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## **Introduction**

The aim of this pack is to offer a source of introductory information about services for people experiencing sight problems and for friends and relatives who may be able to help.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information contained in this pack.

Being registered as either blind or partially sighted does not necessary mean total or substantial sight loss. It is estimated that one in sixty people in Britain have a sight problem and many of those are not registered and may not be aware of help available.

Each section of information is intended to give basic background on some of the topics which, experience has shown, may be of benefit to people with sight problems. Contact details are shown at the bottom of each page.

## ***Making the Most of Your Sight***

It is important to remember that using your vision will not wear it out or cause deterioration, so it is safe to use it in whatever way you want or need to, in whatever lighting conditions are most suitable for you.

Some people find that using bright lighting is very helpful whilst others cope in dull light. A lot will depend on the cause of your visual loss. For instance, people with macular degeneration often find that bigger, brighter and bolder is the best way of dealing with this condition.

We recognise that everyone is an individual and any particular eye condition will affect vision very individually, which makes YOU the expert.

Colour contrasts are often helpful in making the most of your vision. A white cup on a dark surface will show up well or vice versa. The question of contrast is relevant in many situations in every day life, both in and out of doors.

## ***Scarborough Blind & Partially Sighted Society including Whitby & Filey***

The Society has a large purposed-designed Resource Centre just outside the town centre at 183 Dean Road, Scarborough, and on a regular bus route from town.

A wide range of services is offered, tailored to suit the individual person's needs. After diagnosis of a sight problem it may just be some advice and a friendly face to talk to that is needed, while later the client may wish to use some of the many facilities we have. The centre has a wide range of specialist equipment, closed circuit tv readers, talking books to borrow, social and activity groups and its own mini-bus.

In the Information Technology Suite we are able to teach sight impaired people how to use a computer, starting with a touch typing tutor for those with little or no knowledge of a keyboard, to accessing the internet and emails for those who are more competent. Whether a beginner or someone who has used a pc before, we can offer you training if you are registered as sight impaired.

In our gym we have a treadmill, a rowing machine and a recumbent cycle, where clients can exercise in a safe environment under supervision.

Advice and information on all aspects of sight impairment is available, as well as on benefits and welfare rights. If you need help to complete a form for Council Tax Benefit, Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance we can help.

We don't receive any funding from anyone, and are a local independent charity, so donations and help in the form of volunteering in some way are always welcome. We have a charity shop at 66 Falsgrave Road, Scarborough which we have set up to hopefully generate some profit to help us to continue to provide our services, and volunteers are always welcomed to help.

If you just want to look round the Centre do please call in during our opening hours, Monday to Thursday 10am to 4pm, or come along to our coffee morning usually held on the first Friday of each month except January.

## ***A Potted History of Scarborough Blind & Partially Sighted Society***

Formed by four local men in 1935, the Society was first known as the Scarborough Society for the Welfare of the Blind. In 1992 the name was changed to the Scarborough Blind and Partially Sighted Society. The need for such a society was seen by four local men, Mr J Catchpole, Mr H Leadbeater, Mr F Horton and Mr A Wood, and its broad aim was to help local blind and partially sighted people.

Over the years the Society has given assistance to the client group in the form of help to pay for gas and electricity, furniture, prescription charges and spectacles, together with interest free loans, transport, free coal, grants towards holidays, outing and the supply of various items which help towards normal daily living and associated tasks. For a number of years a gift of £10 was given at Christmas, but the introduction of new Charity Commission regulations meant that this was no longer possible.

In 1954 the Blind Social Club was formed, meeting twice a month at South Cliff Methodist

Hall where blind and partially sighted members met socially, being entertained by local choirs, bands and musicians. The Club was disbanded in 1991, due to lack of support.

In 1983 it was felt that there was a need for a Talking Newspaper in Scarborough and a Committee of interested volunteers was formed. The equipment needed to set up the newspaper was purchased by the Society, who also provided the necessary funding for the first few years, until the Scarborough Talking Newspaper could stand on its own feet and become a charity in its own right.

