



# WCB Roundup

Summer 2010.



## Rehabilitation in Wales

**Also in this issue:**

**Wales and West Conference**

**New Office for WCB**

**New Eye Tracking System in Cardiff**



**A newsletter for Local VI Groups in Wales**

# Foreword

Welcome to the Rehab issue of Roundup.

This issue looks at several new developments within Welsh Rehab that have taken place this summer. Again and again, people with a visual impairment say that it was rehabilitation that they found to be the most useful service they've received. Sighted people take for granted getting around, walking to the shops, dressing ourselves. Without rehab, these can be challenges to people with a visual impairment. Wales is exceptionally lucky in our rehab officers. Across every county, we have dedicated, hard working and professional officers who put the needs of their clients first.

There's the launch of the new University of Newport's Rehab Foundation Degree, the first course of its type in Wales. Anyone out there who fancied becoming a qualified rehabilitation officer for the visually impaired can now attend a course without travelling to England.

Then there's the new project taking place to understand the training and developments needs of our existing rehab officer workforce. Only by understanding what training our current officers need can Wales put in place training to make sure we're getting the very best service.

Elsewhere in the issue we look at a new eye tracking scheme in Cardiff, report on the launch of the UK Vision Strategy in Wales, and give you the latest round up of regional news.

Remember, Roundup is YOUR magazine. If you have anything you'd like shared, any news or announcements, please write to us at WCB.

# The UK Vision Strategy Launch.

“What a great night!” - that was the response heard from many of visually impaired people who attended the launch of the Welsh Vision Strategy. Held at the Seynedd in Cardiff, the launch was a celebration of the UK Vision Strategy’s latest family member - the Welsh Strategy.



Sandy Mewies, AM, launches the strategy.

We believe that the Strategy represents a great opportunity to develop services across Wales, to improve things in way that really does make a difference to people’s lives.

There are 115,000 people with sight loss in Wales, half of whose sight loss could have been avoidable. Sight loss costs Wales an estimated £215 million every year in direct and indirect costs. These figures are unacceptable, and unsustainable.

Therefore, it’s with great pleasure that we have launched the Welsh Vision Strategy Implementation Plan. The plan, supported by over 650 partners and contributors from across the eyecare sector and supported by the Welsh Assembly Government, sets out key actions for delivery from 2010 to 2014 as part of the UK Vision Strategy.

1. To improve the eye health of the people of Wales
2. To eliminate avoidable sight loss and deliver excellent support to people with sight loss
3. To increase inclusion, participation and independence for people with sight loss

If you’d like to receive further information on the UK Vision Strategy and the Welsh Implementation Plan, please email [WalesVisionStrategy@rnib.org.uk](mailto:WalesVisionStrategy@rnib.org.uk).

# New Office for WCB.

WCB has finally moved office! We didn't go very far from the old one, admittedly, but it was still something of a challenge.

Our lease at Shand House was due to expire by the end of the year, so we'd set about looking for new premises a year ago. We were keen to stay in Cardiff - and in the city centre specifically - in order to minimise disruption to existing staff and to maintain a presence in the capital. We visited a number of places in the city - always keeping the balance of locality, accessibility and cost in mind - and



WCB's shiny new meeting room.

finally settled on a building directly opposite our existing premises. It did seem a bit bizarre to be hiring a removals firm to load a van and drive it across the street only to unload it again five minutes later, but it had to be done somehow.

We had a number of team meetings to discuss the move. Plans were drawn up and a timetable

established. The whole affair was organised like a military campaign and, amazingly, it all went pretty much to plan.

All WCB staff got involved in the move, taking responsibility for their own stuff and helping to pack the large amount of general files into boxes. We are thankful that Sight Support offered us storage space for older files so that we could reduce what needed to be taken across the road.

Our volunteer, Ann, single-handedly packed WCB's large library into over 30 packing boxes. This has now been re-shelved in the new office and is available to anyone who would wish to use it; just give us a ring first. Ann maintains the library for us; adding items and cataloguing them.

Over the weekend of the move, staff came in to assist with practicalities: overseeing the removals firm; putting up shelving; cleaning and so on. We were joined by family members who kindly helped out: thanks Charlie, Fin and Jack!

We are very grateful to the Welsh Assembly Government for providing us with some financial assistance towards the move. This enabled us to furnish the office to a much improved standard. (Anyone who visited our previous office may remember being hustled quickly into the meeting room - the only room we could be proud of at the time!)

