**Blind And Partially-Sighted People In Gloucestershire - Have Your Voices Heard**

There are around 3,500 people living in Gloucestershire who have difficulties with their eyesight. Everyone who is blind or partially-sighted in the county uses all different kinds of organisations and services including GP surgeries and hospitals, buses and taxis, restaurants and theatres, shops and sports. Many of these activities and services meet the needs of their customers and users with sight loss very well, but some are not so helpful or aware.

It is very important that anyone providing a service to someone who is blind or partially-sighted, listens to the experiences and views of people with sight loss themselves. People with a visual impairment are the best people to explain how to do things in the most helpful way.

The Gloucestershire Sight Loss Council will help do this. The Sight Loss Council is made up of blind and partially-sighted people who live in the county and have come together to reflect and represent the experiences and views of people with sight loss to decision-makers, policy-influencers and service providers. We will do this through working in partnership in a helpful and positive way. We will welcome what works well and give advice and suggestions about how to improve things if this is needed. The issues the Sight Loss Council will focus on first are Education, Employment, Health and Social Care, Sport and Leisure, Technology, and Transport.

The Sight Loss Council will meet each month. To make sure that all its members can take part we will move meetings around the County, hold meetings in evenings as well as during the day, and use technology such as Skype and telephone conferencing. Between meetings, members will be having meetings and conversations with the organisations and services we will be working with.

The Sight Loss Council is supported by Thomas Pocklington Trust, a national charity supporting people with sight loss. Other Sight Loss Councils already exist across the country in areas including Birmingham, the Black Country, Merseyside and our closest neighbouring Sight Loss Council is in Bristol. Each council is supported by an Engagement manager who will support the members in their work.

Anyone who is blind or partially-sighted, over the age of 18 and living in Gloucestershire can apply to join the Council in this exciting voluntary role. To be a Sight Loss Council member you will need to have an interest in issues that people with sight loss experience, to be able to work positively with people and organisations and have the time and enthusiasm to take part.

If you would like to find out more or request an application pack, please contact the Engagement Manager Alun Davies by phone on 07779 169019 or by email at alun.davies@pocklington-trust.org.uk Further information about Sight Loss Councils can be found at [www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk](http://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk)