

# Contact



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Summer 2022



Photo by Vicky Blencowe @VI\_VickyPhoto

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## Chair Welcome and Thanks

Welcome to the Summer edition of CONTACT and we hope you enjoy our 78th edition.

It was wonderful to see Sutton Vision's volunteers being thanked for all their hard work this year at our Volunteers' Week afternoon tea. We were also blessed with glorious sunshine for the whole afternoon. It was a great opportunity for everyone to meet, have fun and enjoy a scone or two!

The week's celebrations come at a time when we've welcomed several new volunteers and we introduce a new feature in CONTACT, Volunteer News, to keep you up to date with the fantastic work of them all.

We'd also like to share that our Resource Hub is open every Wednesday for you to pop down and try the latest tech and see how tech can work for you, using VoiceOver, Siri and much more.

You may well have noticed an updated and refreshed Sutton Vision logo, along with an updated cover for CONTACT. We took the decision to tweak the logo as it will print more cleanly on promotional materials we use for outreach, a key priority for our Lottery funded project. The refreshed image builds on the positivity of the existing logo and reflects the many ways Sutton Vision supports people. The logo design work was completed without charge to the charity.

My final word must go to Vanessa, our Low Vision Coordinator, who is leaving us to enjoy her well-earned retirement after 17 years of supporting clients through our Low Vision Clinic. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I'd like to extend our collective thanks for all that she has done for Sutton Vision and we wish her the best for her future.

As usual, we'd love to hear your comments about CONTACT magazine and contributions from the Sutton Vision community and partners are always welcome. Please send these to our Editor at [editor@suttonvision.org.uk](mailto:editor@suttonvision.org.uk).

Michael

## Message from our General Operations Manager

We have had a busy few months at Sutton Vision, re-establishing our social groups, face to face activities and support after two years of COVID restrictions. What a warm welcome I have had from everyone since starting way back in January! It has been lovely to meet so many new people and to start to get to know you all.

Our newest member of the team is Caroline, who started working for us on a temporary basis but is now a permanent part-time member of staff. In addition to all the help she provides with the general running of the office, Caroline looks after our social media, website and coordinates and writes for Contact magazine.

Many of you will know Vanessa, our Low Vision Clinic Coordinator. Vanessa has been with Sutton Vision for 17 years and started our low vision service. We have just secured funding to continue the clinic for a further 3 years, largely due to the excellent reputation the service has developed during the time Vanessa has been our Coordinator. Sadly for us, Vanessa has decided that now is the right time to leave Sutton Vision and spend more time with her family. No doubt her grandchildren will keep her equally busy!

Along with Michael and the trustees, I would like to thank Vanessa on behalf of everyone at Sutton Vision for the fantastic job she has done over the years. We will miss her but wish her the very best for her retirement. Our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer and Sight Advisor, Ann, will be taking on coordination of the clinic when Vanessa leaves.

You can find information about all of Sutton Vision's services and support and details of how to contact the team on our website. You can of course also call us on our main office number 020 8409 7166. Do get in touch if you think we can help or if you have any suggestions or ideas. We'd love to hear from you.

Wishing you all a lovely summer.

Denise

# Sutton Vision Services

## Outreach Service

Would you like to find out about what help you are entitled to as a blind or partially sighted person or support in accessing benefits, advice, advocacy and social activities?

Our Outreach service is here to help with a range of support, from Blue Badge applications to supporting with CV reviews.

This service is FREE and you can book an appointment to visit our Sutton offices or we can come to your home, if your access needs require this.

Our Outreach Officer can also be found at various events throughout the year, promoting the work of the charity.

For more information, please contact Terry Rocks on 020 8409 7166 or [terryrocks@suttonvision.org.uk](mailto:terryrocks@suttonvision.org.uk)

## Assistive Technology

Did you know that we can help you with making your mobile phone, tablet or laptop accessible? These devices can talk to you and you can instruct them with your voice as well as increase the text size. Come and find out how you can change the settings and learn how the in-built accessibility settings can read aloud, increase text size and contrast. You can even dictate your messages and use your voice to control all of these devices.

