# E-Newsletter: October 2024

This e-Newsletter is also available in [audio](https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/retina-uk/episodes/e-Newsletter-October-2024-e2pl85d)

## Big Give Christmas Challenge 2024

We’re pleased to be taking part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge again this year, where your donations to Retina UK can be doubled for one week only – with all of your donations going towards our ground-breaking medical research projects. Save the date: Tuesday, 3 December 2024 from 12pm.

## Annual Conference Feedback

We are keen to capture as much feedback as possible from both our Annual and Professionals’ Conferences in September. If you haven’t already completed the feedback form, we would urge you to please do so now. Your feedback will help to shape our future events and allow us to tailor them based on what you, our community, have told us they want.

The feedback forms are available as follows:

* [Annual Conference (Saturday 28 September 2024)](https://retinauk.org.uk/events/feedback-conference24/)
* [Professionals’ Conference (Friday 27 September 2024)](https://retinauk.org.uk/events/feedback-profs-conf24/)

## New stem cell treatment gains approval to enter US clinical trials

Biotechnology company Blue Rock Therapeutics has been given clearance in the USA to go ahead with in-human testing of a new type of stem cell therapy for retinal conditions like RP.

Unlike gene therapies, which aim primarily to slow or stop further deterioration, some cell-based therapies offer a chance to repair part of the retina and potentially restore some degree of vision. Many of the researchers and companies exploring this approach are using cell lines originally derived from human embryonic stem cells, but Blue Rock is pioneering the use of stem cells created from adult skin or blood.

[Read the full article on our website](https://retinauk.org.uk/news/new-stem-cell-treatment-gains-approval-to-enter-us-clinical-trials/)

## Lottery

Did you know that we have our own Retina UK Lottery, where you could be in with a chance of winning £25,000 every single week for as little as £1 a line? What would you spend £25,000 on? [Sign up to play our Lottery today](https://retinauk.org.uk/get-involved/donate/lottery/).

## November Webinar: The Big Give: How your donations make a difference

Look out for our upcoming webinar and hear from our researchers about the impact your gift would have this Big Give. Date and speakers are to be confirmed but you will see it advertised on our socials and website very soon with all the details of how to register!

## Retina UK Raffle 2024

Time’s running out to enter our 2024 Raffle! Do you want to be in with the chance of winning up to £1,000, just in time for Christmas? Back by popular demand, you could win 5 cash prizes (£1,000, £500, £100, £50 or £25) and support Retina UK at the same time! [Visit our website](https://retinauk.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/raffle) to take part today (before 28 October) and you could be winning a fantastic cash prize very soon!

## Local peer support group meetings

### [Berkshire Local Peer Support Group Meeting](https://retinauk.org.uk/event/berkshire-local-peer-support-group)

Tuesday 22 October – 7pm to 8pm – Online - Please come and join James Birtley and the group for a social catch up to plan our in-person Christmas get together. Please also feel free to share any ideas you have for venues and events you may like to visit for next year or if you would just like a chat, advice or simply need a listening ear, we are here to support you.

[Men’s Peer Support Group Meeting](https://retinauk.org.uk/event/mens-peer-support-group/)   
Tuesday 29 October – 7pm to 8.30pm – Online – To celebrate the 1st Anniversary of this group and to promote Men’s Mental Health Awareness Month we are delighted to welcome our guest speaker Anthony Bashall, who will chat about how we can manage our physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

[\*Save the Date\* ‘Talking’ Tech Peer Support Group Meeting](https://retinauk.org.uk/events/?filter_event_type=96&filter_location=&filter_date=&filter_submit_btn=Apply+filters) Thursday 7 November - 7pm to 8pm – Online – Join us for a tech round up following on from our visit to the London Sight Village event – More information will be available on our website soon.

[West Midlands Local Peer Support Group Meet Up](https://retinauk.org.uk/event/west-midlands-local-peer-support-group)    
Saturday 9 November – 9.45am to 4pm - In-Person – Come and join Perm Bhachu and the group for an exclusive tour and handling session at the National Trust Back to Backs in Birmingham followed by lunch at The Sly Old Fox.

[\*Save the Date\* London & SE Local Peer Support Group Meeting](https://retinauk.org.uk/events/?filter_event_type=96&filter_location=&filter_date=&filter_submit_btn=Apply+filters)   
16 November – 11am to 1pm – Online – Come and join Bhavini Makwana and the group for their latest online catch-up all-around tech advice with guest speaker Davinder Kullar – More information will be available on our website soon.

[\*Save the Date\* Manchester Local Peer Support Group Meet Up](https://retinauk.org.uk/events/?filter_event_type=96&filter_location=&filter_date=&filter_submit_btn=Apply+filters)   
Saturday 16 November – 12.30pm – In-person – Come and join Rachael Zimbler and the group for their Christmas get together at Revolution Manchester – More information will be available on our website soon.

[\*Save the Date\* Scotland Regional Peer Support Group Meeting](https://retinauk.org.uk/events/?filter_event_type=96&filter_location=&filter_date=&filter_submit_btn=Apply+filters)   
Wednesday 20 November – 7pm to 8pm – Online – Please come along to hear from our guest speaker Veronica Kinahan who is part of the audio description team for the Scottish Opera – More information will be available on our website soon.

[\*Save the Date\* West Midlands Local Peer Support Group Meet Up](https://retinauk.org.uk/events/?filter_event_type=96&filter_location=&filter_date=&filter_submit_btn=Apply+filters)   
Saturday 7 December – In-person – Perm and the group will be returning to the Coffin Works Museum for a festive meet up followed by a social catch up and meal at The Shakespeare – More information will be available on our website soon.

[\*Save the Date\* ‘Talking’ Travel Peer Support Group Meeting](https://retinauk.org.uk/events/?filter_event_type=96&filter_location=&filter_date=&filter_submit_btn=Apply+filters) Tuesday 10 December – 7pm to 8pm – Online - Please come along and join Richard & Rachael for our next meeting around all things travel – More information will be available on our website soon.

[London & SE Local Peer Support Group Theatre Trip](https://retinauk.org.uk/event/london-south-east-local-peer-support-group-2)   
Saturday 14 December – 5pm to 9pm – In-person – We are pleased to invite you to join facilitator Bhavini Makwana and the group for a magical night at London’s Peacock Theatre for an audio described performance of the much-loved Christmas classic, The Snowman.

[\*Coming Soon\* ‘Talking’ Home & Garden Peer Support Group](https://retinauk.org.uk/information-and-support/services/local-peer-support-groups/coming-soon) Date TBC - Please register your interest if you would like to join us to share your tips, hints, stories and experiences around all things home & garden.

## Christmas Cards 2024

Have you stocked up on your Christmas cards yet? As well as 4 cards to choose from, including 2 that were designed by members of our community, we’ve also got personalised Christmas baubles on sale this year. As well as our Christmas range, we’ve recently introduced some new products to our online shop, including caps, pens, mugs and notebooks. [Visit our online shop today](https://retinauk.org.uk/shop).