

Wales Council of the Blind Roundup



Autumn 2014

Focus on UCAN Productions
In the supplement: Third (Voluntary) VI
Sector Services across Wales

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Wales Council of the Blind News

Wales Eyecare Conference 2014

The seventh Wales Eyecare Conference, organised by Wales Council of the Blind on behalf of the Welsh Government, was held in Cardiff on 17th September, with 119 delegates from across the eyecare sector in attendance. Opening the conference, Dr Barbara Ryan, Chief Optometric Advisor to the Welsh Government, noted that it was one year since the launch of the Together for Health: Wales Eye Health Care Delivery Plan, which set out a range of key actions to improve the eye health of all children and adults in Wales, particularly for those most vulnerable to eye health issues and sight loss. This plan formed the theme for the conference, and Dr Ryan noted that, although it presented great challenges, change was being achieved: for example, the creation of eye care liaison groups at local level, with representation from clinicians, users and the third sector.

In his keynote speech, Mark Drakeford AM, Health and Social Services Minister, reflected on the achievements of the past year, noting that the themes of the delivery plan reflected the current big debate about how a prudent health care system could be designed, developed and delivered. He was encouraged by people's willingness to engage, noting that Wales' work in this area was being watched with interest by other countries. An ageing population combined with the development of new treatments for previously untreatable eye conditions meant that completely new services were needed. It was essential to develop a more adult relationship with users, encouraging people to look after their eyes, and treating problems close to home, for example by an optometrist, wherever possible. The view that an appointment with a consultant was the ultimate 'prize' needed to be discouraged.

As an example of the way that eye care in Wales was changing, he said that he had been impressed by a visit to Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board where a new eye care triage system had identified that 23% of patients referred to hospital could be seen by an optometrist, keeping NHS costs down, reducing costs and journey times for patients and allowing more urgent cases to be dealt with quickly. The Minister concluded by saying that this was ‘an exciting time to be involved in eye care here in Wales’.

Dr Ruth Hussey, Chief Medical Officer, picked up on the points raised by the Minister, emphasising the importance of ‘prudent health care’, where avoidable sight loss was prevented and problems were diagnosed as early as possible. She gave the example of smoking – people needed to be more aware of the link between smoking and eye health, and Public Health Wales would soon be launching the ‘Stoptober’ and ‘Don’t be the one’ campaigns to get this message across. Measurement is important so that the effectiveness of changes can be measured. Gwyneth Thomas, Primary and Community Statistician explained that three new questions were being added to the annual Welsh Health Survey which would help in this measurement.

Children’s eye health was the focus of talks from Dr Heather Payne, Chair of the Children’s Vision Service Advisory Group, and Rebecca John from the Wales Low Vision Service. They described the aims of the Children’s Group as prevention of sight loss, early intervention and provision of effective, accessible services, then told the conference about the Special Schools Pilot Project, which had been carried out to assess the benefits of school-based eye health services in schools for children with special needs. An initial research project had discovered a clear need for eye care provision in special schools – for example, over 50% of pupils needed spectacles but only 30% had them prescribed, and only 15% actually wore them. A pilot was then established to see how such a service would work, and the feedback had been very positive. The next steps were to get the necessary funding and

legislative changes put in place so that the service can be implemented across Wales.

Other topics covered in the conference were progress on IT rollout across primary and secondary care; work being done to make patient referral pathways more effective; and the role of public awareness campaigns, where the importance of clear, straightforward messages and the use of many different channels of communication were stressed. Delegates were given an update on some RNIB community engagement projects, including one in Cwm Taf, and on the Wales Vision Strategy.

The final session gave members of the Next Steps Forum a chance to talk about their achievements, including partnership working with other disability groups to improve the accessibility of Aberystwyth bus station; increased use of Vision Support's mobile unit to bring information to parts of North Wales where transport links are poor; sporting success in Bridgend; plans to pilot an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer post in Powys, and a user's experience of Cardiff Institute's services.

