

Wales Council of the Blind

**Perspectif**

Supplement no. 1

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# **A day in the life of Keira, the Powys ECLO.**

**Keira Brooks is employed by RNIB Cymru to deliver support to people with sight loss in Powys. She tells us here about the kind of support she provides.**

Attending an eye clinic can be a daunting experience especially if you or a loved one is given bad news about an eye condition or vision. It is very important that there is someone present available to talk things through with and provide support moving forward. Eye Care Liaison Officer's (ECLO's) work within eye clinics as this point of contact and provide support for patients and their families when and if they need it. The ECLO is the link between the clinic and the community, making sure that patients are aware of and able to access available practical, social and emotional support.

I am the ECLO covering the Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) area. Powys does not have a main hospital and instead is serviced by six community hospitals with outpatient departments. My role is therefore different to a traditional ECLO role as I attend multiple clinics in order to provide a face to face service. I also work with primary care and receive referrals from GPs, high street opticians and community groups.

I currently regularly attend the clinics at Ystradgynlais, Brecon, Llandrindod Wells and Llanidloes and am in the process of developing a volunteer-led information service at Welshpool hospital. Due to the size of Powys I am unable to attend people's homes to see them however I provide a telephone service to those I cannot see in clinics.

I talk to people about their vision and how it affects them. As every person's experience and situation is unique I provide them with the information that is relevant and useful to them. The range of information and support I provide is vast and includes everything

from how to access sight loss specific counselling to where to go for a large print book.

I am never in the same clinic two days in a row and every day is different. A typical day would revolve around me attending an Ophthalmology outpatient clinic and being available for patients to speak to. Nurses and doctors will ask me to speak to patients they think could benefit from receiving extra information or who have a specific question. During the day I will also receive referrals from outside the clinic and make contact with people over the phone in these instances.

**You can contact Keira directly using phone 07701 295138 or by email [keira.brooks@rnib.org.uk](mailto:keira.brooks@rnib.org.uk)**

## **Eye Clinic Liaison Officers: working together to integrate health, social care and community support services**

**Rebecca Colclough manages the ECLOs employed by RNIB Cymru across Wales. She wrote, with Puja Joshi, 'Being There – Developing understanding of the essential role of the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer In Wales'. This is a new report about their ECLO service, based on real-life case studies. The report highlights both the range of support ECLOs provide, as well as the huge importance of a host of other services ECLOs work in partnership with.**

Covering every main eye clinic in Wales, ECLOs are there to provide emotional support, information and guidance to people with sight loss, whenever they need it. ECLOs in Wales are employed by RNIB Cymru, Sight Cymru, and Local Health Boards.

The RNIB Cymru report highlights how important the ECLO services are to people with sight loss, and the positive difference

this support can make. ECLOs offer information on eye conditions and treatment options, statutory services, local support services, employment, finance, hobbies, maintaining independence and a huge range of other things.

Much of the work of the ECLO involves signposting or directly referring clients on to other support services. These include local social services and rehabilitation teams (ROVI), the Low Vision Service Wales and RNIB's own specialist services such as employment, education and welfare rights. ECLOs also build good relationships with local societies and national charities, referring clients on for social support or more specific information and advice.

The RNIB Cymru report aimed to highlight, through the case studies, the real importance of working together across this range of essential services. In clinic the ECLO acts as the signpost towards and the safety net between the range of support services patients may benefit from.

Recently the RNIB ECLO in Powys, Keira Brooks, has been supporting architect Stephen Waldron. Stephen has high praise for the service:

“I have a genetic eye condition, but suddenly over a weekend at the end of October last year I noticed a major deterioration in my sight which meant that overnight I had to stop driving.

“I own and run my own architecture business and my priority was keeping this up and running for the colleagues and clients depending on me. I struggled to read, write and produce my drawings for clients. I also need to travel to visit clients so I had to rely on others to drive which was becoming more and more unsustainable.

“Keira has been a great help. She's been phoning regularly

and been very supportive. She's referred and signposted me to RNIB resources such as employment Support, to help me with access to work; to the Rights, Advice and Information Service regarding Personal Independence Payment (PIP); and to Online Today for help with accessing technology."

