

Look Out!

August 2026



Sight Support
Calderdale

Sight Support Calderdale Newsletter

Hello and welcome to our Summer Newsletter!

We have been very lucky to enjoy some beautiful warm weather recently, however we do know how difficult sunlight and glare can be for those living with sight loss. If you are struggling, come along to see us and try out our wide range of Cocoons or discuss other hints and tips.

Coming up, we share all our adventures over the last few months including the Anniversary Event and our summer trip to Blackpool.

There are lots of fundraising events coming up and you can find all the details inside of how you can become involved.

Don't forget, we would love to include some of your stories, poems or other creative pieces in our newsletter. If you would like something featured in the next newsletter, please share it with a staff member.

Opening Times

We are changing our opening hours.

Please note that from Tuesday 1st September our new opening hours will be Monday to Thursday 10am to 2pm.

If you need support out of these hours, appointments can be arranged by contacting the office on 01422 352383.

Don't forget if you struggle to get to us, we can come to you!

Home visits can be arranged upon request, just give the office a ring or email info@sightsupportcalderdale.org.uk

Contact Sight Support Calderdale

If you wish to contact the Sight Support Calderdale team to book onto any of our groups or activities, find out more information, seek advice or make an appointment please contact the office via any of the options listed below.

Call: 01422 352383

Mobile: 07927029940

Email: info@sightsupportcalderdale.org.uk

Write: 7 Southgate, Halifax, HX1 1DL



Activities and Events Round Up

Over the past three months, the Social Eyes group has enjoyed a varied programme of activities and guest speakers.

We welcomed Paul Blakey from Street Angels, who gave an inspiring talk about the charity he founded. Paul explained why he believed it was so important to help keep people safe during nights out in Halifax and shared how the initiative has since expanded, supporting the establishment of similar charities in other towns and cities. The group also enjoyed a successful shopping trip to Boundary Mills, where everyone had the opportunity to browse the stores. A few members were particularly enthusiastic with their purchases, although we won't mention any names... Amy and Betty!

Another enjoyable outing took us to the Piece Hall, where we learned about the fascinating history of this iconic Halifax landmark and its importance to the local community.

In June, we were delighted to welcome actor Derry Jordan who spoke about his acting career, the television programmes he has appeared in, and some of the well-known people he has met throughout his career. His talk was engaging and gave members a fascinating insight into life in the entertainment industry.

Overall, it has been a busy and enjoyable few months, with members benefiting from a range of interesting talks, educational visits, and social activities.

We have enjoyed hearing about different services available throughout Calderdale from guest speakers including Leonie from Vita Health, a free and confidential service providing a range of talking therapies and Julie Ingham came to bust some common myths surrounding home care.

The staff team attended the Low Vision Roadshow in April at Huddersfield General Hospital, spreading the word about all the amazing services we have on offer. We were also pleased to join the Local Offer Live Event at Calderdale College in June, providing us with the opportunity to meet children and young people and chat to them about the services they would be interested in.

Of course, we have also been busy with fundraising events including attending the Halifax, Brighouse and Shelf Gala. We had a tombola stall at the Woolshops in May and a stall at Westgate in May. These events, alongside our Anniversary Event raised just over £880 which is amazing. However, more importantly these events gave us a chance to raise awareness of our services and chat to the general public about sight loss and the impact this has on daily lives.

In June, we celebrated our wonderful volunteers during Volunteer Week. This included a treasure trail around Halifax town centre, a delicious lunch from Mustard and Mayo, and the opportunity to contribute to our Volunteer Time Capsule which once complete, will be hidden in the cellar for future generations to uncover.



Anniversary Event

We held our Anniversary Event on Friday 26th June from 10am to 2pm. This turned out to be one of the hottest days of the year but we were still pleasantly surprised by the number of members who came along to support the event.

We were pleased to welcome the Mayor of Calderdale, who chatted with members and sampled some baked goods before giving a speech about the Charity and his reasons for choosing us as one of the Mayor's Charities of the Year.

