

Welcome Pack



The Children and Young People service gives us the opportunity to try new things and activities together.

“ My favourite activities were horse riding because it was fun, bike riding because we got to try lots of different bikes and the science workshop because we got to make slime! ”

“ As a Working Age member, when I came to my first IT lesson I was petrified of technology, during the first year my confidence grew and has continued to progress ever since - now I just want to learn more! ”

“ Croydon Vision made me feel welcome. I know I'm not alone with a sight problem. I also have a chance to help others through volunteering. I find out news of 'eye' developments. There is weekly recorded news of possible future interest. We are transported safely back and forth. Lunches are very good and reasonably priced - overall a social and friendly environment. ”

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About Us

Past

During 1921, there were limited social activities at Lansdown Social Club, The Croydon Guild Social Services (as it was called then) formed the Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind for the welfare and benefit for all Croydon's blind people. In 1931 money was raised to buy land on which Bedford Hall was built in Bedford Park.

In 1979 Bedford Hall was sold to developers, new and larger premises were bought at 72-74 Wellesley Road, to provide a bigger and better service. The houses were built in 1885 and were known as Linlithgow Villas. These provided a variety of accommodation including an establishment for Indian Children.

In 2015, members voted on a proposal, to merge Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind (CVAB) and Bedford Hall Trust into one entity. The proposal was aimed at enabling the new charity to benefit in accessing funds and valuable assets. The merger was ratified in 2017 and we are officially a new company maintaining the name CVAB (aka Croydon Vision).



Croydon Vision – The Now

We are currently evolving Croydon Vision as well as marketing the organisation through outreach work and community engagement meetings. The aim is to attract a wider range of Croydon residents to benefit from the services.

Our forward-looking objectives:

- To provide a range of services which meet our members' needs.
- To further improve our buildings, making sure they are accessible and better utilised.
- Team development, investing time and resources because we believe that a team that works together effectively will be beneficial for an organisation.
- To develop a sustainable plan, going beyond compliance; to drive positive change by influencing from grass root to strategic level.
- To further develop partnerships with private, public and voluntary organisations.



Our Services



Information & Advice Service

Croydon Vision has an Information and Advice Service in partnership with Advisory Service Croydon. Our Information and Advice Officer is your first point of contact for all membership queries. You can book a tour or taster activity with our Information Officer as well as get advice on other services of interest. The Officer can also assist you to complete your membership form.

This service allows anyone with sight loss or anyone affected by sight loss with questions to be answered. This service also helps with answering questions to do everyday problems, such as housing problems, transport and dealing with utility providers.

We work closely with the Sensory Impairment team at the council, Moorfields and local GP's. Croydon Vision offer advice on financial and other benefits. Help service is available including helping to fill in forms and post completed applications. We offer advice on solutions to any problems that may arise due to sight loss along with advocacy assistance.



“Croydon Vision made me feel welcome and part of a community. Gave good advice and answered questions on Attendance Allowance, a benefit I didn't believe I would be entitled to. I truly appreciate the support Croydon Vision has given to me. I have gone from being ignored to getting benefit support that makes a huge difference to me.”



Children and Young People Service

Croydon Vision's children and young people service offers young visually impaired and blind people the opportunity to take part in a range of fun activities. The activities range from sport, drama, arts/craft including fun days out.

We aim to cater to different ages, interests and abilities and in recognising the importance of supporting the whole family, we do try to include places for siblings where possible. Previous activities include trampolining, horse riding, a visit to Kidzania and a cookery workshop. Our aim is to encourage children and young people to make friends with their peers, develop independent and new skills and gain confidence.



“ The Children and Young People service gives me opportunities to try new and different things. It has made me more confident. ”



Creative

Why not come and experience and enjoy:



Art

With a range of styles - two hours per session.



Craft

Making, chatting, learning.



Pottery

With our own kiln - two hours per session.



“ Croydon Vision has well organised activities, friendly helpful staff and Volunteers “Happy to Help”. It’s a Good Friendly atmosphere. **”**



“ Croydon Vision brings people with sight loss together, it gives companionship. It changed my life! **”**





Counselling

Adjustment to acquired sight loss can be challenging in many ways, not least emotionally. Croydon Vision offers professional counselling by counsellors with experience of vision impairment. Sight loss can result in personal and family trauma and many can testify to the help our counselling service has given them.

A small contribution towards the cost is requested.



