Adults’ Care Point
Second Floor,
The Grange
County Hall
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1RF

Phone: 01243 642121
E-mail: socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk

Online enquiry form:
www.westsussex.gov.uk/contact-us/

Other formats
If you need this information in another format, for example on audio CD, in an easy read format or in another language please contact Adults’ CarePoint.

See contact details above.
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Introduction

If your vision is deteriorating, you may be experiencing practical and emotional difficulties which may also have an impact on your family, friends and carers.

We have compiled this booklet so that people, who need help and advice on sight loss, can find information about services and organisations.

Frequently used abbreviations

SI   Sight Impaired (Partially sighted)
SSI  Severely Sight Impaired (Blind)
CVI  Certificate of Vision Impairment
RNIB Royal National Institute of the Blind
ROVI Rehabilitation Officer for the Visually Impaired
DVLA Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
Sight loss and registration

Anyone experiencing difficulties with their sight is advised to go to their doctor who may refer them to an optician or an ophthalmologist at the local eye clinic. The ophthalmologist is a specialist who can identify eye conditions and may recommend treatments. They may decide that the degree of sight loss makes the person eligible for registration as Sight Impaired or Severely Sight Impaired.

Referral to a ROVI

There are various ways of being referred to a ROVI.

1 **Opticians.** If an Optician finds that you are having significant difficulties with your eyesight, they may give you a Low Vision Leaflet (LVL). You can fill this in and send it to us.

2 **Eye clinics.** If an eye clinic identifies that you have significant difficulties with your sight, they will, with your permission, complete a ‘Referral of Vision Impaired Patients’ (RVI).

3 **Consultant ophthalmologist.** If an ophthalmologist gives you a Certificate of Visual Impairment, we will contact you to discuss registration.

4 **Self-referral.** If you are having significant difficulties with your sight, you or someone else can contact Adults’ CarePoint. See page 2 for contact details.

What is registration?
There are two categories of registration

1. **Sight impaired (SI) (partially sighted).**

2. **Severely sight impaired (SSI) (blind).**

Being registered does not necessarily mean that your sight will deteriorate. Registration is not compulsory, but it may help you to access certain benefits and support. However, there are many services available without being registered.

**The process of registration**

The ophthalmologist will complete a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI), and send it to us.

When we receive the CVI, an Assessment Officer will contact you and tell you about the services that are available. You will be offered an assessment of your needs to discuss your situation and possible solutions.

If you choose to be registered you will be issued with a registration card and listed on the West Sussex register of Visual Impairment.

**Charles Bonnet Syndrome**

This term describes the visual hallucinations which may happen when vision is deteriorating. Visions can range from patterns, shapes, flowers, trees, animals and people, to entire scenes. The hallucinations are quite common amongst
people who are experiencing sight loss. There is no cure but visions often reduce and stop within a year or 18 months.

If you are having problems with the visions, it may be useful to contact your GP about other help which may be available.

You can also get information from the RNIB

Phone: 0303 123 9999
Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
West Sussex County Council

Advice and information about visual impairment and hearing loss is available from us and you can also make a referral by contacting:

• Adults’ CarePoint (see page 2)

West Sussex Connect to Support website

You can also find information and advice about available services and local groups and activities on our West Sussex Connect to Support website. There is also an online marketplace where products and services can be purchased.

• www.westsussexconnecttosupport.org

Visual impairment services

We have ROVIs who have been trained to help visually impaired children and adults. They will discuss your needs related to your sight loss and talk to you about new ways of coping with aspects of daily living. For example, they can demonstrate ways of cooking safely and moving about independently, both indoors and out. Their training helps them to understand that you may be feeling frustrated and apprehensive about living with low vision. They can also give you details about the services mentioned in this book.

Eye care for adults with learning disabilities

1 in 3 people with a learning disability also have sight loss. However, many do not have regular eye tests and are at a greater risk of experiencing sight problems as a result.
Seeability is a national information and advisory service for people who want information about eye care and vision for people with a learning disability.

