



LONDON  
VISION

## London Scene

February 2021

London Scene is a regular newsletter to inform people with sight loss about accessible activities and events happening around London, including local society events.

If you would like to unsubscribe from this newsletter at any time, then please call 020 37613651 or email [info@londonvision.org](mailto:info@londonvision.org)

Please note that a copy of this newsletter may have been despatched before receiving your request to unsubscribe. If you would like to submit local society events for promotion in this newsletter, please email or call using the same details as above.

Welcome to the February edition of the London Scene newsletter.

London Vision will continue to be in contact with our clients/members regularly via the London Scene newsletter. We hope everyone is well, staying safe and adapting to life in an ongoing pandemic. London Vision staff are still working and contactable. If you are feeling particularly isolated during this difficult time, then please do get in contact using the normal channels.

[www.londonvision.org](http://www.londonvision.org)

Twitter / Facebook / Instagram @LondonVisionUK  
Charity number: 1183741

## Sports

Keen on staying active while at home? [Try Metro Blind Sport's Audio Exercise Programmes](#)

## Theatre

[10 best Broadway shows you can stream for free online](#)

## Tours

The best virtual tours to help you beat boredom.

Art galleries might not be so interesting unless you have some useful sight, others work well.

[9 Virtual Field Trips That Make History Come Alive \(makeuseof.com\)](#)

Audio describe night time trips through London

<http://bit.ly/368ClpY>

## Esme's virtual friends

Do you or someone you know have Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS)? This condition affects people with sight loss. A condition first identified 300 years ago by the grandson of Charles Bonnet, over the last three centuries people with sight loss have experienced similar hallucinations to those first described by Charles Bonnet. Some are mildly aggravating whilst others can be terrifying.

Esme's virtual friends is a support and information group hosted on Zoom by London Vision for people with CBS. It meets at 6pm every other Thursday with the next meeting on 11 February.

Why not come along and share your story?

If you'd like to join this informal session contact [info@londonvision.org](mailto:info@londonvision.org) or give us a call on 020 3761 3651

## London Vision's Managing Sight Loss Sessions

## Winter/Spring 2021

We'd be delighted if you or a friend or family member would like to join one of our upcoming managing sight loss sessions. All the sessions are currently held via the online video conferencing platform Zoom; people join in via computers, tablets, mobile phone, and the traditional house phone. Whenever we can, we do our best to help people join in. Our sessions are relaxed and informal; they are a mixture of information giving and listening to participants' experiences of living with sight loss. All our sessions are one hour in length unless we tell you differently. Friends and family are most welcome to sit in to find out more. Want to join a session? Call us on 0203 761 3651 or email on [info@londonvision.org](mailto:info@londonvision.org)

### February

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> February 2.30 pm – 3.30 pm – Feeling good, staying healthy**

In this session we'll explore different techniques for staying positive and relaxed when dealing with the pressures of everyday life.

#### **10<sup>th</sup> February 6pm – 7.30 – All things reading**

With the support of Paul, RNIB's Digital Transformation manager and Davinder Kullar from RNIB's Technology for Life team, in this session we will explore all the different ways of accessing reading material

#### **16<sup>th</sup> February 6 pm – 7.30 pm – All about registration: the benefits and the rights it brings**

In this session we will explore certification and then registration as sight impaired or severely sight impaired. We will explore the services you can expect from your local council along with the benefits and concessions registration can bring.

#### **18<sup>th</sup> February 6 pm – 7.30 pm – Making the most of your vision**

This session will be delivered alongside the Macular Society. We will talk about the range of different ways you can make the most of your vision, where you can get help with low vision aids, and more.

#### **23<sup>rd</sup> February 2.30 pm – 3.30 pm – Getting out and about safely**

In this session we will discuss techniques for moving safely and independently around the home, considering the use of lighting and contrast. Then we will explore independent travel outdoors, discussing simple tips and tricks along with directing you to support available from your local council and others.

