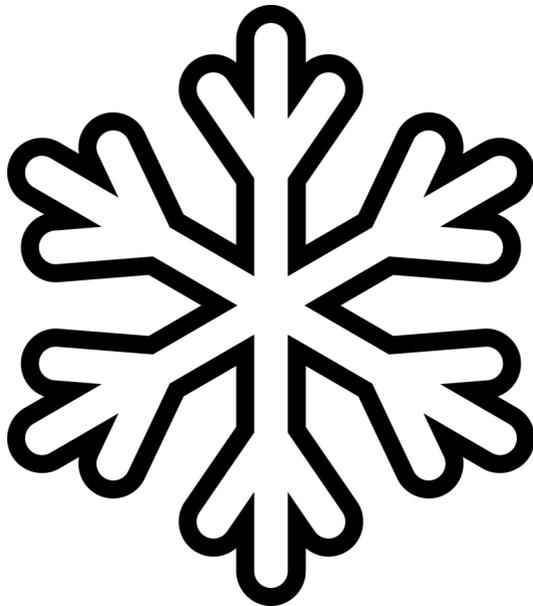


# Winter 2019 Newsletter



# **SARC Team**



**Pauline Jarvis**

**Sensory Service Manager**



**Debbie Malone**

**Rehabilitation Officer**



**Rachel Cross**

**Sensory Service Officer /  
ECLO**



**Elaine Wooding**

**Sensory Service Officer**

# SARC Update

## **Milton Keynes Hard of Hearing Group**

Pauline attended the Hard of Hearing group in August to demonstrate personal listeners. The group are hoping to secure funding to purchase this equipment so that its members can participate in group activities.

## **Department for Works & Pensions (DWP) Stakeholders Meeting**

Pauline attended this meeting in September. It had been arranged by the DWP to try and gauge the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) on service users. Information was given about how best to support service users who were having difficulty accessing UC. This included details of the new 'Help to Claim' service which is for new claims only and can be accessed via the Citizens Advice Bureau.

## **Disability Access Group (DAG) Meeting**

Pauline attended the September meeting during which, there was a discussion about the ongoing difficulty hard of hearing people were having with the loop system at Milton Keynes Theatre. Pauline subsequently arranged a meeting with the Access lead, Louise Henderson to discuss the issue.

## **Milton Keynes Theatre**

Pauline and two service users, Ros Bloor and Norman Holliday met with Louise Henderson at Milton Keynes Theatre to discuss the lack of clarity about exactly what support is available for hard of hearing people visiting the Theatre.

Louise began by saying that she is fully aware that the loop system currently installed is not adequate. She said that she is hoping to secure funding for a replacement system, but is cur-

rently looking for information on a workable alternative. Ros was able to provide her with details of a company who could advise in this area.

In the meantime, the Theatre has installed Mobile Connect. This is an app, that can be downloaded to a smartphone. Once inside the auditorium, the user plugs a loop necklace provided by the theatre into either their own smartphone or one provided by the theatre. Initial feedback is that this system is working very well.

Pauline agreed to share information about the current system with service users and also offered to provide sight and hearing loss awareness training to Theatre staff. Louise agreed that this would be a good idea and said she would like to include this in the upcoming Panto training session.

### **The Gas Safe Charity**

The Gas Safe Charity works to raise awareness of the sources, signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning in the home. Greater awareness will help prevent serious incidents, as well as the under recognised dangers of long term, low level exposure.

The charity has produced a free e learning package and a BSL signed video to help people recognise the signs and potential sources of carbon monoxide poisoning. They also provide an e-learning course, which takes about 45 minutes to complete and there is a certificate to download after successfully completing it. To access the course email:

**e-learning@gassafecharity.org.uk** and they will send through your log on details.

If you would like any more information about the charity's free workshops or resources email: **thinkco@gassafecharity.org.uk**

## **Supporting People with Sight and Hearing Loss Over the Festive Season**

There are a few simple things you can do to make life a little easier for deaf, Hard of hearing, blind or partially sighted people over Christmas.

### **Sight Loss**

- Use coloured Wine Glasses, and plate chargers. This will help with contrast.
- When opening presents, try to get people to say what they've got out loud or use the camera on your tablet to watch.
- Think about lighting, always ask questions because everyone is individual.
- Say what is on the table and where - This allows the person with sight loss to be independent and not have to wait for someone to serve them.
- Use a smart device such as an Amazon Echo. For example: 'Alexa, set reminder for carrots in 10 minutes' or 'Alexa, play me some Christmas music.'

### **Hearing Loss**

- Use a round dinner table to enable people with hearing loss to lipread.
- Limit background music and other sounds. Hearing aid wearers find it much more difficult to hear where there is background noise.
- Have a quiet area available for conversations away from the general hubbub.
- Try and encourage guests to take turns speaking. Everyone talking at once is a nightmare for anyone with hearing loss.
- Have a dinner buddy. Sit next to someone you have no difficulty hearing who can help you with the missing pieces of conversation.

## Braille Group Funding

SARC have been successful in obtaining funding from the Margaret Powell Community 1st Fund & Wilson Community 1st fund. We have used the money to purchase equipment for our Braille group, which meets twice weekly in the Resource Centre.



[Image shows Gill holding an orange cup on one side of a table. Chris on the other side of the table is using the Orbit Reader and holding a piece of Braille paper]



[Image shows Gill using the Orbit Reader]

## **Lipreading Classes**

The Milton Keynes Hard of Hearing Support Group Charity have recently received a grant from the MK Community Foundation to run lipreading classes on the first and third Tuesday of each month from **1.30pm—3.30pm**. These classes are specifically for people who are not able to access the evening classes run by the MK Council's Community Learning department (see back cover). For further information, please contact Ros Bloor at **Rosalie.bloor@yahoo.co.uk**

## **BucksVision Digital Sessions**

BucksVision are offering a unique opportunity of four free sessions to allow you a peek into the digital world.

The four-week project will be led by Madleen Mann of the Technology for Life team at RNIB with help from some local technology expert volunteers.

This project is open to anyone with sight loss who does not currently own a digital device (such as a smartphone or tablet) but would like to find out about how they could use one and what they could use it for.

Starting on **Monday 13 January 2020**, there will be two identical sessions every Monday for four weeks. Each session will focus on a topic and there will be chances to have a go with the devices. To book please call BucksVision on **01296 487556** or email: **reception@bucksvision.co.uk**

## **Ballroom Dancing Classes**

BucksVision are holding classes on the **second Wednesday** and **last Thursday** of every month except the last Thursday of December from **11.00am—12.00pm**, cost **£5** per session.

For further information please call Padma on **01908 377058** or email: **pscheriyan@gmail.com**

# Lip-reading courses at Community Learning MK

For more information or to book your place please call us on 01908 556700 (option 2)

## Lip-reading (Mixed-level)

Do you find communication a challenge due to hearing loss?

Lip-reading classes offer an opportunity to improve lip-reading skills, develop communication strategies and gain more information from non-verbal clues.

**Rivers Centre, Humber Way, Bletchley MK3 7PH**



[www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/clmk](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/clmk)

01908 556700 (option 2)

New ten-week class starting on Thursday 16 January 2020  
7pm until 8.30pm

Suitable for beginners and those with some prior knowledge

Cost: £99 (concessions: £79.20)

A 20% concession is available for learners with hearing loss and those who care for the deaf



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