



**Northumberland County Blind Association**  
Supporting blind and partially sighted people



# NoISe

**Issue 97**  
**Winter 2016**

NoISe (Northumberland Information Service for People with Vision Impairment) is the quarterly newsletter of the Northumberland County Blind Association.



## Low Vision Awareness

Update your knowledge on Low Vision Aids (LVAs) at our free training session covering task lighting, hand and electronic magnifiers, plus the latest wearable filters.

Come along and see for yourself the ERGO-Lux Mobil range of LED hand magnifiers including models which are designed for left-handed users.

Demonstrations of the Optelec Traveller tablet and the recently launched Compact+ HD digital magnifier will be available – both designed with the latest high definition cameras on-board for superior on-screen images.

The Low Vision Aids Update session will take place on **Thursday 26th January 2017, 10.00am to 12noon** at Reiver House, Morpeth.

There will be an informal opportunity for anyone to ask questions and try out the latest solutions available.

Please contact us to book your place on **01670 514316** or email: **info@ncba.org.uk**



This free training session will be delivered by Optelec – suppliers of Low Vision and Braille solutions.

## A message from the Board of Trustees

We are pleased to confirm that following a successful grant application we can continue to provide more Sovereign USB players on long term loan. They have proved to be very popular as they offer superb sound quality and can play content such as audio books, music and talking newspapers directly from a USB stick. They will be available in the New Year to blind and partially sighted people living in Northumberland.

We plan to include regular updates about our core activities in each issue of the NoISe newsletter and on our website.

If you would like to help run your organisation, we welcome more people to join the Board of Trustees.

We would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

## **RNIB's Online Today project is helping people with sensory loss get online**

A free online basic skills session is being held at Reiver House, Morpeth on **Wednesday 8 February 2017, 10am – 3.30pm** to help blind and partially sighted people get online and take their first steps in using technology.

The session will be hands-on, including interactive demonstrations of how to get the most from products such as **tablets, iPads, smartphones** and **eReaders**.

Supported by the Big Lottery Fund, RNIB's Online Today project aims to help 125,000 people living with sensory loss to get online, enabling them to use the internet for everyday tasks such as shopping, banking and staying in touch with friends and family.

David Brown from Action for Blind People said: "Access to the internet and technology can open up a whole new world for people, but knowing where to start isn't always easy



if you have sight or hearing problems. Our Online Today sessions are the perfect introduction, providing the basic skills and confidence to get online and explore all that is on offer.

If you are living with sight loss and are keen to take your first steps in using technology, sign up for the session on **Wednesday 8 February 2017** and find out the difference getting online could make to you. To book your place, please call us on **01670 514316** or email: **info@ncba.org.uk**

# Research suggests Iluvien can improve vision for patients with chronic diabetic macular oedema

New research suggests patients who receive a single implant to treat diabetic eye disease can increase or sustain vision. The data from real-life clinical practice was revealed earlier this year at the Royal College of Ophthalmologists Annual Congress.

Results showed that the majority of chronic diabetic macular oedema (cDMO) patients who received a single Iluvien implant, administered into the vitreous cavity at the front of the eye by injection during routine clinical practice, gained or maintained vision at 12 months. The implant provides a therapeutic effect for up to 36 months.

DMO is an inflammatory disease affecting the macula, the part of the retina responsible for central vision. The disease is the primary cause of vision loss associated with diabetic retinopathy, which in turn is the most common cause of severe sight impairment among people of working age.

In England, Iluvien is recommended by NICE as a

possible treatment for people with chronic DMO who have an artificial lens in their eye if:

- the implant is used in the eye with the artificial lens and
- their DMO has not improved with available treatments.

Mr David Steel who is a consultant ophthalmologist at the Sunderland Eye Infirmary commented that: "Anti VEGF injections have been a major advance in the treatment of DMO but not all patients respond to this treatment. Diabetic patients with chronic macular oedema in particular are frequently unresponsive but studies show Iluvien can often work in this situation. Furthermore because of Iluvien's long duration of action repeated monthly injections are not needed which is significant bonus."

