

Information Pack For People With Sight Problems

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Please note that every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy, reliability and completeness of the information provided in this pack at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that changes in circumstances after the time of publication may affect the accuracy of the information, and the authors can take no responsibility for this.

In addition, the information contained in the pack does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by the authors of any service or organisation listed in the pack.

Macular Degeneration

The macula is a small area of the retina, which is extremely sensitive and enables us to see colours, and fine detail for activities such as reading and writing. Macular Degeneration (MD) is the most common cause of poor vision in Europe.

MD affects the central vision – objects might change colour and shape, and might seem to move or disappear. Your vision might become distorted and blurry, lines become wavy or a dark patch might appear in the centre. Some people become sensitive to bright light, have difficulty adjusting from dark to light situations, and colours can fade. Often people complain that they struggle to recognise faces and ‘lose’ words in sentences.

MD might eventually affect both eyes, but generally only affects your central vision. Even at its worst, you should always retain your side or peripheral vision, which helps you get around, unless you have additional eye conditions. MD alone is painless and in theory shouldn't result in total blindness. Some people with advanced sight loss experience visual hallucinations (‘Charles Bonnet Syndrome’) and ‘see things’ such as patterns, bunches of flowers, children etc. This is a common feature of some eye conditions and cannot be treated but please mention it to the Ophthalmologist. These symptoms reduce over time and are usually temporary.

There are two types of MD – wet and dry. Most people have the dry type of MD where the retinal cells degenerate with age. Unfortunately there is currently no medical treatment for dry MD but any deterioration is usually a slow, gradual process.

However, it is possible for dry MD to develop into the less common wet type (and vice versa). This is where a small amount of fluid or blood collects under the macula because of newly formed thin leaking vessels. These vessels are formed because of the presence of an abnormal protein called vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) which is responding to a compromised state of health in the retina. This process is known as choroidal neovascularisation (CNV) and can result in permanent damage and scarring of the retina. It can occur fairly suddenly and can progress quickly.

In order to diagnose and monitor wet MD, you may well have an OCT scan, and /or a 'fluorescein angiography' test where a yellow dye is injected through a needle in your arm then photos are taken of your eye. Both tests are fairly quick and relatively painless although your overall visit can take hours.

The Ophthalmologist then examines your photos / scan and decides if your particular situation is suitable for treatment, and if so, which one. This depends on factors such as exactly where in the retina the leakage is, how much damage has already been caused by the time of diagnosis and how long it has been there. The earlier it is diagnosed, the more likely it will respond to treatment.

There are various NHS treatments now available for wet MD such as Avastin, Lucentis or Eylea which are injected into the eye following anaesthetic eye drops. This is a quick procedure and whilst uncomfortable, most people don't find it very painful.

Such injections are usually given once a month for three months then further tests such as OCT scans are taken to see if it is working. Most people stabilise on this treatment, and approximately a third will improve. We

hope newer drugs such as Eylea will start to last longer, with less frequent injections.

Because dry MD can turn wet, and wet MD can 'dry up', it can become very confusing for patients trying to keep track of what is happening. Please ask your Ophthalmologist for a copy of any clinic summary letters written to your GP if you wish.

Low vision aids such as magnifiers (see pg. 21) and advice from sight loss professionals ('Rehabilitation Officers' - see pg.20) can help people to maximise their existing vision and therefore retain their independence and confidence.

Whether you have wet or dry MD, you can help yourself in the following ways-

- Stop smoking:

NHS smoking helpline is 0300 123 1044

www.nhs.uk/smokefree

- Good diet:

Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables, as these food groups are rich in anti-oxidants such as vitamins A,C & E, all necessary for healthy eyes. Some scientists think that eating foods which are rich in lutein and zeaxanthin (e.g. dark leafy greens) could be beneficial to your eyes, especially if you have macular degeneration. Examples include spinach, broccoli, kale, corn, sprouts, beans, peas, grapes, oranges. It is also thought that fatty acids such as omega 3 oil found in oily fish may help.