“ A big advantage is that I can talk to others in the same position and discover their solutions to a problem I may have. Instead of standing still after sight loss diagnosis, Croydon Vision allowed me to progress and move forward. It’s important to be part of the association; it makes me feel normal, as opposed to floundering in the outside world. ”



Keeping in Touch

Just because you can’t come to us doesn’t mean you have to be out of contact.

For those who are unable to visit us we run a service where we Keep in touch – please ask for further details.



Healthy Living

Croydon Vision has always sought to help people with sight loss to be as active and as fit as possible.

Why not come and experience and enjoy:



Dance

Come dancing with us.



Keep Fit

Movement to Music from a seated position to keep muscles and joints flexible - one hour.



Short Mat Bowls

Tuition for beginners.



Walks

Fresh discoveries in the fresh air.



Yoga

One hour sessions.





Eye Condition Groups

There are special eye groups for those with one of the four main conditions leading to sight loss – Glaucoma, Age-related Macular Degeneration, Retinitis Pigmentosa and Nystagmus.

These well attended groups hear about the latest eye health treatments and swap experiences.



Low Vision Clinic

The Low Vision Clinic takes place between 9:30 and 12:30 on selected Thursdays.

To access the Low Vision Clinic, appointments can be booked via the main office.

Its aim is to enable people to carry on doing what they enjoy, by making the most of the vision available. Bring your spectacles and magnifiers to be checked. A range of magnifiers, some with an inbuilt light, can be purchased at cost price. The greater the magnification, the smaller the magnifier. Getting the eye close to the magnifier lets you see more words. Advice on lighting, filters (sunglasses) and eye conditions can be given.



Excursions

To places of interest - price dependent on destination.



Music Appreciation

Songs to be sung or listened to.





IT Training & Support

We provide tuition in anything from a smart (or not so smart) phone to Computers which could transform someone's life. Smartphones, Tablets, Computers and software packages for Visually Impaired people can be used by blind and partially sighted people to send emails, search the web, chat to people around the world and have all this read to them.

Through their Smartphones they are finding they can navigate and even have handwriting read out to them. Many people have found their world reopening as they delve into the opportunities technology can give them even though they may never have used any technology before.



“ IT Training - I'm learning so much. Now I know how to send emails. It's not easy but Katherine, my teacher, is very patient. I can also put things on Facebook. I think anyone who is losing sight should get computer training. ”



Working Age Group

This project is aimed at adults with a visual impairment or who are blind who are of a working age. Our aim is to give these adults the encouragement to get involved in activities to enhance their physical and emotional well-being.

This could include a regular social meeting, sporting activities, explore volunteering and employment opportunities, in addition to arranging days out such as visiting the Houses of Parliament and the London Eye. This group is vital to help combat isolation and social exclusion, maintain their independence and help keep them informed of opportunities to meet fellow peers.





New Addington Group

Timebridge Centre has been home to New Addington's branch of Croydon Vision for over twenty five years. It is a big hall with plenty of space for our large lunch table and plenty of facilities.

The centre opens at around 10am on Thursday mornings. With support from Rita, Chas, Dot and Linda, lunch is then delivered. The driver picks up 13 to 15 members in a minibus and brings them to the centre. After their arrival, food is prepared and served. Silence is not an option around the table and the members are happy to chat to each other over the meal, recounting their latest news.

After lunch, Chas often entertains the members with songs, games or quizzes while other volunteers clean up. Many are the special days when birthdays or other celebrations occur and everyone joins in, finishing off the cakes in the record time! At Christmas, the volunteers help to arrange decorations to suit the occasion and to try to remember all the words to the carols. The centre provides such a great atmosphere and positive friendships.





Volunteer Service

Croydon Vision relies on a team of over 50 volunteers to assist in offering support to our visually-impaired members. Volunteers play a significant part in office administration, leading group activities, preparing and serving lunches and accompanying outings – for the full range of opportunities see our website:

www.croydonvision.org.uk

We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Roles will be advertised on the web, and we are keen to accommodate people with disabilities and those seeking access to work. Whilst using and developing your existing skills, we will train you in the following areas: sighted guiding, health and safety and for some, skills in Route to Employment.

“ When I retired and decided to do some voluntary work I choose Croydon Vision a local charity. It has been a good choice as I have met many members of all ages and backgrounds. It is satisfying assisting members with their activities including carpet bowls and dancing, my help is always appreciated.