**25<sup>th</sup> February 2.30 pm – 3.39 pm – Life hacks - everyday living: In the kitchen**

In this session we will explore ways of making drinks, cooking snacks, marking appliances, and labelling and identifying products.

**March**

**2<sup>nd</sup> March 2.30 pm – 3.30 pm – Life hacks - everyday living: your daily routine**

In this session we will explore equipment and techniques that can assist you with your daily routine, from identifying hair conditioner to basic DIY.

**4<sup>th</sup> March 2.30 pm – 3.30 pm – Introduction to assistive technology**

This session is an introduction to the world of assistive technology. We will discuss apps that read text, phones that talk to you and will introduce you to the accessibility features on smartphones. This session will be led by Graham Page from Thomas Pocklington Trust.

**9<sup>th</sup> March 6pm – 7.30pm – Advanced assistive technology**

This session is for regular users of assistive technology and takes the form of a discussion. It will be led by Graham Page from Thomas Pocklington Trust and Davinder Kullar from RNIB's Technology for Life team. We will also update you on any new technology.

**15<sup>th</sup> March 6pm – 7pm – Feeling good**

In this session we will explore different techniques for staying positive and relaxed when dealing with the pressures of everyday life.

**24<sup>th</sup> March 6 pm – 7 pm – Celebration of COVID community support fund and new beginning**

In this session we will be saying thank you to the National Lottery for awarding the Managing Sight Loss Course funding from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund. We will look back over six months of Managing Sight Loss sessions, and this will also be an opportunity for participants to feed back and suggest ideas for future sessions and topics.

## Join the Working Age Forum on Zoom

London Vision organises regular meetings of the Working Age Forum (WAF) for blind and partially sighted people who consider themselves of working age. Whether you are employed, self-employed or seeking work, join our forum to hear from invited speakers and take part in group discussions about all aspects of the world of work.

Due to the lockdown, our meetings are currently being held on the Zoom online platform.

If you wish to become a member of the WAF please email [waf.london@londonvision.org](mailto:waf.london@londonvision.org) and ask to be put on the database to receive news and invitations. We can also email you information on how to download and set up Zoom.

The next WAF meeting is scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> February at 6 to 7.30pm

## Eye Matter - Beyond Sight Loss

Welcome to our weekly meetings

Monday 3pm – 4pm – Surviving to Thriving - Helping your mental health wellbeing with a Solution Focused Approach

Tuesday 6 pm – 8pm – social followed by activities

Wednesday 11 am – Cookery with VI tips

Thursday 5 pm – Beyond Sight Loss, discussion with Ashrafia Choudhury

Friday 11 am – 1pm Social group followed by activities including: Body conditioning, Neurobics, Zumba, salsa, comedy, quizzes, meditation and mindfulness.

Remember, Tuesday and Friday lunchtime activities change each week. Link for all the groups: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2599114264>

## EYE MATTER

Eye Matter is delighted to offer the Living with Sight Loss Workshop, co-facilitated by Suzie and Steve. Covering the topics below and with guest speakers, you will meet and share experiences with other people in similar

situations, boost your confidence and get practical advice, information, and resources.

Topics and speakers include:

- Transport for London Accessibility
- Technology for Life
- Rehab worker
- ECLO
- Low vision advice
- Understanding welfare rights
- Sports and leisure
- Mental health and well-being
- Everyday gadgets at the resource centre

Eye Matter's free and informal Zoom based Living with Sight Loss course is an ideal way to help you adjust to your sight condition, increase your independence, and grow your confidence.

Starting Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February at 11am to 1 pm and every Monday for six weeks

Through the sessions, you will find out about practical solutions and support that can help you adjust to life with sight loss. You will also have the chance to learn from each other's personal experiences and share your top tips.

For more details or to book a place:

Call Suzie on; 07523 266421

Or send an email to; [eyemattervi@gmail.com](mailto:eyemattervi@gmail.com)

Eye Matter is proud to announce

A speed dating evening!