- Phone 01372 755000
- Website: www.seeability.org
- Email: enquiries@seeability.org

**Deaf and hard of hearing people**

We have specialist workers who can support adults who are hard of hearing, Deaf or Deafblind. They aim help people to remain independent.

They can give advice, information and provide support to adults who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. They can assess your needs and may provide or help to arrange services, including:

- Social Care Support for those with eligible needs.
- Arrange equipment to help you hear the doorbell, smoke alarm and telephone and to listen to the television or radio.
- Registration as Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
- Provide information on other agencies or organisations that may be able to help you.

Contact details:

Phone: Adults’ CarePoint 01243 642121
Textphone: 01403 275515
Email: county.deaf.services@westsussex.gov.uk
**Action for deafness**
This is a West Sussex organisation offering a full range of services to Deaf and hard of hearing people in the county. There are resource centres at Haywards Heath, Steyning and Worthing where you can see and try out equipment to help with hearing.

- Website www.actionfordeafness.org.uk
- Phone 01444 415582
- Email: info@actionfordeafness.org.uk

**Action on hearing loss (RNID)**
This is a national organisation which can give advice and information about hearing loss and where you can buy equipment to help with hearing.

- Website www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk
- Phone 0808 808 0123
- Textphone: 0808 808 9000

**Dual sensory loss**
Independent Living Services are able to provide specialist assessments for adults with a dual sensory loss. You may be provided with:

- Advice and information
- Equipment
- Arrangements for specialist services, such as a volunteer or communicator guide.
- County Council funding through a personal budget for a Communicator Guide or other support services.

There are national organisations offering support to people with a Dual Sensory Loss.
• Deafblind UK
  John and Lucille Van Geest Place
  Cygnet Road, Hampton, Peterborough PE7 8FD

  Email: info@deafblind.org.uk
  Tel/Textphone: 01733 358 100
  Fax 01733 358 356
  Website: www.deafblind.org.uk

• Sense
  101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG

  Tel: 0300 330 9256
  Textphone: 0300 330 9256
  Fax: 0300 330 9251
  Website: www.sense.org.uk
  Email: info@sense.org.uk
Family and friends carers

If you are providing unpaid care for a family member, a partner, friend or neighbour who is ill or disabled, you are entitled to ask for a carer’s assessment. This makes sure that your needs and well-being are taken into account.

Carers Support West Sussex
- Carry out carers’ assessments on behalf of the County Council and, in addition, can offer you the following:

  - Information about short breaks and respite.
  - Face to face support
  - Telephone support
  - Carer training and activities
  - Bereavement support
  - Counselling
  - Information
  - Advocacy
  - Complementary therapies
  - Support groups
  - Specialist Support workers for people with mental health or a learning disability
  - Creative and therapeutic workshops
• Carers Support West Sussex:
  (For Adur, East Arun, Worthing & Chanctonbury)
  Phone 0300 028 8888
  Email: info@carerssupport.org.uk
  www.carerssupport.org.uk

Please also see our information booklet ‘Your life, your choice’ available from Adults’ CarePoint (contact details page 2) or online at www.westsussex.gov.uk under ‘Adults’ social care’ publications.
Finance

Benefits
The Department for Work and Pensions can advise people with disabilities and carers about benefits.

Attendance Allowance:
- Telephone: 0345 605 6055
- Textphone: 0345 604 5312

Personal Independence Payment:
- Telephone: 0800 917 2222
- Textphone: 0800 917 7777

The Pension Service
Because of your disability you may qualify for a home visit for a benefit check and help to complete forms to apply for disability and other state benefits.

Other organisations that may be able to help you with completing forms are:

• 4SIGHT
  Phone: 01243 828 555
  Website: www.4sight.org.uk

• Age UK West Sussex
  Phone: 01903 731800
  Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/westsussex
Citizens Advice
Phone: 03444 111 444

Inland Revenue
People who are registered SSI and pay income tax can claim an extra allowance, which can be transferred to spouse or civil partner. You will need to contact your tax office to organise this.

Phone: 0300 200 3300
Textphone: 0300 200 3319

Council Tax
If your property has been adapted to assist you with your disability, or if you have had to set aside a room to house your specialist equipment, you may be eligible for the Disability Reduction Scheme.