On the other hand, renowned Welsh actor and recently retired Pobol y Cwm star Gareth Lewis says he would have appreciated the support of an ECLO, had it been offered at any point over the last 20 years during which his eyesight has deteriorated. After reading the new RNIB Cymru report Gareth commented:

"On reading these case studies I'm well aware that I have missed out on ECLO support over recent years, but I'm pleased they are available and that a number of them can provide the service bilingually

Whilst Wales is currently well provided for with ECLO coverage in those eye clinics attended by over 95 per cent of people in Wales, there is always more to be done. In some areas where funding is uncertain existing services can be at risk. In other areas there are more patients who need the information and support an ECLO can provide but there is simply not enough capacity currently to meet this need.

If anyone would like to read the RNIB Cymru report an accessible electronic copy can be downloaded from the RNIB Website <https://www.rnib.org.uk/being-there-means-more-just-being-there> or emailed to you on request.

**For hard copies to be posted to you please email [rebecca.colclough@rnib.org.uk](mailto:rebecca.colclough@rnib.org.uk) with your request and postal address. You can also call Rebecca on 029 2082 8512.**

# Sight Cymru's Lucentis Clinic ECLO

Sight Cymru provides ECLO services in the Gwent area and in Aberystwyth. The latest addition to their portfolio is a collaboration with Aneurin Bevan LHB to provide support in Newport's new Lucentis clinic based in Specsavers in Unit 2 Austin Friars. The aim of the clinic is to provide Lucentis injections in the high street, taking pressure of the ophthalmology clinic in local hospitals such as the Royal Gwent. The Lucentis clinic is open five days a week in the morning. The environment is purpose-built and provides a fresh, friendly environment for patients who require these injections. The patients are treated within two hours, an hour less than at the hospital, so apart from reducing pressure on the hospital itself the patients are having a less stressful experience. In a morning clinic, nurse practitioners would carry out 20-30 injections and a consultant ophthalmologist is on hand.

Lucentis treatments are invasive and patients are often anxious about the injections. Lissa Gomer, one of Sight Cymru's ECLOs, is available to give some reassurance and emotional support during these visits. But she can also signpost patients to additional support from other organisations - support that would benefit the patient by enhancing their independence. She also attends the clinic with some examples of daily living aids, such as liquid level indicators, 'bump-ons' and large button telephones, and can refer patients to the Low Vision Aids service in the adjoining Specsavers, where they have optometrists accredited to carry out LVA assessments.

With Welsh Government urging optometrists to take on some of the work treatments that are currently carried out in hospitals, we shall see more of these high street services emerging in Wales. These present a great opportunity for third sector organisations to provide this kind of ELCO support, assuming the funds are available to deliver such a potentially widespread service.

# Where are the ECLOs in Wales?

## General description:

The ECLO services in Wales are provided by Sight Cymru, RNIB Cymru and NHS Wales. An ECLO provides emotional support, often at a time of great need, and signposts patients on to the many different local, regional and national services that help to maintain independence. The ECLO helps to bridge the gap between health and social care services.

## UHW Cardiff

Full time ECLO based at University Hospital Wales, Cardiff

**Postcode:** CF14 4XW

**Email:** ruth.rhydderch@cibi.co.uk

**Telephone:** 029 20746860 / 07787 666904

## Swansea (Singleton)

Full time ECLO based at Singleton Hospital, Swansea.

**Postcode:** SA2 8QA

**Email:** susan.neale@rnib.org.uk

**Telephone:** 01792 200390 / 07908 527522

## Bridgend (Princess of Wales)

Part time (Mon and Thurs) ECLO based at Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend.

**Postcode:** CF31 1RQ

**Email:** maureen.griffiths@rnib.org.uk

**Telephone:** 01656 752887 / 07884 310992

## Neath Port Talbot

Part time (Tues) ECLO based at Neath Port Talbot Hospital.

**Postcode:** SA12 7BX

**Email:** maureen.griffiths@rnib.org.uk

**Telephone:** 01639 862234 / 07884 310992

## **Amman Valley**

ECLO based at Amman Valley Hospital.

**Postcode:** SA18 2BQ

**Email:** derek.edwards@rnib.org.uk

**Telephone:** 07884 362827

## **Llanelli (Prince Philip Hospital)**

ECLO based at Prince Philip Hospital, Llanelli.

