

Wales Council of the Blind Roundup

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Photo: RNC's Emma Gaylard, who calls for more VI awareness in Wales.

General Data Protection Regulation

Perspectif supplement: Training and Awareness

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest edition of Roundup. Our focus in the Perspectif supplement this time is on raising awareness through training. Getting people to understand sight loss in terms of its impact on daily living, employment and other opportunities is an ongoing battle. While equalities legislation puts a clear flag in place for the legal duties, the reality on the ground is unsurprisingly patchy and variable. Guide dog users are refused taxis; bus and train staff often exhibit poor understanding of their companies' own policies thereby creating unnecessary stress for blind customers; hospital waiting rooms can be places where people with sight difficulties are too often abandoned and ignored.

Awareness-raising programmes, such as Disability Awareness Training, serve to outline the conceptual and legal framework while impairment-specific training such as VI Awareness Training offers practical solutions to breaking down the barriers to inclusion. But are these enough to improve society for disabled people? We hear from some agencies about the services they provide to raise awareness. What emerges is the sense of awareness being built from a partnership of disabled people, the general public and other agencies.

To supplement this, WCB's Perspectif portal is currently being updated to include providers of awareness training and Disability Equality Training.

In Roundup we give an overview of the new General Data Protection Regulation, coming into force in May. It is useful to know about your obligations as an organisation or your rights as an individual. We hope you find the article useful.

Our next edition will be a celebration of 80 years of WCB, with a look at what has changed over those years. We would love to hear from anyone who has any anecdotes or memories of the organisation that they'd like to share with readers.

- Richard Bowers

WCB Roundup is published quarterly by **Wales Council of the Blind**, 2nd Floor, Hallinans House, 22 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 0DB. Tel: 029 20 473954.
Email: richard@wcb-ccd.org.uk.

Further copies, in audio CD or large print formats, are available. All editions are online at
<http://www.wcb-ccd.org.uk/roundup.php>

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To advertise in many editions, please contact us for discounts. Contact Ann via ann@wcb-ccd.org.uk or telephone 02920 473954.

Don't Panic! General Data Protection Regulation – what you need to know

Prior to this year's Annual General Meeting WCB members were given a two hour presentation from Clive Curtis (Glamorgan Voluntary Services) on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) coming into force on 25th May, 2018.

Most of us have heard of the Data Protection Act introduced twenty years ago. That Act underpins the new regulation.

This article looks at the impact of changes to the way personal data is handled from two perspectives: charitable organisations (data controllers) and individuals (data subjects). **Please note – this is not an authoritative account, so please check www.ico.org.uk for more information and/or seek advice from a legal expert.**

WCB can give some initial advice to members and some members will be able to access legal support via their WCB/Visionary Membership. Please contact Rebecca at WCB for more information on 029 20 473954.

How does the new regulation affect charities?

The GDPR affects any organisation that holds any information about an identifiable, living person where the person can be associated with that information. So, that's pretty much all organisations – it's difficult to think of any club, society or association that doesn't have data about people, such as names and addresses. There is plenty of helpful advice and

guidance on the Information Commissioner's Office website www.ico.org.uk to help organisations prepare for the new regulation.

Many are already doing much of what is required – obtaining consent; keeping data secure; using it only for the purposes for which it was intended; keeping it up-to-date and so on – but the additional rights conferred on the 'data subject' (that's you and me) mean that a few additional tweaks may be necessary. There's more about the rights of the data subject below.

Fines for non-compliance.

There are a few scare stories (in the media and, unsurprisingly, from firms selling services to organisations to make their data GDPR-compliant) about enormous fines being imposed in cases of breaches of data protection. Smaller charities should be reassured that the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is not out to destroy charities with disproportionate fines. The big fines we read about are for huge corporations making data protection breaches involving maybe hundreds of thousands of data subjects. When they start their scrutiny of data controllers they're primarily looking at corporations employing more than 250 persons.

But that does not mean small charities and clubs are exempt from the regulation. So it's important that you can demonstrate that you have everything properly managed, in a way that is appropriate to your needs and proportionate to your organisation's capacity.

What about existing records?

You do not have to re-apply for consent from your existing clients, assuming their data was obtained legally in the first instance and that their consent was given. However, it is good practice to refresh the information you hold so ...

