



Bury Society For Blind and
Partially Sighted People

V.I. Link - Issue 8 – 29 June 2020

This will be the last V.I. Link in this particular format. Following your positive feedback, we are expanding this bulletin to a four-page broadsheet, including other local news, views and information. Production of this new bulletin will be monthly from Issue 9 and will replace our weekly Eye Chat and quarterly 'Out of Sight' Newsletter due to reduced staff capacity at this present time. So, here's our update on what our staff team and volunteers are up to and, where we all are with the new eased lockdown restrictions!

Welcome Back: We are delighted to welcome all the staff who were furloughed and a big personal thanks from me to Alex and Gill for helping keep the office going over the past few months. All the team are working on a rota, ensuring that we have a maximum of three staff in the Centre at any one time, thus reducing transmission risk. At all other times, staff are working remotely from home. The Early Intervention Team, i.e. Glynis, Kelly and Gill are carrying out telephone assessments and will make home, or book Centre visits, if this is safe and feasible for both client and staff.

Centre News: Here at the Centre, we have re-arranged both working practices and the layout of the Centre to ensure safe social distancing and have installed appropriate sanitising processes and equipment. There is a one-way entry system operating via the Main Front Door, and no access in via the Back Door. In our next bulletin we will be listing what additional bookable sessions are available to attend. In the meantime, if you are not classified as an extremely vulnerable person currently shielding, and would like to meet with up to three other friends, from Monday 13th July we can book the Lounge area for you to meet safely between 10.30am-12.00pm, Monday–Friday. We are sure you will appreciate, in order to comply with government guidelines, and ensure the safety of all attending, a telephone booking service has been implemented and priority will be given to anyone living with sight loss. Please note, the normal 'Drop In' facility will not be available. We are only able to offer the morning sessions as this will enable us to carry out a thorough cleaning in the afternoon ready for the next session. At the time of booking, further safety instructions will be explained.

Volunteers: We've missed you! Obviously, our normal volunteer roles are not available at present but, over the next week or so, we will be in touch to explain where support is needed and to see if you would like to help. Do feel free to give us a call if you'd like to have a catch up and either Diane or myself (Jill), can explain in more detail.

Hospital Eye Clinics: Following visits by staff to Fairfield Eye Clinic, and Rochdale Infirmary, both hospitals have either staff or volunteers at the entrances to provide guidance. At Fairfield, you are being directed to Entrance 2 to access the Eye Clinic. Due to road repairs

by the entrance, we would strongly advise either taking hospital transport, a taxi or come in a car, and arrange to be dropped off outside Entrance 2 at Fairfield. Also, you will need to wear a mask when in the hospital building. Rochdale are providing sanitiser and masks as you enter. Fairfield will allow you to wear your own mask. Our key message would be, do attend your appointment, it is important and, if possible, ring for up to date access information so you are prepared.

Out and About:

Where 2 metres is not possible, people should keep a distance of 'one metre plus' i.e. staying one metre apart. Remember though, observe precautions to reduce the risk of transmission e.g. Wear a face mask, avoid face-to-face seating.

Public Transport. Social distancing measures have been introduced on buses and trams with seating being restricted using covers or hazard tape. Wearing face masks is compulsory when using public transport. Our experience when we went to Bury Bus station and the Metro, was mainly positive as staff were helpful, but we did have to ask for assistance as the signage is very visual.

Businesses, shops, banks etc. Most businesses have implemented a one-way system where possible with separate doors for in and out. Presently, The Millgate have security staff on the entrances advising and directing members of the public, between 9am-2pm, and 9am-4pm on Market Days. At Bury Market there are Market Marshalls on duty, and whilst there is no restriction on entrance to the Outdoor market, they are asking people to go one way only. There is only one entrance into the inside market near the Fish/Meat Market.

Stay Safe:

Some of the following ideas may feel outside your comfort zone, but in these strange times, as someone with a visual impairment, wherever possible you need to ensure you are more visible, and don't be shy in stating you need assistance. Do remember, we are offering a support service to accompany you when you first step out into this new world! If you would like more information or to have a chat about help, then please give us a call on 0161 763 7014

- If you have been issued with a symbol cane or long cane, please do use it, especially when out in busy areas such as supermarkets, using public transport etc.
- Should you feel you need a refresher cane training, or would like to be considered for long cane training, please contact us at the Society for advice / information and the referral process.
- We have a selection high viz waistcoats, lanyards and 'Assistance Required' cards, to help you take control of your social distancing.
- Be prepared! Initially, shop on a quieter day, ring ahead and establish what support is available, consider using our Support service so you're not alone.

We are really looking forward to seeing you all again very soon. Stay safe and well, Jill and all the Team at Bury Blind Society.