Feedback from delegates has been generally favourable and as always, they particularly appreciated the opportunity for networking with others in the eyecare sector. However, a number of delegates were keen to see future conferences giving more emphasis to the work of the social care sector as it relates to sight loss.

Copies of the presentations are available on WCB's website:
http://www.wcb-ccd.org.uk/conference/conference_files.php.

Another successful 'Sharing Ideas and Planning Together' event.

Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People (BCDP), in conjunction with Disability Wales and WCB, recently held a training event regarding how the changes in the Welfare Benefit System have affected disabled communities. BCDP seeks to empower more disabled people across Bridgend through regular, interactive meetings, coffee mornings and peer support. BCDP therefore hold training events like this one in order to get disabled individuals expressing their views and getting their voice heard.

We kick-started the day with a thought-provoking video, made by the very talented individuals at Every Link Counts, of our members speaking about their personal experiences when accessing PIP and Direct Payments and their constant fear of what will happen to them if these get taken away from them.

Following the video we had representatives from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) who spoke in detail about the changes from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independent Payment (PIP) using facts and figures to help our members fully understand the difference. We then listened to individual questions and answered our members' concerns.

Local Labour MP Madeleine Moon joined discussions and advised our members on their queries. She spoke frankly and honestly regarding her personal opinions over the controversially coined 'bedroom tax.'

After a very tasty lunch we then sat down to hear presentations from benefit advisers from Citizen Advice Bureau and RNIB who answered more questions from our members, signposting them to outside services where necessary, and further clarified the changes from DLA to PIP.

We finished the day by highlighting the training opportunities available through our Community Voice project. We seek to enrol 9 individuals onto a free bespoke five module training programme throughout a 12 month period. If anyone would like to get involved please contact Cathy; Development Officer at bridgendcoalitiondp@gmail.com or 07816 209 472.

Your Voice: A Shared Vision

Report from the WCB West Wales Regional Steering Group

We are pleased to report that our first regional steering group is up and running.

As the independent organisation representing the voice of people with sight loss in Wales, we believe that one way of achieving this is by establishing regional steering groups, continuing to work with local societies and forging closer links with existing clubs and individuals.

In September, we hosted our first regional event in West Wales. It was a great success with over 20 representatives from Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. The day consisted of an introduction from WCB followed by discussion groups.

The group discussions were structured around the following three questions:

1. What is working well in your area?
2. What is not working well in your area?
3. What experiences have you had, good or bad, that you would like to share with others.

The responses included issues with public transport, parking on pavements, lack of sports and leisure opportunities and some frontline staff unaware of the needs of people with sight loss. In

addition to this, each group reported excellent links with the social services team in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, the value of the local talking newspapers association and the introduction of audio cash dispensers.

The event concluded with an unanimous enthusiasm to continue as a WCB Regional Steering Group. They welcomed the opportunity to speak freely about the things that concerned them as well as things that worked well. WCB can then share good and bad practise between the regions.

The group shall, at next meeting, be asked to appoint a Chair who would represent them on WCB's board of trustees.

If you would like to be part of this, or one of the other groups we are establishing throughout Wales, please contact WCB's Engagement Officer, Rebecca Phillips, on 029 20 473954 or email bec@wcb-ccd.org.uk

Advertisement feature

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- Agree a password with you before we visit you, so you feel safe.
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- Keep you as informed as possible in the event of an unplanned power cut.

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Focus on UCAN Productions

On the cover: a member of UCAN Productions

UCAN Productions and its membership of over 600 visually impaired young people in Wales will next year be celebrating UCAN's 10th Birthday.

UCAN Productions is an award winning performance and creative arts co-operative for blind and partially sighted children, young people and their friends between the ages of 7 and 25. Based in Cardiff, UCAN (Unique Creative Arts Network) works across Wales and exists to prove that visual impairment is no barrier to success. Specialised programmes help to develop physical and vocal confidence, raise aspirations and promote individual abilities.