...engage with your followers...

Review the data you hold and take the opportunity to re-engage with your members and donors. Take the opportunity to clarify with them the services you offer. But make sure that what you are asking them to consent to is presented unambiguously. The regulation is trying to remove those tricky clauses such as *'We may contact you about products and services you may like unless you click the tick box to opt out.'* In fact, a big change is that the person should not be expected to 'opt out' – you must seek their explicit consent by asking them to choose what they want to opt *into*. Opting out is offered to them subsequently so that they can withdraw their consent for certain products and services *after* having opted-in in the first place.

What do you want them to consent to?

You must be very clear about what you are asking their consent for. 'Granularity' means breaking your package of support into different components: a newsletter; questionnaires; requests for donations etc. These should be explicitly listed with, typically, a tick box against each item. The client should be free to opt out of - and into - a combination of these at will, and without any undue barriers.

Requests for changes from clients.

In general, a request for changes to their data from an individual should be carried out within a month. In some circumstances, action should be taken immediately.

The data subject does not in every case have the right to demand changes to your use of their data. There are specific circumstances where the data controller may refuse to comply with the individual's request. For example, an unsuccessful job applicant might request the deletion of his or her data in order

to make the employer incapable of demonstrating that the application had been scrutinized fairly when assessing suitability for the job. There is a six month period in which an applicant might challenge an employer, so the GDPR allows employers to retain data for this period. There are other circumstances and the ICO website gives more information about these.

After Brexit.

What is the situation regarding the regulation's status after the UK's departure from the EU? Currently, the legislation is from the EU but the entire package will be imported into UK law. So it will still apply here after we leave the EU, subject to any amendments that may be made at any time in the future by Parliament.

How does all this affect individuals?

Are you a 'data subject' and therefore protected by the new rights under the GDPR? Almost certainly. Being on the Electoral Register or holding a bank or building society account makes you a data subject. With the new regulation you are given new rights. These rights are designed to protect you against misuse of your personal data. You have a **right**:

- to be **informed** (transparency). The data controller must provide a Privacy Notice that includes contact details of the data controller and the purposes to which your data will be used etc. It should also outline the additional rights below.
- of **access** – you have a right to access the information they hold on you and they must not charge you for this. In most cases, this should be carried out within a month.
- to **rectification** – if data is inaccurate or incomplete you have a right for it to be changed. This should, in general,

be done within a month. They have a duty to send the corrections to any third parties.

- to **erasure** – ‘right to be forgotten’. You have, in addition to withdrawing consent, the right to have your data removed/deleted. (There are some instances where this request can be refused, such as to comply with a legal obligation or to exercise the right to freedom of expression).
- to **restrict processing** – the use of your data can be restricted to storage only, for instance while you are contesting the accuracy of the data.
- to **data portability** – this allows you to move your data from one IT environment to another.
- to **object** – this includes the right to object to direct marketing. There are no exemptions or grounds to refuse your objection to a direct marketing use of your data and they must stop processing your data immediately.
- regarding **automated decision-making** and **profiling** - this is to safeguard against the risk that a potentially damaging decision is taken without human intervention.

While this all seems - and is - quite technical, in essence the individual is largely empowered to have control over the uses to which their data are put. Furthermore, the data controller should not make it difficult for you to exercise those rights. They must make the process transparent to you through its Privacy Notice, which must be easily available, typically through its website. They must respond to your requests quickly (generally within a month) and make it easy for you to withdraw your consent. They must use plain language and indicate clearly what you are consenting to. And remember! You should not be automatically opted-in to anything – it’s for you to make the choice.

GDPR jargon buster:

What is **personal data**? Any information relating to a living person who is identified (or can be identified) from that information, contained in a filing system (hard copy or digital). This also includes ID numbers, location data, online identifiers, genetic or biometric information such as fingerprints. It also includes data on electronic key fobs used for building access.

What is meant by **data processing**? Collecting, recording, storing personal data by a human or automatically. Organising, altering, using, sharing or destroying such data is likewise known as 'processing'.

Who is a **data subject**? All of us - any living, identifiable individual about whom personal data is processed. Under the regulation, data subjects have new rights (see above).

What is a **data controller**? A person or body determining the purposes and means of processing personal data. This could be a charity that collects donor names and contact details and decides how to use that information.