Over the years the Society operated on a part-time basis in various rented rooms, until 1988 when plans were formulated to set up a permanent Resource Centre. With the help of donations from the Yorkshire Telethon Trust and the National Telethon Trust, the premises at 33a Scalby Road were purchased and adapted.

In 1991 Mrs Viv Wright was appointed to the position of part-time Co-ordinator, to extend the facilities at the Center, and in the summer of 1992 an extension was added to the existing building and the interior re-designed and

refurbished. The Co-ordinator's working hours increased to full-time in the following year, and an Information Assistant was appointed. Society News, the monthly magazine produced by the Society was introduced at this time, and over 600 copies a month are now distributed in large print, tape, Braille and email.

In 1993 an Information Point was set up at the Eye Clinic at Scarborough Hospital, manned by volunteers who gave advice and assistance to patients, as well as showing a small range of the equipment available at the Centre.

At this time computer tuition was introduced, with visually impaired members having access to computers fitted with speech synthesisers, enabling them to learn to touch-type, and then to progress to word processing etc.

Over the next few years demand for services and facilities increased, and in 1996 the Society took on the added responsibility of offering services to visually impaired people in the Whitby and Ryedale areas. However, since 2010, the area of Ryedale has become independent with its own services provided by Ryedale In Touch, consequently we now

concentrate solely on the borough of Scarborough, which includes Whitby and Filey. We offer a home delivery and demonstration service for clients in the Whitby and Filey areas.

In 1998 the Society bought premises on Dean Road, Scarborough, with a view to developing a much bigger, modern Resource Centre. An application for National Lottery Funding was made, and in March 1999 the news came that a grant of £150,000 had been awarded to refurbish the premises at Dean Road. The work on converting the building was completed in October 1999, when the new Resource Centre opened. The extended facilities now include a large resource demonstration area, an activity room and training kitchen, disabled toilet facilities, a talking lift, mini-gym, computer suite, as well as four rooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor which are rented out to the Scarborough Talking News. The Centre was officially opened on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2000, by Bond Girl and Avenger's star Honor Blackman.

Mrs Wright is now the Society's Chief Officer, assisted by three members of staff at the Centre which is now a recognised part of life for many sight impaired people throughout the whole area

who use the facilities on a regular basis. The gym and computer facilities are very popular with people of all ages. The Society receives many accolades in recognition of its work, and in 2006 its IT Tutor David Dartnall-Smith was the runner-up UK Silver Surfer of the Year.

The Resource Centre has continued to develop its services in tune with the needs of clients, and as technology has advanced we have kept up with the developments in our IT suite. Modern flat screen monitors, small computers and scanners have replaced the old clumsy monitors, large towers and synthesizers, together with a wide range of specialist magnification and text to speech software to suit every need. Clients can now use the internet, skype and virtually every other application used by sighted people, and of course the world of digital photography has opened up a new leisure pursuit for sight impaired people as well as computer games.

We have had our own minibus for more than ten years, we use this to transport members to our social and activity sessions held three afternoons a week for those living in the Scarborough area, and on Tuesdays for those

living in the Whitby area. Whitby members spend the day with us, spending time in the IT suite and in the gym, or going into Scarborough to do some shopping. The minibus has been purpose designed with a low floor for easy access and a tail ramp for wheelchair users.

We have never received regular funding from statutory funders such as the NHS, PCT or local authorities and over the years have developed our own fundraising strategies. In 2006 we opened a charity shop in Falsgrave Road, Scarborough which has provided employment for local people, as well as promoting recycling, and more importantly raises money to help us to keep our services running. In the Spring of 2011 we were accepted as a UK Online Computer Centre where members of the public can come along and access free computer training at times when our tutor has free time. Of course, there is a financial gain for us by doing this, as we receive payment for each person who accesses our training. In these stringent financial times we have to look at every opportunity to diversify in ways which will bring in funding without affecting the services we offer to our clients.

