



the Bold View

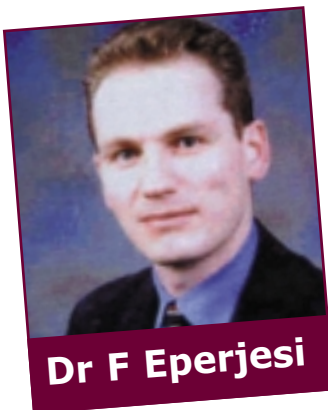
Low Vision Services Implementation Group Newsletter

“Effectiveness of different models of service”

Setting high standards – professional “peer support”.

Generally when committees meet and discuss “peer support” they are looking at ways of involving service users. The Low Vision Services Report acknowledges how important it is for people who are using low vision services to meet together to discuss services and promote mutual support. However, the term may also be used to describe how professionals can collaborate to develop skills and services.

One such collaboration is a new initiative in the Midlands. A group was established after local professionals expressed an interest in meeting together to provide education and information to support the growth of low vision services. It is important that this type of meeting is not confused with the Birmingham Low Vision Services Committee (LVSC), so for now it is to be called the Midland’s LV Special Interest Group.



Dr F Eperjesi

The first meeting invited Dr Frank Eperjesi to talk about “Neurological sight loss and tinted lenses” – an address very well received at the second National Conference. Professionals were invited from all aspects of service provision including education, employment, health and social services. Support for the meeting (on a cold, wet January evening) was high, with some people travelling to Birmingham from Herefordshire.

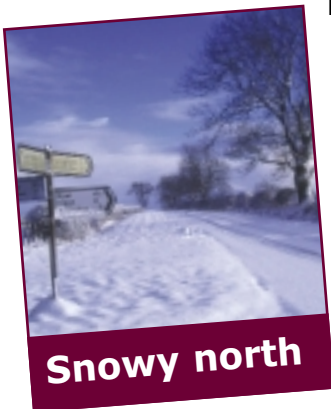
The group discussed how they could have a role in providing “peer support”. Networking and exchanging information through “case studies” were thought to be two useful activities. It was agreed that the group would alternate these activities with a lecture and would meet on a quarterly basis. If this type of professional support network would be helpful in your area please contact Mary Bairstow for advice at the Implementation Office via email at mary.bairstow@rnib.org.uk

What's the new view?

Congratulations to Worcester on becoming the fortieth LVSC. Also groups in Lincolnshire and Southend have very recently established committees.

Local news in the Northeast

Once again the weather has featured strongly in recent activities. No one suspects a jinx, but it was rather unlucky that the time chosen for a meeting in Northumberland coincided with the worst of the recent snowstorms in the Northeast. The



Snowy north

meeting had been organised by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) to consider the possibility of establishing an LVSC. However, the poor weather conditions helped to emphasise

some of the factors that are affecting local people with low vision.

One of the main issues is that people have to travel several miles across Northumberland to access hospital-based services in Newcastle. It is hoped that an LVSC will be able to develop a service that is based locally and integrates health and social care. Fortunately the Northumberland County Blind Association already works closely with social services and local optometrists.

One possible solution to the issue about transport may be to provide a mobile service. Peter Frampton, a local optometrist who has a special



Peter's mobile vehicle

interest in low vision, has already made attempts to reach people by providing a mobile service that gives assistance to people needing eye examinations. His ideas about how this can be expanded to incorporate all aspects of low vision may take a while to reach fruition as the first formal meeting of the LVSC was not until March. However, they already have begun to discuss how to investigate local needs and how to ensure that services can be linked up across this large geographical area. Let's hope that in March the weather was more settled and they did not have another reminder of just how difficult this can be. Perhaps it would be a good idea for the Implementation Officer to wait until the summer to attend a meeting.

Almost there

As well as Northumberland there was unanimous agreement for a committee in Newcastle. On 4 March Worcester had its first official committee meeting.

Low vision language

In our last edition there was an article about the role of the rehabilitation worker. This time the following piece will be concentrating on some of the jargon used in social care.

Social care terminology

ADSS – The Association of Directors of Social Services. This is the professional body for Social Services Directors. It is of interest to the LVSC's as they have very recently published some guidance – “Progress in Sight” – that lists 16 standards of social care for adults who are blind or partially sighted.

BD8 – This is the form that is (at present) filled in by a consultant ophthalmologist to certify someone as blind or partially sighted. Confusion often occurs as to when a person is “registered” as this is the role of Social Services and requires the person's permission. Again of interest to LVSCs, we are awaiting the outcome of a recent Department of Health consultation looking at the complete process of identifying and notifying people who are blind or partially sighted.

DDA – The Disability Discrimination Act 1996. This act aimed to take away barriers to access to services and employment. More information about how this affects people who are visually impaired can be found on the following websites:

www.afbp.org.uk (Action for Blind People) www.rnib.org.uk (Royal

National Institute of the Blind) www.gdba.org.uk (The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association).

LD – Learning Disability. This title encompasses all disabilities that delay learning. The term became used in the late 1980's as an alternative term to “learning difficulty” which is one of the categories of special educational needs in the Education Act 1981.

Research news

Researchers at Aston University in Birmingham are currently investigating the role of nutritional supplements on the progression of age-related macular degeneration. They look forward to hearing from anyone who is interested in taking part in this project, or would like further information. Please contact them on 0121 359 8487 or email bartlehe@aston.ac.uk

LVSC activity

- ✓ Birmingham now publishes its directory “live” on the Aston University website.
- ✓ In Bedfordshire the hospital organised an “Away Day” to investigate ideas on improving services.
- ✓ Merseyside has appointed a researcher from the PCT to identify local needs.
- ✓ Hillingdon has published a baseline review of LV Services including a user survey and future recommendations.
- ✓ Leeds have published “Having our Say” – a report incorporating detailed responses from service users.

The inside view

Chris Smith – Administrator for the Low Vision Services Implementation Project, happened to mention that his photograph has appeared in all the issues of “Bold View”. Rather than break this albeit short running tradition, we thought it might be useful to include an article outlining some of the supporting work that Chris carries out in the background in our office in Birmingham.

Chris has been working for the Low Vision Services Implementation Project since the summer of 2001. He is based with Mary Bairstow, Low Vision Services Implementation Officer, in Birmingham at the new RNIB offices in the centre of town.

Being in the office five days a week means that Chris is available to take enquiries and answer telephone calls when Mary is out of the office. Chris helps with the project administration including supporting national work such as training, conferences and the low vision services group.

In between all this he still finds time to organise the milk rota for other RNIB

staff and is a fully trained first aider.



Chris in action

One big project that Chris is working on at the moment is the creation of an LVSC's database. This database will include information about all the committees including such facts as which professionals sit on the committee, how many users there are, what services they have planned etc. In addition there is also more mundane information such as the times that people meet and the frequency of meetings. However, very often this is just the sort of information that people require.

If you would like copies of any statistics, or particular information about an aspect of LVSC's work, please contact us.

The next edition will be describing the role of a dispensing optician and incorporating some results from our database which describe their involvement in ensuring that more and better services are provided across the UK.

“Bold View” is a quarterly newsletter written and edited by Mary Bairstow for the LVSIG. It is distributed to people and organisations with an interest in low vision. The aim is to inform people of the progress of LV Implementation. Articles about specific projects are reviewed by local contacts. Comments and contributions are welcome. Copy date for inclusion in the Summer issue is May 30th 2003.



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RNIB, Borough Buildings, 58–72 John Bright St., Birmingham, B1 1BN
Telephone: 0121 665 4248/9 Fax: 0121 665 4254