What is a **data processor**? A person or body that processes data on behalf of a data controller (but not data controller's staff). For example, a company engaged by a charity to carry out its payroll duties. Or, a company that mails out a newsletter on behalf of the charity.

What is **granularity**? The degree to which data is broken down into smaller units. With GDPR the user should expect to be able to choose which individual elements of a company's services they wish to consent to.

WCB NEWS

Eisteddfod Genedlaethol

Galwad am siaradwyr Cymraeg I wirfyddoli ar ein stondin yn ystod yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol yng Nghaerdydd rhwng y 4ydd a'r 11eg o Awst 2018. Diddordeb? Mwy o wybodaeth? Cysylltwch â ni ar 02920 473 954 neu bec@wcb-ccd.org.uk

Call out for Welsh speakers and learners to volunteer on our stand at the National Eisteddfod in Cardiff between the 4th and the 11th of August 2018. Interested? Want more info? Contact us on 02920 473 954 or bec@wcb-ccd.org.uk

Your Voice: a Shared Vision

WCB held its SE Wales and West Wales Regional Events in March.

Accessible Information Standards

Marcia Morgan from Public Health Wales attended both events to hear the group's views on the new Accessible Information Standards. To begin, the group listened to a recording of people with sensory loss talking about their experiences of accessing the NHS. Marcia explained that Public Health Wales are keen to ensure accessibility improves for people with sensory loss using the Health Service. She reported that NHS Informatics are working with GP surgeries to provide a two-way text service to allow patients to receive notification of appointments but also have the added function of being able to cancel them via text message.

GP surgeries are now required to ask patients for their preferred communication method. She therefore encouraged everyone to do this at their next visit.

There have been reports of audio announcements in GP waiting rooms being turned off. Public Health Wales will be ensuring they are turned on.

Within the next month, Public Health Wales will be circulating a survey to health professionals. They will be asked to complete it to establish the current position in terms of the NHS' accessibility for people with sensory loss. This will then be followed up with a second survey next year to determine whether there has been an improvement.

If people wish to register a concern about services they have received within the NHS, guidance on how to do this are set out in the 'Putting it Right' leaflet.

Following Marcia's talk, the groups gave positive and negative feedback of their experiences. Instances of staff within the dermatology department having more understanding of sight loss than those working in the Eye Clinic were reported and one person reported that she was left in the hospital foyer by the Ambulance Transport team without offering any support. Other examples included: patients receiving printed letters from the Artificial Eye department, even though permission was given to communicate via email.

There were some reports of good practice. One person was pleased to be taken to a quiet room at the GP surgery so that her details could be recorded in private. Another person was pleased to receive her mammogram results in Braille.

Marcia informed the group that sensory loss awareness training was not mandatory for NHS staff. This caused some

concern and those at the West Wales group agreed to write to Welsh Government with the aim of changing this.

WCB Update

The group heard an update from WCB around patient prioritisation when accessing eyecare. They were asked for their views on Certifications of Visual Impairment being completed by Optometrists on the high street. The general feeling was that it was a good idea. However, there are still instances of hospitals not accepting referrals from opticians and insisting they come from the GP.

At the previous event, WCB explained that they were seeking a representative of the group to sit on its board of trustees. Since then, two nominations were received. The group will be asked to cast their vote over the coming weeks.

Update from members

Mike Rose, a member of the group made people aware of the Energy Saving Trust. They can offer a home visit to identify ways in which people can reduce their energy costs. It is a free service.

He also informed the group that Universal Credits will be rolled out in Blaenau Gwent in April.

Trading Standards

Quita Davies gave an interesting talk on the current scams taking place locally and nationally.

Many rogue traders are targeting vulnerable people by door-to-door selling. They are preying on those with handrails and ramps outside the home. They are offering services such as

landscaping, tree surgery and roofing work for a very high fee with poor results.

Rogue traders also create lists of people they have successfully scammed in the past and sell them on to other rogue traders.

The group was told to be aware of other scams such as telephone callers attempting to obtain banking details and access to their computers.