Contact your local district council to see if you qualify.

Citizens Advice
Your local Citizens Advice can give advice on many topics including benefit entitlement, tax and employment issues, housing, debt and consumer issues. They may also help with form filling.

Phone: 03444 111 444
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Banks
Services offered may include statements in large print or Braille and guides for writing cheques. Contact your bank to find out what help they can provide for you.

If you are finding using a ‘chip and pin’ card difficult because of your disability, you are entitled to request a ‘chip and signature’ card from your bank or building society.

Consumer Services
Gas, electricity, telephone and water companies offer a variety of services for people with sight problems. For example - bills in large print or Braille, or by phone. Contact your supplier to find out what help they provide.
Getting around

Mobility
Our Rehabilitation Officers can show you how to get around safely and independently. They can supply cane to meet your different types of white cane to meet your needs. They can also show you and your family and friends how you can be safely guided.

• For further information and advice on mobility Adults’ CarePoint (contact details on page 2)

Guide dogs are suitable for some visually impaired people. To find out if you may benefit from becoming a guide dog owner please contact:

• Phone: Guide Dogs on 0118 983 5555
• Website: www.guidedogs.org.uk

My Guide
The My Guide service involves a volunteer guiding you as you get out and about in your local area – to gain confidence and increase your independence. My Guide can also provide free, bespoke training for friends and family members, consisting of a basic introduction to vision impairment awareness, and sighted guiding techniques.

To take part in My Guide or for more information please contact:

Guide Dogs
Phone: 0345 143 0229
The Disabled Person’s Parking Badge
If you are registered SSI you are automatically eligible. It allows you certain parking concessions when you are a passenger. There is a fee for the badge.

Phone 01243 777653 for an application form or download one at www.westsussex.gov.uk under blue badge scheme and disabled parking.

Email: blue.badges@westsussex.gov.uk

Rail Travel
If you are registered as SI or SSI, you can apply for a Disabled Person’s Railcard, which gives you reductions on the cost of certain fares for you and your escort. Application forms are available from most railway stations or from National Rail:

Email: disability@raildeliverygroup.com
Phone: 0345 605 0525
Textphone: 0345 601 0132

There are also certain discounts for you if you do not want to buy a railcard. Your local railway station can give you information.

For help with rail travel, please contact your local railway station or the National Rail Enquiry Line.

Phone 03457 48 49 50
www.nationalrail.co.uk
**Air travel**
Do ask for assistance when booking your ticket, if you have any concerns regarding getting about at the airport.

**Bus travel**
People who are over 60 or who have a qualifying disability (including being registered SI or SSI) are eligible for free off-peak bus travel. There is also a “companion pass” for those who need to be accompanied.

To apply for a bus pass contact the authority to which you pay your Council Tax.
Daily living

Our ROVIs can help you develop safe ways of carrying out daily activities by giving you advice, information and training to use special equipment or they may be able to adapt your own equipment.

Lighting

The correct use of lighting can make a big difference to people with low vision, both for safety and everyday activities. We can give you advice and information on the best type of lighting for you.

Equipment

ROVIs may be able to loan equipment to help you overcome some of the difficulties caused by your loss of vision. They can also advise you about where to purchase equipment.

There are specialist equipment suppliers who can supply you with a catalogue. These include:

- **Cobolt Systems Ltd**
  (specialise in talking equipment)
  Phone: 01493 700172
  Website: www.cobolt.co.uk
• RNIB  
  Customer Services 0303 123 9999  
  Website: www.rnib.org.uk

• Partially Sighted Society  
  Phone: 01302 965195  
  Website www.partsight.org.uk

• Optima  
  (Specialise in lights and magnification)  
  Phone: 01803 864218  
  Website: www.optimalowvision.co.uk
Reading

Using your vision will not cause further deterioration, but it is important to wear any spectacles which have been prescribed for you. To make the best use of your vision, it is usually helpful to have plenty of light illuminating the reading material.

You are advised to visit an optician once a year for an eye health check, even if you have been told that spectacles will not help you.