You can book a one to one or attend a Tech Talk or Tech Social (see our Social Groups and Activities section for the dates).

Please email or call Vicky Blencowe, Assistive Technology Coordinator on [vicky.blencowe@suttonvision.org.uk](mailto:vicky.blencowe@suttonvision.org.uk) or 020 8409 7166

## Living with Sight Loss workshops



Being told you have sight loss can be scary and confusing for both you and your family but talking to people in a similar situation can really help. Our free Living with Sight Loss workshops are for people adjusting to life with visual impairment. These sessions cover:

- support with day-to-day living
- access to benefits and services
- using assistive technology

We ran our first sessions in April and May and everyone who came along said they would recommend the workshop to others with a visual impairment. One person commented:

"It was good to meet in a small group, share experiences and learn new things."

We will be running our next workshops on Thursday 15th and Thursday 22nd September from 10am to 1pm. For further information or to book a place, please contact Terry Rocks on 020 8409 7166 or [terryrocks@suttonvision.org.uk](mailto:terryrocks@suttonvision.org.uk)

## Community Low Vision Clinic and Sight Loss Advice

Sutton Vision, in partnership with NHS, runs a fortnightly Community Low Vision Clinic at our premises in Sutton.

You will have an assessment with our Optometrist, Lesley, to find solutions and establish which magnifying devices (if any) and other equipment will be most helpful and speak to a specialist rehabilitation officer from the Sensory Impairment Team.

This service is available to people who have been diagnosed with low vision (a sight problem which is not correctable by spectacles), who live in the London Borough of Sutton and who are not already using the Low Vision Clinic at St. Helier Hospital.

Our Low Vision Clinics are by appointment only.

Ann is also available to provide advice, information and the support that is right for you, when attending St Helier Hospital for Eye Unit appointments. Please note, mask wearing is still in place in the clinic.

If you have any questions or queries about either service, please contact Ann Ryan, Sight Loss Advisor, on 07920 650 613 or [annmarie.ryan1@nhs.net](mailto:annmarie.ryan1@nhs.net)

## Social Groups & Activities



We have a varied and interesting programme of activities here at our building at 3 Robin Hood Lane, Sutton.

These are all free, although donations are very welcome too!

We are still taking every care to make sure everyone is safe on their visit to Sutton Vision premises, providing hand sanitisers on tables on arrival.

**If you would like more information or to book a place, please call Amanda on 020 8409 7166.**

### Sutton Vision Coffee Morning / Social Eyes

An opportunity to come, relax and have a chat about...whatever you'd like, with a friendly group. As the name suggests, coffee, tea and even a biscuit is thrown in.

### Charles Bonnet Support group

This group provides peer support for those affected by Charles Bonnet, family members and carers.

This is an opportunity to meet with others in a similar position and hear about the strategies used by group members to manage their visual hallucinations, caused by living with sight loss.

## VI Scrabble

Come and have a game of Scrabble or two! Our large- print boards make the game more accessible, so a great opportunity to pit your wits.

## Art and Craft

Let your creative juices flow with our art and craft group; paint, draw and more.

## Lunchtime Quiz

Test your grey matter with our quiz, with rounds on different subjects and even some general knowledge; and if you're feeling very confident, there's even a joker for a round with double points!

## Tech Talk and Social

Want to make your smartphone, laptop and tablet work better for you? These sessions, with our Assistive Technology Coordinator can cover ways to make these accessible for visually impaired and blind people so you can use your tech to your full advantage.

## Working Age Social Group

Chat, drink and eat at our monthly social for people of working age, between 30-60. This is held at Tiempo Lounge in Sutton, next to Waterstones.

A group will leave from our offices just before 4pm or meet us there; just drop in whenever suits you.

## Young VI Group – VI Able

If you're 18-30 years old, this group is for you.

