

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.

You don't have to face macular disease alone.
For the best information and support call us on
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: Partially Sight Impaired and, Severely Sight Impaired.

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

Why should I register?

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

- free NHS sight tests
- railcards and other rail or travel concessions
- local travel schemes
- free 195 Directory Enquiry Service
- protection under the Equality Act
- free postage on items marked 'articles for the blind'
- blind person's personal income tax allowance

- a reduction of 50% on the television licence fee
- car parking concessions such as the blue badge scheme.
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Attendance 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. Contact your Local Borough Council to enquire about specific concessions for a Registered person

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 ('A655' in Northern

Ireland, 'CVI Scotland' 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 and your local Borough Council 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

If you are not eligible for formal registration, or do not wish to be, then an RVI (a Referral of Visual Impairment)

form can be completed by eye clinic staff as a referral to request a social needs assessment from the local authority.

With your permission, the hospital eye service will send the RVI to your local council to ask for you to be contacted for information or advice. Sending it does not affect the provision of any medical care.

Your local council has a legal duty to advise you of the range of services available to people with sight problems and carry out an assessment of your needs.

Your local sight loss charity may be able to offer you a benefits review. Citizens Advice and Age UK offer a similar service.

Beating Macular Disease

Macular disease is the biggest cause of sight loss in the UK, with around 300 people diagnosed every day.

The Macular Society is the only charity determined to beat the fear and isolation of macular disease with world class research, and the best advice and support.

Our research programme is focused on finding new treatments and a cure to Beat Macular Disease forever. To support people affected by macular disease now, the Macular Society provides a range of support, information and services:

The Advice and Information Service (0300 3030 111) is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Alternatively, you can email help@macularsociety.org

Our **website** provides a wide range of information and resources for people affected by macular disease. You can also find out more about the services we offer. Visit it at **macularsociety.org**

Our network of over **400 Macular Society Support Groups** stretches across the UK. Each one offers practical and emotional support for people with macular disease, from those living with it today.

Find your local group at **macularsociety.org/groups**

We provide a confidential **Counselling Service** over the phone.

Our **Telephone Befriending Service** pairs you up for regular telephone calls with another person with macular disease who knows what it is like to live with the condition. Calls can be about anything, and provide friendly support.

Call 0300 3030 111 for more information.

Working with you to Beat Macular Disease:

- We provide the best advice and information on living with macular disease.
- Macular Society Support Groups can help you to beat the isolation of macular disease, by connecting you with other local people who know what you're going through – offering support and companionship.
- Our research programme is focused on finding new treatments and a cure to Beat Macular Disease forever.

Macular Society

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