Club and Speakers Corner. Look out for more information on these services in this issue.

Our building, including the Resource Centre, will gradually increase opening times to the public over the next few months and our phone lines remain open so please give us a call if we can help with anything at all.

We can't wait to welcome you all back.

With Very Best Wishes

Sandra Ackroyd

Chief Executive

Talking Newspapers

The Talking Magazine produces a weekly talking newspaper including news and feature articles taken mainly from the local papers in Hull and East Yorkshire. Anyone with a visual impairment can receive the Talking Magazine free of charge. For more information please contact:

Hull : 01482 585822

Beverley : 01482 657073

Bridlington: 01262 677488

Goole: 01405 948831

Supported Housing



When someone has sight difficulties some aspects of life can be difficult but living at Beech Holme Court you can still retain your independence secure in the knowledge that help is close by. Beech Holme Court is a housing complex of 23 flats which provide individual homes for visually impaired people of all ages who wish to live independently and are able to care for themselves.

If you would like more information about Beech Holme Court's facilities or to be considered for addition to the tenancy waiting list, please contact us on 01482 342297.

Road Map for Return to Services

We know you are all keen to return to normal services here at Sight Support so we'd like to share with you our plan for the next few months. Please bear in mind that this all depends on the local and national picture regarding COVID-19 restrictions and may be subject to change.

Day Groups

Our Driver/Activity Coordinators are starting to plan assessment visits to each Day Group member to check their confidence and mobility to return. They'll chat to you about your health and even walk with you to the mini bus to try out the steps to make sure you can manage it.

We will be adopting a gradual approach to re-starting Day Groups and hope that towards the end of May, we will be able to start to bring in smaller groups to the centre. We understand that for many of you, this will be the first

time you have been out for a long time so we will start with shorter days with smaller groups to ease everyone back in gently, gradually returning to a more normal service by the end of June.

If you usually attend more than once per week, to start with you will be offered one day per week to create 'Service User Bubbles' and the Driver/Activity Coordinators will discuss with you your preferred day – we hope that it won't be too long until we can offer you all of your previous days.

There will be a few changes in the day group to ensure we all maintain social distancing and abide by all the COVID government guidelines but we're sure you will still enjoy meeting up with your friends and our wonderful drivers.

Day Group members will receive a leaflet on all of the steps we are taking to keep us all safe and the procedures we would like you to follow when you return. Please read this and share it with your families – hopefully this will offer you, and them, some reassurances.

SocialEYES

Our Costello Fitness and Tennis sessions recommenced week beginning Monday 19th April and we have contacted all those who attend previously to discuss new procedures and guidelines for returning.

Our Art Box Project will continue until the end of May and we hope that our Singing Group, face to face art group, 10 Pin bowling and monthly outings will all be back up and running by July – watch this space for more news!

Virtual Services

We're pleased to announce that our virtual services, which have started during the last year – many of which are very popular, such as the Audio Book Club, Talking Tech, Speakers Corner and SocialEYES Quiz will all continue. We hope you are enjoying these sessions. If you have any suggestions or comments about these sessions, please don't hesitate to contact us on 01482 342297.

Home Visits

Our Community Advice Officers are continuing to offer support and advice over the telephone and when issues can't be resolved this way, they can make home visits, however we have put in place the following procedure to ensure everyone's safety:

- Pre screening will be carried out to check for COVID symptoms/contact
- Visits will be limited to 30 – 45 minutes.
- Where possible, visits will take place outside (in a garden) or if inside, in well ventilated rooms with open windows.
- All our Community Advice Officers have had both vaccinations and are taking twice weekly lateral flow tests.



Resource Centre

We will be reopening our Resource Centre in Hull on a gradual basis, starting with Mondays and Wednesdays from week commencing 24th May.

From July we will also be opening each Friday before we return to opening all five days per week from October onwards.

This service will be available on an appointment only basis so we can manage the number of people in at any one time.

The Resource Centre offers a wide range of equipment to help with the practical issues of sight loss.

To book an appointment simply call us on 01482 342297.



Esme's Friends

Do you see things that are not there?

Visual hallucinations, sometimes known as Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS), can be quite distressing and may be linked to sight loss. CBS is a condition which some people with sight loss experience when they start to see things which they know aren't real.

Esme's Friends is our CBS Support Group.

