

Vision in Wales Roundup

Spring 2013

Vision in Wales logo

Vision in Wales' logo has been approved by the Board of Trustees. We intend to use it flexibly to accommodate various contexts – such as social media sites, letterheads, websites etc.

For
Facebook
and Twitter



English language with sub-heading.

Welsh language without
sub-heading



In the supplement: Arts in Wales & Vision
Impairment

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Our Target 60 initiative is a case in point, for when power interruptions occur its aim is to restore supplies within the first hour. This is a commitment our customers can depend upon.

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Vision in Wales News.

General Manager Owen Williams gives an update.

Wales Council for the Blind has changed its name to **Vision in Wales**. Vision in Wales (Wales' Council for the Blind) is the umbrella agency representing vision impairment within Wales. We will continue to work to campaign, lobby and support the improvement of services for people with sight loss.

As reported in the last edition of Roundup, an important part of our new structure is the creation of Regional Steering Groups to inform Vision in Wales' work. The four groups will be established across Wales with each group offering a platform for local clubs, charities, national agencies, statutory services and people with sight loss to get together and contribute to directing the work and resources of Vision in Wales and the sector. The temporary trustees have met already and recognise that it's likely that priorities may vary from region to region, and that this should be reflected in our work.

Vision in Wales' board of trustees comprises five trustees nominated by Sight Cymru and one person nominated from each of the four proposed regional steering groups making a board of nine people. Four temporary regional trustees were elected at our AGM on 9th January.

We would like to invite you to take part in these Regional Steering Groups, and to help establish the way they work. We will shortly be contacting societies and clubs from across Wales to arrange a visit to share the work of Vision in Wales. If you would like to make an appointment, please contact Rebecca on 029 2047 3954.

Power for Life

Western Power Distribution (WPD) operates the electricity distribution network in the Midlands, South Wales and the South West. Put simply, our role is to ensure the power network of poles and pylons, cables, wires and substations – the infrastructure that we all rely upon to live our lives to the full – delivers electricity to our homes and businesses around the clock.

Sometimes power cuts can happen for reasons beyond our control. During a power cut we are here to help. We know it can be particularly worrying if you rely on electricity for medical equipment. If you depend on electricity for a reason such as using a nebuliser, a kidney dialysis machine, an oxygen machine, a ventilator – or any other reason – you should register with us.

WPD provides a free Priority Services Register, which helps us to identify customers who may need a little extra help during a power cut.

For everyone on the Priority Services Register we can:

- Give you a direct number to call in the event of a power cut so you can get straight through to us.
- Agree a password with you before we visit you, so you feel safe.
- Provide special help, if needed, through the WRVS or British Red Cross.
- Ring and tell you about planned interruptions to your electricity supply.
- Keep you as informed as possible in the event of an unplanned power cut.

To register as a Priority Services Customer, simply call **0845 724 0240** or visit our website **www.westernpower.co.uk**

Have Your Say!

Welsh Government Consultations

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

- Cross border health care & patient mobility (closes 15th March)
- 'Together for Health - a diabetes delivery plan' (closes 15th March)
- Eye health care plan for Wales (see below for more information) (closes 17th May)
- Development of a national standards and outcomes framework for Children and Young People's advocacy services in Wales (closes 22nd May).

Eye Health Care Plan for Wales

This consultation from the Welsh Government seeks views on a draft five-year eye health plan. Its specific aims are to prevent poor eye health; improve eye health outcomes; ensure early identification of, and intervention in, eye problems; provide high quality, efficient services and ensure that services are patient-focused and integrated. The plan is important because poor eye health is a growing problem: currently nearly 100,000 people in Wales are living with sight loss and this figure is expected to double by 2050.

The plan proposes that seven key strategies are put in place to achieve these objectives, and identifies the steps which the various groups of professionals and organisations need to take. The strategies include a public health promotion and education strategy, making better use of primary care services, development of secondary care services and improved use of IT.

As described above, the consultation document can be downloaded from the Welsh Government website, but you can also order copies (including large print, audio and braille) by sending an email to waleseyehealth@wales.gsi.gov.uk, telephoning 029 2082 3998 or writing to:

Eye Care Policy Branch,
Strategy, Policy and Primary Care Directorate,
Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ

In view of the importance of this topic, readers are invited to send their comments to Vision in Wales who will produce a formal response on behalf of their members. Please send any comments to owen@wcb-ccd.org.uk by Wednesday 1st May. If you prefer to respond direct to the Welsh Government, the closure date is 17th May.

Events

North Wales Roadshow and consultation event - 22 March 2013 in Llandudno

RNIB Cymru, Vision Support, North Wales Society for Blind People and Cardiff Institute for Blind People are putting on a roadshow and consultation event to find out what services people want across North Wales and to showcase services and independent living aids and products. Venue and times are to be confirmed.

For more information, contact Ansley Workman 029 2045 0440.