## **Computer Lessons**

Lessons in computer skills are available at our Radford Centre as well as in the home. With the right training and equipment any visually impaired person can use a computer, even without any sight at all.

### **Learn Useful Skills!**

Basic computer skills can be a huge benefit enabling visually impaired people to live more independently. Computer skills mean that visually impaired people can send and read their own written communications, do their own shopping and manage their own finances. These are activities which the majority of visually impaired people would require assistance to undertake.

### **Buying a New Computer?**

As well as teaching computer skills we support our service users through the process of purchasing a new computer. Our experienced staff are able to assess what hardware and software is needed and then source it at the best possible price.

## About Sight Loss

Sight loss can happen to anyone, at any time.

Right now there are nearly 2 million people in the UK who have significant sight loss. The cause could be genetic, the result of an accident, an illness or injury, or simply because of the ageing process but lifestyles can have an impact too - **around half of all sight loss is preventable or treatable if detected early enough.**

***Some of the more common causes of sight loss***

### **Macular Disease (MD)**

The central part of the retina we use for seeing things in fine detail – for reading, writing, driving, and recognising faces and colours, is called the macula. **Macular Disease (MD)** is the collective term for several conditions which cause damage to the cells of the macula thus affecting the central vision. MD is the most common cause of sight loss in the UK and **the age-related form of macular disease (AMD) is the leading cause of sight loss amongst older people.** At the moment there is no cure for AMD but drug therapy, laser treatment or other medical

treatment may, in some cases, be able to slow down or halt the disease.

Macular Disease causes blurred, distorted or dim vision and may progress slowly. It's not painful so the affected person may not notice any changes at first. **Regular sight tests** should pick up any changes in vision.

You can check your vision at home using an Amsler Grid. Further information may be found on the [Macular Disease website](#).

## **Glaucoma**

Glaucoma is a name for a group of conditions which affect the optic nerve and affects **two in every 100 people over the age of 40**. People may have **glaucoma** and not know it as in the early stages there are usually no symptoms. 40% of the optic nerve can be damaged before any vision loss is even noticed and the damage cannot be reversed so it is important to have **regular eye tests**. Anyone can develop glaucoma but the risk increases as you get older.

Further information about glaucoma can be found on the [International Glaucoma Association website](#).

## **Diabetic retinopathy**

People with **diabetes** are at risk of developing a condition called **diabetic retinopathy** which affects the blood vessels supplying the retina, the part of the eye which is sensitive to light and very important to vision. The blood vessels become weak and damaged and the resulting lack of blood supply to the retina can cause serious damage if not treated. **Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in adults under the age of 65.** It can be successfully treated by laser – **if caught early enough.** Laser treatment can't restore sight already lost but could stop the condition progressing further. Another reason to have **regular sight tests.**

Further information can be found on the [NHS Choices website](#).

## **Stroke**

Every year thousands of people in the UK suffer a stroke and visual problems are common, affecting up to two thirds of stroke survivors. Visual difficulties can vary from slight to more severe – there may be central vision loss, visual field loss, eye movement problems or visual

processing problems. Along with other after-effects of stroke, visual difficulties are often resolved in time as the brain heals but where recovery does not happen it is important to have your eyes examined by an eye-care specialist for assessment and possible treatments and strategies to help.

[The Stroke Association](#) has a useful information leaflet (factsheet 37) covering stroke and sight loss.