Despite the renovation of the office, we were not at all wasteful. We advertised a grab-a-desk day and we were delighted that Follow Your Dreams, a charity for learning-disabled children, came and took a large part of our redundant furniture away, the result being that we only needed one small skip to dispose of all remaining junk. We're proud to say that the cost of the whole move was kept to a minimum and very little was wasted.

Again, we would like to thank everyone who helped and supported us in the move. Because of this support, we were able to continue to deliver our services from our new premises with a minimum of disruption.

So, phone, fax, emails and web address remain unchanged, but our new postal address is given at the end of this newsletter.

# Rehab in Wales - What is the Way Ahead?

Rehabilitation is essential to enable people with a visual impairment to lead a full and fulfilling life. Regardless of age, the ability for a person to set and achieve their goals is dependent on high quality, timely and personal rehabilitation. Study after study proves that without rehab, visually impaired people are at risk of depression, isolation, serious falls, reduced confidence and dependence.

However, nearly every rehab service in Wales is funded or provided by Social Services, and will be placed under the same financial pressure that is effecting every public service budget. The Welsh Benchmarking Network outlines that there should be one rehab worker per 50,000 population. That means Wales should have 60 full time workers. With only 43 working in Wales (and some of those part time), it's obvious that we can't cut rehab posts to make savings. In some areas there are already people who have been waiting for rehab for over 2 years because Wales doesn't have enough posts.

But how do we fund more rehab positions? Campaigning for new posts in the current financial climate is unlikely to be successful. So how do we get more rehab within the current climate?

One way of doing it is to look at using different pots of money to buy in rehab. For example, what about using Direct Payments (essentially a way in which a person gets money from Social Services to 'buy' their own services)? Direct Payments often are held in different parts of the Social Services budgets, and we know that Direct Payments are under used in Wales. By buying just the hours of care that are needed, Local Authorities transfer the responsibility of employment away to the rehab agencies providing the care. There's lots of questions needing to answered about this model. Who employs the rehab officers? How do they sustain them during times when

there is no-one buying rehab? Who pays to ensure they are trained and supported?

The next idea is simply to remodel the workforce. Some argue that by splitting the rehabilitation workers role into two separate sections can reduce costs. Teaching people how to get around (often called mobility) could be the sole purpose of a rehab officer, allowing them to see more people sooner. The rest of the role that rehab officers deliver, that of teaching food preparation, ICT, dressing etc, could be provided by independent living officer who can be employed much cheaper than a qualified rehab worker. This model is bound to be controversial. Wales has been working hard to upskill it's workforce, not reduce skills. And will visually impaired people prefer to see one person who can provide everything, or be passed around to several differing people, inevitably being asked the same questions as they are 're-assessed'.

Lastly, there's the discussion about taking rehab out of social care, and putting into health. There have been distant murmurings about this for years. Is what rehab does that much different from Occupational Therapists? Health enjoys much more in the way of sustainable funding, and is used working to strict waiting times in way that often social care cannot achieve.

Whatever the way ahead is for rehab, there will be the need for debate, consideration and negotiation. What we should not compromise on is the that people can access high quality rehab and mobility training.

# A new Visual Impairment Rehabilitation Foundation Degree Course for Wales

**University of Wales, Newport, is pleased to announce a new pioneering course in Wales that will give people looking to become a visual impairment rehabilitation officer a chance to train in Wales for the first time.**

This Foundation Degree has been designed specifically for people who are providing rehabilitation support to people with little or no sight. Approximately 378,000 people in the UK are registered blind or partially sighted. There is therefore an urgent requirement to resource the rehabilitation of blind and partially sighted people and to provide appropriate, effective rehabilitative strategies in order to promote independent functioning and wellbeing in this growing population.

Foundation Degree programmes best meet the needs of employers and students where knowledge, understanding and skills are clearly integrated.

The University is collaborating with other partners including Guide Dogs for the Blind, Sight Support and Wales Council for the Blind to design this new programme. For individuals the course will match aspirations and potential; for employers it will provide a training opportunity and qualification appropriate to their Continuing Professional Development needs.