The organisation was established in 2005 by actor/director Bernie and Jane Latham to enable blind and partially sighted young people in the UK to have access to the arts. The couple were inspired to create the organisation after volunteering for a blind school in Sierra Leone, West Africa.

In the beginning, UCAN worked with twelve visually impaired young people in Cardiff and now has a growing membership of over 600 blind and partially sighted young people throughout the UK. This year alone the organisation has delivered workshops and performances across Wales, created a performance of Dylan Thomas' A Child's Christmas in Wales, held their annual festival at the Wales Millennium Centre, welcoming over 70 visually impaired young people from all over Wales and performed Mechanicals and Fairies, an adaptation of Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer's Night Dream' to a packed audience at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

The UCAN Team has also had great fun running Maggie's Club, play sessions for the clients of Dr Maggie Woodhouse OBE special clinics, which are based at Cardiff University School of Optometry and Vision Sciences.

In the past few months UCAN Members have sung, juggled, danced, acted, created tactile art and photography exhibitions and even learnt to play the ukulele. To top it all off founding members of UCAN, Megan John and Mared Jarman, are leading on a user led project called UCAN GO, which is researching and developing an accessible indoor navigation app for visually impaired people. The project is funded by the Digital Research & Development Fund for the Arts in Wales – Nesta, Arts & Humanities Research Council, and with public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council of Wales. UCAN GO is an R&D project, and the first two arts venues being mapped are the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff and the Torch Theatre in Milford Haven.

As Bernie Latham, Artistic Director of UCAN said 'It seems like yesterday that we were in the Sherman Theatre with our very first drama workshops for visually impaired young people, Jane and I had recently returned from Sierra Leone after volunteering for a Blind School and were so taken with the abilities of the young people there, with the help of RNIB Cymru, we decided to give it a go in Wales. We started with 12 young people but now have over 600 on our books with more joining every day'.

So, as UCAN Productions hurtles towards its 10th year there is no sign of slowing down, and plans are already underway for the birthday celebrations, which will include the organisation's most ambitious production to date. The 1945 Project, which is funded by the Arts Council of Wales, will be a cross generational project to celebrate and collect memories of the end of the Second World War. The plan is to involve as many visually impaired people in the research as possible. There will also be opportunities for visually impaired people of all ages to be

involved in the public performances, which are to be at the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff on the 13th 14th and 15th August 2015.

To become involved or to find out more about the project please contact info@ucanproductions.org or call 02920870554. For any further information on any of the projects above please visit www.ucanproductions.org

Third (voluntary) VI sector services across Wales

The supplement included with this edition of Roundup is a list of charity-based services available through WCB's member organisations and other such services of relevance in Wales. While it cannot hope to be an exhaustive list, it nevertheless will be kept under review because the details for each of these are being maintained within the WCB information portal, Perspectif. This portal is currently undergoing some testing and a version is hoped to be available before Christmas.

Therefore, the services listed in the supplement have already been sent to the provider organisations for checking and should be correct at time of going to press. If you know of any services not listed or know of any corrections that need to be made, please send them to ann@wcb-ccd.org.uk who will make the changes to the entries in Perspectif. That way, additional versions of the printed booklet will be as up-to-date as possible. We are also interested in services offered in the commercial sector.

The services have been grouped local authority then by type – that is, the categories used in Perspectif. Just call WCB on 02920 473954 or email richard@wcb-ccd.org.uk for suggestions and amendments.

Have Your Say!

Welsh Government Consultations

Details of all WVG consultations can be found on their website, <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations>. The following may be of particular interest to people with vision impairment:

- Travelling to better health (closes 30th October)
- Review of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Duty on Local Authorities (closes 30th October)
- Draft 10-year plan for the early years, childcare and play workforce in Wales (closes 15th December)
- Independent Living Fund – future arrangements to support recipients in Wales (closes 23rd December)
- Early Years Outcomes Framework (closes 15 January)

Versions of these documents in alternative formats are available by ringing 0300 060 3300 (English) or 0300 060 4400 (Welsh).