Low vision aids (magnifiers)

These are designed to help you make the best use of your remaining vision.

The following can carry out an assessment.

- A hospital low vision clinic
- Some opticians (ask for a list at your eye clinic)
- A ROVI
- 4SIGHT

Most hospitals provide low vision aids free on long term loan. Other providers may charge for the assessment and the prescribed low vision aid.

Large print

Public Libraries have a range of large print books as well as audio books. There are also specialist publishers of large print books.
• “Big Print” is a weekly large print newspaper available on subscription. Phone Customer Services 0303 123 9999 Website: www.rnib.org.uk

Reading by touch
There are two methods of reading by touch, Braille and Moon. You can get further information about them by contacting our Adults’ CarPoint (see page 2 for contact details).

Spoken word services

RNIB talking book service
Talking Books is a free service using DAISY CD or USB special formats.

• Phone: 0303 123 9999
• Website: www.rnib.org.uk

Calibre
Calibre provides a free loan service of audio books in various formats for adults and children. There is a one off administration fee to join.

• Phone: 01296 432339
• Website: www.calibre.org.uk
**National Talking Newspapers and Magazines (TNAUK)**

For national newspapers and a wide range of magazines in a variety of formats – by subscription from RNIB Newsagent:

- Phone: 0303 123 9999
- Website: helpline@rnib.org.uk

**Local talking news**

Many areas have a local talking news organisation, which produce extracts from local newspapers. To find your local Talking Newspaper:

- Phone: 01793 497 555
- Or fill in the online form at: www.tnf.org.uk

**Libraries**

- Phone: 01243 642111
- www.westsussex.gov.uk/libraries

Audio books for use by visually impaired people are available on loan free from local libraries.

There is also a Housebound Reader Service for people who are unable to access the library because of a disability - ask at your local library.

**eLibrary**

Borrow ebooks – download digital versions of books for free to read on your computer, smartphone, tablet or ebook reader.
Borrow eAudiobooks – borrow digital audiobooks for free to listen to on your computer, smartphone, tablet or portable music player (such as iPod)

**Leisure**

**Television**
If you are over 75 you do not have to pay for a TV licence. However, if you are under 75 and registered as SSI, you are entitled to a half-price licence. To get this the TV licence must be in your name.

If you have any questions regarding TV licences.

- Phone: 0300 790 6130
- Website www.tvlicensing.co.uk

TV Licensing Blind Concession Group Bristol, BS98 1TL

**Radio**
For people who are registered SI or SSI, the British Wireless for the Blind Fund may be able to loan easy to use audio equipment for listening to talking books or the radio.

For information contact our Adults’ CarePoint (see page 2 for contact details).
Cinema
Some cinemas are now offering audio description. For more information please contact:

- Website: www.yourlocalcinema.com

For people who are registered SSI or who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance, the Cinema Exhibitors Association Card entitles the holder to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema. There is a small fee for the card which is valid for one year.

- Phone: 023 9224 8545
- Website: www.ceacard.co.uk

Theatres and museums
Audio description and “touch tours” are becoming increasingly available. Contact the venue and ask about what is available to help you enjoy your visit before you attend or book.

Holidays
Several organisations in the UK run hotels which cater specifically for people who are visually impaired. You can get a full list from RNIB.

- Phone: 0303 123 9999
- Website: helpline@rnib.org.uk

There are specialist travel companies which run holidays for visually impaired people including touring, educational, activity and leisure holidays both in the UK and abroad.
Traveleyes

• Website: www.traveleyes-international.com
• Phone: 0113 887 4275

Gardening

‘Thrive’ is an organisation which can let you know about techniques to keep gardening. They run courses and produce information in various formats for visually impaired people.

• Phone: 0118 988 5688
• Website: www.thrive.org.uk

Sports and physical activities

You can enjoy a wide range of sporting activities despite your sight loss. Ask at your local leisure centre about the help they can offer you. You can get information and advice from the following organisations and groups.

• RNIB on 0303 123 9999
• British Blind Sport on 01926 424247
• Website: www.britishblindsport.org.uk

Cricket

Sussex Sharks is a cricket club for adults and children with a visual impairment. For further information contact British Blind Sport as above.