All you single people with low or no sight bring yourselves and your single friends for our Valentines extravaganza

Breakout rooms for 5 minutes each couple  
on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2021; 7pm to 9pm

Please preregister at: [eyemattervi@gmail.com](mailto:eyemattervi@gmail.com)

Eye Matter is accessible via mobile, landline or computer

Link will be sent when you register

## January issue Riddles and Answers

Riddle: What has many teeth, but can't bite?

Answer: A comb

Riddle: What is cut on a table, but is never eaten?

Answer: A deck of cards

Riddle: What has words, but never speaks?

Answer: A book

Riddle: I am full of holes but I can still hold water. What am I?

Answer: A sponge

Riddle: I can be cracked, I can be made, I can be told, I can be played. What am I?

Answer: A joke

## February Riddles

Riddle: What is always in front of you but can't be seen?

Riddle: What can you break, even if you never pick it up or touch it?

Riddle: I have branches, but no fruit, trunk or leaves. What am I?

Riddle: What can you catch, but not throw?

Riddle: What has to be broken before you can use it?

Answers will be in the March issue of London Scene.

## Baking

Chocolate and Pineapple Upside-Down Pudding – serves 4 to 6

1 x 227g Can pineapple slices  
2 – 3 tablespoons golden syrup  
125g butter or margarine  
125g caster sugar  
2 eggs, beaten  
125g self-raising flour

25g cocoa

1. Pre heat the oven to 180°C, or Gas 4.
2. Drain the pineapple slices, reserving the syrup. Pour the golden syrup into a greased 18 cm (7 inch) round cake tin and arrange the pineapple slices on top.
3. Cream together the fat and sugar until fluffy, then beat in the eggs a little at a time.
4. Sift the flour and cocoa together, then fold into the mixture, adding about 1 tablespoon of the reserved pineapple syrup, to give a smooth dropping consistency.
5. Spread the mixture over the pineapple and bake in a preheated moderate oven, 180°C, Gas Mark 4 for about 45 minutes.
6. Put onto a plate. You can warm the remaining syrup and serve separately.

Enjoy - What a great pudding!

### **Online shopping**

Shopping online brings many advantages. Not least it can be done from the safety and comfort of your own home. We know however that it's not always that straightforward when you are blind or partially sighted.

As part of the Managing Sight Loss programme, London Vision is hosting a session on online shopping. If you would like to attend, get in touch on [info@londonvision.org](mailto:info@londonvision.org) or 020 3761 3651 and tell us about your online shopping experiences and any issues that arose and we will make sure we have got the right people in place to lead the session.

### **Fit and Fab with Croydon Vision**

Dear ladies,

Make exercise part of your New Year's resolution for 2021!

Do not let the winter blues bring you down.

Come and join us for a bit of fun exercises and become Fit and Fabulous with Croydon Vision

This program of exercises is part of a national initiative to encourage girls and women to take up a physical activity and lead a more active life to improve their health and wellbeing.

We will run a series of fitness classes which will include exercises to stretch, build your strength, relax and take away any stress as well as boost your energy and make you feel good.

Every Thursdays from 2pm to 3.00pm.

You can join us by Zoom or through a USB stick just like the talking news

We will make sure all the exercises are well described so you will not need to see us at all!

To register and join our free Fit and Fab programme for women register by sending us an email now:

[fitandfab@croydonvision.org.uk](mailto:fitandfab@croydonvision.org.uk)

Or phone: 02086882486

## Croydon Vision

Here is the programme of Facebook Live Events produced by Croydon Vision. Do join us, comment, give us feedback and ideas for future events, spread the word and share with your personal and professional networks!

Facebook Live Every Thursdays at 4pm:

February 2021

4 February: Technology there the help you with Katherine Turner.

11 February: Eye Health with Hussein Khambeti from Moorfields Eye Hospital.

18 February: Volunteering – how it helps, how to start, and benefits of, with Nadine Thomas.

25 February: Food and entertainment Join us to learn a tasty recipe.

## **Increasing diversity in the workplace – spotlight on enabling the visually impaired**

Croydon Vision invites you to join us for a free live zoom event on the 5 February at 10am, register, join us, you will be inspired by our fantastic speakers and have the opportunity to ask questions and learn about how blind and partially sighted people adapt to the work environment and the support available to employers.

