

Spring Newsletter 2025



Dan, our Accessible Technology Specialist, demonstrating accessibility features

Featured in this newsletter:

- Technology – What it Means for You
- Important Updates From the Macular Society
- Fundraising Update, and Easter's on its Way!



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Spotlight on Technology

In our 100 years of supporting people living in West Sussex with sight loss, we have seen countless changes in the type of support needed. Since 2023 the highest percentage of demand for our support is with accessing technology.

Around a decade ago, we worked with national charities to facilitate a series of technology workshops around the county, and from this, our technology service was introduced.

Our Accessible Technology service is one of the many vital services we offer to countless people across the county, helping our clients complete daily tasks once again following sight loss. For example, online banking using magnification functions, turning on their heating because they cannot see the thermostat, adding appointments to their calendars, and many more activities that, without technology, would be so difficult. Without this service, many of our clients have told us of the challenges they would face. Technology is ever-evolving and has

removed many access barriers for people with low vision, especially with the advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI).



In the past, sight loss has often led to some form of handheld magnification tool or an adaptation to lighting in the home. These are still important, but technology can, and is supporting daily living, as there are more technologies people use every day without necessarily realising that they are part of technological development. It is suggested that the future of aids for those living with sight loss will incorporate everyday technology, with the potential of adaptability to support varying needs.

It is anticipated that by 2030 nearly all people across the UK will be online. The Royal National Institute of Blind People report goes on to suggest that tackling the barriers associated with the factors of age and knowledge is likely to reduce the divide and speed up the adoption of technology by blind and partially sighted people.

“ Many of us can benefit from the advancements in everyday technology. As time progresses, the need for our support relating to accessibility features and products increases. ”

Dan, our Accessible Technology Specialist and Services Manager.



Global Accessibility Awareness Day

Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD)

Help us celebrate GAAD on Thursday 15th May. The purpose of GAAD is to get everyone talking, thinking and learning about digital access and inclusion, and the more than one billion people worldwide with disabilities/impairments. The GAAD Foundation's mission is "to disrupt the culture of technology and digital product development to include accessibility as a core requirement." If you'd like to find out more please visit the GAAD website www.accessibility.day

Contact us today:



01243 828 555 or email:



enquiries@4sight.org.uk



www.4sight.org.uk

@4sightVS



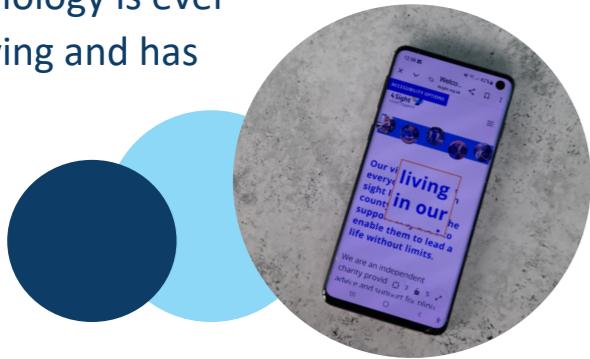
Client Story

Marion has been a client of ours since 2020, she contacted us last summer as she was feeling ever more isolated at home, due to her deteriorating sight loss because of macular degeneration. We made a referral to the British Wireless for the Blind Fund, who provide radios and Alexas for free and for life to people living with sight loss (eligibility criteria apply), as we felt Marion could benefit from an Alexa.

Marion received her Alexa and, through support from our Accessible Technology Specialist, we were able to inform her of its capabilities, highlighting how versatile the device could be. We also assisted in setting up the device. At the same time, we introduced Marion to the accessibility features on her existing android devices.

Marion is now able to communicate with friends and family via Alexa communication, as well as accessing news, talking books and managing her calendar. Marion said

“ Thank you for opening my eyes as to how I can access the world with just my voice. ”



Accessible Technology: A Day in a Life

We have collated some of our clients' feedback on how they use technology to support them with everyday tasks.

- 10pm – “Alexa, wake me up at 6.30am in the morning.” “Alexa, turn my lights off.”

- 6:30am – Alarm sounds “Alexa, alarm off.” “Alexa what is in my calendar for today?”

Getting dressed – there's an app that can be used on a smartphone (either Envision or Seeing AI) to identify the colour of different garments.

- 7am – time for a coffee! In the kitchen a one cup kettle can help to ensure that a cup is not overfilled (or you burn yourself).

7:30am – after coffee and breakfast, it is time to leave home for the day. “Alexa, what's the weather like today?”

Knowing that we are not due any rain, means umbrellas can be left at home.

8am – on the bus, if you realise you have left the heating on at home, you can get an app for your smartphone to enable you to switch the heating off remotely. Every penny helps in our current situation.

Throughout the day different technologies can be used for a range of tasks including monitoring emails, creating documents and speaking with friends/family/colleagues/customers.

3:30pm – a video doorbell can notify you when someone is at your front door. You can communicate with the delivery driver remotely to ask them to leave your parcel with your next-door neighbour.