The real world data was obtained from two sources: a European registry study and an audit of UK clinical practice. The Iluvien Registry Safety Study (IRISS) is a safety study that Iluvien's manufacturer Alimera Sciences is required to perform.

Professor Usha Chakravarthy from Queen's University Belfast, principal investigator of the IRISS study, said: "In these real world studies, patients were switched to Iluvien when clinicians had determined that despite other treatments there was vision decline and worsening appearance of the macula.

"Following the switch there were improvements in visual acuity and retinal morphology in the majority of patients showing that Iluvien is an important addition to our therapeutic armamentarium."

Further information specifically for patients and health care professionals is available at:  
[www.iluvien.co.uk](http://www.iluvien.co.uk)

## **RNIB Talking Book Service**

RNIB Talking Books is part of the largest library of its kind in Europe (for people with sight loss) and RNIB Library was shortlisted for Library of the Year at The British Book Industry Awards 2016.

### **Who can join RNIB Talking Books?**

If you live in the UK and are unable to comfortably read standard print with spectacles, then you are eligible to join. You don't need a doctor or other professional's verification and it's completely **free** to join.

You can choose to receive your books on **DAISY CD** (one book per disc) or **USB stick** (three books per stick) depending on your personal taste.

You can join Talking Books online at [www.rnib.org.uk/talking-books-service](http://www.rnib.org.uk/talking-books-service) or via the Helpline on **0303 123 9999**.



# Supplier Information and Equipment Day

Thursday 6th April 2017, 10am – 2.30pm at Reiver House, Morpeth, Northumberland



**Sight and Sound Technology Ltd** is the exclusive master distributor of products such as JAWS, ZoomText, and Kurzweil 1000/3000 to name a few. They also supply desktop/handheld magnifiers, text to speech and Braille products.

**Optelec** offer a growing range of assistive products, whether it be a simple optical magnifier for low vision, or the latest device to assist a Braille user to access all parts of the information world.



**RNIB** are here for everyone affected by sight loss. Whether you are losing your sight or you are blind or partially sighted, our practical and emotional support can help you face the future with confidence.

**British Wireless for the Blind Fund** exists to help improve the daily lives of visually impaired people, who are unable to afford a specially adapted radio, by providing the equipment on free loan.



Free entry, sighted guide and refreshments are available on the day. For further please contact us on **01670 514316** or email: **info@ncba.org.uk**

# Inspire and support visually impaired young people by becoming a LOOK UK mentor!

Young people with a vision impairment can face barriers to achieving their potential, and it can be difficult to make informed decisions and manage transitions. That's why LOOK UK is connecting these young people with volunteer mentors; inspiring role models who can help them to **understand their options, develop their skills** and ultimately build a **bright future**.

They are working with the national online mentoring charity Brightside to support visually impaired young people with education, careers and future thinking, and **they are looking for mentors with experience and knowledge of visual impairment** to take part in this project from November 2016.

**As an online mentor**, you will help young people develop the knowledge and connections required to be able to make confident and

informed decisions about their next steps - whether that is deciding their future career path, going into higher education or seeking volunteering or community work. The project also involves **face-to-face training and events**, designed to help you build rapport with your mentees, develop your mentoring skills and celebrate your mentoring relationship.

**How online mentoring works.** You will be matched with a mentee aged 16 – 25 who is at or approaching a time of transition. You will communicate with them at least once per fortnight (approx. 2-3 hours per month). You will be using a safe and secure online mentoring platform where you can exchange messages and share resources and information.

To register your interest in being a mentor, please email Anna Falcini, Mentoring Project Co-ordinator: **mentor@look-uk.org**

## Volunteer profiles

**Volunteering** with NCBA does make such a difference to many people with a visual impairment living in Northumberland.

**Alan** is 105 years old, partially deaf and severely sight impaired. He cannot get out and about, so life can be very lonely at times. **Liz** visits Alan on a regular basis and as Alan says: “It’s great when Liz visits me, she is always cheerful and we get on just grand. Liz and I chat about all kinds of things. I like to go down memory lane and hear what she has been up to. Sometimes she even brings her ‘gadget’ and we can listen to my favourite brass band music.”

