This leaflet is available in accessible formats such as large print, braille and audio. Ask Wales Council of the Blind for copies on **029 20 473954**

**How can I get information, advice and support in my community?**

There is a range of support available in the wider community and it is there to help at any time. Even if you feel you’re not ready for additional help, keep this leaflet handy to use in case you need it. There’s a contact number at the end to an impartial Wales-wide organisation that will direct you to the support you want and need.

**Continue to visit your high street optometrist.**

It’s important that you continue to maintain your general eye health. This can by checked by your high street optometrist or optician. Opticians can generally see you quickly if you have a problem and are able to refer you to an eye specialist at the hospital if necessary.

**Medicines and after-care.**

It is really important that you use any medicines or treatments that have been prescribed to you by an eye specialist or your GP. Treatments such as eye drops for glaucoma are an important part of your ongoing eye health. Use them as instructed or seek advice from a specialist if you are in any doubt or experiencing difficulties. Your local pharmacist would also be able to advise you on the use of medication.

**Low Vision Service Wales.**

You might be able to make many day-to-day activities easier by obtaining the right magnifiers and lighting to suit your particular needs. This free service can offer up to an hour-long appointment with a trained practitioner who will: discuss the difficulties that your low vision causes you; measure your vision; help you to try out appropriate visual aids and prescribe suitable ones for you, free of charge; discuss your eye condition(s) with you.

**Eye Care Liaison Officer.**

ECLOs are there to offer information, and practical and emotional support when you see your eye specialist at the hospital. But they are also there for you if you need to go back and see them at any point in the future. They can advise on eye conditions, benefits, emotional wellbeing, children’s services, and the process and of being registered with your local authority as sight impaired or severely sight impaired.

**Vision rehabilitation / habilitation.**

If you have given your consent, your local authority will contact you to arrange a specialist vision impairment assessment aimed at establishing what support you may need. You will be referred to a Vision Rehabilitation Specialist who can work with you to get about indoors and outdoors safely, improve your confidence with preparing meals, using appliances safely, and looking after yourself and your family. They also provide information, training and advice for your friends, family and carers. Children and young people can get similar support from a Vision Habilitation Specialist. You can also ask about adaptations to your home to make it safer and simpler to use.

**Education and employment.**

If you are in education or employment support is available to help you to continue to study or work. If you’re in school, college or university, there are sources of help such as the Disabled Students Allowance. If you are in employment, then Access to Work, for example, can provide practical support to help you start work, stay in work, move into self-employment or start a business.

**Other sources of help.**

There is a range of services and support provided by charities and third sector organisations. They can help by giving information; practical support, such as travelling or shopping; clubs where you can meet other people with sight loss and share experiences; talking books and magazines. You can even get help to choose the right IT solution so that you can continue to read household bills or books.

Also, for support and information about your particular eye condition, such as glaucoma or macular degeneration, there are specialist organisations that can help you.

**Central contact number:**

To find out more about any of these sources of help and support, contact Wales Council of the Blind, who will direct you to the right contacts or arrange for the organisations to contact you.

**Wales Council of the Blind:** http://wcb-ccd.org.uk/support

**Tel: 029 20 473954
email support@wcb-ccd.org.uk**