



Our staff and volunteers have been working hard to continue providing vital support to local people with sight loss during Covid-19. Read on to find out more about what we have been doing.

Hello Everyone

I hope you're all keeping safe and well in these challenging times. It certainly feels like a lot has happened since our last issue of Insight.

The coronavirus has had a huge impact on everyone's lives and we are all learning to live in a different way. We realise that many of you will have been shielding for the last few months due to the virus and additional health conditions you may have. I hope you have all coped with lockdown ok; we know how difficult it is not being able to get close to those we love and the additional isolation this has caused for many.

Like all other organisations we had to close our premises during lockdown but have had a number of staff working from home and have still been offering support in the best way we can.

Since the lockdown we have been working very hard to continue to provide support in the best way we can and to as many local people with sight loss as possible during

the pandemic.

During the last few months we have continued to provide expert advice, guidance and maybe most of all reassurance; we have:

- Made 3,164 welfare calls to our most vulnerable service users
- Made 898 telephone befriending calls to isolated visually impaired people
- Made 125 shopping trips
- Made 79 referrals to local community hubs and other support services

We have also been working hard during lockdown to develop new services to support everyone until we can physically get back together again, which will be as soon as it is safe to do so and following government guidelines.

In Touch is our new monthly magazine including some additional fun activities. This is in addition to this Insight magazine which goes out three times a year.

Speakers Corner is our new fortnightly dial in service featuring guest speakers.

Talking Tech is our new online group offering advice and tips on technology to help you keep connected with your family and friends, as well as the wider community.

You can find out more about each of these new services elsewhere in this edition of Insight.

We are slowly starting to return to a 'new normal' with staff gradually starting to return to work after furlough leave.

During the next few weeks, we will be purchasing some additional 'tablets/ small computers' which we hope to loan out to those of you who would like to join in on some 'virtual' group sessions using the internet. Don't worry we will support you every step of the way.

We're missing all of you and the most important thing at the moment is that we all stay safe.

We look forward to seeing you all again as soon as it's possible.

Until then; take care, stay safe and stay positive

Sandra Ackroyd
Chief Executive

How we are helping

Our Community Advice Officers have been working from home and making welfare calls to some of our most vulnerable and isolated service users during the Covid-19 lock down.

They have made thousands of calls and the overwhelming feedback is how isolated many of our service users are feeling right now and how much they are missing regular contact with the wider community.

People like Barbara:

"Thank you so much for your help and advice. I live alone so your calls are making a huge difference."

Here are just a couple of examples of how Alisha, one of our Community Advice Officers (pictured overleaf) has been able to help people during this challenging time.

Eileen and her Talking Books

Alisha was delighted to talk to and help a lovely lady called Eileen whose Talking Book deliveries from the RNIB had suddenly stopped. Not only did Alisha sort out the

problem but she also updated Eileen's wish list of authors and Eileen promptly received seven new audio books.

"I'm over the moon," said Eileen. "My family are wonderful support but I was still feeling very down emotionally so I've really enjoyed my chats with Alisha and I'm very grateful for her support. Receiving my books again is the nicest thing to happen since lock down began and it's made my day."



Alisha is pictured above in her home office

Charlie and his Family

Charlie is a husband and father of a young child with another baby on the way. He has diabetic retinopathy and prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Alisha was able

to help him to apply for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) unfortunately when the lock down began, the PIP system also slowed down leaving Charlie with no payments which meant that he and his young family were really struggling to even buy food. He had tried to call the council for a food parcel but his request for help wasn't answered.

Alisha was able to contact the council to get Charlie's request expedited and also referred him to Connect Well to assess his benefits situation and how they might be able to provide assistance. Within one week, Charlie had received a food parcel from the Council, and Connect Well had been in touch to speak to Charlie about benefits and his housing situation which lead to them making an emergency universal credit claim due to Charlie's long term health problems and now he is receiving his benefits.

"I am so grateful for Alisha and Sight Support HEY's help," said Charlie. "The follow up advice and support I've received has been wonderful."