Liz says: “As an Optician, I frequently see how visual impairment can impact on peoples’ lives. Sight loss can be a lonely and scary place – something I realised when a member of my family suffered a sudden loss of vision several years ago. I decided to get involved with the NCBA, hoping that

perhaps my experience could be used to help others. In actual fact, I feel I am the one who has benefitted most by working with NCBA! I have learnt a lot about working with visually impaired people, and I think I have a better understanding of the difficulties they have coping with day-to-day activities and the things those of us without visual problems take for granted.

When my husband took part in the NCBA abseil fundraising event at Bamburgh Castle in August, I was totally overwhelmed by the courage and spirit shown by those people with sight loss who launched themselves off the top of that 60 foot tower – talk about a leap of faith!

I really enjoy visiting Alan – he is such a character, he always cheers me up! I love hearing him talk about growing up on the farm in Allendale, being signed up and training as an engineer with the RAF, his travels



with the brass band and the antics of his youth. It's great when we talk about how things have changed over the years and hearing how he would put the world to right.

For all of his sensory and health problems, Alan never complains. He always comments how other people are so much worse off than he is – he certainly helps me keep things in perspective!”

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**Karen** has been volunteering with NCBA for a number of years in a variety of roles. Karen says: “Volunteering with NCBA is really rewarding. I found out about NCBA through a couple of clients I was visiting as part of the housebound library service. My first major role was helping to introduce interested people to the internet and email using specialist software for the blind. Working with clients one to one every Monday morning was really good and I enjoyed sharing my knowledge and opening up

new opportunities to people. This work led to visiting a client to take him shopping as he was no longer able to drive.

I travelled with the then Volunteer Coordinator to Blyth to visit an elderly gentleman, **Eddie**, who was then 92 years old. We arrived on a very snowy day in December and that was the beginning of what has turned out to be a mutually rewarding relationship.

We started shopping on a fortnightly basis and very quickly, Eddie wanted me to visit him on a weekly basis. I have now been going to Blyth every Monday for four years and the role has grown to include lots of different activities to assist Eddie and help him maintain his independence. I have also learned many new skills through this role, including how to maintain hearing aids, how different aids can help overcome difficulties due to sight loss and Eddie, as a keen ballroom dancer, has even managed to teach me

a few of his favourite dances. We were able to try out my dancing skills at a tea dance organised by NCBA.

I recently interviewed Eddie in connection with a deafblind project that he and I are connected to. He feels that if he didn't have the weekly visits it is likely he would no longer be able to remain in his own home. He dreads having to leave his home and move into a care home and the weekly support means this doesn't need to happen. It's very rewarding to know you make such a difference to someone's life".

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## **Become a volunteer**

There are lots of ways to volunteer with NCBA. It's a great way of meeting people, gain new skills and experiences.

Benefits of volunteering:

- Give something back
- Help others
- Enjoy new experiences

- Do something positive
- Learn new skills
- Increase confidence and self esteem
- Receive training and support

All of our volunteers who support clients on a one to one basis are trained in sighted guide technique and how best to support someone with a visual impairment. They are also vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Hours for most roles are flexible and out-of-pocket expenses, such as mileage, phone calls and parking fees will be reimbursed.

To find out more about our opportunities please contact our friendly Volunteer Coordinators, Susan Bennett or Antonietta D'Angelo Worn, on **01670 514316**, email: **[volunteer@ncba.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@ncba.org.uk)**

## Half price TV Licence

If you are **blind (severely sight impaired)** and can provide the appropriate evidence, you are eligible to apply for a **50% concession** on your TV licence. Your licence will also cover anyone who lives with you. If you are partially sighted (sight impaired) you are not eligible.

A blind concession TV Licence costs £72.75 for colour and £24.50 for a black and white TV Licence.

You need to provide a photocopy of one of the following documents, to confirm that you're certified as either **blind** or **severely sight impaired**:

- A copy of the certificate or document issued by or on behalf of your local authority.

- A copy of the certificate from your ophthalmologist

You won't need to provide this information again when you renew your TV License.