Follow the link to register and book your FREE place:

<http://bit.ly/39g3M3b>

### **Agenda**

- 10.00am Introduction to Making a Difference Programme of Employability Support – Rita Fiuza, Employer Engagement Manager, Education Development Trust
- 10.10am Introduction to Croydon Vision - Odette Battarel, Personal Development Officer, Croydon Vision
- 10.20am How we adapted our recruitment process and offer to people with disabilities – Sue Hall, Director of HR & OD, Pension Protection Fund
- 10.50am Supporting staff with visual impairment in the workplace & Pre-employment Professionals Training, Emma Griffith, Employment Advisor, RNIB
- 11.20am Access to Work - Ashvin Mistry & Olatomi Majekodunmi, Department for Work and Pensions
- 11.40am Burst your Bubble-Bias – Fabiana Ferrara, Employment Coach, Education Development Trust
- 11.45am The Michael Spooner Story – Michael Spooner
- 11.55am Q&A

### **Illuminate Freedom**

What: Online VI Gentle Exercise

When: Beginning Week Commencing 11 January 2021

Thursdays - 6:30-8pm (for six weeks)

Fridays - 2:00-3:30pm (for twelve weeks)

Where: Online, Using the platform, Zoom

Cost: FREE

Gentle exercise stills the mind! That's right, our gentle exercise session aims to ground, centre and soothe your body and mind, something that is needed now more than ever during these trying times and so many lock-downs. Our

motivational class helps to gently improve balance, strength, posture and fitness and can help keep your body moving at a time when we are having to stay at home.

We use your body weight and falls management techniques to help people learn more about their bodies, avoid poor posture and reduce trips and falls. This class leaves people feeling stronger, healthier and happier. Check in, share how your week is going and let us do the rest!  
Booking details below.

### Online VI Zumba – FREE

What: Online VI Zumba  
When: Week Commencing 11 January 2020  
Tuesdays - 6:00-7:30pm (for twelve weeks)  
Wednesdays - 2:00-3:30pm (for six weeks)  
Where: Online, Using the platform, Zoom  
Cost: FREE

Join us for our funky fiesta Zumba - Ay, Ay, Ay, Caramba! All you VI Zumba veterans know what this joyous sound means! It's great to celebrate the start of a new week and then the coming weekend but even better celebrating it together, dancing. If you're new to the party, VI Zumba is our Latin inspired, gentle yet exhilarating dance fitness session. These sessions allow blind and partially sighted men and women of all ages and abilities to enjoy and improve their health through movement. Lose weight, gain muscular strength, get fitter, meet new friends and have fun!  
Booking details below.

### **To book:**

If you would like to join one, two or all of our sessions, please register your interest with Jaimee at [connect@illuminatefreedom.org](mailto:connect@illuminatefreedom.org).

### RNIB connect Radio

This opportunity is available if you'd be interested in getting involved with the programme!

The premise of the programme is a one-off hour-long show on Valentine's Day all about love. The aspects we're hoping to cover are

- Dates - worst, best, first
- Misconceptions, cliché,
- Online dating/dating during COVID
- Attraction and sexual attraction

- Lasting love

We won't necessarily discuss all these topics, the programme format isn't set in stone yet but this is a general idea. I'd love to hear about your experiences if this is something you'd be interested in taking part in I'd love to have you on board.

Ellie Marsh, Content Producer, 0141 357 3518  
On Freeview 730, online [www.rnibconnectradio.org.uk](http://www.rnibconnectradio.org.uk)

## Merton Vision

We are very happy to announce that we are continuing our new look Talking Book Club into the new year

Because of current lockdown restrictions we will be holding it by phone

We will be using a conference call system which means that multiple people can take part at the same time.