**Remember – half of all sight loss is preventable or treatable. Keep an eye on your vision and have regular eye tests. That half hour appointment could save your sight.**

When did you last have an eye test? To find your nearest registered optician:

### **Scarborough**

**Local Eyes** (formerly Horn & Pierce)

4 Newborough,

Tel: 01723 364045

**Pagan & McQuade**, 108 Westborough,

Tel: 01723 372250

**Brown & Humphreys**, 42 Huntriss Row,

Tel: 01723 361957

**Domiciliary visits** may be available from Pagen & McQuade and Brown and Humphreys on request.

## **Whitby**

**Specsavers** 9 New Quay Road Whitby

Tel:01947 824020

**Rayners** 3-4 Wellington Road Whitby

Tel: 01947 603358

## **Filey**

**Langton's** 17B West Avenue Filey

Tel: 01723 512100

**Boot's** 32 Belle Vue Street Filey

Tel: 01723 513106

**Hunmanby Opticians** 24 Bridlington Street

Hunmanby Filey Tel: 01723 890011

## ***Magnifiers and Low Vision Aids***

Magnifiers can be of great value and there are many different types available for different purposes. Apart from magnifying glasses for reading, some are designed for watching television or, even checking the number of the

next bus. Magnifiers are often referred to as Low Vision Aids or LVA's for short.

You must be referred to the Low Vision Aid Clinic for assessment for a magnifier, by your consultant, but you also have the option of requesting a low vision assessment by a local optician approved to provide this service. Your sight will be assessed and the appropriate magnifier provided free of charge. The opticians you can use are:

### **Scarborough**

**Local Eyes** (formerly Horn & Pierce)

4 Newborough,

Tel: 01723 364045

**Pagan & McQuade**, 108 Westborough,

Tel: 01723 372250

**Brown & Humphreys**, 42 Huntriss Row,

Tel: 01723 361957

**Domiciliary visits** may be available from Pagen & McQuade and Brown and Humphreys on request.

A range of magnifiers are kept at the Resource Centre, which can be purchased if you so choose.

## ***Technology for reading***

We have a range of specialist closed circuit tv readers on display at the Resource Centre. These range from a simple hand-held mouse containing a magnifier, which is connected to your television set by a scart lead to freestanding all-in-one machines with flat screens. The simplest one is the Bierley Monomouse, costing around £100, which you can use by rolling the mouse over the page, the image is then transferred to the television screen in magnified print size for you to read.

At the other end of the scale you can be spending up to £2,500 for a superb machine which allows you to write or continue with hobbies, such as needlework or painting, as well as magnifying print and photographs.

Finally, do continue to have regular eye examinations, as recommended by your optician. An eye examination not only diagnoses eye conditions but also can show evidence of other health problems at an early stage. If you are over 60 years of age, or suffer from glaucoma or have a family history of glaucoma, then the eye test is free of charge.

## ***Registration***

If your Ophthalmic Consultant has decided you can be registered blind or partially sighted you are given the option of registration. If you choose to be registered you will be asked to sign a form agreeing to this, and details will be sent to NYCC Sensory and Physical Impairment Team.

A Rehabilitation Officer specialising in sight impairment will contact you to arrange a visit to assess your needs and offer relevant help and advice. Further help and advice can be given as your needs change.

Registration is voluntary and you do not have to register to receive help and advice. However, registration does offer you easier access to a wide range of services and enables the local authority to plan future provision of services for sight impaired people.

Your registration details will be kept confidential by NYCC, although you will be asked if you would like to be put in touch with the Scarborough Blind & Partially Sighted Society, as we offer a wide range of services to sight impaired people

## ***Rehabilitation Officers and their work***

A Rehabilitation Officer is a professionally trained person who can help people with sight problems to adapt their daily living skills and maintain independence in their lives.

Rehabilitation Officer can teach Braille, daily living skills including kitchen safety, telling the time, recognizing money and can offer other help to suit your specific needs. They can advise on the use and availability of specialist aids and equipment.

The Majority of people who are registered as blind have some remaining sight. The Rehabilitation Officer can suggest ways of making the best use of this residual vision with enhanced lighting, magnification and colour contrast.

Mobility training can also be offered as well as advice on how to move confidently and safely both indoors and out using the most suitable mobility aid such as a white cane or stick.

Requests for a visit from the Rehabilitation Officer should be made via the Social Services Customer Relations Team on 0845 034 9410.