Events

Inherited Eye Disease Patient Day

This patient day will take place in the Cardiff School of Optometry and Vision Sciences on Friday 9th January, 2015 from 12.30 – 5.00pm in the Main Lecture Theatre on the ground floor. Contact Professor Marcela Votruba on 029 208 76784 or email her on votrubam@cardiff.ac.uk

North Wales Mobile Information Unit

The November schedule for Vision Support's unit is:

- Monday 3rd Bryngwran Community Centre
- Friday 7th St Asaph Tweedmill (Llanerch)
- Monday 10th Abergele Medical Centre
- Friday 14th Bethesda, Station Road (opposite medical centre)
- Monday 17th Llangefni Car Park by the Town Hall
- Monday 24th Rhos on Sea Promenade
- Friday 28th Blaenau Ffestiniog, Diffwys Square

Please ring 01745 338914 to confirm details before travelling.

Glaucoma Support Group meetings

The International Glaucoma Association (IGA) is organising the following support group meetings:

- 23rd October at 4pm - National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
- 24th October at 1.30 pm - Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend
- 25th November at 1.30 pm - Port Talbot Resource Centre
- 3rd December at 1.15 pm - Singleton Hospital in Swansea

Details of all IGA's support group meetings are on their website, www.glaucoma-association.com – click the 'support groups' option towards the top of the screen.

Sight Cymru is organising a support group meeting for people with glaucoma at the Salvation Army Hall in Newport on 6th November from 12 noon to 2 pm. A light lunch is included. Please ring Lissa or Emma on 01495 763650 to book a place.

Finding your Feet workshops in Swansea

RNIB Cymru in Swansea is offering free 'Finding Your Feet' courses, providing valuable hints and tips to help people with sight loss to cope better with everyday life. The individual sessions provide information and advice around money and your rights, shopping, transport, computers and digital inclusion, entertainment and media, and Health and Wellbeing. A group of sessions starts on 19th January for six weeks, and there will then be another group starting 23rd February. If you would like to find out more and book a place, please contact Anita or Judith on 01792 776360.

Parties for disabled children

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of their team in Wales, Contact a Family Cymru is organising a series of birthday parties across Wales for disabled children and their families. There will a cartoon film, lunch and storytelling workshop for the children, whilst families will have a chance to get information and advice, and meet others in a similar situation. Dates and venues are:

- Sunday 26th October – Merthyr
- Sunday 16th November – Llandudno
- Sunday 23rd November – Cardiff
- Saturday 29th November – Caernarfon

- Sunday 14th December - Mold

All events take place from 11 am to 3 pm, and help with travel may be provided if this is a problem. For more information, and to book a place, telephone Contact a Family Cymru on 029 2039 6624 or send an email to cymru@cafamily.org.uk.

Sight Village visits London

The 'Sight Village' exhibition will visit Kensington Town Hall in London on 4th November, giving people with sight loss, their families and friends, and professionals working in the sector, the opportunity to find out about the latest gadgets, technology and other services which can make life easier. The event is organised by Queen Alexandra College.

The event is free, although it is recommended that you register in advance. For more information, including details of how to get to the venue and a list of exhibitors, visit the Sight Village website, <http://www.qac.ac.uk/exhibitions.htm> or telephone 0121 428 5041.

Royal National College for the Blind

The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC) in Hereford is organising a Professional Development Day on 22nd October, giving attendees the chance to find out about the support RNC can offer to vision impaired people move into further education and employment. The event will be tailored to people who support VI adults, such as social workers and disability employment advisors. RNC also has a free 'Have a Go' weekend on 25th to 26th October for young vision impaired people aged 13-16 who are considering going to college. Parents can also stay at the college free of charge during the weekend.

