

## My Sight Nottinghamshire

My Sight Nottinghamshire, previously called the Nottinghamshire Royal Society for the Blind, promotes greater independence for visually impaired people of all ages, improving lives of thousands of visually impaired people, and their families, living in Nottinghamshire.

The charity which believes that no one should have to face sight loss alone and unsupported, works with individuals to ensure that they achieve their own goals and enjoy a full and independent life beyond sight loss.

My Sight Nottinghamshire also campaigns on a range of local issues affecting visually impaired people; promotes awareness of eye health within the wider community; work with the Service User Member Involvement Team (SUMIT) to ensure the views of their visually impaired service users are taken into account when planning new services; has over 150 volunteers; and has three charity shops in Nottingham, Mapperley and Stapleford.

My Sight Nottinghamshire offers a range of services for visually impaired people, which provide practical support, advice, information, training and adapted leisure facilities, including:

- Counselling and emotional support for people affected by sight loss;
- Support at the Eye Clinic at Queens Medical Centre for patients newly diagnosed with a visual impairment or a change in vision;



- Delivering the My Guide service, alongside Guide Dogs, to reduce isolation and increase confidence for those who find it hard to get out alone;
- Computer classes and home based IT support to help people learn about and use new technology;
- A weekly job club, run by Action for Blind People;
- Regular welfare sessions led by an Independent Living Coordinator from Action for Blind People.
- Talking newspapers both in English and Gujarati;
- A transcriptions service creating Braille, audio and large print versions of documents;
- Advice on magnification and correct lighting;
- Classified advertising service for second hand equipment;
- A local agent for the National Wireless for the Blind Fund, providing accessible audio equipment on loan; and
- Equipment in the Community Service bringing support to people living in various locations in Nottinghamshire on a seven week cycle.

The charity also offers a range of social and leisure activities including:

- Weekly gym and swimming sessions at the University of Nottingham;
- Weekly social group for older service users;
- Evening socials for people to meet up and enjoy Nottingham's nightlife;
- A varied programme of day trips;
- A children's and young people's group who meet regularly;
- A support group for parents who are visually impaired;
- The Nottinghamshire Knights Cricket Club;
- The Nottinghamshire Blind and Partially Sighted Football Club; and
- The Nottinghamshire Sheriffs goalball club,

a joint venture with the University of Nottinghamshire.

One of these services provided by My Sight Nottinghamshire are weekly arts and crafts sessions, two in Nottingham and one in Mansfield, led by Arts Development Worker, Jeanne Roberts, and her team of volunteers.

Attended by 30 people with a further 10 on the waiting list, the sessions are aimed at those with a creative streak but who struggle to access craft activities because of their sight loss.

The sessions cater for all abilities, encouraging people to be creative in a sociable and friendly environment, accompanied by a supply of tea and biscuits.

Artwork produced by those who attend, which focuses on producing a good individual final product rather than group work, as Jeanne considers art to be a very personal thing, include 3D wool work, paintings, origami, knitting, sculpture and seasonal crafts including Easter eggs.

Jeanne Roberts said *“The sessions are not about therapy or disability but teaching people things that are tactile and that can be enjoyed by those who have no or limited sight, whilst still producing high quality art work.”*

Future plans for the arts and craft sessions, which have their own purpose built studio, include the installation of a kiln, the setting up of a choir and, for those on the waiting list, one day taster workshops prior to them joining the groups.

For more information on My Sight Nottinghamshire visit [www.mysightnotts.org.uk](http://www.mysightnotts.org.uk).



*“I volunteer because of the people and it helps my own art work as I’m learning something at the same time as everyone else. I love it. It’s a unique place”* **Jeremy, volunteer**

*“I love seeing people’s confidence grow and because I have a visual disability myself it’s good to see the visually impaired get their confidence back”* **Jayne, volunteer**

*“The group allows me to try different projects and get back into art and life again. I learn new things all the time that I wouldn’t try at home”* **Participant**

*“I like doing craft work but feel out of my depth when working with people who can see better than me. Here I feel I’m getting more individual support in a lovely, friendly environment. I would recommend the group to anyone”* **Participant**