**Date for your diaries: 2pm January 28th**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91305645315?pwd=YjR1T1VuQk5wbHFWRmF0d3lvWG5hZz09>

or use one tap mobile 020 8080 6591 or dial in 0330 088 5830

Meeting ID: 913 0564 5315

Passcode: 008997

If you are interested in joining or experience any problems please email [info@mertonvision.org.uk](mailto:info@mertonvision.org.uk) or call the office.

## VIRTUALLY EASTBOURNE TEAM

Virtually Eastbourne Team is hosting an 80s/90s evening to dance away the lockdown blues and put you back in your dancing shoes

Date: Friday 29 January

Time: 7:00pm to 9:30pm

The evening will consist of:

- A Mix and Mingle session in random breakout rooms to share memories and describe your party clothes

- A Request Show with DJ Jazzy Jas and Jani
- There are five showcase Talent Slots available for participants to perform songs from either decade
- Test your memories in our 80s/90s Quiz with
- A special International Appearance
- Join in on our interactive Dance Routine with Michel
- More details will be emailed to you once you have registered along with the all important Zoom link

This event will be hosted by Alex and Berin

Please register early to ensure your requests and dedications can be played live on the night

If you would like to take part in our Talent Slot, please email us at [virtuallyeastbourne@gmail.com](mailto:virtuallyeastbourne@gmail.com).

Please click here to register for this unique event.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOErHzGCn94bvEOM56qVmfyhN4UqP22CI5WqI-or4IPsO1vA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOErHzGCn94bvEOM56qVmfyhN4UqP22CI5WqI-or4IPsO1vA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

If you require any assistance please email our team and we will be willing to support your needs.

Please note a recording of this event will be made for promotional use only.

The deadline for registration is [Thursday 28 January 2021](#)

## **GOVERNMENT SURVEY**

The Disability Unit at Cabinet Office is developing a National Strategy for Disabled People, which publication planned for Spring 2021. The Disability Unit has launched the UK Disability Survey (link below) and we want to hear from as many people as possible. We are particularly keen to hear from disabled people, their carers, friends and family but views from the wider public are also very welcome. The survey will remain open until 23rd April, and all views will be used to shape the delivery of the plans we set out in the Strategy with those that we receive by 13th February informing its development.

We've tried to make sure the survey which is hosted on Citizen Space is as accessible as possible. It is available in Easy Read, BSL and written responses can be sent to: [DUCitizenspace@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:DUCitizenspace@cabinetoffice.gov.uk). A braille

version is available on request and blind or partially sighted people who are having difficulty filling in the online survey can email RNIB for advice or support at: [campaigns@rnib.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@rnib.org.uk).

<http://bit.ly/3bO4DcZ>

## **Help us to improve the COVID-19 home testing experience for visually impaired people.**

Thomas Pocklington Trust and Sight Loss Councils are supporting NHS Test and Trace to conduct research into the experience and accessibility of getting a home test for coronavirus (COVID-19). The aim of the research is to understand how the home testing experience could potentially be improved to better serve the needs of people who are blind or partially sighted, or those with sight loss.

NHS Test and Trace are inviting you to express your interest in taking part in this research. We are looking for people who would:

- Be willing to conduct a home test for COVID-19 and share feedback on their experience
- Be available to take part in this research between Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January and Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February

NHS Test and Trace will be capturing your feedback through video calls, phone calls or a survey depending on your access needs and preferences. If at any point in the research you do not wish to continue, you will be able to withdraw from the study.

If this applies to you or somebody you know, and you would like to find out more information or register your interest in taking part in this research, please complete this online form:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/hometeststudy2/> .

Alternatively, if you are unable to access or complete the form for any reason, please contact Mike Bell ([mike.bell@pocklington-trust.org.uk](mailto:mike.bell@pocklington-trust.org.uk)) on 07971 467 089 and we can arrange to register your interest over the phone.