These events offer attendees the chance to find out more about the RNC and the training and support it has to offer to visually impaired students. For more information and to book a place on any of these events, visit the website www.rncb.ac.uk and click on the 'calendar and events' link, or telephone 01432 376 621.

New College Worcester

New College, the national residential college for blind or partially sighted young people aged 11 to 19, has a free Outreach Open Days on 21st October and 13th January for educational professionals working with VI young people, and for the parents of VI children. Attendees will have the chance to meet subject teachers, get hands-on experience of specialist equipment, and get practical support and advice on specific curriculum areas of your choice.

Vision impaired children, young people and their families can try a range of activities at New College's free Family Day on 22nd November. Places on these events are popular and must be booked in advance. To find out more telephone 01905 763933 or book on-line at www.newcollegeworcester.co.uk.

RNIB Taster weekend for vision impaired children

Are you aged 8 to 12 years old? Would you like the chance to stay away from home, make some new friends, and have great fun trying out new activities? Then come and join RNIB Cymru on a taster residential event on Saturday 29 – Sunday 30 November 2014 at Llangrannog.

The one night residential event will give children who have never been away from home the opportunity to meet other children and take part in fun activities at the centres whilst having the security of it only being for one night. You will be staying at an Urdd activity centre with en-suite bunk houses. All meals and drinks are included. Examples of some activities on offer are: high ropes, skiing, quad biking, horse riding, swimming. Thanks to funding from BBC Children in Need there will be no cost for this event.

To request an application form or for further information please contact Claire Milton, Children and Family Services Manager on 07870 643 461 or email Claire.Milton@rnib.org.uk.

Wobbly Wednesday

Following the success of last year's event in raising awareness of nystagmus, this year's Wobbly Wednesday will be on 5th November. The event will be of interest to anyone with the condition, family members, and professionals who work with children or adults with nystagmus. For more information about what will be happening and how you can get involved, visit the Nystagmus Network website, www.nystagmusnet.org.

News and Information

On-line Today digital inclusion project

RNIB Cymru will share part of a £5.8 million award from the Big Lottery to RNIB to create Online Today – a project to support people with sensory loss across Wales to get online. A team of digital inclusion officers and volunteers will work with people with sight loss, or who are deaf or hard of hearing, to help them gain confidence in using digital technology in everyday life. The bilingual project will support around 2000 people a year through one-to-one sessions, group sessions, surgeries and other events provided by a range of partner organisations, including Wales Council of the Blind (WCB).

Owen Williams, WCB's Director, said:

'People with sight loss are often telling us about the barriers facing them when accessing services on-line. Increasingly, government departments are using the internet to deliver services – and of course the benefits of using facilities such as on-line shopping are particularly valuable to people with sight loss.

'This project will give people with sensory loss both practical and impartial advice on the most appropriate and affordable access technologies to suit their needs, as well as develop online skills and confidence to get and stay online through face to face training.

'WCB believes that this project will help to reduce some of these barriers and we are looking forward to working with RNIB Cymru and other partnership organisations to improve the quality of life of people with sensory loss across Wales'.

Introducing a new Sensory Loss Support Service in Rhondda Cynon Taf

In partnership with RCT Homes and Action on Hearing Loss, the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) has announced the launch of a new Sensory Loss Support service offering support to RCT Homes tenants who are deaf, hard of hearing or a tinnitus sufferer and/or blind or partially sighted.

Starting in August 2012 the Vision Support Officer provided blind and partially sighted tenants of RCT Homes with information, advice and practical support to enable them to make the most of their sight and ensure they are accessing all the services available to them. With training and on-going support from Action on Hearing Loss, the Officer is now equipped with the specialist knowledge to support tenants living with a hearing loss. The support provided is entirely dependent on the individual tenant and can include support to; understand their eye condition, access local statutory services maximise their income, access low vision services and learn new communication skills such as Braille, British Sign Language and Lip-reading.

