

Information on Services for People with a Visual Impairment

Provided by

**Haringey Council
Sensory Impairment Team**

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SIGHT LOSS

Sight loss can happen overnight, over a period of weeks, months or even years. Sight can be affected in many ways. Some people may not be able to see details but can see shapes; others may be able to read but may miss obstacles such as lamp posts, overhanging bushes and everything that is not directly in front of them. The time of day, bright sunshine or dull light, as well as many other factors can make a huge difference when you have lost some of the ability to see.

Total loss of sight is very rare. Most people will have some useful remaining vision.

If you have had a loss of sight, you may have experienced a variety of feelings including shock, anger, fear, depression, frustration or a combination of all these things.

When the sense of shock starts to lessen, you may need information about the practical ways of re-shaping your life and where you can get help and services.

In this booklet we have tried to put together some information about the practical ways of re-shaping your life and where help and services can be obtained.

Of course it is not possible to cover everything in a booklet of this size. However, it is important to remember that if you need more details regarding anything we have written or there is a problem or query that you have and we have not covered it, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will help you if we are able to.

REGISTRATION

The term VISUAL IMPAIRMENT refers to severe loss of sight. Most services described are available to people registered severely sight impaired (*blind*) or sight impaired (*partially sighted*). However certain benefits, concessions or services are available only to those who are registered blind.

If you are not currently attending hospital and you are experiencing problems with your vision, it is advisable to visit your GP who may then refer you to see a specialist at a hospital eye clinic.

The council keeps a voluntary register of people who are blind or partially sighted. The specialist consultant at hospitals that have eye clinics, refer people to the Sensory Impairment Team for registration as severely sight impaired (*blind*) or sight impaired (*partially sighted*). It is not compulsory to be on the register, but it can help with certain benefits or concessions.

USING YOUR VISION

Contrary to popular belief, getting close to the object you are trying to see will not damage yours eyes.

Magnification and Low Vision Aids

There are three ways to magnify whatever you are trying to do.

- The first and easiest way is to bring the object closer. Remember being close to view whatever you are trying to see will not damage your sight.
- Making the object bigger. This is done for example with large print books (which are available at all libraries)
- The third way is to use an aid to make objects larger. This happens when we need glasses, but there are also other much stronger types including magnifiers, which come in many shapes and sizes.

Lighting and Contrast

If you have a visual problem, making best use of light contrast in the home can be very important. Lighting in comparison to other electrical equipment is cheap and good even light in the home will help. Equally if strong contrast of colour is used this can make items stand out more.

REMEMBER TO ASK YOURSELF:

1. **Have I got the best light?**
2. **Have I got the best contrast?**
3. **Have I got the best magnification?**

Sensory Impairment Team

Provision:

The Sensory Impairment Team assesses the needs of people with a visual impairment, or who have a dual sensory loss. If needs have been identified, a care plan will be drawn up to help meet the identified needs. Rehabilitation support can be provided to visually impaired and deafblind people to promote independence and assist with reducing risks. This can include skills training in low vision, daily living tasks and mobility.

Who may refer?

Referrals are accepted from individuals and professionals.

Referral method?

Contact the Integrated Access Team where a Community Care Officer will be pleased to assist with your enquiry

Telephone: 0208 489 1400 (Opening Hours 0900-1700 Mon-Fri)

Fax: 0208 489 4900 (including for notifications of hospital admissions and discharges)

Write to: Integrated Access Team, London Borough of Haringey, 1st Floor, Cumberland Road, Wood Green, N22 7SG

Email: IAT@haringey.gov.uk

SMS: Text IAT to 80818 (charged at standard rate depending on provider and subscriber's package)

Information required for referral:

Please include all personal details, specific functional difficulties relating to the sensory impairment and background medical information.

Interpreting needs:

Provision of interpreters can be arranged.

MOBILITY AND TRAVEL

When someone has had a loss of sight, ability to get around in the home or outside becomes difficult.

Canes and Sticks

There are several different kinds of canes and sticks available, which can help with mobility. Small folding canes can be kept on the pocket and then unfolded in places where it might be advisable to let other pedestrians or drivers know that you have a sight problem; there are also guide and long canes which can help detect pavements edges or surface changes. However it is important that you should have the proper advice on the one which is more suitable to your personal needs; you will also need training in how to use the cane before it is issued.