5pm – end of the day, you can check bus times home via the bus operator's app. If the bus is running 10 minutes late, “Hey Google, call Home”. You can notify those at home that you will be running a little late.

6pm – upon arriving home, “Hey Google, open up Envision”. Envision can read your post for you, helping you to remain independent.

6:15pm – it's time to prepare dinner. An electronic vegetable chopper is a useful tool to prepare vegetables for your evening meal.

- **7pm** – time to unwind in front of the TV. Using the built-in screen reader can help you navigate to the program guide and find out what programmes are available with Audio Description.

There are a variety of technologies that can play an important part in everyday life and enable someone living with sight loss to complete their daily tasks without the need of relying on others or their remaining functional vision. Ultimately, technology is a tool, and like any tool, it can be used for a variety of purposes. As long as we are able to identify a purpose for our own specific needs, this is where the value of technology lies.

For further details about this article, please call us on: **01243 828 555** or email: enquiries@4sight.org.uk

News and Information

Low Vision Solutions Open Days

Tuesday 25th March, 2pm to 5pm,
West Wittering Memorial Hall, Elms
Lane, West Wittering, PO20 8LW.

Monday 12th May, 11am to 2:30pm,
Roffey Millennium Hall, Crawley Road,
Horsham, RH12 4DT.

Thursday 11th September, 11am to
2:30pm, Midhurst Methodist Church,
North Street, Midhurst, GU29 9DU.

Gain hands-on experience with
products and technology to aid you
in your daily activities – electronic
magnifiers, both portable and desktop,
as well as text to speech scanners and
other assistive technology. Entry is
free, no appointment needed. To find
out more please contact us.



For further details about any of
these articles, please call us on:
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World Glaucoma Week

From 9th to 15th March 2025, World Glaucoma Week focuses once again on reminding us, our family and friends to pop a date in the diary for an eye health check-up: this vital check can detect a number of conditions, like glaucoma, and prevent avoidable sight loss.

“We hope by raising awareness of glaucoma, it will encourage all of us to have a regular eye health check. Even those living with 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, CEO.

Are you concerned about different types of fraud and online scams?

To help raise awareness of different types of scams, how to recognise them and stay safe, and learn what to do if you become a victim, join West Sussex County Council for a free, informative webinar on **Tuesday 22nd April, 1-2:30pm**. Register now www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/are-you-scamsavvy-tickets-1105388309189

An update from the Macular Society

Director of Research at the Macular Society, Dr Peter Bloomfield, recently attended the macular group's monthly meeting in Shoreham. Dr Bloomfield updated attendees on the current projects that are under trial and how they will affect people with central vision loss.

A new drug, named Syfovre, is going through the acceptance process in the UK prior to approval. This drug is the first to be used on patients with late stage dry Macular Disease and is applied by injection. Other developments are the introduction of a new type of drug, named Vabysmo, with dual action to address two different aspects of wet Macular Disease and only needing an injection every 3-4 months. Also mentioned was the use of biosimilars on patients with wet Age-related Macular Degeneration.

For more information on any of this, or to find out if there is a support group for your sight loss condition and where these are based, please contact us.



The employment team at Thomas Pocklington Trust are launching their first 'Working Well with Sight Loss' residential course. The course is for blind or partially sighted people who are looking for work, or want to become more confident with technology, job searching, completing applications and facing interview questions. They are committed to creating a fun, relaxed learning environment where experience of living as a blind or partially sighted person is highly valued, and people will have the chance to be with like-minded people.

When:

Wednesday 23rd to Friday 25th April

Where: Thomas Pocklington Hub London and accommodation at the President Hotel

Cost: Free

If you'd like to find out more, email employment@pocklington.org.uk, if you're interested in joining the course, tell them about yourself and why you would benefit from the course, and the skills you have – all in 300 words.

Fundraising News

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

Our Christmas Prize Draw raised **£2,692**. Congratulations to our winners, ticket numbers:

1st prize – 032056

2nd prize – 008216

3rd prize – 032026

We raised just under **£2,000** 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, and Tesco, West Durrington, without whom this event would not have been possible.

Our collection in Tesco, Chichester raised **£200.49** and our collection in Chichester raised **£204.51**.

For further details about any of these fundraising activities, please call us on: **01243 838 001** or email: **fundraising@4sight.org.uk**

We received a staggering 546 beautiful, handcrafted Christmas knitted novelties. We filled them with sweets, sent them out to local schools and businesses to sell and raised just over **£400**! 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.

CHOOSE US AS YOUR LOCAL CAUSE

Co-op Members can support us through the Local Community Fund
membership.coop.co.uk/causes



Do you shop in the (blue) Co-op?
We're part of the Co-op UK Local Community Fund. If you're a Co-op Member please consider choosing us as your cause to support. Support us online with just one click <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/88314>

Congratulations to our 200 Club winners:

Jan: No. 22 Mrs Richards, Bognor Regis
Feb: No. 1 Mrs Ceccarelli, Littlehampton