

Feb / March Newsletter 2024



Our Vision Support Advisor, Tara, demonstrating magnification with a client at an low vision open day.

Featured in this newsletter:

- Our Impact 2022/23 – Read Our Report
- World Glaucoma Week and Eye Health Checks
- NHS Health Inequalities Project – Have Your Say



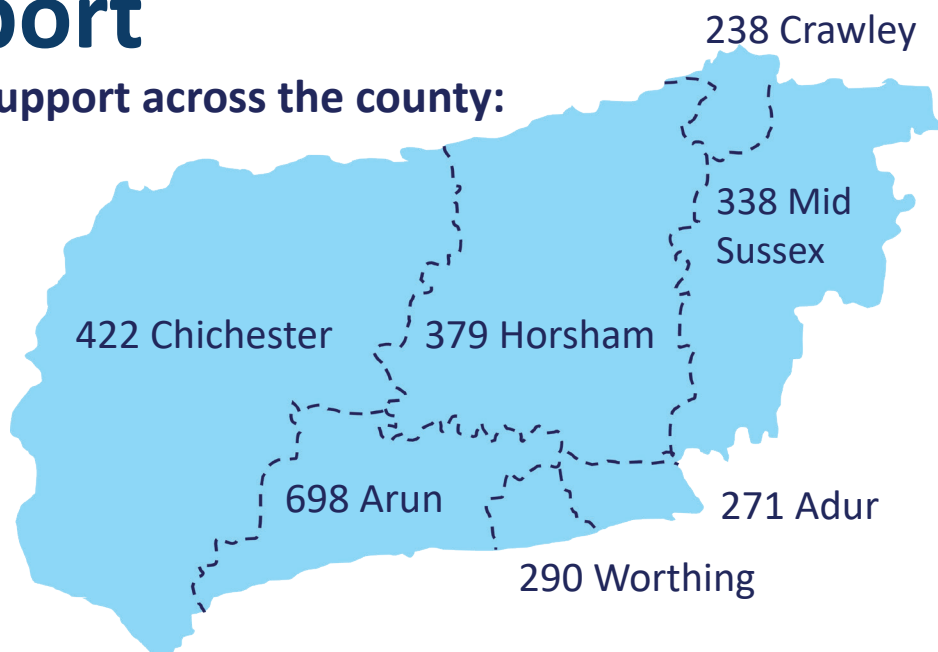
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Impact Report



Support across the county:



Our Impact 2022/23

We provide free support and specialist information to blind and sight impaired residents, their families and carers across West Sussex. Our mission is to help our clients live Life Without Limits. Demand for our services has never been greater and research predicts a further 23% growth in demand by 2032 (RNIB). Securing funding and resources to provide care for those in need is a constant challenge.

- We welcomed **685** new clients – our highest number ever and a 32% increase.
- Total number of clients just over **2,800**.
- Our Sight Care Advisors provided emotional and practical support after diagnosis to **1,990** contacts – including help with understanding the

visual impairment certification and registration process and completing **327** registrations.

- We carried out **390** dedicated assessments to identify magnification, techniques and products to help with everyday tasks such as reading, shopping, medication and preparing meals.
- We supported **118** clients with accessing benefits and concessions, helping them to complete forms (such as Personal Independence Payments, Attendance Allowance and Blue Badge) and supporting people with appeals, tribunals and assessments.

Please continue to contact us when you need us and please be patient, our team will always respond to you as soon as they can.

Eye Health – Spotlight on Glaucoma



From **10th to 16th March**, we will once again be supporting World Glaucoma Week. It is important that everyone has regular eye health checks in order to detect glaucoma as early as possible. Fortunately, for many people early detection/diagnosis and treatment can prevent further/sight loss.

Glaucoma is often caused by a build-up of fluid in the eye. This causes pressure in the eye to increase, which damages the optic nerve and leads to sight loss. Eye drops are the most common treatment for glaucoma, there are several different kinds but, used regularly as prescribed, they help to keep your eye pressure right for you.

“ We hope by raising awareness of glaucoma, it will encourage all of us to have a regular eye examination. Even those suffering from vision loss should continue to do so as checking for further changes in the eyes can help make the best use of remaining vision and prevent any unnecessary further sight loss. ”

Kirstie Thomas,
Chief Executive Officer.