## **What will students study?**

The following areas will be covered during the two year programme:

- Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology
- Implications of Hearing Loss
- Social & Emotional Implications of Implications of Hearing Loss
- Working with diverse client groups including those with dual sensory impairment or multiple disabilities
- Communications for the Visually Impaired
- Technology and specialist software
- Orientation and Mobility
- Independent Living Skills
- Counselling / Interpersonal Skills
- Multidisciplinary practice in working with people with Visual Impairment

There will be a strong element of Applied Practice throughout the 2 years of study.

The course is an assessed module (that means that students will need to sit assessments in order to get the qualification). However assessment will be undertaken through a variety of appropriate means including:

- Written assignments
- Individual projects
- Oral presentations
- A qualification in Braille
- Teaching practice files
- Case study approach
- Portfolios of work

For more information on the course, please go to the University of Wales website (<http://www3.newport.ac.uk>) or contact them directly on 01633 432432.

# Daily Living Aids.

## **Contacts for Daily Living Aids.**

As we are focusing on rehabilitation in this issue, we thought it might be useful to give information about organisations that provide - or can give advice about - products which make life easier for visually impaired people. The suppliers mentioned here are just samples of those which are available, and inclusion in this list does not constitute recommendation by WCB.

### **Ricability.**

Ricability is an independent consumer research charity providing free, practical and unbiased reports for older and disabled people. Items of interest to visually impaired people include reports on DAB radio, digital television and electrical appliances. The reports are available on the website, [www.ricability.org.uk](http://www.ricability.org.uk), and some of them are also available in print and alternative formats, and can be ordered from Ricability at:

Unit G03, The Wenlock Business Centre, 50-52 Wharf Road, London, N1 7EU

Reports are free, but there is a charge for postage. To find out postage costs and for any other information, telephone 020 7427 2460 or email [mail@ricability.org.uk](mailto:mail@ricability.org.uk).

### **The Disabled Living Foundation (DLF).**

The DLF provides impartial advice on daily living products and other aspects of independent living via its website, [www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk), and a telephone helpline, 0845 130 9177 (open weekdays, 10am to 4pm). It provides fact sheets on topics such as play equipment for visually

impaired children, household equipment and kitchen gadgets.

### **Talking Products Ltd.**

As the name suggests, this company provides recordable cards and gifts, educational products, and a range of 'talking' daily living aids such as tins, labels and first aid kits. Products can be ordered on-line at [www.talkingproducts.com](http://www.talkingproducts.com), or by mail order. Telephone the helpline, 02380 730731 for more information.

### **Cobolt Systems Ltd.**

Cobolt Systems specialises in the design, manufacture and supply of innovative aids for visually impaired people. Products include talking healthcare aids such as blood pressure monitors and thermometers, low vision games, magnifiers, canes and bank note money detectors. The 2010 Catalogue is now available and can be downloaded from the website, <http://www.cobolt.co.uk>, or telephone 01493-700172 to order a printed copy.

### **Force Ten.**

Force Ten provides low vision aids such as magnifiers and talking products and will attend open days of societies for visually impaired people to demonstrate the product range.

Their website is at [www.forcetenco.co.uk](http://www.forcetenco.co.uk), or telephone 01372 450887.

### **IC-Online.**

IC-Online have a large selection of low vision products available from their on-line store, including magnifiers, telephones, lighting and clocks. The website address is [www.ic-online.co.uk](http://www.ic-online.co.uk), and you can telephone them on 01226 764082.

# Mapping Rehab: Welsh Rehabilitation Provision

WCB and the Welsh Assembly Government have launched a new project that will explore the workforce requirements of visual impairment rehabilitation officers across Wales, and make recommendations to ensure Wales has the best trained officers available.

The recent production of the National Occupational Standards for Sensory Impairment Workers and the resulting Qualification Framework enable the measurement of the rehabilitative services available in every local authority in Wales.

In addition to the hoped for formal registration to practice as a Rehabilitation Officer working with Visually Impaired People (ROVI's) the Standards firmly establish the need for a coherent, specifically directed continuous professional development (CPD) training package to ensure that the services provided by ROVI's across Wales are consistent and equitable.

Any CPD package needs a baseline to work from, so an in-depth training needs analysis of the ROVIs in Wales is vital. This will not only fully inform the CPD but also establish the levels of services being provided with specific emphasis on the current levels of ROVI training, practice and their technical supervision.

A knock on result of this kind of research process is that it will provide a visual impairment service map of Wales which will highlight areas of both good and poor practice. This will help the sector develop better standards, leading to better rehab being received by people with a visual impairment.