After support from the service one tenant recently diagnosed with Age-related Macular Degeneration fully understood her eye condition, was able to make the most of her remaining sight after a referral for a Low Vision assessment and is again enjoying reading after being supported to register for audio books. Another tenant with severe hearing loss has been supported to; complete an assessment to access support from the local Social Services Sensory Team, enrol in a lip-reading class, and increase their home safety with a fire safety check from the Fire Service.

The service is open to any RCT Homes tenant or household member living with a visual and/or hearing impairment. To find out more or to make a referral contact Ruth Nortey on 01443 494572 or 07500 064257 or email ruthn@rcthomes.co.uk.

Big Lottery Fund awards £940k for welfare rights service for people with sensory loss

The Big Lottery Fund has awarded £940k to RNIB Cymru for an innovative welfare rights service for people with sensory loss in Wales. The service has been designed to address the barriers that people with sensory loss face ensuring access to information, support and advice that is delivered when, how and where people need it. This brand new service will help mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform for some of the hardest to reach and most vulnerable people in Wales, tackling the poverty, financial and social exclusion that people with sensory loss face.

The Wales-wide project will support more than 5,000 people who have sight or hearing loss to claim the benefits they are entitled to. RNIB Cymru will deliver the service in partnership with Action on Hearing Loss Cymru, Sense Cymru and Deafblind Cymru. The new advisors will help people to fill in forms, challenge benefits awards and decisions and will also represent people at tribunals. People with sensory loss have helped design the service to ensure that it is truly person centred. The service will be delivered digitally, on the phone, face to face and at home.

Wales Vision Strategy 2014-18 launched

A new plan to improve eye health and meet the needs of people with sight loss was launched on Wednesday 8 October at the Cross Party Vision Group in the National Assembly Government for Wales. The new implementation plan for 2014-18 has been developed and published by the Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group, following the launch of the refreshed UK Vision Strategy for 2013 - 2018 and a consultation with key stakeholders.

The Wales Vision Strategy brings together organisations with an interest in eye health and sight loss to agree a set of shared aims and identify how these can be achieved over the next four years. The new Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Plan focuses on three outcome areas which include:

- everyone in Wales looks after their eyes and sight
- everyone with an eye condition receives timely treatment and early and appropriate services and support are available should sight loss occur
- help facilitate a society in which people with sight loss can fully participate.

VI Tennis Group in Swansea

A new tennis group for people with vision impairment is being set up in Swansea. It meets every Thursday from 1pm to 2 pm at Swansea Tennis Centre, Brunel Way, Landore, Swansea, SA1 7DS. There is a charge of £2 per session. The game is very much like conventional tennis but with much larger balls filled with ball bearings, making it easier to detect the ball's direction.

For more information, please contact the RNIB in Swansea on 01792 776360.

'Seen through other eyes' - poetry competition

The Seeing Ear, the on-line library for blind and print-disabled people, is running its first poetry competition for young people aged 5 to 18 years who are vision impaired, dyslexic or have any other disability which makes reading printed books difficult. There is a prize of £150 for the best entry, plus runner up prizes.

There are two categories: an 'open' category for poems on any theme, and a 'war' category, for poems which reflect on the centenary of the start of World War I. Full details of the competition rules, and how to enter, are on The Seeing Ear's website, www.seeingear.org. Entries must be received by 31st December 2014.

Don't get bitten by loan sharks

The Wales Illegal Money Lending unit is working to rid Wales of unlicensed money lenders – and they are aware that loan sharks frequently target families which include a disabled child or adult. Borrowing even a small amount from a loan shark could mean paying back thousands of pounds in interest. The unit has set up a 24-hour confidential hotline where people in Wales can report loan sharks in their area, and receive assistance and protection. The hotline number is 0300 123 33 11.

Social workers are also advised to be aware of the potential exploitation of their clients by loan sharks, and can use the helpline to report incidents.

