



B·I·D SERVICES

SARC 
SENSORY ADVICE RESOURCE CENTRE
Milton Keynes

Autumn 2020 Newsletter



[image shows graphic of four different coloured autumn leaves]

Resource Centre Appointments

We are pleased to say that we have recently started offering a small number of appointments in the Resource Centre. We have created a COVID safe environment and in order to maintain this, we ask that you do not attend the Resource Centre unless you have received an appointment letter from us. We also ask that you come at the appointment time. If you come too early, we will not be able to let you into the building and if you are more than 10 minutes late, we may have to reschedule the appointment.



[image shows a table in the Resource Centre with a box of masks, a box of gloves and a bottle of handgel on it.]

SARC Service

The SARC team continue to work mainly from home, but you can contact us if for any reason you need a face to face appointment.

We are still providing full assessments of need; this is being done by telephone or video call where possible, but we also continue to offer COVID safe home visits where this is not possible or where additional input is needed.

We are interested in hearing from you if you have had any difficulty contacting this service or any other service for support since the beginning of the pandemic, particularly if this difficulty was with accessing a service as a result of your sight or hearing loss.

Our contact details are on the last page of this newsletter

Hearing Aid Support

To date, the venues we use for out drop ins are still closed. We are still, however doing our best to ensure that people who wear hearing aids are supported to have them retubed regularly.

We are continuing to offer appointments at the Resource Centre for hearing aid retubing. If you are housebound, we can also offer an appointment for a home visit. There is currently a high demand for these and there may be a wait of up to a month for an appointment.

We have also put together a guidance booklet which includes information on basic maintenance of your hearing aid. These are available on request.

Hearing aid Batteries

We have now provided most GP surgeries with a stock of batteries. The surgeries are requesting that you phone them first before visiting to collect batteries.

Currently Hilltops Medical Centre is the only surgery that is not providing batteries. If you are not able to get to another practice, please contact us and we will post batteries out to you. We need to keep our cost down where possible, so please only request from us if you have no other option for obtaining replacement batteries.

Lost Hearing Aids

We have an increased number of calls from people who have lost their hearing aid when removing a mask. If you have lost your hearing aid, you will need to make contact with the relevant audiology department at the hospital.

It is important to take care while removing your mask. Try the following;

- Only remove when you are in your car or at home to limit the possibility of losing the hearing aid.
- Get into the habit of checking the hearing aid is still in place once the mask has been removed
- Consider using a mask which ties over your head rather than one with loops around your ears

Vibrating Smoke Alarms

As of June 2019, the fire service no longer fit the specialist vibrating alarms we provide. You will need to fit them yourself or arrange for someone to do it on your behalf.

The fire service will fit standard smoke alarms and will also carry out a fire wellness check, which we can request on your behalf.

Assistive Equipment Demonstrations

If you would like a demonstration of a piece of equipment for your sight or hearing loss, please contact us and we will do our best to support you,

Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLLO)

Our ECLLO, Rachel is now back in Milton Keynes Hospital eye clinic on Wednesday afternoons and Friday mornings. You can request to meet with her if you are in clinic for an appointment.

If you have a query about your eye condition or need information about being registered you can also request speak to her at any time by contacting the service.

TV Licensing Update

As of 1st August 2020, if you are over 75 and not claiming Pension Credit, you will have to pay the full Licence fee.

If, however, you are registered severely sight impaired/blind you can apply for a 50% reduction. Unfortunately you cannot claim the 50% reduction if you are registered sight impaired/partially sighted.

To claim the 50% reduction you will need to provide evidence of your registration to TV Licensing i.e. a copy of your Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) or BD8. If you have any queries please contact SARC.

Our ROVI Debbie, has been out and about in Central Milton Keynes to look at how people with sight loss might be affected by the new environment created by the need for social distancing. Here's her report;



[image shows barriers at the entrance of MK Central Train Station]

Central Milton Keynes Train Station

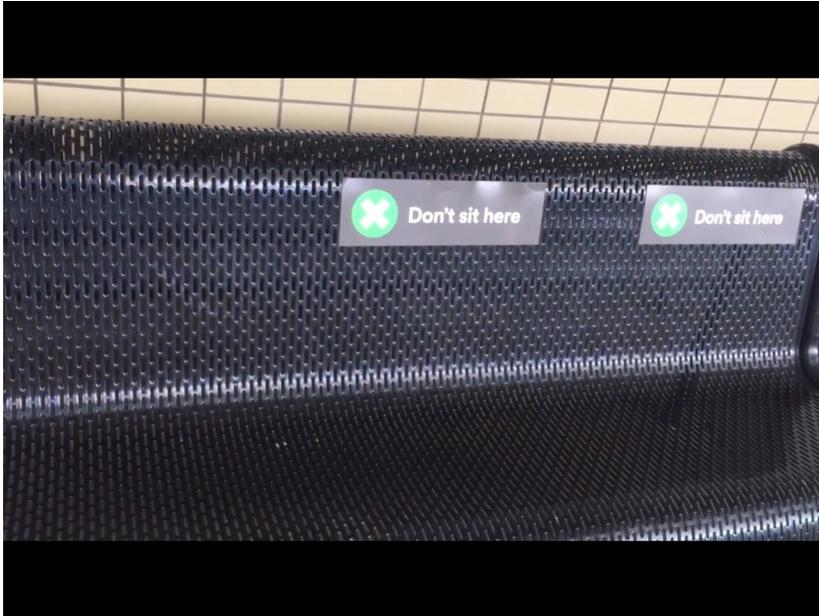
Waist high metal crowd control barriers are positioned in front of the entrance of MK station horizontally. If you are facing the automatic glass doors at the main entrance of the station there is a separated entrance to the ticket office where barriers lead you inside the station. To the right of the ticket office barriers there are barriers with an 'Entrance' sign. The ticket machines are all in use with a Perspex screen attached to each machine.

Once inside the station there are directional arrows to denote a one-way system on the left hand side leading to the ticket barriers.

Only the ticket barriers on the left hand side are operational in order to maintain the one-way system. There are members of staff positioned at the disabled access ticket barrier and they are the first point of contact should you require assistance.

Once through the ticket barriers the one-way system is still operational and at the top of the stairs, there is an additional barrier attached to the stair handrail to encourage passengers to keep to the left hand side of the staircase.

At the bottom of the staircase, there are painted social distancing feet signs. The first 2 seats of the metal bench has tape that reads 'do not sit here,' indicating that only one person is allowed to sit on the bench. The platforms have stickers to mark out social distancing areas.



[image shows a metal bench in MK Station with a 'don't sit here' sticker on two spaces]

MK Shopping Centre

At each entrance to the centre, the glass doors are permanently open during the shopping hours that are currently Monday to Friday 9:30am-8pm, Saturday 9am-7pm and Sunday 11am-5pm.

Green tape attached on the marble floor in the centre of the thoroughfare throughout the centre denotes a one-way system with additional stickers with arrows pointing forwards on the floor. The one-way system encourages shoppers to keep on the left hand side of the thoroughfare. Shoppers are required to wear a mask when entering all shops unless you are exempt from wearing a mask.



[image shows large green social distancing stickers on the floor of MK shopping centre]

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