## ***Lighting***

Making the best use of good quality light is likely to be of very considerable benefit to you. Daylight is, of course, the best source and you will need to experiment to find out what is best for you. For example, try to do your reading in a room where you can push the curtains all the way back to allow the natural daylight to help you by sitting facing into the room with your back to the window.

To increase the light, redecorate the walls and ceilings, a light colour and avoid shiny surfaces, which create dazzle and glare. Lighting levels can often be improved by changing the light fittings by choosing a style which distributes the light evenly around the room. Avoid fittings where a naked bulb is visible or where shade throw shadows and patterns.

Freestanding floor lamps are available with daylight bulbs, and in some cases with magnifiers attached, which are of immense help to anyone with poor sight. Desk lamps with flexible arms and heavy bases or clamps are also an option, again fitted with daylight bulbs. Further details are available from the Centre.

## ***Keeping in Touch***

There are many ways to help you keep in touch with family and friends as well as keeping up to date with letters, bills and correspondence.

Letter writing frames are available and can help you maintain the horizontal line when writing a letter, and you can use address frames for envelopes. Notepaper printed with thick black lines for you to write on is available if you prefer, whilst one of the most useful purchases you can make, is a thick tipped felt tip pen.

Several items of equipment are available to make use of a telephone easier, including large button telephone featuring easy-to-use numbers, an answering machine and the 1471 and 1571 facilities.

Scarborough Talking News produces a weekly newspaper featuring articles from the Scarborough Evening News which are read onto tape by volunteer readers. The pen drives or disks are sent to you through the post, free of charge, to listen to in your own home. They produce a monthly magazine which contains a

wide range of topics of both local and national interest.

**Scarborough District Talking News** A free service of audio books which are available on Pen-Drive, Normal Audio CD or tape.

**Whitby Talking News** is published once a month again featuring local news and items of interest, and is available to anyone with a sight disability.

**The Talking Newspaper Association (TNAUK)** produces a wide range of newspapers, magazine and journals on cassette. Subscription rates are reasonable. This service enables you not only keep up with national or hobbies and keep up to date with developments.

### **Big Print – your weekly newspaper**

Big Print is the only British weekly newspaper published in bold text and has a UK readership of around 14,500 and is produced by the RNIB.

It has sixteen pages of excellent reading material including national and world news pages, special feature pages, a Sports page, a

fantastic two page spread with the Big Print crossword, quick Question Time quiz, Recipe of the week and even the weekly horoscope.

Accompanying Big Print newspaper is a weekly TV and radio listings supplement. It contains over 30 pages of listed programming schedules including BBC 1, BC2, ITV, Channel 4 and Five plus regional programming throughout the UK and Radio 3, 3, 4 and 5 and Classic FM programmes for the week. The TV 'Pick of the Week' and 'Week's Choice' will mean you won't miss out on your favourite TV programmes.

### **Free sample**

To receive a sample issue call Big Print on 0303 123 9999 or email [bigprint@rnib.org.uk](mailto:bigprint@rnib.org.uk) giving the following information:

Name, Postal Address, Postcode and Telephone Number. You can also request subscription details from this number if you wish.

### **BT**

BT produces guide for people who are disabled or elderly, called "Freedom to Communicate".

This informative booklet gives information about BT and its products, as well as sections which deal with products available for people with sight or hearing loss and other disabilities. A free priority fault repair service is available to vulnerable people who have a BT standard telephone line.

## **Free Directory Enquiries**

British Telecom has a scheme enabling people to register for the free Directory Enquiries Service by completing an application form which is available from the Scarborough Blind Society.

### **Contacts:**

**Scarborough Talking News:** 01723 363344

**Scarborough District Talking News:** 01723  
377524

**Whitby Talking Newspaper:** 01947 810628

**TNAUK:** 01435 866102

**BT Free Priority Fault Repair:** 0800 800 150 (if you don't want to follow the instruction to select the options offered on this number don't do anything, just listen and eventually you will be put straight through to an operator)

**BT Age & Disability Action:** for a copy of the booklet Freedom to Communicate contact the number given above, 0800 800 150.