Just like our Working Age group, it's a chance to meet other people your age, have a chat and laugh.

## Bingo

Play to get a line or a full house and you might even win a prize! Join us for our lively game and a biscuit or two.

## Macular Society Social Morning

The Macular Society hosts their Social Morning at our offices, offering the chance for anyone affected by Age Related Macular Degeneration to talk to others and learn more about the condition on the 2nd Monday of every month, 11am to 1pm.

For people recently diagnosed with AMD, these meetings are an opportunity to learn more about the condition and pick up some helpful information and tips from people who are further along in their diagnosis.

Normally, membership fees and monthly contributions apply, but for the remainder of this year, no charges will be made.

Come along and join us for a cup of tea or coffee and friendly conversation and find out more about what the Sutton Macular Group and the Macular Society has to offer or call Diane on 020 8715 3348 to find out more.

## July's social groups and activities:

Monday 4th July, 10am to 12pm: SV Coffee Morning

Thursday 7th July, 1pm to 3pm: Tech Talk

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July, 11am to 1pm: Macular Society Social Morning  
1pm to 3pm: VI Scrabble

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July, 12pm to 2pm: Lunchtime Quiz

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2pm to 4pm: Tech Social  
2pm to 4pm: Social Eyes Coffee Group  
4pm to -7pm: Working Age Social Group,  
(Tiempo Lounge, next to Sutton Waterstones)

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1pm to 3pm: VI Scrabble

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July, 12pm to 2pm: VI Able (for those aged 18-30)

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July, 11am to 1pm: Charles Bonnet Group  
1pm to 3pm: Art & Craft

## August's social groups and activities:

Monday 1st August, 10am to 12pm: SV Coffee Morning

Thursday 4th August, 1pm to 3pm: Tech Talk

Monday 8th August, 11am to 1pm: Macular Society Social Morning

1pm to 3pm: VI Scrabble

Monday 15th August, 12pm to 2pm: Lunchtime Quiz

Thursday 18th August, 2pm to 4pm: Social Eyes Coffee Group

Monday 22nd August, 1pm to 3pm: VI Scrabble

Wednesday 24th August, 12pm to 2pm: VI Able (for those aged 18-30)

Thursday 25th August, 1pm to 3pm: Art & Craft

2pm to 4pm: Tech Social

4pm to 7pm: Working Age Social Group,

Tiempo Lounge, Sutton (next to Waterstones)

## September's social groups and activities:

Monday 5th September,	10am to 12pm: SV Coffee Morning
Thursday 8th September,	1pm to 3pm: Tech Talk
Monday 12th September,	11am to 1pm: Macular Society Social Morning 1pm to 3pm: VI Scrabble
Thursday 15th September,	2pm to 4pm: Social Eyes Coffee Group
Monday 19th September,	12pm to 2pm: Lunchtime Quiz
Thursday 22nd September,	2pm to 4pm: Tech Social 4pm to 7pm: Working Age Social Group, Tiempo Lounge, Sutton (next to Waterstones)
Monday 26th September,	1pm to 3pm: VI Scrabble
Wednesday 28th September,	12pm to 2pm: VI Able (for those aged 18-30)
Thursday 29th September,	11am to 1pm: Charles Bonnet Group 1pm to 3pm: Art & Craft

## Resource Hub Drop-In

You can try the latest accessible technology at our Resource Hub Drop-In every Wednesday. Come in between 10am-1pm and you can use our tablets, mobiles and laptop, set up with accessibility in mind, with voice activation and larger print. Call the office on 020 8409 7166 for more information.

## Professional Vision Services Product Awareness Day

Professional Vision Services will be holding a Low Vision Demonstration Day at Sutton Vision on Wednesday 20th July 2022, allowing you to try out products including video magnifiers and reading cameras.

The Demo Day will run between 10am and 2pm and you can visit their website at [professional-vision-services.co.uk](https://professional-vision-services.co.uk) for more information.