Events at New College, Worcester

New College, the national residential college for young people aged 11 to 19 who are blind or partially sighted, is offering several events over the next few months.

23 April and 3 July – Outreach Open Days

Aimed at educational professionals working with vi young people, and the parents of vi, Outreach Days offers 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 such as Maths, PE, Music, Science, Braille etc. They are free but an optional lunch is provided at a charge of £5.

6 May – Family Day

Family Day is a fun and exciting day for any family who has a visually impaired child. The day offers a range of activities for all ages and parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters are all welcome! Activities will include climbing wall, pony rides, art workshops and a tour of the college. It includes a free lunch and refreshments.

Places on all these events must be reserved in advance. To find out more and make a booking, telephone the College on 01905 763933 or book on-line at www.newcollegeworcester.co.uk.

Professional Development Day at RNC

The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC) in Hereford is organising a Professional Development Day for professionals working with younger students on Thursday 9th May 2012, from 10am to 4pm. To attend or find out more information, please call 01432 376 621 or email info@rnrb.ac.uk

Glaucoma Support Group meeting in Cardiff

There will be a support group meeting for patients with glaucoma at the University of Wales hospital in Cardiff on 19th April from 12.30 to 3.30 pm. For more information, contact Julia Swaffield on 029 2074 7747.

Specialist Workers Meeting in Cardiff

There will be a meeting for specialist workers in visual impairment at 1 pm on Friday 26th April at the Masonic Hall in Cardiff. The event is an opportunity for networking, and includes talks on the problems facing deafblind people, and the eye condition retinitis pigmentosa.

To book a free place contact Lissa Gomer from Sight Support on 01495 763650 or by email at lissa.gomer@sightsupport.org.uk.

News and Information

Changes at the Macular Society

Following a survey of members, the Macular Disease Society has decided to change its name to the Macular Society, because many respondents thought the word 'disease' suggested contagion. In connection with the new name, the society has developed a new logo and re-launched its website, <http://www.macularsociety.org>, making it easier to use.

The new website gives access to an on-line community, where members can find out more about the condition, chat to others in the same situation, or just keep in touch. To join the community, use the 'quick link' at the bottom of any page of the Society's website.

Chip & Signature cards - if you can't use a PIN

The Payments Council is raising awareness that, if you are unable to input a PIN when using your credit or debit card, for example due to visual impairment, the 'Chip & Signature' card is available. All banks are required to issue these cards, and retailers must accept them, but the level of awareness by both consumers and retailers is low.

How does a Chip and Signature card work?

- It looks identical to a chip and PIN card and is inserted into the machine in the same way, but instead of entering a PIN, the terminal prompts the customer to use their signature to authorise the payment
- A chip and PIN card remains the fastest and most secure way of making a card payment. However, chip and signature cardholders get the same level of protection from fraud as any other customer
- Chip and signature cards are not currently accepted at self-service check-out machines in places like supermarkets and petrol stations
- All banks and building societies offer these cards and all retailers are obliged to accept them.

To apply for a Chip & Signature card, contact your bank. For more information, you can contact the Payment Council's public enquiries line on 020 3217 8259 or visit the website www.payyourway.org.uk.

Increased funding available for disabled people wanting to stand for public office

The Access to Elected Office Fund offers individual grants to disabled people who want to be considered for selection as candidates for an election, or are standing for election. The payments are intended to help meet the costs of the additional support needs of disabled people, and increase their participation. The fund was launched by the UK Government last year, and now the upper limit for individual grants has been raised from £10,000 to £20,000 in any calendar year.

There is a website, www.access-to-elected-office-fund.org.uk, giving full details of the fund, including a resources section which includes downloadable information leaflets, or you can telephone 0845 864 5340 for more details.

EYE CAN project launched for vi young people in Swansea & Neath Port Talbot

EYE CAN is a new project developed by RNIB Cymru, Info-Nation and Cardiff Vale and Valleys (CVV) to support young people aged between 11 and 25 years who have a visual impairment and live in the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas. Its aims are to provide social groups and activities for these people, and to give them specialist support in a wide variety of areas including sight loss, health, education and training. The project is also providing workshops to local schools and colleges so that they are able to promote the service to their visually impaired students.

There is a drop-in support session on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 3pm to 5pm at Info-Nation at 47 The Kingsway, Swansea, which includes a Facebook chat session. To

find out more, please contact Anita Davies at anita@cibi.co.uk or telephone her on 01792 776360.

RNIB personal transcription service

RNIB has launched a personal transcription service. A separate leaflet describing the service has been sent with this issue of Roundup, but if you have not received it, contact Vision in Wales on 029 2047 3954 for your copy.

Calibre launches new services

Members of Calibre, the audio library service for children and adults with sight problems, can now access Streaming - a service where Calibre audio books are delivered to you live as you listen, using the internet (as opposed to downloads where the complete book is delivered before you start listening). Members can listen to them on internet enabled devices which include computers and smart mobile phones. This development gives instant access to all Calibre's digital books, with no waiting for the post and complete mobility to listen to the book anywhere, at any time, using your internet enabled smart phone.