Football

Visually impaired children up to the age of 16 can play in the Brighton and Hove Albion Seagulls Specials. For further
information contact British Blind Sport as above.

**Bowls**
There are lawn bowls clubs for visually impaired people in Bognor, Crawley and Worthing. For further information contact British Blind Sport as above.

**Riding**
The Riding for the Disabled Association will be able to give details of your nearest centre.

- Phone: 01926 492915
- Website: www.rda.org.uk

**Adult and further education**

**Royal National Institute for the Blind**
The RNIB website is full of useful information for students.

- Phone: 0303 123 9999
- Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
- www.rnib.org.uk

**Open University (OU)**
The OU has a wide range of support services for students with disabilities. Contact the Disability Student Services:

- Tel: 01908 653745
- Website: www.open.ac.uk
Adult and Community Learning

Classes are run during the day and evening in term time at many locations in the County. Subjects range from hobbies through to courses leading to an academic qualification.

The Centre running the course should be told before you enrol that you might need learning support because of your visual impairment. They may then arrange an interview with you to clarify the support you need. For further information please contact:

- Phone 0345 6010161
- Website www.aspiresussex.org.uk

Employment

There are several organisations that can advise you about the facilities available to help you find, continue or re-train for work.

Disability Employment Advisors (DEA)

The DEA can give help and support in finding work or gaining new skills. Contact your local Job Centre and ask to speak to the DEA.

Access to work

‘Access to work’ can help if your health or disability affects the way you do your job. They can give you and your employer advice and support with extra costs which may arise because of your needs. The service is available for people starting a new job, self-employed or employed people.
The service may include:
- special aids, equipment and adaptations;
- a person to read for you
- fares to work

- Phone: 0345 268 8489
- Text Phone: 0345 608 8753
- Email: atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
- Website: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

**Workability**

Workability aims to provide equal access to education, training and work opportunities for people with disabilities. They offer help with applications, career histories and interview skills, finding courses or training opportunities and looking for paid or voluntary work.

- Phone: 01903 730044
- Website: impact-initiatives.org.uk
- Email: info@impact-initiatives.org.uk
Children

West Sussex Children’s Services
Sensory Support Team

The ROVIs in this team can give specialist advice, information and support to you and your child with a visual impairment. They are able to provide training for mobility and life skills to maximise your child’s development and independence both at school and at home. They can also provide environmental checks on school premises and advise on any adjustments that are required. They liaise closely with Advisory Teachers for Visual Impairment, the school and other agencies as appropriate.

All schools in West Sussex have a responsibility to assess children with disabilities. They provide support to children to help them participate in learning and to play a full part in the life of the school.

Advisory Teachers for Visual Impairment from the Sensory Support Team can provide advice, assistance and specialist equipment to schools for children and young people with a sensory impairment to ensure they can access the curriculum. These teachers provide specialist Braille teaching and touch-typing training can also be provided when needed.

In some cases the Local Authority may decide to make a formal statement outlining your child’s special educational needs and how these will be met in school.

• Email: sensory.support@westsussex.gov.uk
• Phone: 01903 270430
The Family Information Service
The Family Information Service is run by the County Council and offers free, impartial information on a wide range of activities and support including childcare.

- Phone 01243 777807
- www.familyinfoservice.westsussex.gov.uk
- Email: family.info.service@westsussex.gov.uk

RNIB
The RNIB has a service, which you can contact for advice and information regarding children and young people.

- Phone: 0303 123 9999
- Website: www.rnib.org.uk

Blatchington Court Trust and Look Sussex
Work with young adults who have a visual impairment.

- Phone: 01273 727 222
- Email: info@blatchingtoncourt.org.uk
- Website: www.blatchingtoncourt.org.

Blind Children UK
Can offer the following:
- Family support and information
- Education advocacy
- IT assessments, advice and support
- Customising of large print books
- Activities
- Phone: 0800 781 1444
- Website: www.nbcs.org.uk
**VICTA (Visually Impaired Children Taking Action)**
Provides support and information to parents/carers/visually impaired young people/organisations. They also make grants to individuals, groups and research groups.