Visit:

**[www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)** and download an application form and send it along with proof you're certified as blind (severely sight impaired).

Send your completed form, cheque payment and a photocopy of your local authority document or ophthalmologist's certificate to:

TV Licensing  
Blind Concession Group  
Darlington  
DL98 1TL

Include either your licence renewal notice or TV Licence number if you have a current TV Licence.

## Key Communications update

We are now into year three of our Key Communicatins Project. In that time we have delivered on a number of the project's outcomes.



**Outcome 1 - More blind and vision-impaired people will have increased choice and control, build confidence, and maintain their independence.** We have established a number of outreach information clinics across the county giving people access to low vision aids, daily living aids and the opportunity to receive further information and advice.

**Outcome 2 - More blind and vision-impaired people will feel socially included, experiencing increased opportunity and social activity.** The continuation of the many clubs, support groups and other events giving people the chance to socialise in a supportive environment.

**Outcome 3 - More blind and vision-impaired people will cope better and more independently in day-to-day life as a result of gaining new communication and technological skills.** This year we established computer training classes at Morpeth and Hexham, which has proved very popular. We have also worked in partnership with RNIB by holding introductory training sessions in the use of tablets, smartphones and ebook readers.

In addition to the above, we created a new website, set up new Twitter and Facebook social media sites and held two very successful supplier and equipment information days. We have held service user and volunteer feedback sessions and look forward to implementing some ideas gained from these meetings in our work in the New Year.

# Useful Organisations

**Age UK Northumberland**, The Roundhouse, Lintonville Parkway, Ashington, NE63 9JZ. Telephone: 01670 784 800.  
email: [info@ageuk-northumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@ageuk-northumberland.org.uk)  
**[www.ageuk.org.uk/northumberland](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/northumberland)**

Age UK Northumberland provide services to support older people including: computers for beginners, exercise, small gym; monthly foot care clinic, café for snacks and light lunches; welfare rights service, information and advice service and much more.

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**BID Services Northumberland**, Office 3D, Austin House, Sanderson Arcade, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1NS.  
Telephone: 01670 293 150.  
Email: [info@bidnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@bidnorthumberland.org.uk)

Providing a range of resources and practical support to enable people with a visual impairment to live independently as possible in their own homes, including: rehabilitation support, orientation and mobility training, identification and installation of VI aids and equipment.

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**Carers Northumberland**, 107 & 109 Station Road, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 8RS. Tel: 01670 320 025.  
Email: [info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk)  
**[www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk)**

If you look after a husband, wife, partner, child, parent, another relative or a neighbour or friend. Carers Northumberland inform carers of their rights and entitlements, support carers to access help for the person they care for, reducing the social isolation that so many carers feel and empower carers to have a voice.

## Macular disease causes central vision loss

**Skills for Seeing** can help you:

- Read
- Recognise faces
- Take care of yourself
- Watch TV

 **Macular Society**

Regain control and confidence in your life.

For more details about free one-to-one coaching, please call **Christine** on **01670 513 042** or **07908 513 042**.

We would like to wish everyone a  
Merry Christmas and a peaceful  
New Year



Reiver House will be closed from  
mid-day on **Friday 23 December** and  
re-open on **Tuesday 3 January 2017**



## Fundraising news

We had another great turn out at our early Christmas Fayre in November. The fayre was opened by Councillor Alison Byard (pictured right) and we raised a magnificent £1,124.53. A big thank you to everyone who attended on the day and to all of the stall holders for their time and hard work.



## Congratulations to our 100 Club Prize Winners 2016

100 Club	1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
<b>October</b>	117 Mrs M Wilkinson	80 Irene Brown	15 Mr D Loader
<b>November</b>	56 Miss M Thompson	71 May Smith	137 G Hamilton
<b>December</b>	91 David Dickinson	141 Mrs S Johnson	61 R Featherstone

**HumanWare** has always been innovative with technology and they are now giving customers the opportunity to **spread the cost** when purchasing one of their products.

### **It's all about choice!**

The entire product range is available to purchase using their new Interest-Free payments.

You can purchase any of their products, safe in the knowledge that they won't cost you one extra penny.