## What will the Project do?

The overall aims of the project are to:

- identify strengths and weaknesses in the visual impairment rehabilitation service provision across Wales.
- identify shortfall in current skills within the rehabilitation officer workforce, and propose solutions to them
- recommend future policy on effective and cost-efficient delivery of workforce development to meet the needs of the National Occupation Standards

The project concludes in Autumn this year, where a report will be published outlining the recommendations. We'll share the key findings of this report in the next issue.



### **Welsh Rehab Officers Forum website.**

With the aim of creating an online resource for professionals, the Welsh Rehabilitation Officers Forum worked with WCB to create a website where information could be shared among the various teams across Wales. The site offers a discussion board, where authorised officers can share advice; a resources section and more. Although the site is mostly for the use of its members, much information shall be available to general visitors.

# UK News

## **Disability Hate Crime to be investigated by EHRC.**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is to investigate whether public bodies are fulfilling their legal obligations to prevent disabled people from being harassed, and anyone who has experienced such crime is being asked to let the commission know about their experiences.

The inquiry was prompted by concern that a high number of these types of crimes were being carried out in Britain. The first wave of evidence is being collected until Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September, and can be given via the EHRC website ([www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)) and email. There is also a special telephone helpline for people in Wales to provide evidence: 08456 048 810.

## **Disabled Persons Railcard cuts the cost of travel for VI people and a companion.**

People who are registered as having a visual impairment are eligible for a Disabled Persons Railcard, giving one-third off the price of most rail fares. If travelling with an adult companion, they can claim the discount as well. The card costs £18 for one year, and £48 for three years, and you will need to provide evidence of your visual impairment when applying.

For more information and an application form, visit the website [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk), or telephone 0845 605 0525.

# Forthcoming Events.

The following events may be of interest to visually impaired people in Wales. Don't forget to let us know if you would like us to include an event in your area.

## **Action for Blind People – Mobile Sight Loss Information Service.**

The Mobile Sight Loss Information resource vehicles enable visitors to try out the latest technology and gadgets designed to aid daily living for blind and partially sighted people. This will be in the following sites in Wales over the next few months:

Merthyr Tydfil: 17 – 18 August

Breconshire: 19 August

Venues and times had not been confirmed at the time of writing, but once agreed, will be available on the AFBP website, [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk), or by ringing the RNIB Helpline, 0303 123 9999.

AFBP's visits are made at the invitation of the local societies to support their work– if your group wants to arrange a visit, contact them on 020 7635 4800 or write to:

Action for Blind People, 14-16 Verney Road, London SE16 3DZ

## **SWALEC Dual Sensory Exhibition.**

To mark World Sight Day, Sight Support has announced a Dual Sensory Exhibition on Thursday 14 October from 10 am to 3 pm.

The venue is

The Indoor School, The National Cricket Centre, Swalec Stadium, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff CF11 9XR.

The exhibition is aimed at anyone involved in dual sensory loss and supporting people with sight/hearing loss across the public, voluntary and private sector. Experienced staff will be on hand to give details of all services designed to maintain independence – along with community-based services to explain how they can help.

In addition to stands and information there will be a series of informative presentations throughout the day. The exhibition will include technology companies, charities, voluntary and statutory organizations who support people with sight/hearing or dual sensory loss.

For further information, contact Nirmala Pisavadia at:  
Sight Support,  
Bradbury House, Park Buildings, Pontypool, NP4 6JH  
Tel : 01495 763640 Fax : 01495 764650  
e-mail : [Nirmala@sightsupport.org.uk](mailto:Nirmala@sightsupport.org.uk)

### **Eye to Eye Conference 28-29 October in Birmingham.**

The 'Eye to Eye' conference, organised by Guide Dogs and the National Blind Children's Society, will take place in Birmingham on 28 - 29 October. It is aimed at connecting young people with visual impairment and their families with professionals from the clinical, social and education fields.

Beginning with the support available at diagnosis, to discussing how positive parenting can be encouraged and understanding care pathways (the journey from diagnosis to appropriate support and intervention), Eye to Eye offers a wealth of specialist knowledge and support.

For more information, visit the conference website,  
[www.eyetoeyecconference.com](http://www.eyetoeyecconference.com).



# The Welsh Eyecare Conference 2010

On the 17th September WCB is facilitating the Welsh Eyecare Conference at the School of Optometry and Vision Sciences, Cardiff University.