Library Services

Libraries in Hull and East Yorkshire have now reopened. In Hull a 'Select and Collect' service is in place as customers are not allowed into the library to browse. Large print and audiobooks are available. You can ask for a specific author/title, or just a genre and the item will be picked out for you and the library will call to let you know when it is ready to collect. It will be at least 72 hours from 'selecting' because of the quarantine period. There is a free home delivery service for vulnerable service users. Books will be delivered and collected from the doorstep and this can be accessed by calling 01482 210000 which includes talking books.

East Yorkshire libraries are operating an order and collect service only. You will only be able to drop off borrowed items and collect pre-ordered items at the door - there is no provision to browse books or drop in. You can order items using the online catalogue, the library app or by phoning your branch and will be notified online when items are

ready to collect. Check out their website www.eastridinglibraries.co.uk for further details including opening hours and mobile library.

Esme's Friends

Esme's Friends is our new Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS) Support Group. CBS is a condition which some people with sight loss experience when they start to see things which they know aren't real, sometimes called visual hallucinations.

Meetings will 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.

The first meeting will take place on **Tuesday 18th August at 11am** when Judith Potts, founder of Esme's Umbrella (an organisation offering telephone support specifically for people who experience CBS, will be our guest speaker.

Banking Support

Staying at home poses a challenge for managing your money, especially if you are not confident with online or mobile banking, but solutions are available. The Post Office is offering a cash delivery service to help vulnerable customers who are shielding at home to receive benefits such as state pensions. Eligible Post Office Card Account holders will be contacted by the DWP to offer them the use of this service.

Some banks, including Barclays, NatWest and Tesco, are also offering a delivery service for vulnerable customers.

Most are trying to offer more telephone support during the crisis, while the Lloyds and Royal Bank groups have opened dedicated helplines for vulnerable customers and those over 70 years of age.

Some banks will allow a third party (with appropriate ID) to visit a branch on your behalf.

As the situation is changing rapidly, we would advise you to check with your own bank for current information on what help they can offer.

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. For more information please contact:

Hull : 01482 585822

Beverley : 01482 657073

Bridlington: 01262 677488

Goole: 01405 948831

In Touch

In Touch is our new monthly magazine. We know that many of you are missing getting together with your friends at Sight Support HEY and taking part in your usual activities so we hope this new monthly magazine will help fill the gap a little bit until we can get back together again in person. If you are visually impaired and would like to receive In Touch, please call us on 01482 342297 or email info@sightsupport.org.

Speakers Corner

Our new Speakers Corner events offer you the chance to hear a wide range of speakers offering advice, information and entertainment. They will take place every other Wednesday at 2pm. And the best bit? You don't have to leave the comfort of your armchair to join in!

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. We will then give you instructions and a password to join in, but don't worry it's very easy to join in.



Our first Speakers Corner featured local author and Sight Support HEY Vice President, Val Wood (pictured above). Val read an excerpt from her latest book "Four Sisters" and

told us more about her current writing competition details of which can be found on her website at www.valeriewood.co.uk.

"I really enjoyed listening to Val talk," says Trixie. "I enjoy her books and she was very interesting. Now I'm looking forward to the next speaker too."

For more information, forthcoming dates or to book your place please call us on 01482 342297 or email us at info@sightsupport.org.

Your Support

Every donation we receive right now has never mattered more. We know not everyone can help at the moment, but if you can, and would like to make a donation, however large or small, please complete the donation form included with this newsletter and return it to us at the usual address. Alternatively, you can donate to our virtual bucket collection (see back page) using your mobile phone.

Meet the Team



Leah Ellerington (pictured above) joined us in July last year and, although her role is that of Personal Assistant to our Chief Executive and Services Manager, she is always willing to help out other colleagues and goes above and beyond to ensure our service users are made to feel welcome.

What do you like about working at Sight Support?

The charity plays a massive role in supporting our members to live their best life, despite their visual impairment. It brings people together. It's such a privilege to be a part of this amazing team.

What do you enjoy when you are not working?

I love cooking and eating healthily, Yoga and spending quality time with my family. I also love buying

clothes and drinking good Champagne!

Favourite Quote

You don't have to be perfect to be amazing.

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

Hmmm. Tough one. Maybe Allan Sugar. I love his authority, or Jason Momoa because I think he is just so handsome!