## **UTILITIES**

### **GASCARE**

For customers with special needs: specially designed appliance controls, advice booklets, cassette tapes for visually impaired customers, talking bill service, free gas safety check on appliances, visit from a Home Service Adviser to give advice, priority attention for repair work, etc. Register by ringing your local gas office for application form, or call National Gas Care Team 0845 955 5404. Gas leak emergency number: 0800 111 999

## **TELEPHONE CUSTOMER SERVICES**

BT has a number of services for people who are disabled or elderly. For information call the Disabled Officer. Telephone No. 0800 919 591

### ***Getting Around***

Many people can benefit from Mobility Training in order to maintain independence outside the

home. Sometimes learning to recognise 'landmarks' such as bus shelters, letter boxes, yellow lines on the road or certain coloured doors are sufficient to help you to travel independently. Mobility training is available from the Rehabilitation Officer who can teach you the safest way to get around using your vision and can provide a white cane or stick depending on your needs.

You may also feel that you would benefit from a Guide Dog. You can discuss this with the Rehabilitation Officer, or contact the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association direct. Alternatively you can come along to our regular meeting of guide dog owners and trainers held at the Centre on the first Wednesday of each month.

Within Scarborough a community transport group, known as Dial-a-Ride, offers transport. This service is especially for people who would otherwise have difficulty in using public transport. A similar group operates in Whitby, the Good Neighbours Community Transport Scheme.

## **Travel Concessions**

If you are registered as blind you can apply to your local Social Services for a blue badge. This can often increase your accessibility to the shops and other public buildings as it is issued to you, and you can use it when the car is being used solely for the purpose of a blind person's transport needs, and that someone else is the driver.

Railcards and other travel concessions are available if you wish to travel by train. Fare reductions may be available for you and an escort. You can also request assistance at stations on your journey, by contacting your local rail station in advance and giving them details of your journey.

### **Contacts:**

**Guide Dogs for the Blind Association:** 0845 3727 451

**Dial-a-ride:** 01723 354434

**Good Neighbours Community Transport:** 01947 602982

### **RAIL TRAVEL**

24 Hour service Telephone No. 0845 7484950  
[www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com)

## ***National Self-help Groups linked to Eye Conditions***

### **BRITISH RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA SOCIETY**

P.O. Box 350 Buckingham MK18 1GZ

Telephone No. 01280 860195 (Office)

Helpline 01280 860363 [www.brps.org.uk](http://www.brps.org.uk)

### **BEHÇET'S SYNDROME**

3 Church Close, Lambourne,  
Newbury. Telephone No. 01488 71116  
[www.behcets.org.uk](http://www.behcets.org.uk)

### **GLAUCOMA**

The International Glaucoma Association exists to listen to your problems and provide relevant general information about Glaucoma. It promotes early detection of the disease and supports medical research into the causes and treatment of Glaucoma.

Telephone No. 0870 609 1870  
[www.glaucoma.org](http://www.glaucoma.org)

### **MACULAR DISEASE SOCIETY**

PO Box 1870, Andover, Hampshire SP10 9AD  
Telephone No. 0845 2412041  
[www.maculardisease.org](http://www.maculardisease.org)

## **DEAFBLIND UK**

Provides support, respite, rehabilitation and awareness training. 18 Rainbow Court Paston Ridings, Peterborough

Telephone No. 01733 358100

## **DIABETES UK**

Telephone No. 020 74241000

[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

## ***Equipment***

There is a variety of equipment available to help you maintain your independence. Some specialized items use sound and voice effects. Others have large print or Braille features.

To give you an idea of some useful equipment available, the following are examples of the most popular choices:

Big button telephones

Talking Clocks

Talking Watches

Handwriting frames and signature guides

Large print playing cards and other specially adapted games

Talking scales for the kitchen and bathroom  
Medicine dispensers and tablet organizers

There is a wide range of specialist equipment at Scarborough Blind and Partially Sighted Society's Resource Centre, 183 Dean Road, Scarborough, where you can try it out and buy it if you wish.