- **Consider supplements:**

Research from the 2001 AREDS study (Age Related Eye Disease Study) has suggested that people with wet MD in one eye who took a specific formula of mineral and vitamins may reduce the risk of the condition occurring in the other eye. There is no evidence so far that such supplements benefit people with very minimal dry MD. The following brands contain the AREDS formula but there are many others on the market:

- ICAPS®
- Ocuville® Preservision™ (however contains no lutein)
- Ocuville® Lutein

They can cost between £10-20 per month and are available from places such as chemists, health food shops and some opticians. Ask your Ophthalmologist if they would recommend them. As with all medicines and products, there is a small risk of various side effects. The high levels of vitamin A (beta-carotene) in some preparations have been shown to increase the chances of getting lung cancer in smokers. ***If you smoke, or have smoked consistently in the last ten years, you should opt for a preparation that does not contain it.***

Useful numbers:

Local Macular Society (01273) 476 206
Meets on 2nd Tues of month 11am at Cornerstone
Community Centre, Church Road, Hove

Macular Society

0300 3030 111 www.macularsociety.org

Professional free telephone counselling available. Can advise about 'Eccentric Viewing' technique and 'Steady Eye Strategy' to help maximise any side /peripheral vision you have. Genetic information and support.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a group of eye conditions when the optic nerve is damaged at the point where it leaves the eye. This is due to the pressure in the eye being raised (largely independent of blood pressure), a weak optic nerve or a combination of both.

The optic nerve carries information from the retina (light sensitive layer at the back of the eye) to the brain, which interprets this as a picture. It can become damaged when the aqueous fluid (not tears) cannot move through the pupil and out of the eye through drainage channels between the iris (coloured part) and cornea (front covering of the eye). If these channels are too narrow or blocked, or too much fluid is produced, the eye pressure will rise. Sudden high pressure can cause instant sight loss.

There are four main types of glaucoma:

Chronic glaucoma:

This happens gradually over a long period of time as the drainage channels slowly become blocked. Various factors increase your risk – being older, being of African descent, having a close relative with glaucoma (close relatives over 40 should have a free NHS test every year), short sighted people and diabetics.

Chronic glaucoma might not be noticed for some time, as it is painless and gradual. The field of vision, however, is being damaged, usually in an arc-shape just above and/or below the centre when looking ahead. Eventually sight becomes ‘tunnel vision’ – like looking through a tube.

Testing for chronic glaucoma:

Over 40's should have an eye test at least every 2 years, and should ask for three types of glaucoma tests – most opticians can do these:

- **examining your optic nerve with a torch**
- **measuring your eye pressure**
- **showing you light patterns**

Treatment:

Damage from glaucoma cannot be cured. However this condition can usually be managed well with early diagnosis, regular checks and treatments which aim to reduce eye pressure or increase the blood supply to your optic nerve –

- **eye drops to reduce the amount of aqueous fluid produced or to open up the drainage channels**
- **Failing this, laser treatment or an operation (trabeculectomy) can improve drainage.**

Acute glaucoma:

Also called closed angle glaucoma. The edge of the iris and the cornea come into contact, stopping the flow of fluid completely and rapidly. The vision can deteriorate suddenly, the eye become red and it can be very painful. You might feel sick and see misty coloured rings around white lights. You might have mild attacks of this in the evenings. You should contact your doctor or the hospital urgently, and you will be admitted to hospital. If caught early, it can be treated within a few hours and your vision might return almost to normal.

As with chronic glaucoma, your treatment will be a combination of drugs, laser or an operation. You will probably be advised to have your other eye treated too.

- **Secondary glaucoma:**
The pressure rises because of another eye condition.
- **Developmental/congenital glaucoma:**
This is rare and potentially serious condition in babies.

Useful numbers:

International Glaucoma Association

www.glaucoma-association.com info@iga.org.uk

Sightline 01233 648170 Mon to Fri 9.30 - 5.00pm

Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a condition where the body cannot process sugar and other carbohydrates normally due to a lack of insulin. It usually starts in later life and can affect many different parts of the body, including the eyes. Diabetes won't necessarily affect your sight, particularly if it is well controlled. Annual eye examinations are therefore crucial.