## TURN UP AND GO REINSTATEMENT

From Transport for London:

Turn Up and Go physical assistances services on London Underground and London Overground will resume from Wednesday 27 January 2021. This follows a review by our Safety Health Environment team, conducted following additional Government restrictions and emerging information about the new variant of coronavirus.

We will be emailing customers who have registered with us for accessibility updates to ensure they are aware of this update. The only change is that we are no longer asking staff to accompany customers in lifts.

Under the current restrictions, all customers should check before they travel and continue to follow the government's guidance to stay at home and only travel for legally permitted reasons.

### **Cashless journeys on the TfL network: London Vision's response**

London Vision cautiously welcomes Transport for London's (TfL) announcement on 19 January 2021 that it will not push forward with the move to make all journeys on the network cashless at this time. London Vision is pleased that TfL took into account the responses to our December 2020 consultation, responses that clearly outlined some of fears and concerns blind and partially sighted people have about the move.

The proposal to make all journeys cashless would remove the option to pay in cash or top up at Overground, Underground and DLR stations, and promote the use of personal bank cards to travel on the network. Removing the option of paying or topping up at stations would leave local newsagents as the only place to top up oyster cards, and would make it very difficult for travellers to buy day tickets.

#### **Consultation responses**

To better understand the views on this issue, London Vision consulted with blind and partially sighted Londoners that use the network, as well Eye Clinic Liaison Officers, Rehab Officers, representatives of sight loss organisations in the capital and members of local sensory teams to gather feedback and opinion on the proposed changes.

Some of the responses to the proposed move:

“This is terrible, this will affect the elderly and disabled significantly and if you are both then this will hit them hard. Many people I know do not have a bank account, they prefer cash and love the interaction to confirm that something has happened correctly”. (Anonymous)

“No face-to-face contact is bad, there will be no interaction with everything moving online, this will get lonely, isolating, and difficult to ask for help. It is harder when you cannot see, it will stop people from going out”. (D. S.)

“I believe taking away cash payments in a convenient place like a station will impact significantly on the visually impaired community, not just travel but also communication needs”. (G. P.)

If you are impacted by this issue, please get in touch with Bhavini Makwana on [bhavini.makwana@londonvision.org](mailto:bhavini.makwana@londonvision.org)

## TFL face covering and safer travel update

It has been mandatory to wear face coverings on public transport for seven months, and figures show strong public support for the measure and around 90 per cent compliance at the busiest times of day. The vast majority of passengers are wearing a face covering over their nose and mouth when on public transport and in stations, unless they are exempt. Only a selfish minority who are not exempt are continuing to ignore the regulation and put themselves and their fellow passengers at risk. We have expanded our team of enforcement officers, and they are handing out more fines to customers who don't comply and prosecuting those who do not pay.

A new cohort of TfL enforcement officers completed training in December, boosting our enforcement team to around 500 officers. They work alongside our policing partners from the Metropolitan Police Service and British Transport Police to carry out enforcement operations on our transport network every day. They are ensuring compliance of coronavirus safety regulations, as well as tackling aggression, fare evasion and providing greater visibility and reassurance. The new recruits are now in operation on the transport network and we are regularly carrying out operations at stations with low compliance. Bus stops at Victoria, Brixton and Stratford have also been targeted, with an operation taking place at Walthamstow bus station yesterday morning.

Over the last seven months, around 128,000 people have been stopped from boarding services until they have put on a face covering, around 9,300 have been prevented from boarding, and around 2,100 have been ejected from services. Around 1,700 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) have been issued to

those who have travelled on the network without a face covering and who are not exempt. Customers who do not pay their fine within 28 days face prosecution, and around 650 people have been prosecuted for not wearing a mask on the network. Fines have been as much as £660 for those convicted for a first offence, with one repeat offender having to pay £1,170.

We take the safety of children, and all those on our services, extremely seriously, and part of this means doing all we can to ensure they too comply with the requirement to wear face coverings. Children aged 11 to 17 who do not comply with the requirement to wear a face covering will be reminded of the need to do so by officers, but wouldn't be removed from our services to ensure their safety.