We were absolutely delighted to welcome Josh Dean back to the centre. Josh came along to unveil the defibrillator we purchased from his fundraiser last year in memory of his dad, Nigel Dean. Josh gave a lovely speech about his dad and the difference the charity made to his life. Josh also pledged his support to the Mayor's fundraising cycle.

Downstairs we had a delicious selection of homemade cakes and hot and cold drinks available, we also had raffle tickets on sale for people to try their luck at winning some of the amazing prizes we had on offer.

Upstairs was a hive of activity as members visited supplier and partner stalls. We were lucky enough to be joined by Vision Aid, Edward Marcus and Humanware who all had a wide range of the latest aids, technology and equipment available to support independent living.

Also upstairs were Emma from the Low Vision Clinic, Kathy, Michelle and Debbie from the Sensory Team, Phillipa from PS Footcare and Ollie from EnergEyes.



Summer Trip

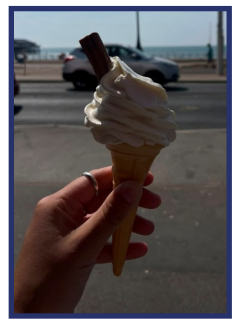
On Thursday 16th July we headed off to Blackpool for our summer trip. The weather was perfect for a day at the beach and everyone was in high spirits.

Thanks to the fabulous drivers at Community Transport Calderdale we all arrived safely after a smooth journey. Everyone quickly disbanded, eager to get on with enjoying the day. Some headed off for lunch, some for the slot machines and some for the beach.

The flat landscape made for an easy walk around the shops or a stroll along the seafront.

After a few hours of free time, we all met back up for the journey home, hot, tired but happy.

A big thank you to all those who came along and made the day special. Suggestions for next year's trip are now being taken!



Summer Stalls

The staff team have been busy over the last few weeks. With support from volunteers and trustees we have attended the Halifax, Brighouse and Shelf Gala. This has been an important step in raising the charities profile one of our main objectives in the strategic plan.

We also recently held a tombola stall at the Woolshops and attended one of the brilliant live music events at Westgate.

Our time at these events was spent having meaningful conversations with members of the public, discussing sight loss, different eye conditions and how these impact on daily living and how we can support people throughout their sight loss journey.

The activities that we offered helped with fundraising efforts with every penny raised going straight back into helping us to continue to provide services.



Paul's Fundraising Challenge

Paul Iannelli is a member of Sight Support Calderdale, living with Retinitis Pigmentosa. Paul was diagnosed with the condition at just 16 years old. At that time, Paul didn't really give it much thought, he worked, he drove and lived life to the full. In his 30's, Paul started to notice changes to his eyesight as his peripheral vision started to deteriorate, he kept working until his early 40's but by then, his sight had deteriorated to the point where he was no longer able to do his job and he retired. For the last 10 years, Paul has lived with complete sight loss.

Paul has been a regular at the Inbetweeners group for a while now and was present when Sarah came along to talk about her role as a Guide Runner. Paul had previously enjoyed running at school and decided to take Sarah up on her offer of accompanying sight impaired members on runs.

Paul has gone from strength to strength with the support from Sarah and as a result has decided to challenge himself to complete 5 10KM runs finishing with a 10mile challenge at York in October. Paul is taking on this challenge to raise funds for Sight Support Calderdale.

Paul and Sarah have already completed 3 of the 5 races, running in Leeds, Lindley and Aintree with Paul beating his personal best at every race.

Paul says " I am really enjoying this new hobby, I feel much fitter, it gets me out in the fresh air and I have met some great people. Sarah has been brilliant, she fills me with confidence when we are out running and I would highly recommend the whole experience of guide running to anyone who may be interested"

Paul is so enthusiastic about running with a guide runner, he has inspired his brother Tony, who also has Retinitis Pigmentosa to take up the sport. Tony accompanied Paul on his latest run at Aintree.

If you would like to support Paul with his fundraiser please visit his Just Giving page or use this link:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/paul-iannelli-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

To find out more about Guide Running and how you can get involved, please contact the office for more details.



Trustee Recruitment

Sight Support Calderdale is currently seeking a Trustee with lived experience to join our Board of Trustees.