Quita shared some useful advice to avoid being caught out. Trading Standards can install a call blocker to home telephones to prevent cold callers. If you have been scammed and money has been taken from your account, this could be reimbursed by your bank. If you are having difficulty obtaining a refund, the issue should be taken up with the Financial Ombudsman. It is a free service and they will investigate it for you. In addition, Quita distributed stickers to be displayed in a place that's visible to cold callers. If displayed, cold callers will be breaking the law if they knock your door and should be reported to Trading Standards.

Local Councils keep a register of tradesmen who are required to sign a Code of Practice and advised residents to contact them if they are seeking a tradesman.

Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire Labour Party

Lynne Parry is the Disability Officer for the Labour Party Disability Forum. They hold a regular coffee morning and she was concerned that there is no representation from people with sight loss. Lynne asked for some advice on this issue. The group gave several suggestions such as circulating notices via the talking newspapers, email and in audio formats.

Lynne welcomed the opportunity to address the group and noted that there are lots of disabling barriers that need to be eradicated.

-Rebecca Phillips

Contact Rebecca, our External Engagement Officer, if you wish to attend our regional meetings. 029 20 473954

ACROSS THE SECTOR

Skills for Seeing

Macular conditions, such as age-related macular degeneration or juvenile macular dystrophies, cause a loss of central vision. Skills for Seeing training can help you to use your vision more effectively, and can help with reading, taking care of yourself, getting about and watching TV. The Macular Society trains volunteers to teach two techniques that can help you use your vision more effectively.

The first technique, eccentric viewing, involves identifying and using the healthiest parts of your vision. Many people often adopt this technique as they adjust to their sight loss. The second technique is steady eye strategy, which involves learning a new way to read text.

These techniques do not work for everyone. However, learning them will not damage your vision and when they do work, many people say they feel more confident and have more control over their lives.

For more information about Skills for Seeing and for free one-to-one coaching in these techniques, call the Macular Society helpline on 0300 30 30 111 or email help@macularsociety.org. If you would like to learn to become a volunteer Skills for Seeing Trainer, then please email adele.francis@macularsociety.org or call 07494 468 007. The free training lasts three days, and includes expenses (including overnight accommodation if required). A training session is provisionally scheduled for 2nd to 3rd May in Swansea, so please contact Adele if you are interested.

EyeBelieve EyeCan

Sue Griffiths tells us about a recently formed organisation to support children and young people with sight impairment.

EyeBelieve EyeCan was founded in June 2017. We are a parent/child support group for children/young people with a sight impairment within Carmarthenshire. Children/young people are very limited to social opportunities outside education. At EyeBelieve EyeCan our aim is to provide an opportunity for children/ young people to meet and support each other through meeting, having lunch out or fun social activities. EyeBelieve EyeCan gives the opportunity to develop new skills, gain experience and make new friends. Parents can have the opportunity to support each other and become involved in the planning of the activities and become an active member of our social group in our regular meetings or through social media 'facebook'.

Our aim is for parents, friends, colleagues to fundraise and organise fun, engaging and challenging activities for the children. These activities will be selected by the children themselves. Activities could be as simple as meeting up for a burger, cinema or more challenging in kayaking or mountaineering.

To date we have enjoyed several excursions, Folly Farm, Parc Y Bocs, Pembrey Country Park for a picnic and recently Limitless Bounce and Winter Wonderland.

The implications of these activities and social/group meetings is the cost (transport & entrance fees) and having access to halls/meeting rooms across Carmarthenshire for our meetings. To continue with these outings/meetings we are looking for opportunities for companies to support us with the cost

implications or provide an opportunity for children/ young people to achieve an activity/sport/lifeskill.

At EyeBelieve EyeCan, social integration and well-being is important in our minds thus enabling children/young people to achieve to their individual potential and become an integrated part of society.

The aim of our group is to provide support when needed through our facebook page. Parents can send a message to meet up at any time especially if the child is experiencing a difficult time eg National tests, difficulties with their school or the misunderstanding of VI from their peers.

I also work full time for Carmarthenshire Sensory Service as an Habilitation Specialist.

