

WHO SHALL EYE CONTACT?

Services, Information, Advice

For Blind and Partially Sighted People

**Living in the Royal Borough of
Kingston upon Thames**

**Kingston Association for the Blind
020 8605 0060**

This information has been compiled by members of Eye Contact (a self-help group for Visually Impaired People who live in the borough of Kingston upon Thames) and by the Sensory Impairment Team.

We hope to give you some ideas on how you can improve your every day life once you have been assessed as a result of your visual impairment.

Please let us know if you have found this information useful. We are always interested to receive suggestions and new information that may be of use to other visually impaired people.

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Kingston Association for the Blind
www.kingstonassociationforblind.org

For general Information and enquiries phone 020 8605 0060

The Kingston Association for the blind is a registered charity established over 25 years ago to promote the interests of blind and partially sighted people living in the borough.

It can make grants available to blind and partially sighted people who live in the borough for a wide variety of purposes - special equipment, cost of holidays, educational courses, etc.

The Kingston Association for the blind supports a number of clubs and societies in the area including the Surbiton Blind Club, the Coombe & New Malden Blind Club, Social Eyes, and the Eye Contact Group. It also supports The Kingston Talking Newspaper and a number of Buddy Schemes including Eye Buddies, Tandem Buddies and Running Buddies.

Eye Buddy Scheme - Kingston Association for the Blind
Contact Jackie Gould 020 8949 6405

www.kingstonassociationforblind.org

The Eye Buddy Scheme matches trained volunteers (Visual Awareness Training given by the Sensory Impairment Team) to blind or visually impaired clients to help with tasks such as reading mail, writing letters, short walks or just a cup of tea and a chat on a regular, weekly basis.

Under this umbrella two more Buddy schemes started - the Tandem Buddy (available to those blind or partially sighted

people who would like to try riding a tandem with a sighted volunteer) and the Running Buddy.

Telephone Friend Scheme - Kingston Association for the Blind

Matches one visually impaired person with another for a regular chat on the telephone.

COMMUNICATIONS

BT Free Directory Enquiry Service

Available to anyone who is unable to use a telephone directory because of poor sight or other disabilities. Dial 195 to receive this service. You can also request that the Enquiry Operator dial the number for you. Other telephone companies run similar schemes.

UTILITY COMPANIES

To prevent bogus callers, you should have a specially pre-agreed password with any utility supplier whose staff may need to call you at home.

You can request that all communications (including letters, statements and/or accounts) from your bank, building society, telephone, cable TV, gas, electricity and water suppliers be supplied in large print or on tape.

For example, there's British Gas's Home Energy Care Service on 0845 955 5404. It's open to anyone over 60 years of age

who lives alone, or anyone who is registered disabled in any way, or anyone who is chronically ill.

British Gas Care Service can also supply the following:

- Adapters for switches that are difficult to operate;
- Large print billing of accounts (Braille is also available);
- Telephone information on bills;
- Accounts can also be paid by direct debit from your bank account.

If you are placed on the Home Energy Care Service Register and are a home-owner, an annual free safety check is carried out on all appliances belonging to you.

NEWS, INFORMATIVE PUBLICATIONS, BOOKS AND TAPES

National Talking Newspaper and Magazine Service (known as TNAUK) 01435 866102

www.tnauk.org.uk

Provides recordings of over 200 publications in a wide range of formats (cassette tape, floppy disk, downloaded from the Internet, as e-mail and on CD-ROM). There is an annual subscription fee which is based on the number of publications you choose. You can also subscribe to their website and e-mail service which gives you access to an unlimited number of titles each year..

A wide range of titles and almost all newspapers and magazines are available. Charges can be reduced for people on low incomes (who do not need to be on Income Support or other benefits in order to qualify). Even if you are not a TNAUK member, you can request free, taped versions of in-store magazines such as Marks & Spencer's and Waitrose's.

Kingston Talking Newspaper 020 8287 4180

This service is provided free of charge to anyone who is visually impaired who lives in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, and is an excellent way of keeping up to date with local news and issues. The first section of this weekly tape concentrates on news and information for Visually Impaired People, and is followed by a selection of articles from the current edition of the Surrey Comet.

Community Library Service 020 8547 6451

community.library@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

www.kingston.gov.uk/leisure/libraries

Kingston Libraries provide a free home-delivery service to residents who find it difficult to get to their local library. Staff visit once every four weeks, bringing books pre-selected to your specific tastes. Ordinary and large-print books, story cassettes, music tapes, videos, DVDs, wooden jigsaws and knitting wool are also available.