**Contacts:**

**Scarborough Blind Society: 01723 354417**

***Cooking***

Many simple adjustments can be made to your kitchen to enable you to prepare and cook meals or snacks. A small amount of additional lighting may be helpful such as a torch kept in the kitchen to find articles in dark, corner cupboards.

Contrasting colours help to locate things, such as a red mug or brown teapot on a white work surface. If your kitchen has light coloured work surfaces, put strips of coloured plastic sticky tape along the edge of them. You can then judge that an item you are putting down is safely on the worktop. Raised markers called bump-on's can be put on your cooker and microwave controls to make them easier to use.

A wide range of kitchen utensils and equipment which have been specially developed to make food preparation easier are available in the shops and you may already have items which are very useful to you.

**Contacts:**

**Social Services:** 0845 034 9410

**Scarborough Blind Society:** 01723 354417

***Money Matters***

People with sight problems may be unsure about what benefits they are entitled to. It is important to get advice to check that you are receiving all the financial benefits to which you are entitled. Claiming benefits can be complicated, slow and frustrating experience BUT support, guidance and practical help is available from Scarborough Blind and Partially Sighted Society.

Several pieces of equipment are available to help with the handling of money. These include coin holders for all coin denominations which can help you identify your money.

Banks will provide you with large print or Braille statements on request, and can supply templates guides for writing cheques.

Large print or Braille bills can be requested from all utility companies, and the local council for your council tax bill, and password schemes are operated by the utility companies on request. They may also offer tape or a telephone service.

## ***Health***

Maintaining good health is important to us all. The eye specialist at your hospital will have given you advice in respect of your vision and your doctor will have been informed about your eye condition.

Separate leaflets, produced by the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB), clearly explain the seven most common eye conditions in easy to understand terms. They are a useful guide and are often of help to family members. These leaflets are available in print and are free from the Resource Centre.

If you are taking different tablets each day, clearly marked tablet organizers are available. These help to ensure you are taking the correct level of medication at the right times. Your eye condition may require you to use eye drops and again, specially designed holders are available

to help you administer drops accurately and easily.

An easy to use talking body thermometer is available which measures body temperature in degrees Fahrenheit. All are available at the Resource Centre.

The important thing is to keep fit and active. RNIB has produced a free catalogue called 'Looking Good, Feeling Great'. This lists a selection of cassettes on all aspects of health and fitness.

## **Coastcall Alarm Service**

Consists of a special unit and a separate pendant, which can be carried or worn on clothing. The system is very useful for people of any age, who live alone or who are alone for part of the day. If the alarm button on the pendant is pressed, trained staff at the control centre will ordinarily be able to talk to you through the unit or send someone to assist you.

There is a charge for the service and the unit works alongside any existing telephone.

## **Contacts:**

**Yorkshire Coast Homes: 08450 655 656**

## ***Leisure***

Leisure time is valuable and should be enjoyed. Having a sight problem does not mean that hobbies and interests have to cease. Very often they can continue and new ones are discovered.

The local Library Service will be able to lend you large print books or spoken word story cassettes. You don't have to travel to the library. Through a combination of the Doorstep Service and using the free postal concession, they can bring the books to you. The Scarborough library runs a VIP Reading Group for sight impaired people, which meets at the Vernon Road library on the second Tuesday of every second month at 10am and lasts for about an hour.

Another organisation, from which talking books can be borrowed, using the freepost service, is the Calibre talking book service. Between these organisations thousands of books are on offer, covering a very wide range, including fiction, non fiction, academic etc. Catalogues listing these titles are available.

There are also sport and leisure clubs specifically for people suffering from sight loss. Activities include bowls, swimming and organised outings, and a sports club for sight impaired children. Scarborough Blind and Partially Sighted Society can give information about what is currently available.