Trustees play a vital role in leading the charity, working collaboratively to provide strategic direction and ensure the organisation continues to achieve its charitable aims.

This is a rewarding opportunity to make a meaningful difference to the lives of people with sight loss in Calderdale. As a trustee, you will help shape the future of the charity while gaining new experiences, developing your skills, and building valuable relationships.

The role does require a commitment of time and engagement. Trustees are expected to attend board meetings regularly, read meeting papers in advance, and contribute their skills, knowledge, and lived experience to discussions and decision-making.

If you have lived experience of sight loss and are interested in learning more about becoming a trustee, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Faye for more information.

Charity Abseil

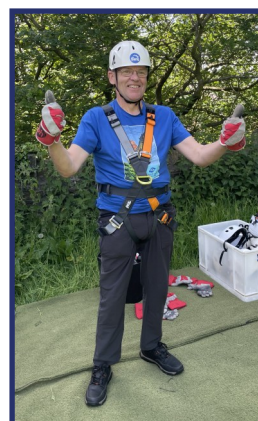
On Saturday 30th May, the sun shone down on 8 brave adventurers as the day came for them to complete their charity abseil challenge.

Not only did the abseilers have to climb 369 steps to the first viewing tower, they then had to inch themselves backwards from the platform, over the edge before making the 435 foot descent to the bottom.

This was a big challenge for everyone but even more so for 5 of our adventurers as they all live with sight loss.

However, there was a great crowd of spectators, creating a supportive atmosphere with lots of shouts of encouragement to help each person along the way.

Altogether a huge £4483 was raised from this experience. We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who sponsored our explorers and everyone who came along on the day to support them. We would like to say an even bigger thank you to our 8 brave adventurers for taking on the challenge and having the courage to go through with the abseil on the day! Well done!



Rock and Roll Evening

Sight Support Calderdale is delighted to invite you to our Rock and Roll Fundraiser Evening!

Get ready to dance the night away as the incredibly talented Melissa Harper performs a fantastic selection of 1950s rock and roll classics, featuring hits from legendary artists including Buddy Holly, Bill Haley, and Elvis Presley.

Tickets are just £15 per person which includes a delicious pie and pea supper, and can be purchased at our centre now.

Refreshments, including a bar will be available throughout the night.

There will also be the chance to take part in our exciting Heads or Tails game. For just £5, you can enter this fast-paced competition, with the last player standing winning 50% of the total prize pot! What better way to round off a summer of sun, come along for a fun-filled evening of great music, delicious food, and fundraising, all while supporting the work of Sight Support Calderdale.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Technology Studio

Sight Support Calderdale's Technology Studio is here to give members access to computers in an accessible and supportive environment. It can be used for everyday tasks such as browsing the internet, completing forms, reading documents, studying or carrying out work.

The computers are equipped with specialist software for people who have a visual impairment or low vision. JAWS is a screen reader that reads information on the screen aloud and allows the computer to be controlled using the keyboard. ZoomText enlarges text and images, improves how information appears on screen and can also read content aloud. SuperNova provides a combination of screen magnification and speech, allowing each person to adjust the computer to suit their sight.

The studio also has scanning equipment that can turn printed letters, post and other documents into accessible text, which can then be enlarged or read aloud.

Whether you are confident using technology or would like some support getting started, the Technology Studio is available to help make computers and printed information more accessible.

Talking Newspaper

As you will be aware, Sight Support Calderdale now manage the Calderdale Talking Newspaper.

This service is available to anyone living with sight loss in Calderdale and the surrounding areas. We have recently made the decision to reduce readings to a fortnightly basis as we have struggled to acquire additional editors. If you, or anyone you know may be interested in this role, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the office where we can chat about what this role entails.

The Talking Newspaper can be received via a USB stick, which you listen to through a USB player. USB players are available from Sight Support Calderdale if you do not already have one.

You can also listen to the Talking Newspaper, and all our other publications, through the Alexa.

To listen to any of our publications via Alexa, you need to go into the Alexa app and enable the Talking News Skill. You then ask Alexa to go to Talking Newspapers, you will be asked which area or newspaper you require and you just need to respond Calderdale.