Those who already have access to the Internet can view the library catalogue on-line at:

<http://opac.kingston.gov.uk/TalisPrism>

TAPED SERVICES

Delivered free under the 'ARTICLES FOR THE BLIND' concession. There is no return postage to pay on any item.

London Sounds 020 8563 2922

www.actiontrustfortheblind.org

info@actiontrustfortheblind.org

An excellent, free, monthly cassette magazine produced by Action Trust for Blind People, it contains details of London theatre and concert performances, together with food ideas, interviews, equipment reviews and gardening.

Calibre Cassette Library 01296 432339

www.calibre.org.uk

enquiries@calibre.org.uk

Calibre is a free lending library of books recorded unabridged onto ordinary cassettes, for anyone who is unable to read books in standard print. There are currently over 6,000 titles, including more than 1,000 for children. The catalogue is arranged into 23 categories, and gives a brief synopsis of each book, together with the names of the author and reader. For those who do not find it easy to use the catalogue, Calibre's computer will choose the next title for you based upon your previous book choices.

Soundings 0845 725 8852

www.soundings.org

support@soundings.org

A monthly magazine produced on tape by Info-Soundings which includes items from all over the UK together with news of services and equipment for VIPs.

TRANSPORT AND GETTING ABOUT

Tripscope 0845 758 5641

A national charity that gives advice on most aspects of travelling and holidaying for people with a disability, including Visually Impaired People. They do not take bookings.

Freedom Passes

Freedom passes are provided by arrangement with Transport for London. They are available to people permanently resident in the borough of Kingston who are over 60 years old, or are aged 11 and over and have a permanent and substantial disability.

The pass allows travel free of charge on buses, trains and the underground in the Greater London area. In some cases there are restrictions to the time of travel.

On application two passport photographs are required. (If you find photo booths difficult, try Jessops Photographic Shop, near the 'tumbling telephone boxes' in Kingston centre, where they will take a Polaroid photo of you and give you 4 copies for a small charge).

People who are over 60 are automatically eligible and can obtain an application form from the post office otherwise contact the Sensory Impairment team on 020 8547 6600

Taxicard Scheme

The London-wide Taxicard scheme is for Kingston residents with an impairment which prevents them from using buses or trains. The scheme allows people to travel in black cabs at greatly reduced fares. People are allocated 104 trips (pro rata) per year.

Application forms can be obtained by telephoning 020 8547 6085.

Capital Call

Capital Call is a complementary service to the Taxicard scheme and gives people the choice of travelling in mini cabs. Capital Call has been introduced as an additional transport option for Taxicard members where there is a shortage of London taxis. People are allocated a budget of £200 per year on average.

Application forms can be obtained by telephoning 020 8547 6085.

Blue Badges

Allow parking concessions for severely disabled or blind people, but not people registered partially sighted unless they have other serious disabilities.

The badge allows the car in which the disabled or blind person is a passenger to park free of charge and without time limit at parking meters. It also allows 3 hours' parking on single yellow lines and free parking in Kingston's car parks. There is a small charge for the badge and it must be renewed every 3 years. Two passport-sized photos are required each time.

Application forms can be obtained from Guildhall 1 or the Crescent Resource Centre, or by telephoning 020 8547 6008.

Dial-a-Ride

Publicly funded, door-to-door accessible transport service operating within the local area for people who cannot use - or find it difficult to use - public transport. Dial-a-Ride can be used for shopping trips, visits to friends, theatres, etc. It cannot be used for hospital appointments. The service is available from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day. The cost is comparable with bus fares. You can only book one day ahead unless you are attending a special event such as a show with pre-booked tickets, or a dental appointment. A friend or relative can accompany you.

Dial-a-Ride application forms can be obtained direct by contacting the Sensory Impairment Team at the Crescent Resource Centre on 020 8547 6600.

Booking Number 0845 999 1999

Flexible Transport

This scheme consists of two wheelchair accessible vehicles available between 10.30 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday to Friday. There is no charge for this service, but bookings must come through a Care Manager or Keyworker. There is no escort, but staff, carers and family are welcome to accompany passengers on their journeys.

For bookings, call Sinead McCormack on 020 8547 6085 between 9 a.m. and 12.30 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

Disabled Person's Railcard

A Disabled Person's Railcard is available for an annual fee and entitles the holder to discounts of up to a third on a range of rail tickets. Accompanying adults can purchase a ticket at the same reduced fare. Application forms are available from national rail stations or from the Sensory Impairment Team on 020 8547 6600.

Guide Dogs

Are available to people with a significant sight loss (you do not have to be totally blind).