If you are interested in attending please contact Sutton Vision at 020 8409 7166 or email [info@suttonvision.org.uk](mailto:info@suttonvision.org.uk) to make an appointment.

# Volunteer News

Welcome to our first Volunteer News section.

We must start with the fabulous time that was had by all at our Jubilee and Volunteers' Week afternoon tea on Wednesday 1st June. Our team was pleased to give our volunteers a well-deserved treat for all their contributions over the past year.

Our marquee was up for the lovely weather, everyone had a wonderful time, enjoying a scone, a few small sandwiches, a pot of tea, biscuits and even a few pieces of summer fruit to top it off. It all gave a royal feel to our thank you. Music was provided by Jack Bennett, with a jazz style, and chatting was in full swing too!

Thank you once again to all our volunteers for their work for us during the year.



We'd also like to let you know our befriending and home visiting service will return face to face, after a break due to the pandemic. If you'd like to be supported by these services, then please call Amanda Larter, Volunteer Coordinator, on 020 8409 7166 or [amandalarter@suttonvision.org.uk](mailto:amandalarter@suttonvision.org.uk)

# Community News

## Free home fire safety visit

London Fire Brigade staff can visit your home, offer personal fire safety advice and will also fit free smoke alarms where needed. If you or someone you know would like a visit, email [smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk](mailto:smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk) or call 0800 028 4428.

## Accessible Tube maps and travel support card

TFL offers large-print colour and black and white Tube maps as well as audio maps. You can also receive a travel support card with space for you to fill in details of how you can be supported on your journey. For details about both services, visit [tfl.gov.uk/accessguides](http://tfl.gov.uk/accessguides)

## VI reading groups - Sutton and Epsom Library

The V.I.P. Reading Group is relaunching on Friday 24th June - 10.30am to 12pm in Sutton Library - and aims to return to once a month meetings in the future. If you would like to join, please contact Library Development Officer, Colin Todd, at [colin.todd@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:colin.todd@sutton.gov.uk).

And in more reading news, there's a new Reading Friends Group at Epsom Library for people with a vision impairment.

Discuss audiobooks with one another, socialise and meet new friends. We will be running sessions roughly once a month. Please sign-up at Epsom Library, via email at

[epsom.library@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:epsom.library@surreycc.gov.uk) or via the Contact Centre

03456 009 009

## VI Leisure Group (VILG)

The VILG organises its own programme and acts as the point of contact for participants. Although Sutton Vision supports and encourages the VILG and their activities, those taking part should be aware that any events organised directly by the VILG are independent of Sutton Vision and are the responsibility of the VILG only.

They are peer led and always welcome new ideas for groups so if you have any suggestions or are interested in finding out more, please contact Sue Christie on 07891 783291 or email [susanannchristie@gmail.com](mailto:susanannchristie@gmail.com).

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>
VI Leisure Group Coffee Morning Waterstones	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday of each month from 10.30am	Waterstones Book Shop, High Street, Sutton
VI Leisure Group Book Club	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of each month from 10.30am.	Waterstones Book Shop, High Street, Sutton
VI Leisure Group The Hope Pub	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday of each month from 12.30pm	The Hope Pub, 48 West Street, Carshalton

# Tips for a stress-free holiday with a visual impairment

Now that COVID travel pandemic restrictions have eased for many destinations, you may be thinking of making a trip a bit further afield than you have in the past couple of years.

To enjoy both your journey to your holiday destination, as well as the trip itself, London Vision have shared their tips to make your trip go more smoothly, so you can concentrate on where you want to explore!

## Book with reputable firms

It can be a bit more pricey but buying holidays as part of a package can give you certain protections, as can using credit cards. Specialist holiday providers include TravelEyes and Seable. The Association of British Travel Agents is a great source of advice in helping you stay safe on holiday. Travel insurance can also help with this, even for weekend breaks in the UK.

## Your mobile phone

If you are blind or partially sighted, the smartphone can be invaluable for navigating, booking and finding out information while abroad. It makes sense to check your data access before you go through your provider or a high street mobile phone shop.

