

Helping people with sight loss use technology with confidence and independence

Why our support matters

As more everyday services move online, accessible technology is becoming increasingly important in enabling blind and partially sighted people to access information, communicate and manage everyday tasks in ways that suit them. Reading correspondence, managing appointments, shopping online or keeping in touch with family and friends can become difficult when technology is not accessible.



For many people, particularly those who have never used smartphones or computers, learning new technology can feel daunting. Others may have used technology for years but struggle to continue following changes in their sight.

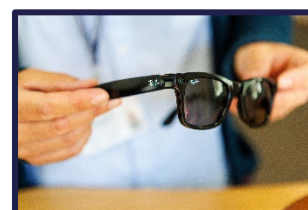
Technology can make a significant difference to independence, but people often need patient, personalised support to understand and use the accessibility features available to them.

How we help

Sight Support West of England provides free, specialist digital support to blind and partially sighted people across Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, and South Gloucestershire.

Our Digital Skills Advisor, supported by trained volunteers, helps people make the most of technology they already own. This includes using magnification, screen readers, voice commands and accessible apps to manage everyday tasks.

We also introduce people to newer technology, including artificial intelligence tools that can read printed text aloud or help identify everyday objects.



Support is tailored to each person's needs and experience, from getting online for the first time to learning new ways of using familiar devices. Appointments are available through our local Community Sight Loss Hubs and Resource Centre, making specialist support accessible closer to home.

Our reach and impact

175 people supported through our Digital Skills service

429 attendances at digital support sessions

80% reported improvements in their use of digital technology following support

The difference it makes

“The course has increased my confidence. I am now reading email and video calling people. I feel connected.”

For some people, the difference is very practical:

“I’m now able to text my friends without having to ask my family to do it for me. I’m in touch with my samba band and able to feel part of the group.”

For others, accessible technology helps with everyday independence:

“I have been introduced to Seeing AI and am now using it every day. I am reading my letters and seeing what I’ve got in my cupboards. It’s so important to me that I can do these things by myself.”

Funding our Digital Skills Service

Digital technology can help people with sight loss continue doing everyday tasks that might otherwise become difficult or impossible.

For some, this means being able to read their own post or manage appointments. For others, it means communicating independently, maintaining employment or keeping in touch with family and friends.

Our personalised approach means people can learn at their own pace, practise new skills and return for further support as their needs or technology change.

What funding supports

Funding helps us maintain and develop our Digital Skills service, including:

- **Digital Skills Advisor:** providing specialist one-to-one appointments, practical demonstrations and personalised training.
- **Volunteer support:** helping people practise skills, build confidence and continue learning.
- **Local delivery:** making digital support available through our community hubs and Resource Centre.
- **Technology and equipment:** providing opportunities to explore accessibility features, specialist apps and new technology.
- **Follow-up support:** helping people develop their skills and adapt as their needs change.

We also want to reach people who are hesitant about using technology. Informal taster sessions will give them opportunities to explore devices and accessibility features in a familiar, supportive environment.

The cost of delivering our service

Our Digital Skills service is free to the people who use it, and funding from trusts and foundations is essential to maintaining this specialist support.

£39,607 – the annual cost of providing our Digital Skills service, including our Digital Skills Advisor and associated delivery costs.

£412 pays for one digital skills training session.

We welcome grants of all sizes towards the service. Funding can contribute towards specialist staff time, volunteer support, technology and equipment, or help us maintain and develop digital support across our region.

Why your support matters

Learning to use accessible technology can give blind and partially sighted people more choice and control over how they manage everyday tasks.

Personalised support helps people develop digital skills, explore new possibilities and continue activities that are important to them.

As more services move online, funding will help us ensure that blind and partially sighted people have the skills and confidence to benefit from technology rather than being excluded by it.

Technology can help people with sight loss do things differently – and continue doing the things that matter to them.

To find out more about supporting our Digital Skills Service, please contact our [Fundraising Team](#)

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