- Phone: 01908 240 831
- www.victa.org.uk

**Family Fund**
Provides grants to low income families with severely disabled children; based on the families’ views and needs.

- Phone: 01904 550055
- Website: www.familyfund.org.uk

**Clearvision**
This is a UK postal lending library of mainstream children’s books with added Braille, for visually impaired children and adults to share.

- Phone 020 8789 9575
- Website: www.clearvisionproject.org

**Contact a Family**
This is a UK charity which offers support, advice and information for families with disabled children. They have information about specific conditions and rare disorders.

- Phone: 0808 808 3555
- Website: www.cafamily.org.uk
General information

In Touch
BBC Radio 4 produces a programme on Tuesday evenings called ‘In Touch’ specifically for visually impaired listeners. Visit the In Touch page at:

- Website: www.bbc.co.uk/radio4

Eye conditions
There are a number of societies for specific eye conditions, some of which are listed below. If you need information on a condition which is not mentioned here, contact your GP, your eye clinic or one of the following organisations:

RNIB
- Phone: 0303 123 9999
- Website: www.rnib.org.uk

RP Fighting Blindness (British Retinitis Pigmentosa Society)
- Phone: 0845 123 2354
- Website: www.rpfightingblindness.org.uk

International Glaucoma Association
- Phone: 01233 648170
- Website: www.glaucoma-association.com

Macular Society
- Phone 0300 3030 111
- Website: www.macularsociety.org

Nystagmus Network
- Phone: 0845 6342630
- Website: www.nystagmusnet.org
Diabetes UK South East
• Phone 01372 720148
• Website: www.diabetes.org.uk

Postal concessions
An ‘Articles for the Blind’ label (available from RNIB) can be used when special equipment or information is being sent in an accessible format for someone who is sight impaired. This could be large print, Braille or recorded material.

Mailing Preference Service
This free service will cut down on addressed ‘junk mail’.
• Phone: 0207 291 3310
• Website: www.mpsonline.org.uk

Royal Mail – Door to Door opt out
This service reduces unsolicited, unaddressed mail and leaflets delivered by the Royal Mail. To register to opt out, send or email your name and address to:
• Freepost RSTR-YCYS-TGLJ
  Royal Mail Door to Door Opt Outs
  Kingsmead House
  Oxpens Road
  Oxford OZ1 1RX
• Email: optout@royalmail.com
Telephones
Telephone service providers may be able to offer you a number of services and equipment including free directory enquiries.

- NTL/Virgin and BT customers should dial 0800 587 0195 to register for the free directory enquiry service.

BT priority fault repair service
If you are housebound because of a disabling condition you can get priority if there is a fault with your phone line.

- Phone 0800 800 150

Telephone Preference Service
This cuts down on unwanted phone calls from sales people.

- Registration line: 0845 070 0707
- Email: tps@dma.org.uk
- Website: www.tpsonline.org.uk
Organisations in West Sussex

There are several agencies in West Sussex for people with sight loss.

**4SIGHT (West Sussex Association for the Blind)**
Supports people of all ages with sight loss, across Sussex.

For general information and advice:

- Phone: 4SIGHT on 01243 828555
- Email: enquiries@4sight.org.uk

- Resource centres in Bognor Regis, Midhurst and Shoreham have large displays of daily living and low vision aids which the team can demonstrate and advise on.

- Hospital Sight Care Advisor Service offering advice, support and information for visually impaired people, their family and friends. The service is based at Worthing and Chichester eye clinics where advisors who are trained nurses, can offer you advice, support and information if you attend at either of the hospitals.
  - St Richards Hospital 01243 788122 ext. 33515
  - Worthing Hospital 01903 285281

There is a membership fee and fees for certain services. Members can take advantage of the following services:

- A regular newsletter (available in various formats).
- A community service where Contact Officers carry out low vision assessments of members’ reading and writing needs.
in the home.
• Social, leisure and activity clubs throughout the County.
• A volunteer home visiting service.
• An audio library of books on CD and tape.
• A weekly Crossword and Sudoku service.
• A rehabilitation kitchen and gym at the Bognor Regis Centre.
• A loan service, available for members who wish to try the latest equipment.
• Transcription service for Braille users.

