

Certification

Keep your Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI). It has three main functions:

1. It qualifies you to be registered with your local council as sight impaired (partially sighted) or severely sight impaired (blind).
2. It lets your local council know about your sight loss. They should contact you within two weeks to offer registration, and to identify any help you might need with day-to-day tasks.
3. The CVI records important information about the causes of sight loss. It helps in planning NHS eye care services and research about eye conditions.

Registration and vision rehabilitation/habilitation

Councils have a duty to keep a register of people with sight loss. They will contact you to talk about the benefits of being registered. This is likely to be through the Social Services Local Sensory Team (or an organisation working on their behalf). Registration is often a positive step to help you to be as independent as possible. You can choose whether or not to be registered. Once registered, your local council should offer you a card confirming registration. If you are registered, you may find it easier to prove the degree of your sight loss and your eligibility for certain concessions. The Council should also talk to you about vision rehabilitation if you are an adult, and habilitation if you are a child or young person and any other support that might help. Vision rehabilitation/habilitation is support or training to help you to maximise your independence, such as moving around your home and getting out and about safely.

Early Years Development, Children and Young People and Education

Children (including babies) and young people who are vision impaired will require specialist support for their development and may receive special educational needs provision. An education, health and care (EHC) plan may be provided. You do not need to be certified or registered to receive this support or an EHC plan. This support is provided by the council's specialist education vision impairment service. Additional support from a social care assessment may also be offered as a result of registration. Information about the support your council offers to children and young people can be found on the 'Local Offer' page of their website. If you or your child are not known to this service talk to the Ophthalmologist or ECLO/Sight Loss Advisor.

Driving

As a person certified as sight impaired or severely sight impaired you must not drive and you must inform the DVLA at the earliest opportunity. For more information, please contact: Drivers Medical Branch, DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1TU. Telephone 0300 790 6806. Email eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

Where to get further information, advice and support

“Sight Loss: What we needed to know”, written by people with sight loss, contains lots of useful information including a list of other charities who may be able to help you.

Visit www.rnib.org.uk/sightlossinfo

‘Sightline’ is an online directory of people, services and organisations that help people with sight loss in your area. Visit www.sightlinedirectory.org.uk

‘Starting Point’ signposts families to resources and professionals that can help with the first steps following your child’s diagnosis. Visit www.vision2020uk.org.uk/startingpoint

Your local sight loss charity has lots of information, advice and practical solutions that can help you. Visit www.visionary.org.uk

RNIB offers practical and emotional support for everyone affected by sight loss. Call the Helpline on 0303 123 9999 or visit www.rnib.org.uk

Guide Dogs provides a range of support services to people of all ages. Call 0800 953 0113 (adults) or 0800 781 1444 (parents/guardians of children/young people) or visit www.guidedogs.org.uk

Blind Veterans UK provides services and support to vision impaired veterans. Call 0800 389 7979 or visit www.noonealone.org.uk

SeeAbility is a charity that acts to make eye care more accessible for people with learning disabilities and autism. Their easy read information can be found at www.seeability.org/looking-after-your-eyes or you can call 01372 755000.