There are no hidden extras, what you see is what you pay! Simply choose the repayment option which suits your budget best, i.e. 3, 6, 9 or 12 months.

Simple, safe and secure, you are just 3 easy steps away from owning a product which will enhance your life.

**1.** Visit their website, choose your product and click the Spread the Cost button.

**2.** Complete the 60 second Application Form and Receive an instant decision.

**3.** Decide which repayment plan is best for you over 3, 6, 9 or 12 months.

Repayment options are clearly shown.

Humanware products include:

- Explore range of electronic magnifiers
- Trekker Breeze+ an effective and informative navigation device
- Prodigy Connect 12 a powerful desktop magnifier for writing, reading and viewing

If you have any questions or would like further information please call

**Freephone 0800 587 2589**

# Talking Technology

## Prodigi Desktop electronic magnifier

This desktop electronic magnifier from Humanware has **Touch and Tap** controls that are easy to learn and hard to forget. Just place your document and tap to zoom in and start reading with your preset magnification, enhanced contrast and reading mode.



The **ClearView C** helps you to read your favourite newspaper, enjoy craftwork or write a check without being restricted in movement.

If you are looking for an easy-to-use video magnifier, then the ClearView C One is ideal for you.

If you would like a one to one demonstration of the **Prodigi** or **ClearView C** at our Resource Centre, please get in touch on **01670 514316**.

For more information about these products, visit: **[www.humanware.com](http://www.humanware.com)** and **[uk.optelec.com](http://uk.optelec.com)**

# Conference and meeting room hire at Reiver House, Morpeth

## Meeting Room Hire

A 520sq ft. room seating up to 25 people with kitchenette including tea and coffee making facilities. £80 for a full day or £15 per hour (or part there of).

## Desk Hire

A modern office with Wi-Fi internet, photocopying equipment, staff kitchen, WC's, free on site parking and sensory gardens. Two free days meeting room hire is also included in desk hire in addition to a reception service.

## Recording Studio

This room can be used as office space for two people or as a small recording studio, with free equipment hire, 102sq ft. £40 per day or £10 per hour. **Sensory loss groups may be eligible for concessionary rates.**

**For further details on meeting room, desk and office hire please contact us on 01670 514316 or email: [info@ncba.org.uk](mailto:info@ncba.org.uk).**

## Make a difference – support our services

The Northumberland County Blind Association is a registered charity and depends on outside help for many of its activities. We are greatly helped by our team of volunteers as well as many people that support us financially.

If you would like to help by: volunteering, fundraising, making a donation, being actively involved with one of our committees, making a bequest, joining our 100 club, please contact us on 01670 514316.

If you pay income tax, your donation can be worth 25% more to us just by completing and enclosing the slip below with your donation.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a taxpayer. Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please call **01670 514316** or email **info@ncba.org.uk** if you would like to contribute an article or make a comment on anything you have read in this newsletter.

NoISe stands for “Northumberland Information Service for people with vision impairment”. NoISe is a free publication that is produced in large-print, Braille, audio and via email. We aim to give you news about NCBA and useful general information. To the best of our knowledge all articles are correct at the time of going to print. If you know someone who would be interested in receiving NoISe or if this newsletter is inappropriately addressed please let us know.

# Leave a legacy gift in your Will

Leaving us a gift in your Will, however large or small, will help to provide a range of support services to people who are registered blind and partially sighted living in Northumberland. By remembering us in your Will you can help to ensure that our services continue into the future.

We recommend that you seek professional advice when drawing up your Will. We do not provide financial or legal advice. If you wish to find a solicitor please visit the following website: [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk) or telephone 0870 606 2555. For further information on how to set up a personal legacy account, visit the following website: [www.cafonline.org/my-personal-giving](http://www.cafonline.org/my-personal-giving). The Will site provides a complete online service for writing a Will at [www.thewillsite.co.uk](http://www.thewillsite.co.uk)

## Address

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## Contact Us

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Website: [www.ncba.org.uk](http://www.ncba.org.uk)



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[www.facebook.com/NcbaReiverhouse](http://www.facebook.com/NcbaReiverhouse)



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