For further information, contact the Sensory Impairment Team on 020 8547 6600, or Guide Dogs for the Blind Association on 0118 983 5555.

Large Print Tube Map

Can be obtained from the Information booth at the Cattle Market bus stop, or from the Information Shop in Clarence Street.

For travel information, call 020 7222 1234.

SERVICES TO HELP WITH DAILY LIVING

Shopping

Home delivery or home shopping may be helpful for you. Home delivery is where you actually go into the shop and select the items, then arrange for them to be delivered later. Home shopping is where you have a catalogue and order the items by phone or Internet and then have them delivered.

It is always worth phoning the store where you want to shop to ask if they can assist you. All local stores say that they will be only too pleased to help any disabled customer to do their shopping.

Iceland Stores 01244 842842

www.iceland.co.uk

Home delivery can be arranged when shopping. Contact their Customer Service Desk in-store.

John Lewis

www.johnlewis.com

John Lewis has a home delivery service, which can be organised at their Customer Services desk. Charges apply. They have a home shopping service too, accessible both through a paper catalogue (call 0845 604 9049 for a copy) and their web site. Waitrose goods can be ordered via the internet after registering at www.ocado.com.

Sainsbury

www.sainsbury.co.uk

Sainsbury have a 7-day delivery service with a minimum spend. There is a delivery charge and you will need to pay by credit or debit card. If you already have a Sainsbury's reward card, they can provide you with a large print list of goods you have bought in the past 12 weeks from their stores. If it is some time since you shopped at Sainsburys, they can help you to compile your first list (call 0845 301 2020 for a starter pack). You can also order on their website.

Tesco

www.tesco.com/access

Tesco have a delivery service via the Internet. They have special web pages for visually impaired people, which have been developed with the help of the RNIB, with font sizes and page colours that are easier to see.

Safeways

Safeways was bought by Morrisons, who are converting stores from Safeways to Morrisons. Morrisons offer neither a home delivery nor a home shopping service at the time this booklet was printed.

Somerfield

www.somerfield.co.uk

Somerfield offers a home delivery service.
Call 0117 935 9359.

Cleaning

Kingclean 020 8390 4238 (Tuesdays or Thursdays)

People who require help with housework and other practical tasks, and who are not able to recruit their own workers, can use Kingclean. This scheme keeps a register of police-checked houseworkers and matches them to older and disabled people requiring help.

Once the match has been made, the person using the scheme employs the houseworker directly, agreeing what will be done and when, and what the hourly rate will be. There is a minimum recommended rate.

Equipment

Low-vision aids are magnifiers of one sort or another and can enable people to read print, watch television or check bus numbers. People with some types of eye condition may not be helped by low vision aids. Some opticians will stock a small range of LV equipment. If you would like to purchase your own LV equipment either via the Internet or by mail order, contact Optima on 01803 864218, or at www.optimalowvision.co.uk

Low Vision Aid Clinic at Kingston Hospital

Provides a low vision assessment, magnifiers and other low vision aids on long term loan, free of charge. The clinic is on Thursdays, and you will need to be referred by your consultant at the Royal Eye Unit, or by your GP.

Other Equipment

The RNIB provides Internet-based and mail-order catalogues containing ranges of equipment specially designed for visually impaired people, and can be contacted on 0845 702 3153 (or www.rnib.org). Cobolt Systems Ltd (on 01493 700172 and at www.cobolt.co.uk) also offer Internet and printed catalogues, while equipment from The Partially Sighted Society (01302 323132) can be ordered through their paper catalogue.

There is a small Resource Room at the Crescent Resource Centre in New Malden. The room is open from 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, or at other times by appointment. There will be a Rehabilitation Worker there to offer advice and information. Telephone 020 8547 6600. The Rehabilitation Workers in the Sensory Impairment Team can loan some essential equipment free of charge. They can also advise on lighting and colour contrasts as this may significantly improve your level of vision. If you would like an assessment in your own home or some advice or information, phone the Sensory Impairment Team on 020 8547 6600 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. any Monday, Wednesday or Friday. The RNIB has a Resource Centre at its headquarters in Judd Street, Camden, where equipment is displayed and can be purchased. Telephone 020 7391 2356.

The Partially Sighted Society has a vision assessment and advice service based in Fulham, SW6, for anyone who is experiencing visual problems - you need not be registered blind or partially sighted to visit but charges do apply. The Partially Sighted Society is at 9 Plato Place, 72/74 St Dionis Road, London, SW6 4TU. Telephone 020 7371 0289.