Meetings take place via audio telephone calls. You can access the talks by simply calling 0330 336 0036. (Calls are charged at your local call rate. Please check with your supplier). Places are limited, so you do need to book in advance, by calling us on 01482 342297.

Forthcoming Dates:

Time: 11am—12noon

Tuesdays 11th May, 15th June and 13th July 2021.

For more information or future dates, please contact us on 01482 342297.

Speakers Corner



Our Speakers Corner events offer a chance to listen to a wide range of speakers offering advice, information and entertainment. They take place alternate Wednesday at 2pm. And the best bit? You don't have to leave the comfort of your armchair to join in! You access the talks by simply calling 0330 336 0036. (Calls are charged at your local call rate. Please check with your supplier). Places are limited, so you do need to book in advance. We will then give you instructions and a password to join in, but don't worry it's very easy to join in.

Forthcoming Dates

June: 2nd, 16th and 30th
July: 14th and 28th
August: 11th and 25th
September: 8th and 22nd

Talking Tech

Talking Tech is our regular online informal group session where you can get news and updates about latest apps and technology to help you keep connected with the wider community.

Talking Tech is available online via Zoom on alternate Tuesdays at 2pm.

Places are limited so you need to pre book. You will then be sent a link to log in to the session. And, don't forget, if there's anything in particular you'd like help with, please get in touch!

Forthcoming Dates

May: 18th
June: 1st, 15th and 29th
July: 13th and 27th

For more information about forthcoming dates, guest speakers or to book your place for our Speakers Corner or Talking Tech activities, please call us on 01482 342297 or email us at info@sightsupport.org.

Telephone Befriending

Our telephone befriending service is designed to reduce the feeling of loneliness and isolation to anyone with sight loss by providing a regular friendly phone call from one of our trained volunteers.

This service has proved even more important during the difficult, challenging and uncertain times of the pandemic when many people have been unable to get out and about so have welcomed a regular friendly chat. The conversation is guided by you, whatever you wish to talk about, it could be the things you enjoy, such as TV, hobbies, the weather or just a chat in general, our volunteers are ready to listen.

Most of our telephone befrienders are also visually impaired and they understand many of the problems and hurdles you may be facing on a daily basis. They can also refer you to our other services to ensure you receive the best support possible.

Jenny who is a volunteer befriender said:

“I enjoy making my calls and speaking to my ladies every week. We always enjoy a chat and a laugh together and it’s good to know you’ve brightened up someone’s day. It’s lovely to be able to offer something back for the help and support I have received from Sight Support.”

June who receives a regular call said:

“Carol is such a lovely lady to talk to and I always look forward to her call.”

If you think you, or someone you know would enjoy a friendly chat, please call us on 01482 342297.

If you’re a good listener, like to chat and can spare some time on a regular basis, then volunteering as a Befriender could be for you!

No experience is necessary as we’ll provide all the training and support you need.

Interested? Call us on 01482 342297 or email volunteering@sightsupport.org

SocialEYES

Do you live in the East Riding area? Would you like to be a part of a regular local walking group, where your visual impairment is no longer an obstacle? We would love to hear from anyone in areas outside of Hull such as Goole, Bridlington, Hornsea and Howden, with a view to expanding our support for people to experience the benefits of group exercise.

Walking groups are a huge part of our SocialEYES activities program. During normal times we run a weekly fitness walk at East Park Hull, and a fortnightly countryside walk around various routes in the East Riding area. These walks run in such a way that no one is left behind regardless of age or ability. As with all our activities, we want people to feel totally included. "Growing up with a visual impairment myself, I know how challenging it can be to find an environment where you experience the freedom of exercising safely, whilst also having the opportunity to socialise and meet new friends."



Since the start of the pandemic things have had to change somewhat. However, with a little adaptation our walking groups are still going strong. Whilst the tightest restrictions stopped all face-to-face group activity, once we were safe to do so, we managed to get back walking together again. This is currently in the form of a weekly walk at Costello Stadium, Anlaby Park Road North, Hull. Whilst it doesn't have the scenery of our public walks, using the track allows people to exercise and catch up with friends in an environment where they can social distance with the help of the clear white lines, and our wonderful team of volunteers and leaders.

Now that restrictions are lifting even further, we are well aware that many

more people could benefit from such an opportunity, which is why we are reaching out.