What was your favourite TV show when growing up?

I think it was Home and Away. I used to watch that every night.

Have you learned anything about yourself from lockdown?

Yes. To not stress out so much, to slow down and to not worry about things I cannot control.

What chore do you absolutely hate doing?

I absolutely hate cleaning the bathroom! With a passion!



Leah is pictured above in a yoga pose.

Talking Tech



Our Training Officer, Tracy Atkinson, is available to provide one-to-one technical support via telephone to help you with your technology queries including ways to use your smart phones and tablets.

We are also introducing Talking Tech; a series of informal group sessions where you can get news and updates about latest apps and technology to help you keep connected with your family and friends as well as the wider community. You can share your own top tips and take part in a question and answer session.

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

With your permission, our Training Officer Tracy can even remotely access your device to help set you up on Zoom if needed.

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

August: 4th and 18th

Sept: 1st, 15th and 29th

October: 13th and 27th

November: 10th, and 24th

For more information or to book your place please call us on 01482 342297 email us at info@sightsupport.org.

Blue Badges

COVID-19 service update from Hull City Council.

Blue Badges that have expired from the end of January 2020 will not be enforced by parking enforcement due to the delay in processing application forms. You can still use your expired blue badge until 30th September 2020.

SocialEYES

We are delighted to announce that Sight Support HEY has been awarded a grant of £4,600 National Lottery funding from Sport England's Tackling Inequalities Fund to develop outdoor activity sessions, including tennis and outdoor group exercise sessions for visually impaired people.

"I am delighted and extremely grateful to Sport England and Active Humber for supporting us in this project," says Roy Turnham, SocialEYES Coordinator.

"Whilst the current government guidelines have allowed for people to return to a level of group activity, this remains a challenging and stressful experience for many of those with sight-loss, particularly in the unpredictable environment of busy public places. This funding will enable our service users to enjoy the health and social benefits of outdoor small-group activity in a safe space, without fear of breaching social distancing guidelines."

Sight Support HEY would like to thank Active Humber for their kind support of our application.

Tennis Sessions

Day: Mondays

Time: 10am - 11am

Venue: YPI Lawn Tennis Club, YPI Sports Centre, Chanterlands Avenue, HU5 4EF

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 these sessions, however places are limited and must be booked in advance.

For more information and/or to book your place, please contact us on 01482 342297 or by email at info@sightsupport.org.



Cheers for Volunteers

National Volunteers Week takes place from 1st—7th June each year and offers us a chance to celebrate and say thank you for the contribution all our volunteers make throughout the year.

Although it's more important than ever for us to recognise and support volunteers, sadly due to Covid-19, we were unable to celebrate together this year. Instead, along with many other charities, we decided to "Cheer for our Volunteers", and on Monday 1st June 2020 at 8pm, Sight Support HEY staff including Karen Dunderdale, our Telephone Befriending Coordinator (pictured below), clapped and cheered from their doorsteps for all of the wonderful volunteers who support charities like ourselves all throughout the year and during times of crisis.



Our Community Advice Officer, Karen, wrote this wonderful poem to say thank you to our amazing volunteers:

Thanks to those who volunteer
Who struggle on and persevere
Your contribution is unique
The time you give up every week
Though coronavirus has been a test
You turn up cheerfully, give your best
And help to turn the bad to good
To make the lonely understood
To listen with a kindly ear
And make a difference which is clear
It's not an easy thing to do
But so many rely on you
So shout out loud and give a cheer
To those who choose to volunteer!

Virtual Bucket Collection



Since social distancing restrictions under Covid-19 were introduced, we have had to cease almost all our fundraising activities such as bucket collections overnight. Events have been cancelled and at present we simply do not know when it will be safe to reopen and generate income again. It's a worrying time for a charity which receives no government funding and relies on donations to continue its work.

July is usually an incredibly busy fundraising month for us, so with all our events cancelled, we're holding our first ever virtual bucket collection. If you can donate to help us continue to recover some of the donations we've missed out on this month, it would make a real difference.

Simply Text SSHEY to 70085 to donate £5

Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS.

If you'd like to give £5 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text SSHEYNOINFO to 70085.

Thank You

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.

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