Type 1:

This is controlled by insulin injections and often occurs in under 30's.

Type 2:

This is controlled by diet, tablets, or insulin injections. It usually occurs in those over 40.

Diabetic retinopathy is the most serious eye condition caused by diabetes. There are three stages –

1) Background diabetic retinopathy

Blood vessels in the retina might bulge (microaneurysm), and might leak blood (haemorrhages) or fluid (exudates). This is very common in long term diabetics and doesn't threaten your vision.

2) Maculopathy

This is when the above becomes more serious and gradually and progressively affects the macular and therefore the central vision. Generally speaking as with macular degeneration, people with this condition retain their peripheral vision enabling them to get around.

3) Proliferative diabetic retinopathy

If the condition worsens, the retinal blood vessels become blocked and in an effort to keep the blood supply flowing, new vessels appear. Although in themselves they rarely affect your vision, they are weak and grow in the wrong place. This makes them prone to bleeding and creating scar tissue, which distorts the retina and can lead to a retinal detachment. Laser treatment is often given to prevent further bleeding but cannot restore lost vision.

Useful numbers:

Diabetes UK & Careline 0345 123 2399
www.diabetes.org.uk
careline@diabetes.org.uk

Cataracts

Cataracts occur when the lens in your eye becomes cloudy, often due to ageing, but also because of diabetes, certain medications, long standing eye conditions or eye injuries. They are very common and can cause blurred / misty vision, 'washed out' colours and you might become dazzled by bright light. Occasionally they are present from birth (congenital cataracts). Cataracts are NOT a 'skin' nor do you have to wait until they are 'ripe' before having surgery these days thanks to modern technology.

Unless you have other eye conditions, cataract surgery is now very quick and your vision should be better instantly. Most people can have a local anaesthetic and leave hospital within hours of surgery. In this case, you will be awake but should feel nothing during the operation, which takes approximately 20 minutes. A small opening is made in your eye and the cloudy lens is removed and replaced permanently with a clear plastic *intraocular lens implant*.

You might need to wear a clear plastic eye shield over night and you will need to use eye drops for sometime after. Initially you should avoid wearing make up, getting soapy water in your eyes, heavy lifting and strenuous activities.

Sometimes after cataract surgery the membrane of the sac in which it 'sits' can cloud over. If this happens, usually some simple laser treatment, which is quick and painless, can be done as an outpatient.

Hemianopia / Hemianopsia

A number of medical conditions can cause this sight problem where one half of your field of vision (the peripheral, side vision) is missing, but a stroke, a tumour or injury are the most common causes. Hemianopia can be left or right sided and range from being so mild it's unnoticeable, to very severe. There are different types of field loss -

- **Absolute:** affected part of the retina is totally blind to light, form and colour.
- **Relative:** loss of form and colour but not of light.
- **Congruous:** identical defects in the visual fields of each eye
- **Incongruous:** both visual fields differently affected in one or more ways.
- **Homonymous:** nasal half of one eye and temporal (or outer) half of the other - typical of stroke patients
- **Bitemporal:** both temporal (outside edge) halves of visual field - this is typical of pituitary tumours

There is unfortunately no specific treatment for the field of vision defect in stroke, though it may show improvement with time in some patients. It is however important to diagnose the condition in patients still driving to advise them and to treat any underlying problems e.g. abnormal blood pressure.

Although stroke is not itself a genetic illness, it may result from other health problems that exist within families and discussion with medical advisors will help to identify whether there might be genetic implications.

Useful numbers:

The Stroke Association Helpline 0303 303 3100

www.stroke.org.uk

info@stroke.org.uk

How Can I Best Look After My Eyes?

As with all conditions, a healthy lifestyle will help:

- not smoking (smoking hugely increases your chances of sight loss)
- limiting alcohol
- a good diet, low in saturated fats
- exercise
- looking after any medical conditions you may have, such as diabetes or high blood pressure
- protecting your eyes from sunlight with glasses / hats
- visiting an optician at least every two years

If you have very poor vision, then you may be entitled to assistance with low vision aids (e.g. magnifiers - see pg. 21), and/or help from social services (see pg. 20). Some people can be registered Sight Impaired /SI ('partially sighted') or Severely Sight Impaired /SSI ('blind') – see pg. 15.

