



expanding horizons for people
with sight impairment

seenews

SUMMER 2020



Supporting you through lockdown

Find out how seescape has supported clients and will continue to support them during the COVID-19 pandemic

INSIDE

SEE TECHNOLOGY | THE OPTICIAN AT SEESCAPE



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Good news!

seescap has been fortunate in receiving a grant from the Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund to help us set up some new initiatives.



Through receiving this funding, we are delighted to let you know we are now able to move to sending out our newsletter on a USB memory stick which you will be able to play on a Sonic 2 USB memory player or similar device.

The memory stick will be delivered in the same way as your talking books from RNIB and once you have listened to the newsletter you will be able to send the memory stick back in the envelope that will be provided, free of charge ready for your next newsletter.

We realise that some of our clients may wish to continue with CD's. To accommodate this we will phase this change in until end of 2021. Please let us know if this might cause you a problem and we will try our best to solve the problem. If we do not hear from you, we will start sending out the memory sticks for our next newsletter publication in autumn 2020.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact us on **01592 644 979**, email us at **info@seescap.org.uk**, or use the contact form on our website **www.seescap.org.uk**.

A message from the Chief Executive

By Carl Hodson

These really are unprecedented times and I sincerely hope that this newsletter finds you and your family in good health.



The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted daily life as we know it, instilled fear and uncertainty in many people as it has spread around the world. It is challenging leaders in government, public and community health to allay concerns and respond to the crisis. Our first thought – and our primary concern – has been and will continue to be the wellbeing of our clients, colleagues, families and the communities in which we live and work.

Following the advice of appropriate government and local health authorities, we have restricted travel; events and meetings; closed offices; asked employees to work remotely and taken other measures to protect the health and safety of our clients and colleagues. The impact has been substantial for the charity and we thank all those who have provided support to us so we can continue to provide support to you.

We remain intensely focused on our clients. We have implemented plans and been innovative to ensure that we can continue to deliver the highest level of quality services and help during these unique circumstances. We continually assess and adjust these plans with reference to the changing landscape and in line with advice issued by the Scottish Government. As always, we use our values to guide all that we do:

RESPONSIBILITY
PARTNERS

PEOPLE
EXCELLENCE

RESPECT
SAFETY

We are here to help and remain open for all services via phone or email initially including: Sight Support, Assistive Technology, The Optician, Befriending and Volunteering. Please do get in touch on **01592 644979** or **info@seescape.org.uk**

Stay safe, **Carl**

Supporting you through lockdown

Throughout lockdown the Sight Support Team has been working from home and continued to deliver services, but in a slightly different way.

We have managed to address immediate risks, by adapting what we do. We have only been able to do this with the help of our colleagues in the office, who we rely on to post out equipment to clients. It has been a real team effort to keep services running.



Instead of home visits we have been carrying out assessments over the phone, this has allowed us to gather information and address any issues. We have been able to send out equipment with instructions on how to use it, in conjunction with staff explaining the instructions on the phone. This has meant that clients have been able to regain some independence throughout this difficult time. Examples are: being able to make a hot drink without scalding because they have had training and received a liquid level indicator (LLI) and being able to use the cooker because we have been able to send out bump ons and shown them how to mark the dials.

We have been able to carry out telephone assessments for low vision aids. This has meant we have been able to supply magnifiers throughout lockdown. This has worked well and is something we intend to keep going, as it means that you, our clients, will get access to magnifiers quickly.

As well as the above we have been contacting everyone to see how they are managing, we have made several referrals to the Helping Hands service for those who are struggling with shopping and getting prescriptions. For some it is just a listening ear, because of increased isolation due to the lockdown.

Going forward we will be gathering as much information over the phone and trying to address immediate issues as we have been doing throughout lockdown. We hope that we will be able to offer home visits once we have established that it is safe to do so. Staff will be equipped with suitable PPE. Risk assessments will be carried out to ensure the safety of clients and staff.

At this point we will go over our initial telephone assessment to ensure it is accurate and offer any further advice as required.

We are currently looking at ways that we can deliver other services such as mobility training and independent living skills, with social distancing measures in place.

We will continue to offer telephone assessments for low vision aids, as we feel this is a quick and effective way of assessing your needs and getting the magnifiers out to you as quickly as possible.

Currently where we are relying so heavily on remote communication and assessments, it is vital that we have all of the correct contact information for you. With this in mind we ask that you please keep us up-to-date on any changes to your personal information including address, landline phone number, mobile phone number and email address. You can do this by calling **01592 644 979** or emailing **info@seescape.org.uk**.

How we have helped you during lockdown

Abi worked with a client who had a sudden loss of vision and was struggling with all aspects of daily life. Lockdown meant that family could not offer support. seescape was able to carry out a telephone assessment, identify and resolve most of the issues.

Outward referrals were made to community alarm, occupational therapy, and pharmacy to ensure safety in the home environment. We provided equipment such as a liquid level indicator to reduce the risk of scalding and bumpons to enable the client to set cooker and microwave dials safely. We were also able to refer the client for registration, which was completed and because of this she successfully applied for Attendance Allowance, which will help her with day to day living.

Following our intervention, the client feels more confident and safer in her home environment, with all the aids that she requires to keep her safe. These include a liquid level indicator, bump ons for her cooker, community alarm, NOMAD tablet dispenser and handrails in the bathroom.

Elaina carried out a low vision assessment. Her client was struggling to read her mail as well as cooking instructions and labels. Through assessment Elaina was able to send out a suitable magnifier which her client received the next day. The magnifier has been working very well for this lady who advised she is very thankful for the support she received.