As a Volunteer I find it very rewarding to give something back to the Croydon Vision family enabling me to feel a useful member of the community and allows for friendships to be forged. As a Member, when asked what Croydon Vision does for me, I always reply “a life saver and a life changer”.

”



Lunch Club

It is difficult to cook when you have little or no sight and our Lunch Club offers hot, nutritious meals cooked in our kitchen each week.

It's not just a good hot meal (two courses) but a chance to meet, chat and do other things.



Transport

We do all we can to encourage people with sight loss to be independent but for those who find travel extremely difficult we do provide transport for a reasonable fee.





Social Groups - Bedford Hall

There is nothing worse for a person with sight loss than isolation and loneliness in their home. That is why we provide a number of weekly social groups which are interesting and fun such as:

The Tuesday Touch

Our morning group welcomes those who are struggling with sight loss, aiming to develop their tactile skills, their sense of smell and ability to visualise, thus helping them to cope with everyday life. To achieve this we use a variety of tools including "Living Paintings" in which pictures are appreciated by touch. We have maths challenges to keep minds active. Regular updates on new products are given where relevant.

Most importantly, we share each other's concerns and attempt to restore confidence where needed. Of paramount importance we like to have fun along the way.

The Puzzlers

We have tea and a chat, we chat about what we have done and where we have been the week before. We then do a few crosswords and maybe a quiz. We read the daily paper highlights and discuss some of the subjects of the day. We have a giggle and a real camaraderie exists.

Mental Aerobics

If you wish to have an experience of fun, laughter and brain stimulation, come and join us in our many different word games, e.g. words beginning with a letter, (usually 200 – 300), words that contain certain letters, also countries, words over 3 letters from a specific word etc. Get the idea?

Sometimes we do general knowledge quizzes or play 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' Dominoes and Beetle. At the end of the session we often listen to some calming music to relax before going home!

Crossword Group

This group consists of members getting together primarily for support and information. We start with a hot drink and biscuits during which we catch up with each other's news and enquire after any of our group who has been absent. After the general chit chat it's time to gather our collective brains for a crossword puzzle. Suffice to say that there is much banter and laughter and thank goodness the answers are at the end of the book on the rare occasion we get stuck! Strong bonds of friendship are formed which add to our quality of life.

Mystery Afternoon

It is so called because you never know what is going to happen. Run by our Group Leader whose imagination and personality knows no bounds.

Some weeks there are things to feel and explore tactile strengths and weakness, to help improve your skills. It is amazing how much you can discover by feel. When games are played, despite there being no combative element there is determination to win.

Along with the activities there is laughter and care for each other. If there is something troubling any one then there is a discussion whether it be personal or in the news.

Chaotic Crafters

Come and Laugh while you craft!

Meeting in the dining room after lunch the group enjoy a relaxing afternoon doing a variety of crafts, some they remember from their youth and others are new.

In the group there are many different levels of sight but the main gain from the group is the confidence that a completed project brings. Along with crafting there is a sense of fun and much laughter as the world is put to rights.



Talking Newspaper

Just because you can't read it doesn't mean you can't keep up with the local news. We have a Talking Newspaper with all the news from Croydon plus a special Magazine Section full of interest on a weekly basis - only £10 a year.

We can also inform you how to get the nationals and your favourite magazines on CDs, emails, in your pocket and online.



Additional Services

- Annual Swimathon & Other Fundraising Events
- Chiropody
- Exhibitions
- Focus Groups / Workshops
- Hearing Screening
- Hearing Aid Surgery
- Hairdresser
- Independent Living Skills
- My Guide Scheme
- Practical help with everyday living
- Quarterly Meeting - Membership of South London Visually Impaired Women's Group
- Visiting Optometrist

Fees apply for some of our Services

Bedford Hall Hire

The Hall is mainly used to benefit blind and visually impaired residents of Croydon Vision. However, we can from time to time let the building for religious services, children's parties, meetings, concerts, educational activities, physical training and dancing.

Our hall has a capacity of 60-80 people, it can be partitioned in two or used as one main hall, some other features includes:

- Stage
- Cloakroom area
- Disable toilet access
- Kitchen
- On-site car parking

Initial deposit required to confirm booking.

For general enquiries please contact our main office:

Email: info@croydonvision.org.uk

Telephone: 0208 688 2486



Supporting people with sight loss





Thanks to our Partners



Croydon Charitable Trust



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