Contact: Sensory Impairment Team

London Transport

The Disabled Person's Freedom Pass is available to all people registered severely sight impaired (*blind*) or sight impaired (*partially sighted*). Application forms can be obtained from Council Customer Service Centres.

National Rail

Blind and partially sighted people may also apply for the disabled persons rail card. Making journeys possible at reduced prices. Proof of registration is required when ordering these cards. Leaflets are available from main rail stations.

Travel by Train/Air

Help will be provided for visually impaired people travelling by air or rail if you contact the airline or station by before your journey and tell them what your needs are.

London Taxi Card Scheme

This scheme allows people who are severely sight impaired (*blind*) to travel in certain licensed radio/Black cabs at greatly reduced fares. Contact: 020 7934 9791

Guide Dogs

People with a sight impairment can apply to be assessed for a guide dog to aid safe independent travel.

Unit 3 Stroudwood Business Centre

Park Street

Frogmore

St Albans

AL2 2NJ

Tel: 0845 372 7429

hertsbedsandlondon@guidedogs.org.uk

Blue Parking Badge Scheme for Disabled and Blind People

These are available to registered blind people.
Application forms can be obtained from Council Customer Service Centres

Dial-A-Ride

This organisation has tail-lift minibuses available for door-to-door local rides. You will need an application form for membership of this scheme.

Contact: Dial-A-Ride
Progress House
5 Mandela Way
London
SE1 5SS
Tel: 0845 999 1999

EQUIPMENT

Many aids to help people with sight loss manage more effectively in the home are provided by the Sensory Impairment Team. Service users can be assessed to identify any equipment which is appropriate for meeting their needs.

The Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB) has a resource centre, open to the public between: -

9:30 – 5:15 Mon- Fri

9:30 – 12:00 Saturday

The Royal National Institute for Blind People
105 Judd Street,
Kings Cross, WC1H 9NE
Tel: 020 7391 2356

Equipment can also be ordered by telephone or online from RNIB. Items will be sent post together with an invoice.

People registered severely sight impaired (*blind*) or sight impaired (*partially sighted*) can buy most aids from RNIB at a concession price.

Tel: 0303 123 9999

www.rnib.org.uk/shop

TALKING LITERATURE

- **Talking Book Service – RNIB**

RNIB's Talking Books service offers over 16,000 audio books, paid for by annual subscription and delivered directly to your door. Talking Books are recorded in DAISY format, which makes them easy to navigate. Using DAISY means a whole audio book can fit on a single CD.

RNIB National Library Service

PO Box 173

Peterborough

PE2 6WS

Tel: 0303 123 9999

- **Calibre Audio Library**

Calibre provides an audio book service to anyone who cannot read ordinary print books because of sight problems or physical disabilities. This service is free to members, with no subscription charge.

Calibre Audio Library

Aylesbury

Bucks HP22 5XQ

Tel: 01296 432339

Fax: 01296 392599

- **Haringey Library Services**

Talking books on standard cassettes can be obtained through your local library. They also have a mobile library for housebound people.

Tel: 020 8489 2781

- **Local Talking Newspaper and Magazines**

Haringey Phoenix Group
Winkfield Resource Centre
33 Winkfield Road
Wood Green, N22 5RP
Tel: 020 8889 7070

- **The Talking Newspaper Association UK**

The National Recording Centre
Browning Road
Heathfield, Sussex
TN21 8DB
Tel: 01435 866102

UK charity providing national and local newspapers and magazines on audio CD, audio tape, computer disk, e-mail, internet download and CD-ROM for visually impaired and disabled people who find reading a strain.

- **Soundaround Association**

74 Glentham Road
Barnes
SW13 9JJ
Free phone: 0800 917 6008
Provide a free monthly taped magazine.

Financial Benefits

Please contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) as soon as possible for benefit entitlement.

AA (Attendance Allowance)

If you are over 65 and require special help with your personal care or mobility then you may qualify for this allowance.

DLA (Disability Living Allowance)

If you are under 65 you can apply for DLA to assist with any personal care and/or mobility issues.