Bear in mind, data will be needed to use apps such as Be My Eyes or navigation programmes. A battery pack can recharge your phone up to three times, if you're using your phone a lot; an adaptor may be needed for this with a different plug socket also needed.

## Book special assistance in advance of journeys

There are many assistance schemes offered by transport companies. Ask your travel agent about the kinds of assistance available. If you are a guide dog owner, Guide Dogs can be a very good source of advice and information before travelling abroad for the first time.

National Express has an excellent travel assistance scheme. For full details go to [www.nationalexpress.co.uk](http://www.nationalexpress.co.uk) or call 03717 81 81 81 (call centre open 9am to 5pm).

## National Rail and TFL Turn up and Go assistance

By booking with National Rail, you can request support at your departure station, with changes and at your destination station. You can find more at [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or download their app on your smartphone.

Any staffed station in the Transport for London (TfL) network area will offer assistance at the station and this should continue across the TFL network.

## Identifying your luggage

Bright colours, using ribbons or bands, are a good option. Tactile labels, audible tags and even Apple Air Tag can be very helpful for iPhone location users.

## Travel concessions

The Disabled Person's rail card provides the most significant discounts, however, additional savings can be made by buying tickets in advance and splitting journeys.

If you are blind or partially sighted, you will be entitled to a Freedom Pass in the London boroughs, for free travel during off peak hours. You may also be entitled to Taxi Card and Dial A Ride service.

## Managing money

Most countries now accept Apple and Google Pay pre-paid currency cards as well as the traditional credit/debit cards, which offer their own insurance as protection.

For cash, paying with notes might be simpler than identifying change and choosing only one or two note denominations makes them simpler to identify or even consider taking a separate wallet for foreign currency.

Apps such as Google Lookout, Envision and Seeing AI are all able to identify notes and Be My Eyes app will also assist in identifying money if you have a trustworthy volunteer.

## Accessibility

If possible, research the town, place, or accommodation you are to visit, including access, lighting at night, step entry to buildings and public transport.

## Applying for passports

You can apply to the Passport Office via the telephone by calling 0300 222 0000. Someone will fill the form in for you using the information you provide. It will be posted to you to check, sign, and return with the relevant documents, payment, and photos.

A braille sticker can also be attached to your new passport that says the word 'passport' with your name and passport expiry date.

If you are blind or partially sighted you can find everything you need to know about applying for a passport when you have a disability at [www.gov.uk/passport-services-disabled](http://www.gov.uk/passport-services-disabled).

The guidance booklet to help with your passport application is available in different formats, including braille, audio tape and large-print format.

**Now enjoy your well-earned break!**

# Reporting hate crime

You may have seen the case of Dr Amit Patel in the news back in 2018. He received abuse for not moving his guide dog on a London Underground escalator in London Bridge back in 2018. Despite the shock and general public outrage at this incident, cases like this are not isolated.

Stop Hate UK, a charity established 27 years ago, aims to inform and breakdown barriers, in the hope of reducing hate crime, towards those who experience sight loss.

It's possible you think you may not experience hate crime but this takes many forms including public order offences, such as being shouted at on the street, harassment at bus stops and/or on public transport, regularly having access blocked, for example by deliberately parking in a Blue Badge space, as well as physical assaults and threats.

Disability hate crime is significantly under reported compared to other forms of hate crime. In 2020/21, only 18% of disability hate crime was reported to the police.