SEE TECHNOLOGY

by Stuart Beveridge

Since the middle of March, the way seescape has been delivering and assisting our clients to purchase and work with their existing technology has changed due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Our office is closed for the time-being, however, rest assured that our Technology Team is still providing services from home as best we can. So, if you require any advice about purchasing technology or assistance with your existing products, please contact us using the details at the end of this article. If you would prefer to have a one-to-one demonstration or training session in our technology room we can take a referral and add you to our waiting list for an appointment when we are able to offer this service again.

We are also at this time providing online sessions with Sight and Sound Technology who provide a range of hardware and software solutions which include a variety of mobile phones, Braille displays/note takers and electronic magnifiers, as well as software solutions which assist with speech output and magnification for Windows computers.

These sessions are hosted on a platform called Zoom which is fully accessible whether you are using a mobile phone, tablet, computer or landline. They are designed to give clients the opportunity to ask any questions they have around technology and answers are provided by experts. Again, for more information, please contact us or visit our website and social media pages for updates.

Finally, it is also worth stating that other technology companies such as Humanware and Synapptic are also still providing ongoing training and assistance with services as much as they can remotely. Webinars and online training videos and support are available if required so please don't hesitate to get in contact using the following contact details.

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Use the contact form on our website: www.seescape.org.uk

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Sight and Sound Technology

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Fundraising update

By Sally Cameron, Fundraising Manager

Thank you to everyone who has continued to support seescapethrough this difficult time.

We have had to cancel all events due to COVID 19 for this year which has left a big gap in our expected income for the year.

Our fundraising helps to fund many of the services we provide, for example, our assistive technology support. If you, your family and friends would like to donate to our services you can do so by visiting our website **www.seescapethrough.org.uk** and setting up a monthly direct debit. This committed way of supporting seescapethrough helps us to plan our services in the knowledge of receiving promised income.

Of course, all donations are gratefully received whether it is a one-off donation or a committed gift.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss any aspect of how you can help by calling **01592 644979** or email **sally.cameron@seescapethrough.org.uk**.

see community

By Kirstie Henderson, Community Engagement Co-ordinator

During the COVID 19 pandemic, seescape volunteers have been amazing, contacting our clients to make sure no one is left alone and isolated.

Some existing volunteer befrienders have now transferred to telephone befriending, as face to face befriending visits have been suspended during the pandemic. We have also welcomed new volunteers, who received training and support to provide telephone befriending to seescape clients referred for this unique service. Clients and their befrienders have regular conversations on the phone to get to know each other and offer some moral support.

For many during lockdown it has been a welcome change to speak to someone, who is there to listen and be a friendly voice at the end of the phone. Here are some comments from clients who have benefited from the telephone befriending service:

“I’ve really enjoyed having a telephone befriender, we’ve got to know each other well and it’s a great help knowing she is calling every week, it gives me something to look forward to.”

“It’s working well and I like the fact it’s a regular slot, this works for me. This situation we are in (COVID-19 pandemic) has meant I have been more isolated and secluded at home but the telephone befriender is regular contact for me and this has helped.”

Live Zoom calls are taking place every fortnight, where seescape volunteers can join each other online, to share news and updates and take part in discussions on different topics with seescape staff.

Group volunteers have been phoning group members on a regular basis to check people are managing OK. If anyone does need advice or assistance, the volunteers feed this back to seescape to follow up.



Hilary, the group volunteer leader for the Dunfermline Group says:

“I’ve really missed my Tuesday morning of fun at the Dunfermline Club. We (the volunteers) have kept in touch with our members by phone during lockdown, although not the same it’s great to know they are all well. We are now trialling a group call every Tuesday morning for an hour to give group members the opportunity to hear from each other, find out about updates from guest speakers and ask questions.”

So, what’s next on the horizon at seescape?

The seescape befriending training which has been adapted for volunteers to do in their own time is available online, as we aim to recruit more volunteers across Fife to match with seescape clients who need a telephone befriender. If you are interested in having a befriender or if you or someone you know is interested in becoming a volunteer befriender, please contact me for an informal chat about what is involved. Call: **01592 644 979** or email **kirstie.henderson@seescape.org.uk**.

The Optician

at  seescape

see optician

**An update from
Steven Halstead,
Lead Optometrist**



As you will all be aware things have been slightly different at the Optician at seescape for the last few months. On government guidance we were sadly forced to close our doors in March to protect both our customers and staff from the global pandemic of coronavirus.

Despite this our team has been busy fielding phone call enquiries, dispensing advice and triaging patients to local emergency centres for urgent care over the last 3 months.

However, as we now head into phase 2 and 3 of the government easing of lockdown things will still look slightly different at the Optician. To control the number of patients attending the practice we are still holding initial phone consultations with our optician service to ascertain whether you need to be seen within the practice, or if advice can be easily dispensed over the phone.

If we feel your symptoms require us to see you in person then an appointment will be made and all necessary measures will be taken for both your safety and our colleagues alike. A short COVID-19 questionnaire will be completed prior to your arrival plus we ask you to bring a face covering to your appointment.



We will also ask that you arrive at the time of your appointment as you will not be permitted entry to the building until this time.

Our staff will be in full PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and all surfaces will be thoroughly disinfected after each patient visit, with all necessary NHS guidelines followed.

We understand this is a challenging time for everyone and we do ask you to bear with us but stress that if you are having any issues please don't hesitate to contact us and one of our team will always strive to assist you to the best of our ability.

Stay safe and hopefully see you all soon.

To discuss any issues or concerns you have about your vision please contact us on **01592 644 979** or email **info@seescape.org.uk**.



If you, or someone you know
is struggling with sight loss
**we'll see you
through.**

FIND US HERE:

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in Fife with sight impairment

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