Action for Blind People Eye Clinic Liaison Officer ('ECLO')

(01273) 696955 ext 7528 or 07434 598972

Based at the Eye Hospital, the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer can offer information and advice regarding eye conditions, social services, registration, voluntary organisations, low vision referrals for magnifiers etc. as well as basic emotional support.

Registration

If your binocular vision (i.e. what you can see with both eyes open with your best glasses/contact lenses if relevant) is permanently down to a certain level, or you have significant impaired field of vision (i.e. peripheral sight), you can ask the Ophthalmologist if you qualify for a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) so you can be registered 'Sight Impaired / SI' ('partially sighted') or 'Severely Sight Impaired / SSI' ('blind'). Loss of vision in one eye only does not qualify. Also, failing DVLA driving standards also does not necessarily mean your vision is poor enough for registration.

You will be registered by your local authority Social Services once they receive the Certificate of Vision Impairment ('CVI') from the Eye hospital. They will assess your difficulties, provide you with a registration card and number and explain the advantages of registration in your local area as well as nationally.

Besides alerting the local authority to your level of sight loss and resulting difficulties, registration also means you are registered as disabled and protected under the Equality Act (2010). It might also be of benefit to you practically or financially in all sorts of ways e.g. discount at a gallery, help at an airport - just ask. You do not usually need to be registered for a Low Vision assessment (pg. 21) or a 'ROVI' assessment (pg. 20).

Some registration concessions are nation-wide and others will depend on your local area – below are some examples. Registration is voluntary and you can be de-registered if you change your mind in future. You need to inform your new Social Services department if you move area that you are registered. Please call RNIB helpline 0303 123 9999 for more information regarding registration.

Concessions

Benefits

Registration can add weight to a benefit application for clients or carers e.g. Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payment (DLA/PIP) or Attendance Allowance (AA), which could also increase Pension Credit (PC). If someone is having significant daily difficulties because of their sight and / other health problems /learning disabilities, please contact a benefit advisor (see pg. 25).

Blue Badge Scheme (disabled parking)

People registered SSI (not SI) qualify for a badge for use in any vehicle in which they travel. Ask local council for application form.

Bus

Free bus services available to all over 60 (Countycard) and under 60's who are registered SSI or SI or have a letter from their Ophthalmologist confirming they are unable to drive due to impaired vision.

Cinemas

Odeon and Cineworld - if person is registered SSI or receive DLA/AA benefit, they can apply for a CEA (Cinema Exhibitor's Association) card so companion/ escort goes free but no direct discount for person themselves. Application form from www.ceacard.co.uk or cinema.

Duke of York – No direct discount but companion goes free with proof of SI or SSI registration card, not CEA card.

Coach

National Express- Anyone registered SI or SSI can buy a Disabled Coach card guaranteeing 1/3rd off any standard ticket on/off peak time.

Council tax

Reduction to those registered SI or SSI who can show a room is mainly designated for their visual impairment equipment e.g. a quiet room with Braille equipment or talking books etc. (not including a bathroom, kitchen or lounge). Ask local council for application form.

Hearing aids

Please tell your hearing aid provider if you are visually impaired as you may be given a spare pair of moulds.

Income tax

People registered SSI and paying tax on income, savings, private pensions etc. are entitled to an additional £2,160 on top of their existing personal tax allowance. This can be transferred to a live-in spouse. Tel: 0300 200 3301 www.hmrc.gov.uk

Leisure centres

Concessions are often available for those registered SI/SSI or on certain benefits – please enquire directly with individual centres

NHS costs

Possibly entitled to free NHS prescriptions if you have a continuing physical disability which means you cannot go out without the help of another person or have other health condition on the list. Ask your GP about this medical exemption certificate (form FP92A). Free NHS sight test if SI or SSI (or over 60) or on income related benefit. Must tell optometrist before test, and ask if entitled to a voucher towards the cost of glasses. If on low income/savings, consider form HC1. For more advice call 0845 850 1166.