The Eyecare Conference has been running now for 4 years, and as normal, is a partnership between ophthalmology, optometry, social care and the third sector. There are presentations drawn from across Wales, and there's something for everyone, whether you're a small club or society wishing to hear about what is going on in Wales, or the largest of Councils wanting to know about the latest eye care conditions.

This year, the conference is about emerging new developments. There's an exciting look at the latest work on preventing falls in older people, and an update from the International Glaucoma Association chief executive on new approaches to treat Glaucoma. There's also an update on the Welsh Vision Strategy and the work of the third sector. For the first time ever, there will be a 'drop in and drop out' session to get to know the latest work of Seeability, the Nystagmus Network and Guide Dogs in Wales.

Each year this event provides an exceptional chance for everyone associated with eyecare to get together and hear the latest news, and catch up with each other.

And the best news is that it's completely free, and both social care staff and optometrists can count the day as training towards their professional development.

To book your free place, please go to WCB's website [www.wcb-ccd.org.uk](http://www.wcb-ccd.org.uk), or ring 02920 473 954.

# South East Wales.

## **Sight Support's Wales and West Conference.**

On Thursday the 17th June, Sight Support held its annual 'Wales and West' Conference at University Newport's Carleon Campus. With glorious sunshine, professionals from across the sensory impairment sector came to hear presentations from some of the UK's leading speakers on sensory loss. This year, Sight Support has partnered with SENSE Cymru to deliver content that covered dual sensory loss (deafblindness) as well as traditional sight loss.

The event was fantastic, highlighting new research and findings in the area as well as giving the audience real practical ways to improve their practice in working alongside partially sighted, blind and deafblind clients. From cutting edge developments in gene treatments (did you know that trials are underway to grow new eyes in mice from stem cells?), to external stimulation in people with deafblindness, the conference had nine separate presentations.

For those who missed the event, but are interested in finding out more about the presentations, please contact Nimala Pisavadia at Sight Support via email on [nirmala@gwentblind.org](mailto:nirmala@gwentblind.org).

# North Wales

## **Vision Support Activities.**

### **Summer Strollers.**

Enjoy walking? VS has started a new group of summer strolling. This is gentle walking in interesting parts of Wrexham. The club runs on the first and third Thursday of every month. If you are interested in joining this club please contact Nicky to register your interest on 01244 381515.

### **Art & Social Group.**

Vision Support's Art & Social Group has been running for many years and has now moved to AVOW in Wrexham. The group meets every Tuesday for crafts, chat and refreshments. If you are interested in card making or any other crafts then give Nicky a call on 01244 381515.

### **Crefft Club.**

This takes place at The Scala, Prestatyn fortnightly on Tuesdays. Contact Linda Twamley on 01745 338914 for more information.

### **Grow your Own.**

Vision Support has acquired allotment space on Prices Lane in Wrexham. They will be growing everything from vegetables and salad to fruit and flowers. Why not come and join them and get your green fingers to work. Whether you are a keen gardener or first timer there is space for everyone. You may have a relative or friend that would like to help. Don't miss out, give Nicky a call now on 01244 381515. Planting starts now!!

## **Audio Reading Circle.**



Thrillers, Travel or Biographies ... all at Vision Support's new Audio Reading Circle in Wrexham. The group holds meetings on the first Wednesday of every month with between five and ten members to discuss and share opinions on books they have listened to, including the club's book of the month. There may

be a just for fun quiz, a short biography of the author and a chance to share tapes and recommend other books. Contact Nicky to register your interest on 01244 381515.

A book club is also running in Rhyl once a month. Contact Linda Twamley on 01745 338914 for more information.

## **IT Training.**

Vision Support is continuing to deliver IT Training to anyone interested in learning how to use a computer. Its training will be moving to the Gwersyllt Resource Centre. If you are interested in coming for lessons, please contact Keith at the Chester Office on 01244 381515. Please do not contact Gwersyllt Resource centre direct.

# **West Wales.**

## **Congratulations!**

Wales Council for the Blind sends its congratulations to Mrs Jean Kikwood, who recently was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for her voluntary service to visually impaired people in Swansea.

# Focus on... Jill Cassidy.

I was recently appointed ICT Development Officer for Ceredigion, a post funded jointly by Ceredigion Association for the Blind and Wales Council for the Blind. The project is aimed at providing advice and guidance to individuals with sight problems, to help them with their information, Communication, and Technology requirements in their everyday lives.