If a child aged 11 to 17 isn't wearing a face covering without a reasonable excuse, and attempts to engage are not effective, our officers may complete a report which means a warning letter is sent to their parent or guardian to inform them that the child has committed an offence under health protection regulations. If a warning letter is issued, it will advise the parent or guardian that their child has been found travelling without wearing a face covering and that further non-compliance may result in the suspension of their concessionary travel, in line with TfL's Young Person's Behaviour Code that parents signed up to when applying for the Zip Oyster concession.

Our latest customer survey found 75 per cent are supportive of face covering enforcement, rising to 86 per cent among those aged 65 and over.

The Government's message is that everyone must stay at home unless for a legally permitted reason. A reasonable excuse for leaving home includes travel to work where it cannot be undertaken from home, to shop for necessities, seek medical assistance, visit a support bubble or for education. We are continuing to run as full a service as possible for those who must travel, and Londoners are also encouraged to use London's network of safe walking or cycling routes where possible and to use our travel tools to plan journeys by public transport during the quieter times. These are currently between 08:15 and 16:00 and after 17:30 on weekdays, and before noon and after 18:00 on weekends on public transport.

The enforcement of face coverings complements other rigorous measures we are taking to support a safe, reliable and clean network that gives people who need to travel the confidence to do so. The enhanced cleaning regime deployed at the start of the pandemic, using hospital-grade cleaning substances, continues to make the network cleaner than ever, and more than 150 ultraviolet light sanitising devices were installed on escalators on the Tube network in October. Good hand hygiene also remains essential and

more than 1,100 hand sanitiser units across the network continue to dispense free Dettol hand sanitiser.

## **Extra support from your energy supplier during Coronavirus – Citizens Advice**

The government, the energy regulator and Citizens Advice have collaborated on an industry agreement signed by all UK household energy suppliers to give consumers additional protections during the COVID-19 pandemic, which came into force in March and remain in place.

### Extra support from your energy supplier during Coronavirus

Identifying and prioritising customers at risk. Suppliers should seek to identify and prioritise customers who may need additional support and consider the needs of customers taking into account that:

- Any customer can suddenly become vulnerable even if they are not classed as such already
- Priority Service Register customers may need extra advice and support
- Prepayment meter customers, both smart and legacy will need specific support
- Customers with health conditions or who are or are vulnerable to a cold home, may need to maintain a constant supply of energy
- Suppliers will support customers who are impacted financially as a direct or indirect result of COVID-19. Based on individual circumstances, this could include:
  - Suppliers should consider reassessing, reducing or pausing debt repayment and bill payments for domestic customers in financial distress.
  - Suppliers should consider referring customers who are struggling to pay to third party debt advisers such as Step Change and Citizens Advice.
  - Suppliers will suspend credit meter disconnections

Suppliers will support prepayment meter customers directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19 to stay on supply. Based on individual circumstances, this could include:

- extending discretionary/ friendly credit or sending out a pre-loaded top up card.
- enabling customers to nominate a trusted third party to be able to pick up discretionary credit sent to a shop on their behalf.
- switching smart prepayment meters into credit mode or extending non-disconnection periods (consumers will be made aware any credit will need to be paid back).

- promoting online smart prepayment top-up channels.
- having particular regard to the existing rules and the potential impact of COVID-19 when considering switching a customer from credit to prepay.
- contacting prepayment customers with advice on what to do in the event of self-isolation

Help from Citizens Advice If after contacting your supplier you need further help, use the Citizens Advice consumer helpline

Telephone: 0808 223 1133 — Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm Textphone:  
18001 0808 223 1133

For a Welsh-speaking adviser: 0808 223 1144  
Textphone for a Welsh-speaking adviser: 18001 0808 223 1144

If you need more support if you feel overwhelmed, or are unable to deal with your supplier on your own because of personal circumstances, the Citizens Advice Helpline may also be able to refer you to their Extra Help Unit. Learn more at: <https://ehu.org.uk>

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Best wishes from all at London Vision.