Postage ('Articles for the Blind')

Free postage for information prepared specifically for visually impaired people e.g. large print /CD /braille. Need proof of visual impairment e.g. letter from optician/eye hospital if not registered SI or SSI. Call Royal Mail 08457 740740 or www.royalmail.com (articles for the blind)

Radio /tape cassette/CD player (free loan)

Provided by British Wireless for the Blind Association for those reg. SI or SSI in receipt of means tested benefit (e.g. Pension Credit/Income Support/Income Related ESA etc.). Tel: (01622) 75 47 57

Rail

Disabled railcard costs £20 per year -1/3 off most rail travel (there are exceptions) also note - travelling companion also gets 1/3 off rail journey, unlike standard over 60's railcard and works out slightly cheaper to buy. Also you can ask for practical assistance at start/end of journey. Tel. 0845 605 0525 for more enquiries.

Telephone

Fault priority, large print/Braille bills and equipment available to hire e.g. big button telephone may be provided to those registered SI/SSI. Some companies will provide these services with proof of sight problems & reading difficulties (e.g. from Eye Hospital / low vision clinic /Sensory team) even if you aren't registered. Local Social Service dept. may occasionally help with installation and line rental charges depending on individual circumstances. Possible discounts on directory enquiries (0800 587 019). *Please speak to your phone company directly and check any charges.*

Theatres, Galleries, exhibitions etc

Please call venue directly and ask about concessions for those registered.

TV Licence

Age 75 and over is free anyway. 50% discount if registered SSI.

Tel. 0300 790 6071.

VAT relief

Available to those registered SI /SSI on certain products related to sight loss. Call HM Revenue & Customs on 0300 123 1073.

Social Services (Brighton & Hove area)

Call the Access Team on 295555 about the following:

‘ROVI’s’ (Rehabilitation Officers for Visually Impaired people) are specifically trained to help people who are having difficulties because of their sight around issues such as safety indoors (cooking, hot drinks etc.) and outdoors (crossing roads, bumping into objects, tripping over kerbs etc.). They can also advise on lighting, using magnifiers, and register people SI/SSI if they receive a certificate (‘CVI’) from the Eye Hospital (pg. 15). The ‘ROVI’s also run the Low Vision Clinic (pg 21).

Other specialists can advise people with hearing difficulties, and possibly provide equipment such as doorbell/smoke alarm/telephone flashing light alerts. Clients must have had a hearing test in the last three years for this assistance. People with both a significant sight and hearing loss who are encountering considering daily difficulties can ask for a specialist dual sensory assessment.

OTs (Occupational Therapists) can advise people with illnesses or disabilities which mean they are having difficulties with their mobility e.g. getting in/out of the bath, on/off the toilet, climbing up/down stairs.

The Support and Intervention Teams (‘SIT’) give advice, information and may assess people at home if they are struggling with washing or dressing, are forgetful or confused about medication, meals, are unsafe because of falls etc. Carers can request their own assessment.

Social Services (Outside Brighton & Hove)

**East Sussex area: (0345) 608 0191
West Sussex Area: (01243) 642 555**

Low Vision Clinic

Many people with significant sight problems cannot be helped by wearing glasses, but high powered optical aids such as magnifiers, large clear print, colour contrasts and efficient lighting can make a difference. 'Low vision aids' refer to different sorts of magnifiers, CCTV/computer equipment and telescopic glasses.

Low Vision clinics usually provide basic low vision aids on long loan at no charge. You can be referred to your local clinic by asking the Ophthalmologist at your next Eye hospital appointment or your optician can refer you directly. If instead you wish to pay for a magnifying aid, please see pg. 22 or call the RNIB on 0303 123 9999.