Top tips:

- Follow your clinician’s instructions – administer the number of drops advised, on time every day. Establish a routine and stick to it.
- Order further supplies before your eye drops finish to ensure you don’t run out.
- If you find it difficult to put your drops in – an eye drop dispensing aid might help.

Conversations about a glaucoma diagnosis can be daunting. So please remember, we’re here to support you every step of the way.

Alternatively, you can contact Glaucoma UK. They run support groups, which can be a great way of sharing information and experiences.

www.glaucoma.uk

helpline@glaucoma.uk

or call 01233 648170.



For further details about any of these articles, please call us on: 01243 828 555 or email: enquiries@4sight.org.uk

News and Information

Low Vision Solutions Open Days

- Monday 4th March, Horsham.
- Monday 20th May, Haywards Heath.

Gain hands-on experience with products and technology to aid you in your daily activities – magnifiers, electronics, reading machines, desktops and much more. **10am to 2pm, entry is free**, no appointment needed. To find out more please contact us.



RNIB Living Well With Sight Loss Courses

- 13th and 14th March, Horsham.
- 12th and 13th June, Haywards Heath.
- 25th and 26th September, Midhurst.

All **10am to 4pm**. These courses cover information from understanding benefits, staying independent, tips and gadgets for everyday living, eye health to hobbies and interests.

To find out more please contact us.

Accessible Supermarkets: Shop for cheese with ease

As a blind or partially sighted person:

- Do you find supermarkets an easy place to shop?
- Are you able to recognise what you're buying?
- Do you think supermarkets and the products they sell could be more accessible?

Join us, Thomas Pocklington Trust, Proctor and Gamble and NaviLens for an informative and interactive session where we'll be exploring the world of supermarket accessibility.

Tuesday 27th February, 11:30am to 2pm, The Shoreham Centre. Tea/coffee and a sandwich lunch will be provided. To secure your place please visit: <https://pocklington.tfaforms>.

Product Sales

As part of our ongoing efforts to ensure we are operating efficiently, with effect from **1st April 2024** all products that we sell (for example magnifiers, bump-ons, lighting, kitchen aids, large print items), need to be paid for at the point of purchase. Payment can be made by bank transfer, card, cheque or cash.

NHS Health Inequalities Project

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we have been invited by the NHS to lead a project in collaboration with East Sussex Vision Support to research the inequalities of the NHS across Sussex.

The aim of the project is to look at the full process for visually impaired people in accessing and utilising the NHS. Please let us know what you think works well and what requires development, we can then feed this back to the NHS. This is the first time we have done such work with the NHS and your input is imperative for change. If you require any more information or wish to take part in this project (with our support or independently online), please contact us.



For further details about any of these articles, please call us on: **01243 828 555** or email: **enquiries@4sight.org.uk**

Discounted rail travel for visually impaired persons and a companion

Any visually impaired person and an accompanying adult can receive discounts on rail travel without a rail card. The discounts

can be Anytime

Day Single

34% for both

and Anytime

Day Return 50%

for both. More

information can be found at

www.nationalrail.co.uk Please do

let us know if you have any problems obtaining this discount.



Talking News

Six talking newspapers in West Sussex deliver local news and information in audio for free to blind, sight impaired and print-disabled people. Use the 'Talking Newspaper' app which can be downloaded to your smart device for free or via your Alexa device. Use the voice command "Alexa, Enable Talking Newspapers", then ask for the one you would like. Many have websites where you can listen to latest and past news. Please contact us for details of your local talking news.



News and Information

Support available from utility companies

The Priority Services Register is a free support service to help people in vulnerable situations, including those who are visually impaired. Energy suppliers and network operators offer it. If your gas, electricity or water supply is damaged or develops a fault, engineers work around the clock to restore it as quickly and safely as possible. Being on a Priority Services Register will ensure that extra support is received if you experience an outage. Utility companies offer various financial assistance, including discounted tariffs based on household income or for those in receipt of benefits, payment breaks and grants for home improvements.

Contact your supplier/s to find out what they offer. Various suppliers are active in Sussex, the following are the most common:

- **UK Power Networks: 0800 169 9970**
www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/power-cut/priority-services/aboutthe-priority-services-register .
- **SSEN: 0800 294 3259** www.ssen.co.uk/PriorityServices/ .
- **Southern Water: 0800 027 0800**
www.southernwater.co.uk/helpadvice/join-our-priority-services-register .