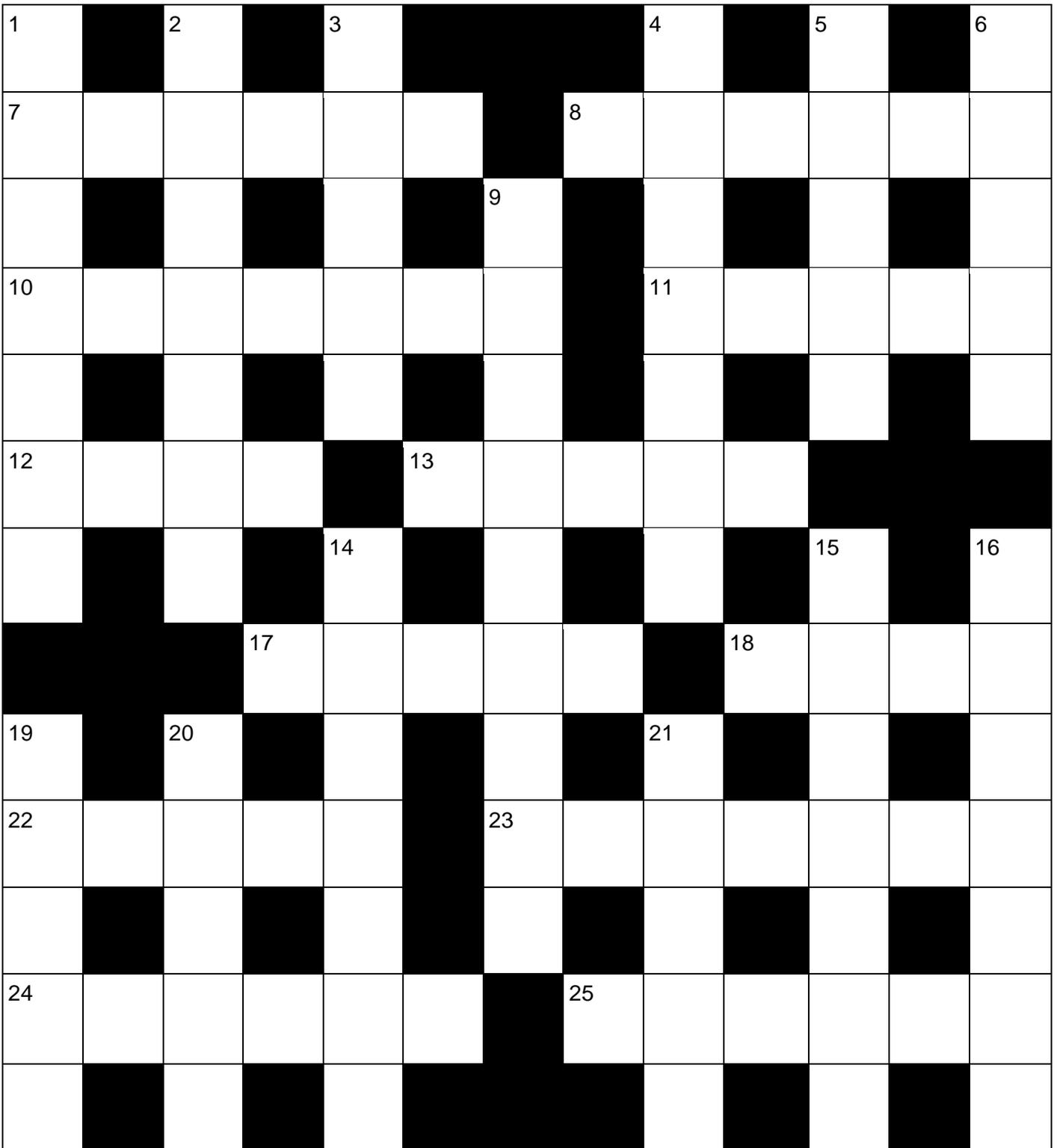
It can be challenging to report a hate crime, due to fears you may not be understood, but Stop Hate UK are here for you.

They have trained helpline operators, offering a compassionate listening ear, 24 hours a day. They can signpost you to relevant local support as well as assist victims to escalate cases to the police, should they wish.

The helpline is independent and confidential, and you may report anonymously. You can call, text, use the app or online form; their helpline support is offered in over 20 community languages including BSL.

