

Look Out!



Halifax Society for the Blind: Newsletter July 2021

Dear Members, as the Pandemic hopefully lifts for us all, HSB is thinking about the balance between current ways of working, and opportunities to work safely and differently as we go forward. This newsletter will have some important information on how we hope to move forward following the planned government announcement on 19th July 2021. But for now, please read on, stay safe, use our services, and support us if you can.

Pete Hoey, Chief Officer

HSB Policy Statement: how our services will continue – post Covid19 relaxations

The Board of HSB are committed to maintaining the wellness and wellbeing of our community: our employees, volunteers and people who use our services. The team played a big role in keeping everyone safe at the start of the Pandemic, by reluctantly closing the Charity's doors over a week before the first lockdown. The setting up of online, phone-based and remote services has helped hundreds of local people with practical and emotional help through what is inarguably amongst the worst of times in living memory. We would like to thank our team for helping keep people safe, and for working so hard during this time. Presently our staff and volunteer team are not fully vaccinated, and as such remain at risk.

The anticipated ending of Governmental Covid19 restrictions on Monday 19th July 2021 presents practical and significant ethical issues for charities not wishing to contribute to Covid19-related harm. Services have been reviewed, and will operate as follows:

- Onsite appointments will be offered to people, who may bring a guide or support worker. We will space these out to enable sanitising of the premises and equipment and reduce the chances of infection, and all procedures around social distancing and hand hygiene will be observed.
- Face coverings will continue to be required by anybody working in or attending 36 Clare Road.
- We will be delivering lower risk outside activities where possible and again, established Covid19 practices will be adhered to.

- From the week commencing 19th July we are planning some group activities off-site – mainly at the Brighthouse Rest Centre and the Maurice Jaggard Centre. These activities will operate in well ventilated regularly sanitised environments. They will be facilitated by employees and volunteers who have completed their vaccination course.
- People wishing to attend HSB's activities should register by calling 01422 352383.
- We'll continue to operate a weekly Zoom group and will move to a reduced number of phone sessions.

Card payments for equipment, group fees and donations are preferred, so we advise anybody attending to bring their payment card. If you do need to pay cash, please bring the exact change.

We are very proud of the work we have done over the last 15 months and will be assessing the safety issues around Covid19 over the coming months. Additionally, members are encouraged to participate in our post-Covid19 Recovery survey over the next few weeks. We will look at the results carefully and as things, hopefully improve, we will factor in our findings to an improved range of support services. In the meantime, we thank you for your cooperation and continued support.

Continue to Protect Yourself and Your Family

- Social distancing and hand hygiene remain hugely important.
- Get yourself fully vaccinated at the earliest opportunity.
- On your return to outdoor activity, boost your confidence in small steps.
- Keep your hospital eye appointments and seek one if something's wrong.
- Call Calderdale Urgent Needs if you have a crisis - 01422 392890.
- Call HSB 01422 352383 or email info@halifaxblindsociety.org.uk and we'll do our best to help you.

In-Person Services

We are very happy to say that we have assessed two large well-ventilated venues which offer good social distancing options for our groups. These will help us re-start regular face-to-face groupwork. Please read Lucy's activities update for more information, and to find out how to book.

It will certainly be lovely to see you all face to face – though in the case of our one-to-one appointments at Clare Road, we are maintaining a strict face coverings approach, due to the close nature of providing Sight Centre

support work. We will work flexibly with anybody not able to use a face covering, including stepping outside when the weather permits, or working over the phone etc, as we have been for the last 15 months.

Activities Update

In-person social groups at Brighthouse and Halifax

From 19th July, we are starting two in-person social groups where you can come along for a chat, some refreshments and activities including quizzes, games and bingo. There will be a weekly group at Brighthouse Rest Centre, every Monday from 1pm-2:30pm. The Halifax group will be at the Maurice Jagger Centre, on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 2:15pm-3:45pm.

Please contact us to reserve a place if you would like to attend either or both groups. Numbers are limited and we will offer places on a 'first-come, first-served' basis. Subs for the groups will be £1.50 per session - please either bring exact change or you can pay by card. Please do not bring along any prizes for the bingo as the cost of these is included in your subs, thank you.

For now, we are asking that you arrange your own transport to the groups. Calderdale Community Transport have recently expanded their service to include community venues again, but you need to register to receive the service – call 01422 888086 or email sandra.makin@ctcalderdale.co.uk or complete the registration form on their website. If you need any support to do this, feel free to contact the HSB office.

Dates for your diary

Mon 19th July – Brighthouse group

Wed 21st July – Halifax group

Mon 26th July – Brighthouse group

Mon 2nd August – Brighthouse group

Wed 4th August – Halifax group

Mon 9th August – Brighthouse group

Mon 16th August – Brighthouse group

Wed 18th August – Halifax group

Mon 23rd August – Brighthouse group

Mon 30 August – BANK HOLIDAY (No group)

Wed 1st Sept – Halifax group

Notice of AGM 2021

Tuesday 24th August @ 7.15pm via Zoom, unless agreed otherwise, on <https://zoom.us/j/9683947679> or dial 0203 481 5240 and enter the meeting ID 968 394 7679 when prompted.

Contact Us

Call us: 01422 352383 between
9.30am and 4pm, each weekday

Email us: **info@halifaxblindsociety.org.uk**

Write to us at: 36 Clare Road,
Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX1 2PL

Website: **www.halifaxblindsociety.org.uk**

Halifax Society for the Blind is a registered charity (No 224258)