- **South East Water: 0333 000 2468**
www.southeastwater.co.uk/gethelp/help-for-priority-customers .



Could you make a difference by representing the voice of blind and partially sighted people in West Sussex?

The West Sussex Sight Loss Council is recruiting new members. Sight Loss Councils, funded by Thomas Pocklington Trust, are regional groups led by blind and partially sighted volunteer members. They use the lived experiences of members to work with businesses, policy makers and local service providers to increase the accessibility of their services for the local community. To find out more and how to join Sight Loss Councils, visit www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk, email info@sightlosscouncils.org.uk or telephone **020 7031 6376**.



Discount/Concession cards and grants for people with a Special Educational Need and/or Disability



MAX Card – a MAX card will provide discounts on attractions and activities across England. To claim your card, sign up via <https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/disability-register-0-25>.

CEA Card – enables a disabled cinema guest to receive a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them when they visit a participating cinema. To find out more and register visit the www.ceacard.co.uk.

Carers Card West Sussex – is available to anyone registered with Carers Support West Sussex. The card can help with offers and discounts across the county and has an ever-growing list of business being added. To find out more and register visit www.carerssupport.org.uk/carers-emergency-contact-card.

www.disability-grants.org is a website that contains information on a range of grants available to disabled people.

www.familyfund.org.uk provides grants to families with disabled children to help cover the costs of essential items.

The Cadent Foundation Winter Support Fund – food or energy vouchers and/or winter essentials for those in fuel poverty available through the RNIB; until end of March 2024. Eligibility criteria applies. To find out more call the RNIB's Helpline on **0303 123 9999** (option 3) or email advice.service.mailbox@rnib.org.uk.

For details of other discounts/concessions available to blind or sight impaired people please contact us.



For further details about any of these articles, please call us on: **01243 828 555** or email: enquiries@4sight.org.uk

Leisure Activities

Our Online Activities

We continue to run monthly Virtual Activities, focusing on:

- **Monday – books.**
- **Wednesday – technology.**
- **Thursday – a quiz!**

Access is via the Zoom video and teleconferencing facility over the internet or by phone. For further details please contact us.

Shoreham Experience Hub at The Shoreham Centre

Our Shoreham Experience Hub is an opportunity for blind and sight impaired people to meet and enjoy new experiences together. Our first Craft and Chat session in January included knitting, crochet, embroidery and a lot of chat! Our next planned sessions are:

- **Italian Wine Tasting, 8th February, 2pm to 4pm, £6.**
- **Craft and Chat, Thursday 15th February, 2 to 4pm, FREE.**
- **'50s and '60s Music Appreciation, 5th March 10:30 to 1pm, FREE.**

If you'd like to find out more, try out something new or book your space, please contact us today.
(Limited spaces available.)

Holbein at the Tudor Court – descriptive event, **12th March, 1.45pm**
There will be a descriptive event, for blind and partially-sighted people, for the Holbein at the Tudor Court exhibition at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace on **Tuesday 12th March from 1:45pm**. In partnership with the School of Historical Dress the event will explore what the Tudor characters from the exhibition are wearing and Principal, Jenny Tirimani, will bring costumes for examination and handling. We will have a guided wander through the exhibition and guests will be able to explore the works when the Gallery is closed to the general public. To book tickets please visit their *website* www.rct.uk or call the Ticket Office on **0303 123 7324**.



For further details about any of these articles, please call us on: **01243 828 555** or email: **enquiries@4sight.org.uk**

Accessible Breaks and Days Out

For details of other accessible days out please visit VisitBritain or VisitEngland's websites. They've put together some inspiration for the best accessible breaks and days out around England, including award-winning zoos, dramatic moorland wanderings, chocolatey fun and cosy hotels. www.visitengland.com/access-all .



VisitEngland

Sight Impaired Bowling

A sight impaired bowling club in Worthing is looking for new members. The Club meets every Friday, indoors, from **2pm to 4pm** at Pavilion Bowls Club. Would you like to get into bowling or learn?

Please contact the Organiser, *Les Fryer*, to find out more on: *07539 273 318* or email:

sightimpairedbowlsclub@gmail.com.

For details of more activities in your area please contact us.