There is a Low Vision Clinic at Montague House, Montague Place/Somerset St, Brighton, BN2 1JE and one at Haywards Heath Health Centre, Heath Road, Haywards Heath RH16 3BB. *You must ask your GP, not the Eye hospital, to arrange hospital transport to the low vision clinic if this is needed.*

The clinic will call you to arrange an appointment where you can discuss what type of low vision aid (usually a hand held magnifier) would suit your lifestyle and eye condition. Brighton & Hove residents can also have more in depth rehabilitation advice from the 'ROVI's (see pg. 20) at their clinic appointment and ask for further support to practice the technique called 'Eccentric Viewing' (using your side /peripheral vision).

East and West Sussex residents can ask for more advice and support from their local Social Services Rehab Officers (pg. 20) and/or charities ESAB (pg. 23) or 4Sight (pg. 24) who can contact them in due course and possibly visit them at home.

**Opticians Providing Private Low Vision Services In
Brighton / Hove**

The following opticians can refer you directly to the free, NHS Low Vision service but can also assess you for low vision aids privately at a cost if you prefer:

Rachel Barnard
Barnard Associates
Connaught House
27 Sackville Road
Hove BN3 3WA
(01273) 772318

Linwood Strong(Collisons)
57B London Road,
Brighton,
BN1 4JE.
(01273) 682925

Domicillary ('home visiting') Opticians

*****please ask them to refer you directly to the Low Vision
Clinic if this is needed*****

**Complete Community Care Opticians
(01273) 220 588**

**Eyes at Home
(0800) 345 7509 (free phone) / 07748 020 315**

**Eye Visit
Mr Keri Davies
(01273) 701 439**

**Lesley Sones Opticians (Peacehaven)
(01273) 585 359**

Equipment

The following centres have a display of equipment for people to try out:

East Sussex Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People (ESAB)

(01323) 832 252

Mon – Fri 9 – 4.30pm

Based in Hove and Hailsham supporting anyone in East Sussex with sight problems. Equipment display, monthly social groups, home visiting scheme, talking books and videos, free radio/ tape/ CD player for those registered and in need. Local Brighton dual sensory impaired social group. Maggie Grinyer links in with the Low Vision clinic (see pg. 21).

Low Vision Clinic

(see pg. 21)

Need a referral from your Optician or eye hospital (wherever your eyes were last examined)

British Red Cross

0800 0280 831

No actual sight specific equipment but hires out wheelchairs and commodes and useful on-line equipment shop (www.redcross.org.uk/shop).

Voluntary Organisations

Action for Blind People (Via RNIB Helpline below)
Advice re: employment, housing, benefits, holidays,
children and young people's activities etc.

Blind Veterans UK (0800) 389 7979
Wide ranging support for ex-service men/women.

Carers Centre (01273) 234 045
Activities and support for carers of relatives/partners /
friends/neighbours who are sick or disabled.

City Synergy (01273) 697339 Paul Gillett
E-mail: citysynergy@yahoo.co.uk Web: www.citysynergy.org.uk
For all ages – activities include BBQ's, pubs, sport etc.

Deafblind UK
(01733) 358 100 (24hrs) info@deafblind.org.uk
For people with significant sight/hearing loss and carers.

ESAB (see pg. 23)

4Sight (West Sussex Association for the Blind)
(01243) 828 555 Email: enquiries@4sight.org.uk

RNIB (supporting blind and partially sighted people)
(0303) 123 9999
Advice re: magnifiers / education / employment / benefits
/ telephone social groups / counselling / gadgets /
computing / holidays / campaigns / legal advice etc.

SeeAbility (01372) 755 000 www.seeability.org
Support for people with sight problems and additional
learning / physical disabilities / mental health problems.

Sense (0300) 330 9250
For people with significant sight and hearing loss.

Employment / Training

Action for Blind People Employment Helpline
0800 440 2255
employmentline@actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Action for Blind People Employment & Education (16+)
Advice Service Andrew Farrell
07920 232 912 East Sussex & Brighton/Hove area

Blatchington Court Trust (for 0-30 yr olds in Sussex)
(see pg. 31) Provide IT & employment advice.

Disability Employment Advisor/s
(01273) 647533/4 re: job re-training, courses, benefits.