We appreciate that travel is always a big obstacle, which is why we would like to give people outside of Hull a more local opportunity. If this is something you would like to be a part of, please contact Sight Support on 01482342297 and we will be delighted to hear from you.

Roy Turnham

SocialEYES Coordinator

Audio Book Club

Do you love audio books? Why not join our new audio book club?

Each month members will receive a chosen book from Calibre Audio books and at the end of that month, group members will come together (by phone at first but hopefully in person when we can all meet up again) to discuss the book; the storyline, characters, plot twists etc. It only costs £18 a year to become a member. That's just £1.50 per month!

Books will be sent out on memory stick or CD and there are no postage costs to send back.

If you're interested in joining our exciting new group, why not call us on 01482 342297 for more information or email: info@sightsupport.org.

Insight into Sight Support

A big thank you to our lovely Day Group member Margaret who send in this short poem:

Ray has driven the minibus for many years

He's listened to people's hopes and fears

The roads are long and he steers us to laughter

With his little quips and there's plenty more after

At our final destination there's more of the same

And I realise.... "That's the name of the game".

Virtual Quiz



Fridays

Time: 3pm

Love quizzing? Are you an avid fan of Pointless, The Chase or even Mastermind?

Fancy putting those brain cells to the test? Then we have just the thing for you... our VIRTUAL Quiz!

Rounds include multiple choice, true or false, and a connections round where all answers have a connecting theme to be figured out.

The quiz is hosted on our telephone conference calling system, so all you need to be able to join in is a standard mobile or house phone.

Participants have commented on how nice it has been to keep in touch with friends and also meet new ones, in spite of not being able to meet face to face. New members are always welcome.

For more information or to book your place, call us on 01482 342297 or email info@sightsupport.org. We will then give you instructions on how to join the quiz.

Tennis Sessions

Day: Mondays

Time: 10.15am - 11.30am

Venue: Nuffield Health Centre, Kingston Park, Hull, HU1 2TX

Outdoor Exercise Group

Day: Fridays

Time: 10.00am - 11.30 am

Venue: Costello Stadium, Anlaby Park Rd North, Hull, HU4 6XG

HOW TO BOOK

All equipment is provided at the above sessions, however places are limited and MUST be booked in advance. For more information or to book your place, please contact us on 01482 342297 or by email at info@sightsupport.org.



Meet the Team



Anna Zacharias, pictured above, is our Volunteer Coordinator who oversees the fabulous work our volunteers do within the community, helping deliver services and raising awareness and funds for the charity.

When did you join Sight Support HEY?

February 2020 – just before lockdown!

What do you do at the charity?

I recruit, train and manage our wonderful volunteers.

What do you like about working at Sight Support?

The people! Everyone I've met so far have been fab!

What's your favourite TV program?

Magnum PI (the remake) or any American crime show.

What do you enjoy when you are not working?

Walking my dog Bella. Spending time with friends and family, eating out. Going to cinema/ theatre. Travelling. Retail therapy!

What is your Favourite Song?

Don't really have a favourite song- I love lots of different types of music and it depends on my mood as to what I listen to. Hootie and the Blowfish, "I only want to be with you" & "Happy" by Pharrell Williams always make me smile. I love 80's music for a bit of a boogie.

If you could meet any living person for dinner, who would you pick and why?

I'll pick the Obamas – both of them together if possible! But either will do! I think they have done remarkable things and would have fascinating stories to tell.

What's your favourite place you've ever visited?

There are so many! I love the Lake District where my family is from and Scotland. I also love Kovalam in Kerala, where my family is also from. The beach is beautiful and the sunrises are stunning.

Who is your hero?

My current heroes are the men and women who have developed the Covid-19 vaccine.

Volunteering



This June as part of National Volunteers Week (1st to 7th June). During an exceptionally difficult year, people from all walks of life around the UK have taken the time to volunteer and made a huge difference to people and their communities – just as they do every year. That's why the theme for this year's Volunteers' Week is **'A time to say thanks'**.

Sight Support HEY will once again be celebrating and thanking our volunteers for all their time and dedication during the last 12 months as well as thanking those who usually volunteer but have not been able to because of the pandemic.

The week also offers us a chance to showcase the range of volunteering opportunities we have on offer and to encourage people to try volunteering for the first time .