Glaucoma UK Digital Support Groups

With World Glaucoma Week coming up, we thought we'd let you know about Glaucoma UK's free digital glaucoma support groups which run every fortnight. Topics range from the basics of glaucoma, to living well with the condition and the latest research. It is also possible to join by telephone – no internet connection required.

The next talk is 'Glaucoma Jargon Busting' on **13th February**.

For more information: visit www.glaucoma.uk/events or contact the helpline on **01233 648 170** or helpline@glaucoma.uk .



Fundraising News

A big thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas activities: -

- Our Christmas Prize Draw raised just over **£2,900**.

Congratulations to our winners, ticket numbers; 1st prize – 17410, 2nd prize – 38363 and 3rd prize – 22167.

- We raised just under **£1,600** selling Christmas cards – we do have a few designs left so if you'd like to get ahead for next Christmas please give us a call to buy some.

- Our Concert with Seaford College Chapel Choir raised just under **£700**.



A big thank you to Seaford College Chapel Choir, St Mary de Haura Church, Shoreham, Waitrose Haywards Heath and Waitrose Chichester, without whom this event would not have been possible.



- Our collection in Tesco, Durrington raised **£149.34** and our collection in Chichester raised **£519.60**.

- We received a staggering 268 beautiful, handcrafted knitted novelties. We filled them with sweets, sent them out to local schools and businesses to sell and raised over **£300!** If those needles are itching to get clicking again, we would be pleased to receive little Easter chicks or bunnies (that we can fill with Cadbury Crème Eggs), please get in touch for more information and a pattern.



Congratulations to our 200 Club winners:

Nov: Mr Lyons, Chichester, No.128.

Dec: Mr Le Mare, Worthing, No.159.

Jan: Mrs Bosher, Littlehampton, No.78.

Global Recycling Day – 18th March

Why not start something green and good this Global Recycling Day? We can recycle various items to raise funds for our vital services:

- NEW – Plastic bread packaging.
- Stamps – from your everyday post and collections.
- Ink cartridges.
- Cheese packets – including BabyBel wax wrappers.
- Cracker, biscuit and cake wrappers.
- Pringles tubes.
- Old or foreign coins and banknotes.
- Mobile phones, games consoles and tablets.
- Jewellery.

If you have any of these items, please drop them off at our offices in Bognor Regis or The Shoreham Centre. If you have any questions or would like to recycle your old car please contact us.



FREE will writing service – Bequeathed

We all want to make sure that our loved ones are taken care of in the future. By writing a will, you can make sure that your money, property and possessions go to the people and causes that you care about. We've teamed up with Bequeathed to offer our supporters a free, professionally drafted Will For Good. This service allows you to make the right will for your needs in the way that suits you best. **Visit www.bequeathed.org/4svs** and follow three simple steps:

1. Fill in an online form, with support and guidance available.
2. Attend a 30 minute appointment via telephone, video call or in person.
3. Receive your free Will For Good in the post, sign it in front of witnesses and return it to the legal firm.

For further details about any of these articles, please call us on: **01243 828 555** or email: **enquiries@4sight.org.uk**

CEO's Message



Firstly, a very Happy New Year to you all!

In this issue you'll find our Impact Report summarising how our services benefited those living with sight loss in 2022/2023. It shows just how important our services are to so many across West Sussex and also brings home the challenges we face in terms of finance and resources to keep delivering at the level required.

In the last Newsletter, we highlighted that we no longer receive West Sussex County Council funding, making a huge impact – we now have a letter template on our website making it easy to write to your MP to raise this vital issue – we continue to encourage anyone to do so. The major Fundraising Appeal we are planning has now moved to an April launch so watch out for news nearer the time.

This year we were part of the national campaign to prevent the closure of train ticket offices. We were delighted when the Government scrapped the proposals, and want to thank everyone who lent their support.

Finally, we were sad to learn of the passing of our previous Chairman and Vice Patron, Tony Boam. Our thoughts are with his family and friends.

Kirstie

Kirstie Thomas,
Chief Executive Officer.

Update your details

Don't forget to let us know if you have moved or changed your phone number, so that we can continue contacting you to support you.

Newsletter format & feedback

We produce the newsletter in a variety of formats – large print, Braille, email and audio, on USB or CD. If you would like to receive our newsletter in a different format, or have any feedback about the format you receive e.g. layout and formatting.

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