There are hotels especially designed for people experiencing sight problems and their families. Most of these are on the coast and also cater for special diets. The staff who run these hotels understand the difficulties some people experience with reduced vision and are very keen to ensure that all their visitors have a very enjoyable holiday.

Guide Dogs for the Blind organise activity and special interest holidays for visually impaired people. You do not need to be a guide dog owner to apply.

**Contacts:**

**Calibre:** 01296 432 339

**Scarborough Blind Society:** 01723 354417

## ***Other Help***

### **The Benefits Agency**

For general benefits and welfare rights advice and information, contact the local benefits agency. People with disabilities and their carers can contact the Benefits enquiry line on 0800 055 66 88

For people with text phone who have hearing or speech problems contact 0800 023 48 88

### **Electoral Rights**

A person who is registered blind can vote by post, by proxy or be assisted at the Polling Station. Call the Electoral Registration Officer at the Town Hall on 01723 232307/232309

### **Employment**

Ask to see the Disability Employment Advisor at Job Centre Plus for advice about staying in employment as well as retraining and finding new opportunities. Telephone 0845 6060 265

## **Action for Blind People**

Action for Blind People is a charity offering national information and advice services. It provides grants, welfare rights advice, independent and supported accommodation, residential and nursing homes, holiday hotels, employment and training. Contact them at 14-16 Verney Road, London SE16 3DZ, telephone 020 7635 4800.

## **Royal National Institute of the Blind**

As a national charity RNIB offers information about all aspects of sight problems including benefit and welfare rights, education and employment. RNIB also offers a wide range of services and products, which may be of use.

Contact them on: RNIB Helpline 0303 123 9999

RNIB literature and products 01733 375 006 .

## ***MAKING A WILL***

Have you made your Will? A recent Gallop Poll commissioned by the Law Society showed that only one in three adults have made a Will. Did you know that if you die intestate (this means not having made a Will) then your estate will be distributed under the intestacy laws. These may not meet your dependant's needs, and also may mean that your surviving spouse will not automatically inherit everything. If you are married with no children, and die "will-less" then your spouse will get the first £125,000 and personal chattels plus half the balance of your estate. The rest will go to your parents, if they are dead then to brothers and sisters or their offspring. If, however, there are no surviving relatives then the remainder will go to the surviving spouse. Property in joint names may pass to the survivor. If you are married with children, and die "will-less", then your spouse will get the first £75,000 and personal chattels of your estate plus the interest only from half of the remaining estate, the other will go to your children immediately, along with the first half when your spouse dies. This may not be quite what you had in mind, so if you want your estate

to be distributed accordingly to your wishes then you must write a will.

If you are planning your make a will then you would be well advised to consult a solicitor, who has experience in this specialized field and can advise you of the legal intricacies. The distress of a death in the family can be made far worse for relatives who have to cope with the extra burden of sorting out the estate of someone who has died intestate, and the possibility of ensuing family squabbles. Drafting a will is quicker and cheaper than most people think, and the peace of mind which comes from knowing you have planned it all out makes it well worth the effort.

Many people like to make a bequest in their will to a local charity, perhaps one which they worked with or have benefited from sometime during their life. We have found that locally there have often been occasions when a person left money to our Society, by stating “£??? To the local blind”, unfortunately in a lot of these instances the money has been sent to the Royal Institute for the Blind by the executor of the will, who has not been aware of our existence. Others have left money to the RNIB, mistakenly believing that we are a branch of that organisation.

If you would like to leave a bequest to us could we suggest that you include the following clause in your will:

I give Scarborough Blind and Partially Sighted Society, for the general purpose of that charity

The sum of **EITHER/OR**

“the residue of my estate and the receipt of the Trustees of the Society shall be good discharge for such legacy”.

If you have already made your will but would now like to help the Society to carry on its work in the Scarborough area you will be able to do this by adding a codicil. To make sure that your wishes are carried out exactly as you intend it is advisable to consult a solicitor.