

# Registering as sight impaired

Being registered often makes it easier to get practical help and may qualify you for certain benefits.

This leaflet is available on audio CD.

No one need face macular degeneration alone.  
For information and support call 0300 3030 111.

## Introduction

If you have a permanent visual impairment you may be eligible to be registered as sight impaired. Being registered often makes it easier to get practical help and may qualify you for certain benefits.

Registration is voluntary. There are two categories of registration: sight impaired and severely sight impaired.

The loss of sight in one eye does not generally qualify you for registration.

## Why should I register?

If you are registered as either sight impaired or severely sight impaired you may be entitled to:

- free NHS sight tests
- railcards and other rail or travel concessions
- local travel schemes
- free directory enquiry services from BT
- protection under the Equality Act
- free postage on items marked 'articles for the blind'
- free assessment by social services.

In addition, if you are registered as severely sight impaired you may be entitled to:

- blind person's personal income tax allowance
- a reduction of 50% on the television licence fee

(N.B. everyone over 75 gets a free television licence)

- car parking concessions such as the blue badge scheme.

You may also be entitled to get:

- free loan of radios, cassette players and TV sound receivers

- help with telephone installation charges and line rental
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Attendance Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Tax credits
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax disability reduction
- Universal Credit
- Pension Credit
- free ticket for a guide at theatres, galleries and tourist attractions.

## How do I register?

To be registered, you must have your sight examined by a hospital consultant ophthalmologist (eye specialist).

This can be arranged by your GP or optometrist if you are not already a patient of a consultant.

## How is my category decided?

The ophthalmologist will measure your visual acuity (how good you are at seeing detail) and your field of vision (how much you can see from the side of your eye while looking straight ahead).

They will look at the combined results to decide whether you're eligible to be registered, and at which level.

If the ophthalmologist thinks that you are suitable for registration he or she will complete a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) form (a CVIW form in Wales, BP1 form in Scotland) with you. This form records information about your condition and certifies you as either sight impaired or severely sight impaired. The register is confidential and held locally, so if you move you will need to re-register.

Copies of the CVI will be sent to adult social services and your GP. Your hospital will provide you with a copy as well.

A member of your local sensory services team will then contact you to discuss your particular needs and what services and benefits may be available.

With your permission, a copy of the CVI will be sent to The Royal College of Ophthalmologists Certifications Office at Moorfields Eye Hospital, where information about eye conditions is collected and used to help to

improve eye care and services in the future.

### **Other ways to get help**

You can request an assessment from adult services using the Low Vision Leaflet (LVL). This notifies them that you are having difficulties as a result of your sight loss. To access the form, call your local authority adult services department or visit their website.

Forms are also available from your optician. This is a self-referral leaflet but you can ask eye clinic staff or your optician to complete a

request on your behalf. With your consent they'll use the Referral of Vision Impaired Patient (RVI) form. The forms give information about your vision and the types of things that you might like help with, for example cooking or getting about safely.

The form can be used if your sight is not poor enough to qualify you for registration, or if you don't want to be registered, but you do want advice and information that might help you. The types and level of services available differ according to where you live.

Some people who are not eligible to be registered as sight impaired may still qualify to be registered as disabled. Your local sight loss charity may be able to offer you a benefits review. Citizens Advice and Age UK offer a similar service.

## How we can help

The Macular Society has a range of free services to help you share your feelings and explore ways of coping with the changes to your life.

### Helpline

Our Helpline should be your first point of call. Our specialist staff

listen, offer support and provide information and advice about all aspects of central vision loss. Calls are confidential and no question is a silly one.

**0300 3030 111**  
**Monday to Friday**  
**9am – 5pm**  
**help@**  
**macularsociety.org**

The Helpline can also tell you about our other services:

### **Counselling**

It is natural to feel upset or angry when you're told you have a macular condition. Many people find it helps to talk in confidence to a professional counsellor.

### **Support groups**

We have a network of almost 380 local groups providing friendship, practical advice and a sympathetic ear to thousands of people with macular disease. To find your local group, visit [www.macularsociety.org/groups](http://www.macularsociety.org/groups) or call the Helpline.

### **Befriending**

Befrienders telephone regularly for a friendly chat about anything you like including, but not only, macular disease.

### **Advocacy**

We offer help to those struggling to access treatments.

# Six months free membership

If you would like to receive regular updates about living with macular conditions, treatments and medical research to find a cure then membership is for you.

Join for free today by calling 01264 350 551 or go to [www.macularsociety.org/6months](http://www.macularsociety.org/6months)

We rely on donations to fund support services and research to find a cure. To donate please go to [www.macularsociety.org/donate](http://www.macularsociety.org/donate) or call 01264 350 551.



**Macular Society**

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Macular Society is the trading name of the Macular Disease Society.

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