Benefits/ Housing /Legal Advice

Regardless of savings/income, you may be entitled to a disability benefit if you are having significant daily problems because of your sight loss and / poor general health. Carers also may qualify for benefits. SI/SSI registration isn't essential.

Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)
(0845) 120 3710 General advice service

RNIB Helpline
(0303) 123 9999

The Fed Centre for Independent Living
(01273) 894050

(Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is for under 65's
(0800) 917 2222

(Attendance Allowance (AA) is for over 65's
(0345) 605 6055

Counselling / Emotional Support

Age UK (over 60's) (01273) 720 603
Local face to face general counselling.

Blatchington Court Trust (for 0-30 yr olds & parents)
(see pg. 31) Local face to face specialist counselling

Brighton Urgent Response Service (BURS)
(01273) 242220

Deafblind UK (see pg. 24) Specialist telephone support

HopelineUK (for 35 yr olds and under & those concerned)
(0800) 068 4141 General telephone support

Listening Eye (Tues, Weds, Thurs 6-10pm)
(0800) 783 1979 Specialist telephone support

Macular Society (pg. 6).Specialist tel. support.

RLSB (Royal London Society for the Blind) (see pg. 31)

RNIB Emotional Support Services
Helpline (0303) 123 9999 for specialist telephone support.

Sight Line Vision North West (Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon 6-10pm)
(0800) 587 2252 Specialist telephone support

Sussex Mental Healthline (0300) 5000 101

Samaritans (08457) 90 90 90 General telephone support

The Fed Centre for Independent Living (see pg. 25)
Face to face local general counselling.

The Silverline (general telephone support, older people)
(0800) 470 80 90

Books / Tapes / Radios / Papers

**Big Print weekly national paper and TV/radio guide
(0303) 123 9999 (RNIB)**

**Brighton & Hove City Libraries Equal Access Service
(01273) 296906**

Has information on talking books in various formats e.g. large print, tape cassettes, CD - free if housebound / registered disabled e.g. Sight Impaired. Provides a service to sheltered, care & nursing homes.

Calibre

(01296) 432 339

www.calibre.org.uk

Talking books lending library. £30 adult / £20 children one off registration fee. Tapes posted out.

ESAB (see pg. 23)

Free talking books lending library.

Large Print Bookshop

(01763) 252 687

info@largeprintbookshop.co.uk

National Talking Newspapers & Magazines (TNAUK)

(01435) 866102

www.tnauk.org.uk

National newspapers and over 200 magazines and journal titles in a number of formats for a fee (tape, audio CD, Daisy CD's etc).

RNIB Talking Book Service

(01733) 375 414

The Seeing Ear

librarian@seeingear.org (no tel. number)

The on-line library for visually impaired and print disabled people.

Local News

Brighton- Argus (01273) 677 755
Free weekly local talking newspaper on CD or via
website <http://brightontnb.co.uk/>

Deans Talk (01273) 303 111
Free monthly audio magazine for those in the Deans.

Lewes (01273) 813 459 (Mrs Hancock)

Wealdon Talking News (01435) 862 304

Transport

Blue Badge scheme
(01273) 296 270
Free parking badge for people with various disabilities
(e.g. registered SSI/Blind (not just SI/partially sighted) or
serious mobility difficulties).

Concessionary Bus Pass
(01273) 291 924
For people registered SI / SSI. Talking bus stop fob
available through the ROVI's (see pg.20)

DVLA (driving licence) medical enquiries
(0300) 790 6806

Easy Link
(01273) 505 888
Special bus service for people who have difficulties with
public transport. W/chair accessible. Contact for further
info re: local w/chair accessible transport.

Red Cross (0800) 0280 831
Provide door to door transport for appts, holidays etc.
Charging per mile with minimum starting fee.

Taxi Voucher Scheme

(01273) 291 924

Limited amount of free vouchers towards taxi fares for people unable to use public transport.

The Fed Centre for Independent Living

(see pg. 25)

Tripscope

(0117) 939 7782

National travel advice and information for older /disabled people.

