# RNIB’s Sight Loss Advice Service: ECLO

Michelle: I’m Michelle, I’m the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer here at Rotherham Hospital.

I offer practical and emotional support to patients so that can be in eye clinic I might be up on the stroke ward offering support on the day when it’s needed, there and then.

OK and you’re coming through the door. All right?

Andy: Well my name’s Andrew. Mostly known as Andy and obviously lost my sight through a major heart attack nearly five years ago. I work up blind, literally overnight.

Michelle: So with Andrew, I gave a lot of emotional support right at the very beginning and I supported him with his partner they’d been together for a lot of years but she struggled to cope with the sight loss as well.

Andy: From working for 25 years as a joiner, quite hands on, sporty. Cycling, canoeing, I used to coach that. So it was a big loss to my social life and everything else.

Julie: My name is Julie Drobek and my role is the Matron of Specialist Surgery which includes Ophthalmology.

Having the support of an ECLO takes the pressure from the nursing staff. We ring Michelle, we get an appointment straightaway for the patient. The patient actually goes out, even having been given the bad news, they know that there is somebody out there that will support them and get them through to get them back to some independence.

Michelle: I referred him on to the organisations that could support him best with rehabilitation, guide training and looking at just basic daily living aids that he could use.

Mohamed: My name is Mr Mohamed Jabir, I’m a consultant ophthalmic surgeon in the Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust.

An ECLO is very important to the patients, they have the time to talk to them, they call them back home. In a busy clinic, doctors and nurses are extremely busy and probably we have ten minutes, fifteen minutes for the patients, no more.

Julie: I can’t put a value on it because for me it is totally invaluable, it’s a service that we could not manage without.

Andy: Just the support, it’s a big, big thing. Well it’s a big shock to anybody isn’t it?

It’s that basic understanding of somebody that knows what you might be going through.

Michelle: He’s doing fantastically well now. He engages in blind sports, he’s doing some volunteering. He’s just an amazing guy who has a lot of strength, courage and resilience to get to where he is.

Andy: So it feels you get your independence back and your identity, definitely, I found my identity again.

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