They offer advice, information and counselling support to visually-impaired people, as well as advice and training for low

vision aids. If you wish to look at this equipment, it is best to make an appointment so that staff can set aside time to assist you.

Occupational Therapy Service

This service is provided for people who have a long term disability, which significantly affects their ability to undertake normal daily living tasks such as washing, dressing, accessing the toilet and cooking. Equipment is provided long term and there is no charge for the service. OTs can also advise you on suitable adaptations to your home.

To obtain an assessment by an Occupational Therapist, please call 020 8547 6621.

OT Shops

The borough has two Daily Living Equipment Shops (also known as OT Shops). One is at The Crescent Resource Centre, Cocks Crescent, New Malden on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon. The other is at Newent House Resource Centre on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to noon. Equipment to assist independent living (cooking and getting in and out of bed and dressing) is on display and to try and buy.

For more details contact Pearl Ofoego on 020 8547 6510.

Community Care Services

Community Care Services aim to assist older and disabled people to continue to live in their own homes where possible and to support any carers who are providing a high level of support to them.

Services include personal and practical assistance through the Home Care and Independent Living Scheme; hot and frozen meals; a shopping service; bathing service; laundry service; the Careline 24-hour emergency alarm scheme; and Relief Care and Respite Care to assist carers.

The criterion for these services is that you must need daily assistance with personal care - for example, washing, dressing and meal preparation. There is a charge for most of these services.

For more information, please call 020 8547 6621.

Sensory Impairment Team

The team is based at the Crescent Resource Centre in New Malden. On the team are two Rehabilitation Workers for visually impaired and one for hearing impaired people, and they can visit people in their own homes and provide assessments, advice and information. They also provide training in mobility, independent living skills, Braille and touch typing as well as advice on appropriate equipment and lighting. The team can be contacted on 020 8547 6600 on Monday, Wednesday or Friday mornings between 9 a.m. and 1.00 p.m.

Residential and Nursing Care Service

Community Care Services can arrange long term residential and nursing home care for people no longer able to manage in their own homes even with the support of carers and Community Care Services. Short-stay and respite care can also be provided for people where it would help them to remain in their own home - or to support carers who provide a high level of assistance.

Residential care may be provided in one of the four residential homes managed by the Council or in a registered independent residential or nursing home in Kingston or elsewhere. All homes used by Community Care Services are regularly inspected. Charges are calculated on a full financial assessment and are based on a formula set by the government.

If you wish to find out more about Community Care Services, please call 020 8547 6621.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS

Leisure, hobbies and interests for visually impaired people

British Blind Sports 01926 424247

www.britishblindsport.org.uk

info@britishblindsport.org.uk

Provides sport and recreation for blind and partially sighted people. Sports include athletics, cricket, martial arts, swimming and target shooting with a laser. They produce a monthly newsletter called Target.

Thrive 0118 988 5688

www.thrive.org.uk

info@thrive.org.uk

Thrive is the national charity whose aim it is to enable positive change in the lives of disabled and disadvantaged people through the use of gardening and horticulture. Produces Come Gardening, the only magazine in the world where all the articles

are relevant to visually impaired gardeners. The magazine is produced quarterly and is available in large print, Braille or on tape for a small annual charge.

London Blind Rambling Club
Contact David Clark on 020 8868 0096

Average walks are normally 8 miles unless otherwise stated. One to one guiding (if needed) is usually available. Home Counties and sometimes beyond explored.

East Anglian Sailing Trust 01473 659 221
www.east-anglian-sailing-trust.org.uk

Sailing weekends and holidays for visually impaired people.

Braille Chess Association
Telephone Norman Wragg on 0114 230 5995
n.wragg@braillechess.org.uk

The association has been running for 70 years. Games are played either by post (cassette tape) or by e-mail. Braille chess boards can be purchased from the RNIB.

Braille Puzzle Club
Telephone Frank Ellis 01423 562613

Braille crossword puzzles.

Spartan Swimming Club 020 8941 3255

A swimming club for disabled people that welcomes visually impaired people. One-to-one tuition is provided and there is a

hoist. The pool is available exclusively to members during the session. The club takes place at 6.30 p.m. every Thursday evening at the Malden Centre in New Malden.

The BBC Radio 4 'In Touch' Programme.

This is an information programme for visually impaired people which is broadcast every Tuesday evening at 8.40 p.m.

The Poetry Library 020 7921 0943

www.poetrylibrary.org.uk

A comprehensive collection of modern poetry containing all 20th and 21st-century work published in the UK. The library also has a huge selection from other English speaking countries and an unrivalled collection of translations. There is a special service for visually impaired members, and membership is free. Although the library is closed to visitors until January 2007 for renovation, their postal service for blind or partially sighted readers is still open.