If you are interested in receiving the Talking News, or any of our other publications, via USB please contact the office so we can arrange this for you.

If you would like support to access publications via Alexa, please give us a ring and we can either talk you through the process or do a home visit to help you with this.

Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 30th September. The format of the evening is below:

6pm: Arrival

6.10pm: Formalities including,

- Approval of minutes from the previous AGM
- Financial Report
- Chairs Report
- Election of new committee members
- Any other significant business

6.30pm: Guest Speakers

7pm: Refreshments and Networking

You are welcome to join us in person or online. The zoom link can be shared on request. If you are unable to attend and have a question or comment please submit these in writing before Friday 18th September.

If you wish to receive the papers in advance of the meeting, please contact the office.

12 in 12: Sight Support Calderdale and Me

Our 12 in 12: Sight Support Calderdale and Me fundraising campaign continues to go from strength to strength, and we are delighted to announce that in September we welcome the lovely Emma from Hebask Yorkshire.

Emma founded Hebask Yorkshire in 2021 after making the life-changing decision to leave her job and start her own business. Based at Dean Clough, she has created a beautiful, gentle, coastal-themed retreat where clients can relax, unwind, and escape the waves of everyday life.

Emma has been a strong supporter of Sight Support Calderdale over the past few years, and we are incredibly grateful that she is continuing to support us as part of this fundraising campaign.



On Tuesday 22nd September from 10:00am to 2:30pm
Emma will be offering the following 30-minute treatments:

- Back and Shoulder Massage
- Face and Scalp Massage
- Reflexology

Appointments will be available every 30 minutes, starting at 10:00am, with the final treatment beginning at 2:00pm.

There is no charge for these treatments; however, donations to Sight Support Calderdale would be very gratefully received, with all proceeds supporting our work within the local community.

If you would like to book a treatment, please contact the office to reserve your preferred time slot and receive further information.

To find out more about Emma and Hebask Yorkshire, please visit <https://hebaskyorkshire.book.app> or email Emma at hebaskyorkshire@gmail.com.

A huge thank you to Emma for her continued kindness and support. We look forward to welcoming you for a little time to relax while supporting a great cause.



Halifax Macular Group

The Halifax Macular Group is a support group for those living with wet or dry macular degeneration.

This group meets on the 2nd Friday of every month (with the exception of July) from 1pm to 3pm at the Maurice Jagger Centre, Halifax. The group is run by Gillian Thornber, who also has macular degeneration. Gillian has a very positive outlook and lots of practical hints and tips to share.

This is a great opportunity to meet with others living with similar experiences, have a chat and receive support and advice. Refreshments are available.

In September, Jason from Vision Aid will be attending the group, bringing a selection of daily living aids along and offering advice on products. We will keep you updated about upcoming guests.

If you would like to join the group you are welcome to just drop in or for further information contact Gillian on 01422 886177.

Footcare Clinic

Sight Support Calderdale are pleased to announce that we have joined forces with PS Footcare to bring a monthly foot care clinic to our centre.



Philippa will be available within the centre on the last Wednesday of every month between the hours of 10am and 3pm. Services include basic nail trimming, paring of calluses, corn removal, ingrowing toenail cutting, reduction of nail thickness and any advice appropriate to meet your needs. Each session lasts approximately

30mins with a charge of £35.

Mat is available to provide home visits to those members who are unable to access our centre.

Philippa and Mat have over 25 years experience collectively, are full insured and trained to deal with diabetics. Philippa and Mat trained at SMAE, Maidenhead which was founded in 1919 and is the longest running independent provider of training in foot health in the UK with a reputation for excellence in the teaching. Both Philippa and Mat are members of the Open College of Foot Health Professionals and The British Association of Foot Health Professionals and attend regular training sessions each year to ensure they comply with up to date practice.

Upcoming footcare clinics at our office will take place on Wednesday 29th July, 26th August and 30th September. Please contact the office to book your slot.

Locality Groups

At Sight Support Calderdale one of our main aims is to reduce isolation. Our locality groups help us to reach those living with sight loss who live further afield and may struggle to access our services in the town centre. Through our Locality Groups we hope to build social networks and raise awareness of sight loss within the local community.