Volunteering Opportunities

Sight Support receives no ongoing government funding and relies on donations and proactive fundraising to raise the funds needed to provide its ever expanding support services .

With lockdown restrictions lifting, we are keen to restart many of our usual public fundraising activities that have had to be on hold over the last year including store collections and tombola stalls.

We are seeking volunteers who can help us to raise both awareness and funds by manning stalls, booking venues and helping to prep equipment and resources for events.

If you're friendly, outgoing and enjoy meeting new people, able to make your own way to different venues and/or have access to a vehicle, we'd love to hear from you.

Call us on 01482 342297 or email us at volunteering@sightsupport.org.

To find out more about volunteering with us, please visit our website at www.sightsupport.org/support-us/volunteering.

Fundraising Diary

Our fundraising income has seen a very significant reduction over the last year with almost all our events and challenges cancelled due to Covid-19 and we are not expecting our income to recover to pre-COVID levels for some time

We now hope to begin some public fundraising in the not too distant future including our exciting Abseil Challenge and our Christmas Fayre .

We also hope to restart our regular shop and street collections very soon.

If you can spare even an hour or two to help on any of these dates, or if you would be willing to hold a collection at your local supermarket, please contact us on 01482 342297 or email fundraising@sightsupport.org.

Or to receive more information about upcoming events, please sign up to our e-newsletter by emailing us at fundraising@sightsupport.org .

Abseil



Sunday 1st August

Venue: K2 Building, Hull

Whether you're an adventure-seeker or an adrenaline-junkie, now is the time to channel your inner superhero and test your nerve as we offer you this amazing opportunity to abseil down one of Hull's tallest and most iconic buildings; the K2.

Registration is £45 with a minimum sponsorship of £75.

Hurry as places are limited for this one day only event.

Deadline for registration is 1st July 2021.

For more information or to book your place, call us on 01482 342297 or email fundraising@sightsupport.org.

Thank You

Sight Support HEY relies on donations and bequests to fund our support services and your support has never mattered more than during the pandemic.

Each and every donation given really can help us to make a difference to the lives of local people with sight loss. We cannot possibly mention everyone, however here are just a few of you who have helped recently:



John Tomlinson Opticians (pictured above) once again kindly chose Sight Support as their Charity of the Year and, in spite of lockdown closures and the new cashless society, they still managed to raised a fantastic raised £500 . Thank you to everyone involved.

A big thank you to Sally Bird, Ladies Captain at Hornsea Golf Club, and her fellow members who raised an amazing £650 over the last year in spite of the challenges of Covid-19.

Our thanks also go to all our friends at the Rotary Club of Humberside who continue to support our work with a wonderful donation of £300.

We have also been fortunate to receive an incredibly generous gift of £1,000 from local company Smith and Nephew.

Thank you also to a number of trusts and foundations whose kind support has helped us continue to support local people with sight loss over recent months including the David Hudson Trust, the Sir James Reckitt Charity, the National Lottery Awards for All Fund, the Joseph & Annie Cattle Trust and Sport England's Tackling Inequalities Fund with the support of Active Humber.



Christmas Fayre



Saturday 13th November

Venue: Cottingham Civic Hall

Our always popular Christmas Fayre is back!

More than 30 craft and gift stalls with a stunning array of fabulous gift ideas for everyone on your Christmas gift list. Everything from food, crafts, clothing, toys and much more! Plus tombola & refreshments.

Fun for all the family!

Admission 50p adults, children FREE. (All proceeds to support local people with sight loss)

Stallholders

To check availability or to book a stall at this event, please call us on 01482 342297 or email fundraising@sightsupport.org.

Fundraise Your Way

Almost anything you enjoy doing can be an opportunity to fundraise for Sight Support. From running a marathon, to sky diving or holding a charity bake sale, the possibilities are endless.

We are happy to offer advice and assistance to supporters who wish to host their own events or take on their own challenges.

Call us on 01482 342297 or email fundraising@sightsupport.org to find out how we can support your fundraising efforts.

We hope that you enjoy reading this magazine and we would like to continue to keep you updated about how we are helping local people with sight loss, our fundraising appeals and how you can support us. We will not sell your data and we promise to keep your details safe and secure. If at any time you no longer wish to receive our mailings, please email info@sightsupport.org or call us on 01482 342297.