My background is helpful in this new role. I have worked as an Ergonomist for 14 years, advising individuals and organisations how to make work, equipment and technology, as well as workplaces, accessible for those with injuries or disabilities. An Ergonomist is

essentially a very curious person, intrigued by all of the aspects of people and how they work. They use this knowledge to make recommendations to best suit the individual so that they can live and work comfortably and effectively. If the person has an impairment, the aim is to establish how best to assist them in order that they can work effectively and achieve what they need to

achieve. I have had the advantage of working with individuals with visual impairment, and have a working knowledge of the issues and requirements.

My initial month has been happily spent getting up to speed with suppliers, products and organisations available to those with sight problems. With the help of my boss Owen, who knows a huge amount about these products, I have been creating a portfolio of products and



Jill with WCB's I.T. officer, Owen Williams, at Sight Village

services which I can bring out on my home visits for those who want to know more.

I also went to the launch of the Ceredigion Talking Newspaper going digital. A fantastic team of people who volunteer to record the local newspaper onto tape – or now it is digital, memory stick – to keep people who cannot read the newspaper in touch with the local news. Although Talking Newspapers are now a national enterprise, with local groups producing local newspapers, it all started in Ceredigion – something to be very proud of. Anyone in Ceredigion who struggles to read the local newspaper, and wants to have an audio version of the local newspaper sent to them, can contact them.

For those with sight problems, technology which can read to them becomes a real advantage. Many, of course, can get by with the use of magnifiers, or magnification software, and some mix the two.

There is a large range of products available – both in terms of portable, handheld units and software products for using on computers. Choosing between them can be difficult, but essentially that's what I am here to help with.

All singing and dancing products can revolutionise access to the world, but there are also lots of products which are less comprehensive or complicated which can equally suit a person's needs. I will be finding out what a person needs to be able to do, suggesting some appropriate products and letting the person then make an informed decision about what will suit them best, empowering them and enabling their independence.

# Nystagmus Open Day.

I think it would be fair to say that the highlight of the Nystagmus Open Day at Cardiff School of Optometry was a demonstration of the newly purchased **Tobii System**. After a couple of talks regarding work at the Research Unit for Nystagmus, including an outline of the methods used for tracking eye movement in people with nystagmus, we were shown the latest system recently acquired by the Unit.

This expensive device was purchased thanks to funding from the Nystagmus Network. There are few places in the UK where eye tracking can be used for diagnosis or investigating the condition.

As is often the case, the development of technology like this comes from another world altogether: market researchers use eye-tracking devices as a tool to work out where people focus their attention in adverts, on web pages, when viewing television and so on. But it is also an invaluable tool for tracing the activity of the eyes of someone with nystagmus.



A toddler putting the Tobii System through its paces.

Eye-tracking has been around for some years. However, there were a number of problems with the technology used. The subject would need to wear headgear with sensors placed in front of the eyes. This became uncomfortable with prolonged use. Also, the head would need to remain static throughout the testing period. These requirements would not be very manageable when studying an infant, for example. Furthermore, horizontal motion could not be measured at the same time as vertical motion.

In contrast, the Tobii System works non-invasively - which is to say it is not physically attached to the patient - and it works without the restrictions on movement demanded by the old system.

As a proof of this, attendees at the Open Day were privileged to witness the first trial in the UK with a toddler with nystagmus. The device, situated just beneath a computer screen, was quickly calibrated while the child was sat sitting on his mother's lap. Then, various images – some moving, some static – were shown on the screen as the child's eye movements were being tracked by the device. After the test, the mother was shown different representations of her child's gaze, superimposed over the images he had been following.

All this happened with a minimum of distress for the toddler, which is important when gathering data about nystagmus because the condition is thought to worsen in stressful situations.

Perhaps one of the most positive by-products of the system is it quickly demonstrates to the parent that her child is actively seeking objects in his field of vision; a strong indication that there is some useful vision and that it is less likely that there are other, more worrying, conditions.

For Wales, it is good news that it hosts the one of the few centres in the UK that currently has this system. This, along with the Unit's development of the groundbreaking 'Cardiff acuity tests', marks Wales as a leader in this field.

## Send us your news and views!

We are particularly keen to hear any news or items of information from organisations across Wales. You may want to tell us about examples of good practice in your area, or publicise an event which is being organised. Contact Ann or Richard at Wales Council for the Blind.