Bluebird Community Partnership

(01444) 471919

(advanced bookings 9.30am–11.30 am Mon-Fri)

(07711) 034519

(urgent requests 8.30am - 5.00pm Mon-Fri).

Transport to Princess Royal, Royal Sussex County or Sussex Eye Hospital.

Specialist Housing /Homelessness

Blind Veterans UK (formerly St Dunstan's)

(0800) 389 7979 for application form

Daily living skills training, leisure /sports facilities, day trips, holidays, respite/convalescence breaks, housing, residential placements etc.

RNIB Wavertree House, Somerhill Road, Hove

(01273) 262 200

Residential supported accommodation specifically designed for people with sight loss.

Brighton Housing Trust Advice Centre

(01273) 234 737 (homelessness/risk of homelessness advice)

Holidays /Respite /Sport/Leisure

Action for Blind People

(0303) 123 9999

Holidays in Weston, Bognor, Teignmouth, Windermere.

Alternative Vision - self help group holidays

(01273) 683 273 / 07778 209 060 Jon and Sue Ridge

Blind Veterans UK (must be a member) (see pg. 29)

British Blind Sport

(01926) 424247

www.britishblindsport.org.uk

City Synergy (see pg. 24)

Goalball

(07766) 514161(Mick) bhcitygoalball@VERYSPORTY.co.uk

Holiday Care Service (0845) 124 9971

Royal Blind Society (RBS) Holiday Choices

(01903) 857 023

RNIB Holiday Service

(0303) 123 9999

Sussex Active Blind Club

(01273) 685 029

Pam South

Torch Holiday & Retreat Centre (Hurstpierpoint)

(01273) 832 282 (also local Hove support group)

Traveleyes (including group adventures abroad)

(08448) 040 221

Vitalise (Winged Fellowship)

(0845) 345 1970

Younger People with Sight Loss

**Action for Blind People (via RNIB Helpline below)
Actionnaires clubs promote sports and social events –
also associated with Blatchington Court Trust.**

**Blatchington Court Trust (for 0-30 yr olds in Sussex)
(01273) 727 222 (Prefer if young person is registered)
Provide advocacy, counselling, education, IT &
employment advice, and family support.**

**Blind Children UK (National Blind Children's Society)
(01278) 764 770 www.blindchildrenuk.org
For 0-25 yr olds, can provide grants.**

**LOOK (National Federation of Families with Visually
Impaired Children) www.look-uk.org**

**LOOK Sussex
(01273) 677731 / 07703 434 119 Tara Dutton**

**RLSB (Royal London Society for Blind People)
(01732) 592 650 www.rlsb.org.uk
Provide general advice, also counselling.**

**RNIB Family Services Officer (London & SE)
(0303) 123 9999 (main helpline)**

**Sensory Needs Service for Visually Impaired Children
(01273) 293610 (Brighton & Hove)
Assess the developmental and educational needs of 0-18
year olds at home /school.**

**Spiral Sussex (for people with learning disabilities)
(01273) 295 180 / 07922 098 062 Info@spiralsussex.co.uk**

**The Royal Blind Society (Family Support Worker)
07651 406 262 0-25 year olds**

General

Age UK
(01273) 720 603

Carelink
(01273) 673 105
Alarm service for people at risk of falls etc. Two local key holders needed. Monthly charge, some concessions.

Guide Dogs for the Blind
www.guidedogs.org.uk
Kent and East Sussex area 0845 372 7422
West Sussex area 0845 372 7433

RNIB (Supporting blind and partially sighted people)
(0303) 123 9999 (Helpline) www.rnib.org.uk

The Partially Sighted Society
(0844) 477 4966 www.partsight.org.uk

VocalEyes
Nationwide audio description charity, providing access to the arts (Theatre, museums, galleries etc.) for visually impaired people
020 7375 1043 enquiries@vocaleyeyes.co.uk
www.vocaleyeyes.co.uk

**** Please call 696955 ext 7528 to correct any errors ****
(Dec 2015)

Sussex Eye Hospital , Eastern Road, Brighton, BN2 5BF