Please contact Sue for more information and for ways you can support them:

Susan Griffiths, Chairperson, EyeBelieve EyeCan

Email: EBEC2017@outlook.com

Telephone: 07387594104

Pathway to Participation

Guide Dogs Cymru has secured a grant from Children In Need to run a Wales-wide project entitled Pathway to Participation. Led by qualified habilitation specialists, the three-year project will encourage children and young people with a visual impairment to broaden their horizons by getting out, participating in activities and developing new social networks. These could be creative, sporting, social or activity-based. The aim is to address feelings of isolation and exclusion, and increase confidence and self-esteem. Regular involvement in local youth activities, clubs and groups will improve physical and mental health and well-being, as young people are encouraged and inspired to try something different,

meet new friends, take more control of their own lives and simply have fun.

For more details or to make a referral please contact Guide Dogs Cymru

Email: Cymru-MT@guidedogs.org.uk

Tel: 0345 1430195

AMD patients regain sight from stem cell treatment

The first patients to receive a new treatment derived from stem cells for people with wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD) have regained enough vision to be able to read.

The study is a major milestone for the London Project to Cure Blindness, which was funded by the Macular Society in 2008.

AMD is the most common cause of sight loss in the UK, and can lead to a rapid loss of central (reading) vision. The two patients who underwent the procedure, a woman in her early 60s and a man in his 80s, had wet AMD and declining vision.

The study investigated whether the diseased cells at the back the patients' affected eye could be replenished using the stem cell based patch. A specially engineered surgical tool was used to insert the patch under the retina in the affected eye of each patient in an operation lasting one to two hours.

The patients were monitored for 12 months and reported improvements to their vision. They went from not being able to read at all even with glasses, to reading 60-80 words per minute with normal reading glasses.

Douglas Waters, 86, from Croydon, London, was one of two people who had received the treatment at Moorfields Eye Hospital. He developed severe wet AMD in July 2015 and received the treatment three months later in his right eye.

He said: “In the months before the operation my sight was really poor and I couldn’t see anything out of my right eye. I was struggling to see things clearly, even when up-close. After the surgery my eyesight improved to the point where I can now read the newspaper and help my wife out with the gardening. It’s brilliant what the team have done and I feel so lucky to have been given my sight back.”

London Project to Cure Blindness is a partnership between Professor Pete Coffey from University College London and Professor Lyndon da Cruz, a retinal surgeon at Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The Project has been also been supported by the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

Professor Lyndon da Cruz said: “The results suggest that this new therapeutic approach is safe and provides good visual outcomes. The patients who received the treatment had very severe AMD, and their improved vision will go some way towards enhancing their quality of life. We recognise that this is a small group of patients, but we hope that what we have learned from this study will benefit many more in the future.”

Professor Pete Coffey said: “This study represents real progress in regenerative medicine and opens the door to new treatment options for people with age-related macular degeneration. We hope this will lead to an affordable ‘off-the-shelf’ therapy that could be made available to NHS patients within the next five years.”

The results of this groundbreaking clinical study, published in Nature Biotech, described the implantation of a specially

engineered patch of retinal pigment epithelium cells derived from stem cells to treat people with sudden severe sight loss from wet AMD. It is hoped that it will also help treat dry AMD in the future.

- *Source: Macular Society*

'Access to Work' funding increased

The maximum amount disabled people can claim to help them access employment is set to increase to £57,000 a year, which represents a £15,000 - or 38% - rise from the current cap on Access to Work funding.

The increase takes effect in April 2018. Access to Work is the UK Government's scheme to help people with disabilities with the additional costs that they face in working, such as workplace adaptations, assistive technology and transport.

For more information go to
<https://social.shorthand.com/DWP/uyHPPLUs4j/access-to-work>

Anita Davies – a brilliant woman!

Congratulations to Anita Davies from Cardiff Institute for the Blind who was included in Wales Online's list of the '100 brilliant women of Wales'. The list was published to mark International Women's Day 2018.

Anita was born with aniridia, a rare condition that means she has no irises in her eyes, and was registered blind as a child.

After years of campaigning for visually impaired women to compete on the international stage, the mother-of-two became a Judo world champion in 1995. She is also a community councillor in Bridgend.

Disability Sport Award

Congratulations to WCB's Julie Thomas who won Sports person of the Year with a Disability at Swansea Sports Awards. At the ceremony she thanked coach John Wilson for changing her life, and praised team mates at Swansea Indoor Bowls Club and West Glamorgan VI Bowls Club and her supportive friends.

