

Sight Advice South Lakes was formed in 1956 and provides a variety of services to support visually impaired people in the South Lakes area of Cumbria.

Sight Advice South Lakes aims to support people with visual impairment to improve the quality of their lives, together with promoting a greater awareness of sight issues. To enable the mission to be achieved the charity has the following aims: to enable visually impaired people to live independently; to provide practical and emotional support to visually impaired people and their families and carers; to enable visually impaired people to access social support and activities and to promote awareness of sight issues and campaign with, and on behalf of, visually impaired people.



### What services does your organisation offer?

Sight Advice South Lakes offer support to people of all ages who are living with any sight loss (uncorrectable by spectacles) to enable them to live as independently as possible and maintain their social connections.

Our support can come in the form of information and advice about equipment or visual aids, arranging for a volunteer to visit a sight-impaired person at home or accompany them to activities within the community or offering emotional reassurance. We provide leisure activities and peer support for adults and have a children's project which provides peer support for children, siblings and parents alike. We also manage the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) service which provides support for those attending eye clinics at Westmorland General Hospital.

We have continued to support sight-impaired people throughout the lockdowns by providing advice via telephone or online (always with telephone access). Our sessions include social activities, condition-specific events, equipment demonstrations and presentations by sight-impaired celebrities. We have obtained a number of devices to enable those without IT equipment to access online events but provide peer support groups by telephone for those unable to access our online services. Our ECLO service has offered telephone support throughout the pandemic.

### How many people use your service every year?

We have supported approximately 1,400 people in the last year

### Can you tell us about any future projects?

During lockdown, we have worked with a number of partners to obtain IT devices to enable our members to access Zoom sessions and have encouraged links with specialist equipment providers. We have joined forces with two other Sight Loss charities nationally to provide a wide choice of online and are working on developing this further to promote technical expertise. We are currently planning joint working with Occupational Therapy students from the University of Cumbria and are developing links with the NHS Care Home Effective Support Service (CHESS) team.

### Are there any opportunities to get involved?

We welcome both visually impaired and sighted volunteers and value their contribution to the running of the charity. Volunteer opportunities range from administration to sighted guiding, supporting people in the community, fundraising and heightening awareness of sight impairment. We have a dedicated Volunteer Support Officer and provide full training to our volunteers. You can find out more about Sight Advice at the Sight Advice website [here](#).