**Postcode:** SA14 8QF

**Email:** derek.edwards@rnib.org.uk

**Telephone:** 07884 362827

## **Carmarthen (Glangwili)**

**Description:** ECLO based at Glangwili Hospital.

**Postcode:** SA31 2AF

**Email:** derek.edwards@rnib.org.uk

**Telephone:** 07884 362827

## **Haverfordwest (Withybush)**

**Description:** ECLO based at Withybush Hospital, Haverfordwest.

**Postcode:** SA61 2PZ

## **Powys**

This full time ECLO service operates from a range of clinics including Ystradgynlais, Brecon, Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes.

**Email:** keira.brooks@rnib.org.uk

**Telephone:** 01597 827772 / 07701 295138

## **Merthyr (Prince Charles)**

Full time ECLO based at Prince Charles Hospital, Merthyr.

**Postcode:** CF47 9DT

**Email:** christopher.reddington@rnib.org.uk



## **Llantrisant (Royal Glamorgan)**

ECLO based at Royal Glamorgan Hospital.

**Postcode:** CF72 8XR

**Email:** christopher.reddington@rnib.org.uk

## **Newport (Royal Gwent)**

Part time ECLO based at Royal Gwent Hospital, Newport.

**Postcode:** NP20 2UB

**Email:** lissa.gomer@sightcymru.org.uk

**Telephone:** 01495 763650

## **Austin Friars Treatment Centre Newport**

An ECLO providing emotional support and information for individuals attending the Lucentis injection clinic at Specsavers in Unit 2 Austin Friars, Newport.

**Postcode:** NP20 1DQ

**Email:** lissa.gomer@sightcymru.org.uk

**Telephone:** 01495 763650

## **Ystrad Mynach**

ECLO based at Ystrad Mynach (Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr) hospital.

**Postcode:** CF82 7EP

**Email:** lissa.gomer@sightcymru.org.uk

**Telephone:** 01495 763650

## **Abergavenny Nevill Hall**

ECLO based at Nevill Hall hospital.

**Postcode:** NP7 7EG

**Email:** emma.richards@sightcymru.org.uk

**Telephone:** 01495 763650

## **North Road Clinic Aberystwyth**

ECLO service (2 days per week).

**Email:** [janet.nicholls@sightcymru.org.uk](mailto:janet.nicholls@sightcymru.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 01495 763650

## **Abergele (Stanley)**

ECLO based (Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri) at the Stanley Eye Clinic, Abergele Hospital.

**Postcode:** LL22 8DP

**Email:** [hazel.h.lindop@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:hazel.h.lindop@wales.nhs.uk) or  
[michelle.higgins@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:michelle.higgins@wales.nhs.uk)

**Telephone:** 01745 4480 ext 2439

## **Wrexham Maelor**

ECLO based 3 days per week) at Wrexham Maelor.

**Postcode:** LL13 7TD

**Email:** [john.carruthers@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:john.carruthers@wales.nhs.uk)

**Telephone:** 01978 726254

## **Ysbyty Gwynedd**

ECLO (Mon-Wed) based at Ysbyty Gwynedd, Bangor.

**Postcode:** LL57 2PW

**Email:** [bethan.scriven2@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:bethan.scriven2@wales.nhs.uk)

**Telephone:** 07884 267195 / 01248 384334

## **Ysbyty Cwm Rhondda**

ECLO based at Ysbyty Cwm Rhondda Tuesday to Thursday.

**Postcode:** CF40 2LX

**Email:** [susan.brooks@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:susan.brooks@wales.nhs.uk)

**Telephone:** 01443 430022 ext 2507 / 07884 362

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# What is the Perspectif Supplement?

This new series of supplements to **Roundup** quarterly features an area of the services listed online at WCB's Perspectif Portal. Each edition includes an article or two about the service area in question from people who are active in providing the service. It presents a way for WCB to highlight the work done by third sector, local authorities, health boards and others in providing support to blind and partially sighted people and make that work better understood and more widely known.

**Perspectif** is WCB's online database of services and support for people with sight loss in Wales. If you know of any errors or services not listed, please get in touch to let us know.

**Contact: Richard Bowers, Wales Council of the Blind.  
029 20 473954 richard@wcb-ccd.org.uk**

<http://wcb-ccd.org.uk/perspectif/index.php>

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