Wales' Commonwealth Medal Winners

WCB Trustee Julie Thomas and partner Gilbert Miles win Bronze Medals in the Mixed B2/B3 Pairs Bowls at the Commonwealth Games. Directors John Wilson and Byron John guided them to a success against Scotland. More information is at www.welshvibowls.org.uk

A fantastic medal match that went to a thrilling extra end that was decided with Gilbert's last bowl. What a great advertisement for VI Bowls.

Nystagmus Network launches helpline

The Nystagmus Network can now offer information and support over the phone.

To contact this service, please call 01427 718093. It is available during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. You can leave a message if lines are busy or during weekends and someone will call you back. Alternatively, if time is short, you can continue to use the info@nystagmusnet.org email address for all enquiries

AMD guidance updated

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has issued revised guidance on the diagnosis and management of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), following a consultation exercise conducted during 2017. The guidance should end some differences in treatment between eye units and other healthcare professionals about when and how people should be treated for AMD, meaning that treatment is more consistent. It has been welcomed by the Macular Society, as it will allow the condition to be treated at an earlier stage.

You can read the full guidance documents on the NICE website, <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG82>.

The Macular Society has produced a list of frequently asked questions about the new guidelines which you can read here: <https://www.macularsociety.org/news/nice-clinical-guidelines-faqs-patients>.

Macular Society Awards

Nominations for the Macular Society's annual awards, which recognise outstanding professionals, volunteers and fundraisers, are now open. Nominations can be made in four categories:

- Clinical Service of the Year
- Optician or Optometrist of the Year
- Chairman's Award for Fundraising
- Chairman's Award for Volunteering

To find out more and make a nomination, visit the Macular Society website, <https://www.macularsociety.org/awards>. The closing date for entries is 31st May 2018.

Award for Cardiff University

Congratulations to Cardiff University's Down's Syndrome Vision Research Unit, which has been awarded the UK's most prestigious academic award – a Queen's Anniversary Prize – for its pioneering research and treatment of vision problems in children with Down's Syndrome.

The Unit, led by Dr Maggie Woodhouse, has identified the benefits of prescribing bi-focals to improve the vision of children with Down's Syndrome.

CONSULTATIONS

Welsh Government

Details of all consultations are at <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations>. Here are two open consultations:

- Draft framework for nursing in special schools (closes 5th June)
- Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for people (closes 12th June)

For preferred formats contact
CustomerHelp@wales.gsi.gov.uk or call 029 2082 3683.

Train ticketing survey

RICA, the UK research charity that works with older and disabled consumers, wants to find out about your experiences of, and views about, using train ticketing systems in the UK.

You can complete the survey online at
<https://www.snapsurveys.com/wh/s.asp?k=152060931207>.
The survey is also available in print and large print, or you can give your answers over the phone. If you'd like the survey in an alternative format or have any questions, please contact Catherine Cashman via email at catherinecashman@rica.org.uk, or telephone 020 7427 2466.

Everyone who completes the survey has the option to be included in a prize draw, and the survey closes on 27th April.

OPPORTUNITIES

Can Do volunteering scheme

Leonard Cheshire Disability's 'Can Do' scheme offers disabled people aged 16 to 35 years the opportunity to volunteer in their community.

The organisation provides the necessary training, covers expenses and can provide additional support as required. Participants have the opportunity to gain new skills, increase confidence and make new friends. 'Can Do' operates in locations across the UK, including Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham in Wales.

To find out more and make an enquiry, visit the Leonard Cheshire Disability website:

<https://www.leonardcheshire.org/support-and-information/life-and-work-skills-development/can-do>

or telephone Lisa Gilchrist, co-ordinator for Wales, on 07793 803753.

PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES

Nystagmus and driving

Nystagmus Network has produced a new publication that tackles a subject of major concern to people with the condition. 'Nystagmus and Driving' addresses the issues, answers your questions and points to free and concessionary alternatives to driving. You can download the free booklet from <http://nystagmusnetwork.org>

Online training for professionals

The Macular Society has launched the first of a series of free on-line training modules that will give healthcare professionals a greater understanding of central vision loss.