**Worthing Society for the Blind (WSB)**
Assists visually impaired people in the Worthing area. They have a well-stocked resource room and provide many social activities. A home visiting service is available and members receive a quarterly newsletter, Membership is free.

- Phone: 01903 235782
- www.worthingsocietyfortheblind.co.uk

**Blatchington Court Trust**
The Trust works to promote the educational and employment needs of young vision impaired people under the age of 30 Sussex. In addition to providing grants for educational equipment the Trust also offers family support, advocacy, counselling, advice, IT training, benefits advice and information on employment support.

- Phone: 01273 727222
- Website: www.blatchingtoncourt.org
West Sussex Connect to Support
You can find information and advice about available services and local groups and activities on our West Sussex Connect to Support website at

• www.westsussexconnecttosupport.org

Look Sussex
This is a local charity supporting families in Sussex who have a child with a visual impairment.

• Phone: 01273 677731
• Website: www.looksussex.co.uk

ICIS: Information for Life
This is an information ‘bank’ helping people in West Sussex find information through difficult or challenging circumstances, and enabling people to find care, support or advice services.

• Phone: 01903 528620
• Email: enquiries@icis-info4life.org
• Website: www.icis-info4life.org.uk
National organisations

RNIB and Action for Blind People
These organisations have joined forces to share resources, skills and expertise. Their services include:
• Braille and talking book libraries
• Information about eye conditions
• Talk and support – telephone socialising and support
• Welfare benefits, employment and housing advice
• “Actionairre” groups for children and families
• Advice about assistive technology
• Holiday and hotel information
• Equipment (order online or by phone)

• Phone: 0303 123 9999
• Website: www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk
• Website: www.rnib.org.uk

Blind Veterans UK (Formerly St Dunstans)
Blind Veterans UK offers support and advice, training and rehabilitation, help with benefit claims, sport and socialising and more. You can apply if you served in the forces (from cadet to war service) and you are registered SSI. They will also help you if you have suffered severe sight loss whilst on duty with one of the emergency services. In most cases, your vision will be tested by an independent ophthalmologist to assess your eligibility.

• Phone: 01273 307811
• Website: www.blindveterans.org.uk

Torch Trust
This is a non denominational Christian organisation for visually impaired people. It provides Christian literature in accessible formats; holidays, retreats and residential courses. There may be a local group who worship near you.

• Phone: 01858 438260
• Website: www.torchtrust.org

Macular Society
• Macular Society, PO Box 1870, Andover, SP10 9A.
• Phone: 0300 3030 111
• Email: info@macularsociety.org
• Website: www.macularsociety.org
Driving

Information for driving licence holders
You must be able to read a post-September 2001 car number plate at 20 metres (65 feet).

The law requires you to tell the DVLA immediately about any condition that may affect your ability to drive safely. Therefore if your sight is affecting your driving, or a specialist has advised that you are not safe, you must contact:

• DVLA drivers’ medical enquiries
  Phone: 0300 790 6806

Registration as SI or SSI is normally regarded as incompatible with holding a driving licence. You are breaking the law if you are driving without meeting the vision requirements and you are liable to a substantial fine. If you are involved in an accident and it is found that your health condition was a contributing factor you may be prosecuted and your insurance may not be valid.

Class 3 Pavement Vehicles
This category includes powered wheelchairs and other outdoor powered vehicles, including scooters for use on roads and highways with a maximum speed limit of 8mph, and facility to travel at 4mph on footways.

These vehicles need to be registered with DVLA and display a “nil duty” tax disc.

Although there is no legal sight requirement you should be able to read a car number plate from 12.3 metres (40 ft).
You are advised to take out insurance if you are driving one of these vehicles, and to advise your insurance company about your visual impairment.

Full information is in the booklet ‘Code of Practice for Class 3 Vehicle Users’, available from:

- Website: www.gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchair-rules
Edition 15

www.westsussex.gov.uk

E-mail: socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk

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