Calibre has also launched a new service specifically tailored for people living in care homes. It is designed for groups of people listening together (rather than individually), and there is a flexible tariff to enable you to tailor the service based on the size of the home and number of visually impaired or disabled residents.

To find out more, contact Calibre on 01296 432 339, visit the website www.calibre.org.uk or send an email to enquiries@calibre.org.uk.

North Wales Vision Alliance

RNIB Cymru, Vision Support, North Wales Society for Blind People and Cardiff Institute for the Blind (CIB) are working in partnership to increase and sustain quality services for people with sight loss across North Wales. We will share resources and expertise to meet this aim. Some examples of how this is working in practice are:

- New Welfare Rights Service in Denbighshire and Wrexham. RNIB in partnership with Vision Support.
- Digital inclusion service across all six counties. RNIB in partnership with Vision Support and North Wales Society for Blind People.
- Children and Families Service across all six counties. RNIB with staff member based with Vision Support.
- Finding Your Feet Course. Eight courses commencing across North Wales both in English and Welsh. CIB in partnership with Vision Support and North Wales Society for Blind People.

Engagement has commenced with a number of Social Services departments and third sector organisations. From January to March we will be engaging with all Health Social Care and Wellbeing Coordinators, Health Boards, AMs based in North Wales, and MPs.

For more information, contact Ansley Workman 029 2045 0440.

RNIB Campaign Supporters' Network Wales

By signing up to receive our thrice-yearly e-newsletters, you can keep up-to-date with all the RNIB campaigns that are relevant across the UK, and also hear about the work RNIB is doing in Wales.

We want to inspire you to get involved in our campaigns, or even to start your own, and to provide a forum for you to share your ideas with each other, and to help you where we can.

You can sign up for the newsletters here:

<http://www.rnib.org.uk/aboutus/contactdetails/cymru/campaign/Pages/subscribe.aspx>

Personal Independence Payments

From 8 April 2013, the Government is replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people aged between 16 and 64 with a new benefit called Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

RNIB has produced a factsheet giving further information about this change, which you can access on their website,

http://www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/documents/pip_factsheet.doc

There are many organisations in Wales which can offer help and advice to visually impaired people about the effect of this change, and benefits more generally. These include RNIB, Sight Cymru, Citizen's Advice and Age Cymru. (The Summer 2012 edition of Roundup had much more information about welfare benefits and financial support – you can still read it on our website, www.wcbccd.org.uk).

Useful publications

‘Contact a Family’, the organisation for families with a disabled child, has updated its guide **‘Money when your child reaches 16 years of age’**. Although the child can claim benefits in his or her own right at this age, it will have an impact on benefits or tax credits claimed by the family, so the implications need to be considered carefully. The guide also looks at the effect of education, training and working on a young person's entitlement to benefits and gives useful contact points.

The siblings of disabled children can feel that the special needs of their brother or sister leave little time for their parents to spend with them. Now Contact a Family has updated its **‘Siblings’** guide, giving parents tips on how to deal with this potentially difficult situation. It includes personal stories as well as links to other resources, and sources of support.

You can find out more and download both Guides from the website www.cafamily.org.uk (look under ‘News and Media’ for the items dated 6th November and 18th February respectively.) Parents can order a free copy by phoning the Contact a Family free helpline, 0808 808 3555 or ring 0207 608 8700 to order in bulk.

‘If only I'd known that a year ago’, the practical guide to the help, services and benefits available to disabled people has just been updated to take account of recent changes. The 2013 edition is a useful source of information if you are newly disabled, a carer, a parent of a disabled child or have lived experience of disability or health conditions. It explains what support systems, health services, equipment, benefits and organisations are out there to support you. The guide is produced by Disability Rights UK, and costs £12.99 plus postage (£7.99 for people on benefits). To find out more and order a copy a copy from the on-line shop, go to the website radar-shop.org.uk.

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- 1** Switch off all gas appliances, and if possible turn off gas at the mains
- 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

For more information, log on to: wwutilities.co.uk



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Roundup is published quarterly by Vision in Wales. It is also available in audio CD format. Further copies can be requested from Richard Bowers, Vision in Wales (Wales Council for the Blind), 2nd Floor, Hallinans House, 22 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 0TD. Telephone 029 2047 3954.

Please send articles and news items to the above address and mark the envelope "Roundup". You may also send to richard@wcb-ccd.org.uk.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of ViW, 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.

The theme for this edition is 'The Arts and Visual Impairment'. Due to the volume of articles, this has been produced as a separate supplement enclosed with this mailing.

The theme for the next edition of Roundup will be **transport**. If you wish to make a contribution on this topic, or on any aspect of visual impairment, please contact richard@wcb-ccd.org.uk or telephone Richard on 029 2047 3954.



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