We currently run two locality groups per month. Our first locality group of the month is held on the first Monday of each month (excluding bank holidays) at The Barley Box in Elland from 11am.

Our second locality group takes place on the third Monday of each month from 11am at the Moorings in Sowerby Bridge.

Both locations are accessible for guide dog owners and long cane users, and the staff are very accommodating, offering to bring drinks and food to the table.

These groups do not necessarily focus on sight loss, they are an opportunity for our members to be able to socialise with others but also receive face to face support if it is needed.

We have had a few new faces at each group recently and it's great to see the groups going from strength to strength. If you live in the Elland or Sowerby Bridge area and would like to come along to the locality group, please feel free to just come along on the day or call us on 01422 352383 for more information.

If you feel the area you live in would benefit from a Locality Group, please let us know.



Donated and Discontinued Items

~~Did you know that not only~~ does our Sight Centre have an amazing selection of new ^[Text Wrapping Break] daily living aids, equipment and technology, that we also have a host of donated and discontinued items available. Why not pop in and take a look, you may be able to grab yourself a bargain!

Included in our range of donated items we have magnifiers, watches, mobile phones, big button phones, video magnifiers and magnifying task lights. These items are always changing so its definitely worth visiting regularly as you never know when the ideal item for you is going to be available.

Alongside donated items, we also have discontinued products such as magnifiers, blood pressure monitor and tactile watches to name a few, offered with a huge 50% discount, giving you access to quality items that are no longer available to buy.



Walkie Talkies

This year for our Walking Group, we decided walks would be planned to help increase independence by making sure the walks we try are accessible by public transport. This will help members feel confident to return on their own or share walks with friends and family.

So far this year the Walkie Talkies have been here, there and everywhere!

As a Walking Group we are committed to getting the steps in which has meant some of the walks so far have been quite challenging but with the support of staff and volunteers members have been able to enjoy the mental, social and physical benefits of being outdoors.

April's walk was a leisurely stroll around Cromwell Bottom in Brighouse. We started on the canal and followed it right up to the nature reserve and back. The group then visited the Golden Hind for some questionably large fish and chips before heading to the bus station with full bellies.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel the walk in May due to the extremely high temperatures but the trepid explorers were back in June where we headed to Shelf for one of our more challenging walks. The sun was shining as we traversed through fields, balanced over brooks and clambered up what felt like a million steps before making it back to civilisation.

After that adventure, we needed a drink so headed to the Bottomley's Arms where we enjoyed some delicious food and a well deserved drink before heading home.

The Walkie Talkies is a warm and welcoming group that caters to all abilities. We are always looking for new faces to join us so if you fancy giving it a try, please feel free to call the office for more information or to book a place on our next excursion.

We look forward to walking with you.



Chicken Pasta Bake

This recipe is taken from “First Catch Your Rabbit” by Simon Mahoney. Simon lost his wife leaving him entirely alone and completely blind. Simon shares his journey on reclaiming the kitchen in this survival manual. This book is definitely worth a read and is available on Amazon.

Chicken Pasta Bake.

Objective: Learning to keep chopping boards for meat and vegetables separate.

Hot Tip: The lids from tins of cans can be very sharp, so handle with care!

Organisation

Gather equipment:

Wok or frying pan, large and medium saucepans, 5 dishes or bowls, 2 sharp knives, 2 chopping boards (one for meat and one for vegetables), wooden spoon, colander, medium sized ovenproof dish with lid, tin opener, clean tea towel, large bowl for rubbish.

Gather Ingredients

Diced chicken

Tin of chopped tomatoes

Broccoli

Medium onion

Peas

Sweetcorn

Oil or butter

Chilli

Salt and pepper

Cheese

Courgette

Bell pepper

Button mushrooms

Celery

Penne pasta

Lazy garlic

Basil

Use your imagination with ingredients. For instance, you might not be a fan of sweetcorn or mushrooms, so leave them out or replace them with something you like better. The above is only a basic suggestion.