Vocaleyes 020 7375 1043

www.vocaleyes.co.uk

A nation-wide audio-description service for blind and partially sighted people, Vocaleyes employs describers who capture the visual elements in a script which they deliver live on a special headset in gaps in the play's dialogue, thus enabling you to enjoy a wide variety of stage shows.

About a week before the show you will receive a tape which includes detailed programme notes and information on the theatre. You may also be invited to join a 'touch tour' of the set before the performance. Tickets for theatre performances (and the museum visits for which Vocaleyes offer a descriptive service too) are sold at reduced prices for you and a companion. It is usually possible to take your guide dog along as well.

RNIB audio-described videos 0845 702 3153

The RNIB has a wide selection of audio described videos for hire, a charge is payable. Audio described videos include an additional narration woven around the soundtrack of the film giving details of facial expressions, scenery, costumes etc.

Shape 020 7619 6160

info@shapearts.org.uk

Can supply reduced rate tickets for selected theatre performances for disabled people and their companions. Can also provide volunteers to accompany people to performances. There is an annual fee.. Shape is located at 356 Holloway Road, London, N7 6PA.

Cinema

Most popular cinema releases are available with audio description for visually impaired people. Over 160 U.K. cinemas have the facilities to screen these films including the Odeon Kingston.

Cinema audio description is similar to listening to a cricket or football match on the radio, having the action described to you. The normal film soundtrack comes through the cinemas surround sound speakers in the usual way, and a recorded

narrator explains what's happening on screen - in gaps in the dialogue - through personal headphones.

Current shows can be found on the website which features speech and web over phone technologies. A weekly listing is also available by e mail -

email ad@yourlocalcinema.com

Odeon main contact number 0800 085 4857

Cinema Exhibitors Association Card

A cinema Exhibitors Association Card is available for a small cost. It is valid for 3 years and entitles the holder to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to a participating cinema.

To apply for the card a person must meet one (or more) of the following criteria.

- a) Be in receipt of disability living allowance.
- b) Be a registered blind person.
- c) Hold a disabled person's rail card.
- ci)

Application forms are available at all participating cinemas.
Further information telephone 0151 348 8020

Holidays

The Sensory Impairment Team has many brochures on file and can advise you as to which organisations to contact. The RNIB (020 7391 2108) also have brochures of recommended hotels for people with a visual impairment.

Action for Blind People 020 7635 4906

Has hotels in Teignmouth, Bognor Regis, Weston Super Mare and the Lake District.

Grand UK 01603 619933
Organise coach holidays within the UK.

Premiere Holidays 01223 516000
Organise holidays in the Channel Isles.

Vitalise 01539 735080
www.vitalise.org.uk

Lots of holiday ideas, UK and abroad. One-to-one sighted guides are available on all holidays.

Winged Fellowship Trust 0845 345 1970
www.wft.org.uk
Sightseeing, adventure, activity holidays at home and abroad.

Clubs

Surbiton Club for the Blind
Telephone Ruth Walmsley 020 8399 3022

The club meets fortnightly on Tuesdays in Surbiton and has been running for over 50 years. Membership is available to those who are registered blind or partially sighted and living in the Surbiton and Chessington area.

The club has a varied programme of activities including speakers, music, day trips, and an annual Christmas luncheon. Transport can be arranged.

Social Eyes
Telephone Della Murphy 020 8605 0060

The club meets fortnightly on Tuesdays in New Malden and started in 2005. Membership is available to those who are

registered blind or partially sighted and live in the Borough of Kingston.

The club offers various activities including craft and gentle exercise programmes and also quizzes and aromatherapy sessions.

Transport to and from the club can be arranged.

Malden and Coombe Social Club for the Blind
Telephone Ann Lieberman 020-8546 9368.

The club meets fortnightly on a Wednesday and has been running for over 30 years. Membership is available to those who are registered blind or partially sighted living in the New Malden area. The club has a varied programme of activities including music, an annual Thames cruise and Christmas luncheon. Transport to and from meetings can be arranged.

Eye Contact Group
Telephone Anne Bleckwen 020 8397 8537.

Self-support group organised by the visually impaired for the visually impaired. Meets 2nd Tuesday of every month in the Malden Centre, New Malden. Organises many trips and outings throughout the year. The first part of the meeting is formal where a wide range of topics is discussed and future trips planned. The second part of the meeting is social, where members can chat over a cup of tea. Transport can be arranged to the meetings via Dial-a-Ride.