Clubs, classes and trips in Swansea

RNIB Cymru's team in Swansea has organised an extensive range of events and activities for the autumn. In addition to local groups for vision impaired people in Gorseinon, Mumbles and central Swansea, there are specialist groups for people with an interest in poetry, arts & crafts, reading and guide dogs. These groups generally meet monthly.

There are also braille classes, and a cookery class started in September. There will be a holiday trip to Paignton (28th November-1st December) and several theatre trips are planned.

For full details on any of these activities, contact the RNIB Cymru team in Swansea on 01792 776360.

RNIB launch digital download library

RNIB has announced the launch of 'Overdrive', a new digital download library service that allows users to access Talking Books, Talking Magazines and podcasts directly onto their computer, tablet or smartphone. Users can select up to six items at a time, and there is no limit to the number of items that can be borrowed over the year.

To join the service, you must take out a subscription costing £50 through the RNIB Shop. To find out more, ring RNIB on 0303 123 9999 or visit the website www.rnib.org.uk and look under 'services we offer'.

Please help 3rd year students in Low Vision Clinic at Cardiff University Optometrists.

Low vision is when a person's sight can't necessarily be corrected with glasses or contact lenses, which may occur as a result of cataracts, age-related macular degeneration or diabetes. Cardiff University's Low Vision Clinic aims to maximise any residual vision or remaining sight. This is often done through the use of hand-held magnifiers, and other specialist aids, and during an assessment, different aids will be tried and tailored to the person's individual needs. For example, you may need help for sewing, reading music or a newspaper, or doing a crossword.

During the period from Monday 27th October to Monday 23rd March, Cardiff University is offering free appointments in the Low Vision Clinic with 3rd year students who are in their final year, and are supervised by their resident optometrists. These assessments are carried out through the Welsh Low Vision Eye Service. You need to have an up to date eye examination (which could be carried out by Cardiff University if required) and not have had a low vision assessment anywhere else in the last year. Alternatively, appointments with the resident optometrist are available throughout the year.

For more information, visit the clinic at Maindy Road Cardiff CF24 4HQ, telephone 029 2087 4357 or email eyeclinic@cf.ac.uk.

Useful Publications

Advice for disabled students from Student Finance Wales

Student Finance Wales has produced a booklet giving details of the Disabled Students' Allowance for new and continuing full-time students in higher education in 2014/15. The allowance is intended to help pay the additional costs which you might incur as a result of your disability. You can read the guide online here: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/media/8633/sfw_1415_btgb_en_d_a.pdf

It is also available in Braille, large print or audio by emailing with your name, address and customer reference number quoting reference SFW/DSAG/VI4 to: brailleandlargefonts@slc.co.uk or telephone 0141 243 3686. For more information, visit the Student Finance Wales website, www.studentfinancewales.co.uk.

Guide for general practice

'Sight loss in older people - the essential guide for general practice' has been issued as part of the UK Vision Strategy. Its release follows a recent survey which revealed many GPs in the UK were not confident when diagnosing major eye diseases.

Topics covered include identifying and assessing sight loss, how practice staff can support people with sight loss, and making general practices more accessible. One of the document's authors is Doctor Barbara Ryan, Chief Optometric Adviser to the Welsh Government. You can download the guide from the Vision Strategy website, <http://www.vision2020uk.org.uk/ukvisionstrategy/> (look under 'news').

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of WCB, and as much of the material is submitted by third parties, we cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of the information therein. We reserve the right to edit for publication.

With the General Election approaching, the theme for the next edition of Roundup will be **‘political engagement’**. If you wish to make a contribution on this topic, or on any aspect of vision impairment, please contact richard@wcb-ccd.org.uk.

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- 2** Open windows and doors to ventilate
- 3** Don't use electrical appliances or switch lights on or off
- 4** Don't smoke or use any naked flames
- 5** Remember to call the National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999**
Lines are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

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