Preparation

- Put bowl of soapy water in the sink and a clean towel nearby
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly
- Check worktop is clean and clear
- Ensure tray in place on worktop
- Put a large bowl for rubbish nearby
- Place equipment on the worktop close to the tray
- Place ingredients on the worktop close to the tray



Chicken Pasta Bake Cont'd

Execution (remember to put all rubbish in the large bowl)

- Preheat the oven to 170 degrees or gas mark 3
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly
- Put meat chopping board into work tray. Take diced chicken pieces and halve each piece, then put in a bowl with lazy garlic
- Wash chopping board and knife thoroughly, and wash and dry hands
- Wash or wipe work tray
- Wash courgette, top and tail, cut in half and split each half into 8 batons and place in a bowl
- Halve button mushrooms and place in bowl
- Top and tail and skin and cut onion into small pieces and place in a bowl
- Halve bell pepper lengthways, remove seeds, cut into thin strips and put in bowl
- Take half a stick of celery, wash, cut leaves off the top and the ragged bit off the bottom. Split into thin batons and put in a bowl
- Carefully open tin of chopped tomatoes
- Heat oil or butter in wok or frying pan and add chicken. Keep on a high heat and turn constantly
- Add onion and keep turning
- Add chopped tomatoes, put heat on medium, and keep turning (remember to dispose of the empty can and lid)
- Add mushrooms and basil, peas and sweetcorn and keep turning
- Take off heat and add celery, pepper slices, courgette and a quarter of a teaspoonful of chopped chili. Mix well and leave to rest
- Fill saucepan half full of water, add drop of oil and bring to the boil. When boiling drop mug and a half of penne, stir and then turn down the heat and simmer for 5 minutes
- Remove from heat, drain, return to saucepan
- Add tomato puree, mix well
- Add handful of grated cheese and mix well
- Pour contents of wok/ frying pan into pasta and mix well
- Pour contents of saucepan into oven proof dish, level, cover with grated cheese and put in oven for 40 mins
- Remove, serve and enjoy!



Staying Safe from Scams

A scam is a deceptive or fraudulent scheme designed to trick you out of money or personal information. Unlike standard fraud where criminals use stolen details without your knowledge, a scam relies on manipulation, where you may be tricked into willingly handing over funds or personal information.

We are all susceptible to being scammed and protecting ourselves and loved ones against them is growing increasingly important, especially as technology advances.

There are four common ways scammers attempt to obtain confidential information from us. These are:

- Telephone and impersonation scams.

Scammers often pretend to be from banks, the police or government agencies such as HMRC. The scammers usually claim that an account has been compromised in some way or that there is an outstanding fine to pay. The scammers will then pressure you to transfer funds or share your account details with them.

- Computer/ Tech Support

When using the internet, some websites may be infiltrated and present a pop up screen. The pop up will then usually freeze the screen and display a phone number to call to “fix” the problem. These scammers will then charge a fee and install malicious software onto your computer to steal confidential data such as passwords, card details and addresses.

- The “Grandparent Scam”.

Scammers are known to send messages claiming to be your son/ daughter or other loved one in some form of distress and in need of money.

- Doorstep Rogues

Fake tradespeople will come to your door and offer quick home repairs or services such as fixing a leak or repairing your roof. These scammers will request money up front and complete sub-standard work, if any at all.

Whilst all this may sound very frightening, there are things you can do to keep yourself safe and reduce the risk of scammers stealing from you.

- Never open your door to anyone unexpected without checking their ID beforehand.
- Never hand over your valuables or bank details. The bank/ police etc will never ask you for information such as your PIN.
- Hang up and verify any calls you are uncertain about. If someone calls or texts claiming to be from an official organisation, hang up the call and don't call any numbers back that they have provided. Wait 5 mins and call the companies official number that you have got from a bill, website or the phonebook.
- Agree a safe word. Discuss with your friends and family and set up a safe word for emergencies. That way if someone contacts you saying they are a family member and asking for money, you can ask for the safe word to prove their identity.
- Ignore the urgency. Scammers rely heavily on the panic and sense of urgency. This can often be seen when they threaten to cut benefits, or put time limits on exclusive offers. Always take time to consult with your family or friends if you are unsure.