

Eye Chat Weekly.

Issue 227 – Friday 23 September 2022

Welcome to this week's quick update giving you news, views and information. Contact Alex or Jill in the office, to offer us your articles, or e-mail admin@buryblindsociety.org



Last Monday we couldn't fail to be moved by the State Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. A truly historic event and one that so many of us felt proud to be a part of, which was reflected in the huge numbers who attended. A fitting end for a life well lived.

It's been a short week but actioned packed. The LVA & BBS Joint clinic was held on Wednesday and our Healthy Living group had a very interesting session on Anger Management on Thursday. Discussing some of the areas that sparked frustration and anxiety, I asked the group if they would mind reporting this at the User Forum on Wednesday 12th October (10.30am-12.00pm) as many of the issues would be relevant to other clients and something that we, as the Blind Society could look at actioning. Included in this was the problem when attending the swimming baths and not knowing where your locker was or where to go. This is the type of feedback we would like to receive from our 'Quick Sports & Activity Questionnaire' so we can look at solutions. Group Leaders will find copies of the questions in their registers. Please do get members of your group to complete – and ask a sighted volunteer to assist if required. The questions are available on our website, plus next week a few volunteers will be making phone calls to clients who do not drop into the Centre. Your feedback is vital in helping us make a difference for sight loss.

The Macular Group met this week too and, with the cost of living crisis, provided some excellent suggestions via Colin Davies of the Macular Society regarding support available if you are visually impaired. We've highlighted a few this week and will continue next week. If you would like to discuss further or like a full copy, please contact us at the Centre. We have a number of volunteers who can help with Benefits and form completion and our Early Intervention Team are available to discuss registration and sight loss support.

Disability Benefits: If you are using more aids, making adaptations, asking for more help from someone or simply taking more time to do simple tasks than you used to, you could qualify for additional disability benefits.

What are they?

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Attendance Allowance: For people over pension age you may be entitled to Attendance Allowance. This benefit is non-means tested and pays for the additional costs of living with a long-term health condition or disability such as age-related macular degeneration.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP). For people 16 and up to pension age they may be entitled to PIP. Again, this helps to pay for the additional cost of living with a long-term health condition or disability. It is also non-means tested.

Registration as Sight impaired or Severely Sight Impaired.

Being registered can always come as a bit of a shock. Depending on the level of registration, it could come with some statutory entitlements. Registration does not guarantee you will make a successful claim for either Attendance Allowance or PIP, but it can be used as really good evidence to support your claim.

Blind Person's Tax Allowance

If you are registered as SSI you can claim Blind Person's Tax allowance. i.e. you can earn more money before starting to pay tax. This includes pay from a job, pension income and even tax paid on interest on savings. If you are not working but you are registered you can pass this allowance onto your spouse or civil partner.

Coming Up: We are delighted to be working with Bury Lions for our 100 Years Celebratory 'Walk for Treasure' Hunt on Saturday 1 October. Great fun for everyone. £5 per adult, £2.50 for 5-12 year olds, toddlers free. The walk should last about two hours with clues along the way. Starting at the Centre from 10am-11am. A prize for the winning team! Pre-booking essential. Contact the Centre or visit our website.

Bury VCFA Volunteer Recruitment Fair, The Oasis Centre, Whitefield Methodist Church. Wednesday 28th September 1-4pm. Les and Alicia are representing us at this event but why not go along and say hello. Let's see if we can recruit some more wonderful volunteers to our 'happy band'!

In Our Thoughts: We say goodbye to Sheila Southwood. Before suffering ill health, Sheila had been a regular volunteer with our Monday Events Group. Our thoughts and condolences go out to Sheila's family and friends.

Drop In is available Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings 10am-12pm. All other groups meeting as normal this week. Do pop by – it would be lovely to see you!