Income Support

If you are eligible for income support, you will be entitled to claim the blind person's additional disability premium.

Housing and Council Tax Benefits

You may be entitled to these benefits. Contact Jobcentre Plus for further details.

Carers Allowance

If you are caring for someone with personal care needs for at least 35 hours a week, you may qualify for this allowance (you do not have to live with, or be related to person you are looking after to qualify for this allowance).

Severe Disablement Allowance

If you wish to claim for incapacity benefit but have not paid enough contributors to get it, then you may qualify for this allowance.

For information/advice on benefits you can contact:

Benefit Enquiry Line – Tel: 0800 882 200

Royal National Institute for Blind People - Tel 0303 123 9999

(Ask for their Benefits Advice Section)

Citizens Advice Bureau - Haringey – Tel: 0844 826 9715

Age Concern – Haringey – Tel: 020 8801 2444

Income Tax Allowance

If you or your husband/wife or partner are registered as a blind person and are paying income tax, then you can claim an additional allowance.

Contact: Your Income Tax Office

TV Licence

A 50% concession on the TV licence fee can be obtained by persons registered as severely sight impaired (blind).

Contact TV Licensing. Tel: 0845 603 6999.

Free Directory Enquiries

People who have a visual impairment are exempt from paying directory enquires charges. In order to qualify for the service, you should ring British Telecom Free Link number on: 0800 587 0195

Being registered blind, whilst not always essential, may help in claiming some of these benefits.

Educational, Social And Recreational Services/Organisations

Haringey Phoenix Group

Winkfield Resource Centre

33 Winkfield Road

Wood Green, N22 5RP

Web: www.haringeyphoenix.org.uk

Email: haringeyphoenixgroup@yahoo.co.uk

Tel: 020 8889 7070

Fax: 020 8881 7235

A registered charity that provides resources and activities for blind and partially sighted people living in Haringey. These include advice and information, weekly classes e.g. arts and crafts, keep fit, Braille, computer skills as well as social activities. Members can receive a weekly talking newspaper and the council magazine - Haringey People on audio cassette.

Venture Club

A social club for Visually Impaired People

Friday 1 – 3pm

St. Ann's Library Hall

Cissbury Road

Tottenham, N15

Tel: 020 8801 0924

In Touch

In Touch is a radio programme especially for visually impaired people. It is broadcast each Tuesday at 8:40pm on Radio 4. It includes news and helping hints for people with a sight loss.

Voluntary Organisations For People With A Visual Impairment In The UK

Action for Blind People

14–16 Verney Road
London
SE16 3DZ
Tel: 020 7635 4800

Association of Blind Asians

Room 16
Zenith House
210 Church Road
Leyton E10 7JQ
Tel: 020 8558 6972

Association of Blind Catholics

58 Oakwood Road
Horley
Surrey
RH6 7BU
Email: contact@blindcatholics.org.uk

British Retinitis Pigmentosa Society

P.O. Box 350
Buckingham, MK18 1GZ
Helpline Tel: 0845 123 2354
Office Number: 01280 815900

International Glaucoma Association

Woodcote House
15 Highpoint Business Village
Henwood
Ashford
Kent TN24 8DH
Tel: 01233 648170

Look (National Federation of Families with Visually Impaired Children)

c/o Queen Alexander College
49 Court Oak Road
Harborne
Birmingham B17 9TG
Tel: 0121 428 5038

Organisation of Blind Africans & Caribbeans (OBAC)

First Floor, Gloucester House
8 Camberwell New Road
London SE5 0RZ
Tel: 020 7735 3400
Fax: 020 7582 8334

Partially Sighted Society

7/9 Bennetthorpe

Doncaster

DN2 6AA

Tel: 0844 477 4966

Royal London Society of the Blind

Victoria Charity Centre

11 Belgrave Road

London SW1V 1RB

Tel: 020 7808 6170

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

105 Judd Street,

Kings Cross

WC1H 9NE

Tel: 0303 123 9999

SENSE

National charity that supports and campaigns for deafblind children and adults.

101 Pentonville Road

London N1 9LG

Tel: 020 7520 0999