The first course, 'An Introduction to Age-Related Macular Degeneration', is now available. The course is divided into three modules: Anatomy and Disease Pathophysiology, Low Vision Aids and Technology. Additional courses are set to follow covering topics such as Early AMD, Skills for Seeing, Nutrition and Eye Health, and Charles Bonnet Syndrome, visual hallucinations which are thought to affect half of all people with macular disease.

For more information and to access the training, visit the Macular Society's website: <https://www.macularsociety.org/news/free-online-training-healthcare-professionals>.

Soundscape navigation app

Microsoft has launched Soundscape, an app that makes it easier for people with sight loss to explore towns and cities. The app is a result of a collaboration between Guide Dogs and Microsoft. People with sight loss were at the heart of the development of the technology, influencing its design and testing the product.

To find out more, including a comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions, and download the app from the App store, go to <https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/services-we-provide/technology/>.

EVENTS

Clocking Off

Parade through Bute Park and retirement gift giving:
Sat 14th of April 2pm.

Clocking Off is a commemorative parade for the working or retired guide dog, devised and organised by artist and researcher Kathryn Ashill. The aim of this work is to honour the working life of the guide dog and to celebrate the work the dogs do for the wellbeing of humans.

Kathryn was inspired by the passing out parade to honour the work of the Goat Major in the Royal Welsh Fusilliers, one of only nine animals to be paid by the MoD. The goat receives an honorary parade both on starting his career and on retiring from the regiment. The idea behind a parade for guide dogs is the celebration of the work they do for their companions and human health. At the end of the short parade, Kathryn would like to give the gift of a dog tag with the title of this performance and performance date on it to the guide/assistance dog.

Contact Kathryn Ashill info@kathrynashill.com

Low Vision Drop-in Day

Llanelli Blind Society is holding a technology drop-in day on April 16th at 1st Floor, 18 Vaughan Street, Llanelli, SA15 3TY.

Dolphin Computer Access and Enhanced Vision shall be demonstrating products such as magnifiers and talking

computers. Contact Dolphin Computer Access on 01905 754 577 for more information about this event.

Glaucoma Support Groups

The following Glaucoma Support Group meetings are scheduled:

- 12th April at 10 am, Keir Hardie Academic Centre, Keir Hardie University Health Park, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1BZ.
- 1st June at 2 pm, Tre-Dodridge Suite, Vale Resort Hotel, Henson Park, Hensol, Vale of Glamorgan CF72 8JY

For further information, contact Eryl Williams on 07856 68 79 31.

Open Day in Prestatyn

Vision Support are holding an open day on Thursday 12th April at their office in Prestatyn. Synaptic and Vision Aid are visiting to demonstrate a mix of equipment for people with sight loss. The event will run from 10 am to 3 pm at 38 High Street, Prestatyn, LL19 9BB. For more information, contact Vision Support on 01745 472558.

‘Living with sight loss’ course

Living with Sight Loss courses are 2- or 4-day information courses for people affected directly or indirectly by sight loss. The courses are free, informal and community-based and will provide information, advice, support and practical solutions for those adjusting to sight loss and those close to them.

The courses provide an opportunity for people affected by sight loss to obtain up-to-date information about local and national support and services in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

Participants will be able to share their experiences whilst learning what local services are available and how to access them.

The courses will cover a number of topic areas including:

- Daily living and mobility;
- Introduction to assistive technology;
- Eye health & eye care pathways;
- Wellbeing;
- Welfare Rights and Concessions;
- Leisure, hobbies & interests.

The courses will be facilitated by Keira Brooks, RNIB Confidence Building Co-ordinator and will include information from a wide range of agencies and services such as Guide Dogs Cymru, local societies, Rehabilitation Officers for Visual Impairment, local optometrists and national RNIB services.

Keira will be focusing on setting up regular courses across Powys, Bridgend and West Wales. The following dates have been confirmed:

South Powys

The Guildhall, Brecon LD3 7AL

10.30am - 3.30pm on Wednesday 25 April & Wednesday 2 May 2018

Mid Powys

The Radnorshire Museum, Llandrindod Wells LD1 5DL

10.30am - 3.30pm on Tuesday 5 June & Wednesday 6 June 2018

Dates for other areas will be shared as soon as they are confirmed however please contact RNIB if you would like more information or to be added to the waiting list for your area.

Please note, in other areas of Wales information courses and sessions may already be run by local authorities or local societies.