For more information about the helpline services and training, please contact [Kieran@stophateuk.org](mailto:Kieran@stophateuk.org)

# Crossword



## Clues:

### ACROSS

7. Attack (6)
8. Relatives by marriage (2,4)
10. Bedding plant (7)
11. Cue ball colour (5)
12. Nobleman (4)
13. Spicy meal (5)
17. Frank Sinatra song (2,3)
18. Scottish region (4)
22. Sudden burst of light (5)
23. Make bigger (7)
24. Choux Pastry Bun (6)
25. Talk foolishly (6)

### DOWN

1. Exchanged (7)
2. Strange event (7)
3. Tarnish (5)
4. Belgian port (7)
5. Ancient language (5)
6. Attendant (5)
9. Soaked (9)
14. Tropical fever (7)
15. Germ (7)
16. Young hare (7)
19. Behind (5)
20. Ethiopian Emperor, ---- Selassie
21. Be Buoyant

**Answers on page 25**

## Sutton Vision Quiz

1. What is the largest country in the world?
2. Name the composer behind the soundtracks of The Lion King, Inception and Pirates of the Caribbean.
3. How many elements are in the periodic table?
4. At which venue is the British Grand Prix held?
5. What colour are the seats in the House of Commons?
6. Which southern Italian city is usually credited as the birthplace of the pizza?
7. In which country would you find the original Legoland?
8. When did the Vietnam War start?
9. The letterbox of 10 Downing Street in London has an inscription that reads "First Lord of..." what?
10. What language is spoken in Brazil?
11. Which artist painted the Mona Lisa?
12. What colour is found on 75% of the world's flags?
13. In which part of your body would you find the cruciate ligament?
14. Where in the world would you expect to find a car with the vehicle registration code 'V'?
15. In which children's book did a spider called Charlotte and a pig called Wilbur appear?
16. How many sides has a heptagon?
17. Which was the first James Bond film to feature Roger Moore in the title role?
18. 'Golden Russet' and 'Braeburn' are varieties of which fruit?
19. In which century was the first 'Grand National' horse race?
20. The letters of the word 'allergy' can be rearranged to form three other seven-letter words. Can you find them?

**Answers on page 26**

# Crossword Answers

## ACROSS

7. Waylay
8. In Laws
10. Petunia
11. White
12. Earl
13. Curry
17. My Way
18. Fife
22. Flash
23. Enlarge
24. Eclair
25. Babble

## DOWN

1. Swapped
2. Mystery
3. Taint
4. Antwerp
5. Latin
6. Usher
9. Saturated
14. Typhoid
15. Microbe
16. Leveret
19. After
20. Haile
21. Float

# Sutton Vision Quiz Answers

1. Russia
2. Hans Zimmer
3. 118
4. Silverstone
5. Green
6. Naples
7. Denmark
8. 1955
9. The Treasury
10. Portuguese
11. Leonardo da Vinci
12. Red
13. Knee
14. Vatican City
15. Charlotte's Web – E.B. White
16. 7
17. Live and Let Die (1973)
18. Apple
19. 19th century (1839)
20. Gallery, largely and regally

# Useful Telephone Numbers

The following list of useful numbers includes an emergency number for the London Borough of Sutton and St Helier Hospital Eye Unit.

Advice Link Partnership Sutton (ALPS)	020 8254 2616
Age UK (Sutton)	020 8770 4090
Friendly Club	020 8669 4106
London Borough of Sutton	020 8770 5000
LB Sutton Referral Point	020 8770 4565
Macular Society (National)	01264 350 551
Macular Society (Sutton)	07970 525 143
Merton Sports & Social Club	info@mssc.org.uk
RNIB Helpline	0303 123 9999
St Helier Hospital Eye Unit	020 8296 3800
St Helier Hospital Eye Unit <b>EMERGENCY</b>	020 8296 3817
Sight Loss Adviser, Ann Ryan	07920 650 613
Sutton Carers' Centre	020 8296 5611
Sutton Talking Newspaper	020 3759 6679
Sutton South Hello	07790 031 764