If you would like further information please contact your local provider for details.

RNIB Living with Sight Loss enquiries 0300 123 3933

lwslenquiries@rnib.org.uk

Exhibition / Information Day in Llandudno

There shall be an Exhibition / Information Day on Friday, 18th May, 2018 at Venue Cymru, Llandudno. It will be an opportunity to find out what is new in the world of vision enhancement and offer the opportunity to discover more about attaining and maintaining independence.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Bethan at the North Wales Society for the Blind on 01248 353604.

VICTA Events in Wales

VICTA, the organisation for children and young people with sight loss, is organising events for vision impaired young adults aged 18 to 29 years this summer.

24th-28th June: Surfing break in the Gower Peninsula. This will include three mornings of surfing lessons, facilitated by 'Surfability', a surf school specifically set up to provide surfing experiences for people with disabilities. Afternoons will be spent on dry land exploring the area and there will also be a social evening activity. The deadline has passed but there are still a few places left, so contact VICTA if you're interested.

13th-19th August: Conservation Expedition to Skomer Island. The trip will provide time to explore and develop an understanding of the island's geography and wild terrain through a number of walks

incorporating the coastal perimeter and inland meadows. Walks will be timed to witness dawn and sunset, low and high tides, to maximise wildlife spotting and experience different wildlife behaviours. All walks are curated to maximise light, shadow, colour, sound, smell and touch. Apply by 21st May.

There is a cost of £150 per person for each event. For more information and to apply for a place, visit the website <http://www.victa.org.uk/2018-victa-activities/>, where you can find information on all VICTA activities. You can also contact VICTA on 01908 240831.

Macular Society Roadshow

The Macular Society is organising four roadshows during 2018, giving people with an interest in macular conditions the opportunity to find out about the latest treatments, and the search to find a cure. The roadshow will visit Cardiff on Tuesday 8th May. Tickets are now available and cost £18 per person, including lunch. To find out more and book a place, visit the Macular Society website, <https://www.macularsociety.org/roadshows> or ring 01264 350 551.

Social Groups in North Wales

Vision Support organises five social groups in North Wales:

- Rhyl Visionaires - (primarily attended by people of retirement age, although anyone can attend) - meets on the last Monday of every month at 11:00 a.m. at Rhyl Library
- Prestatyn Visionaires - (as above) - meets on the first Wednesday of each month from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. in Nant Hall Church, Nant Hall Rd, Prestatyn
- Mold Visionaires - (as above) - meets on the third Wednesday of each month from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at Llys Jasmine, Jasmine Crescent, Mold

- Wrexham Visionaires - (as above) - meets on the first Thursday of each month from 11:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m. in room 1 at Avow, Egerton St, Wrexham
- Socialise - (18-55s working age social group) - meets alternately in Chester and Llandudno on the third Saturday of every month, meeting at Chester/Llandudno railway station at 1:00 p.m.

Anyone wanting further information on these groups can call Vision Support's Prestatyn Sight Loss Centre on 01745 472558 or the head office in Chester at 01244 381515.

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.

Power cut? Call 105 or 0800 6783 105

Sometimes power cuts can happen for reasons beyond our control. During a power cut we are able to help.

We know it can be particularly worrying if you rely on electricity for medical equipment or if you are elderly, very ill or disabled.

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 Service Register, which helps us to identify customers who may need a little extra help during a power cut.

If you join our FREE Priority Service 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 RVS (Royal Voluntary Service) 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 join, call **0800 096 3080**, or visit our website **www.westernpower.co.uk**

Smell gas?

Staying safe in six easy steps

If you smell gas in your home or business, we're here to help. Here's what to do.

- 1 Call us immediately on Freephone 0800 111 999. We're available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and will send out an engineer to make your property safe.
- 2 Turn off all your gas appliances and, if possible, switch off the gas at the meter (unless the meter is in the cellar or basement, in which case don't go in).
- 3 Open windows and doors.
- 4 Don't use any electrical appliances or switch lights on or off.
- 5 Don't smoke or use naked flames.
- 6 If there's a smell of gas in the cellar or basement, please wait outside or with a neighbour.



**YOUR GAS EMERGENCY
AND PIPELINE SERVICE**



**WALES&WEST
UTILITIES**