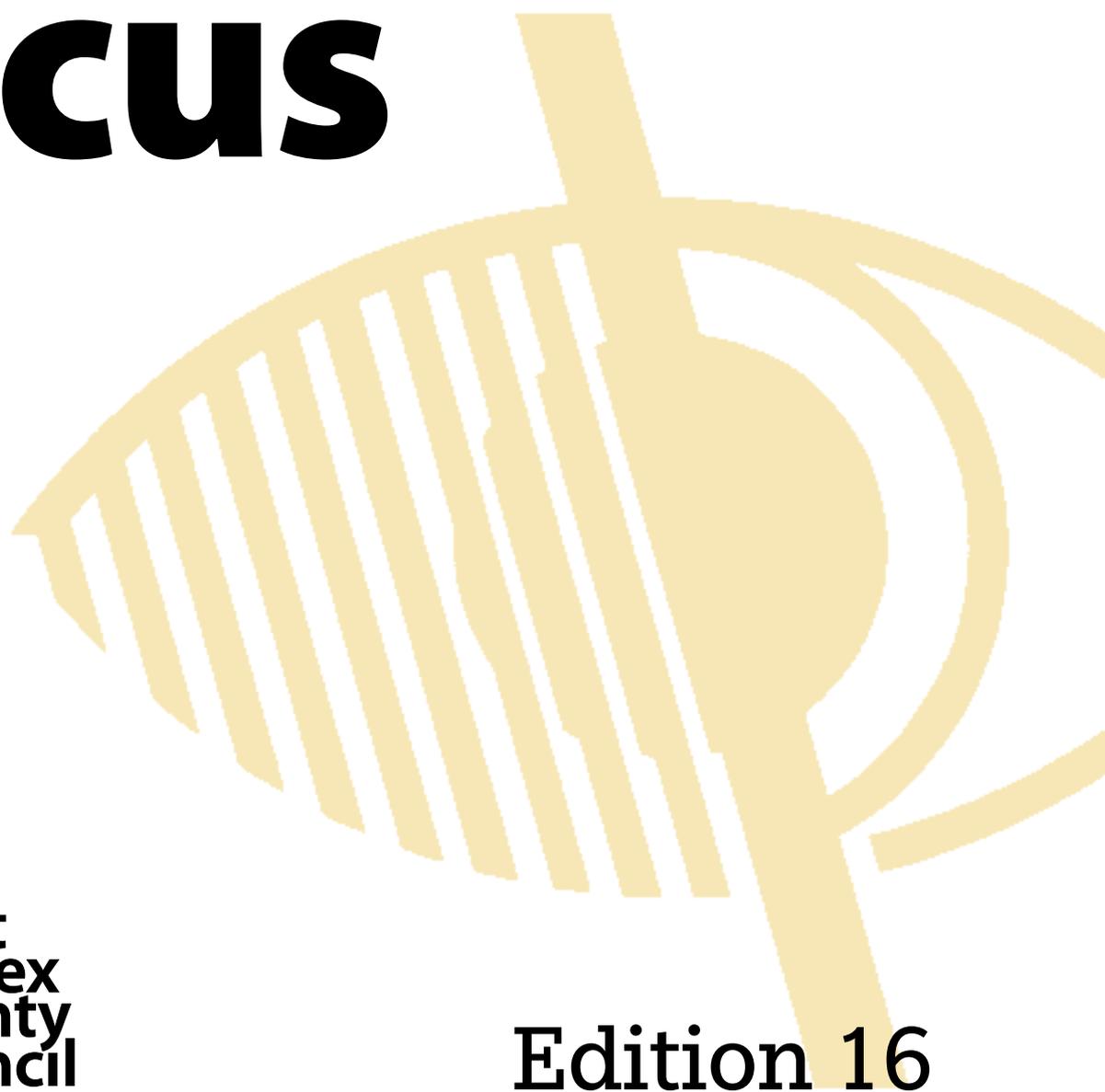


Information for people  
with sight difficulties  
and dual sensory loss

# Changing focus



**West Sussex County Council****Adults' CarePoint****Second Floor****The Grange****County Hall****Chichester****West Sussex****PO19 1RF****Phone: 01243 642121****NGT Text Relay: 18001 01243 642121****(Helps people with speech and hearing difficulties to communicate. Available as a downloadable app for computer tablets and smartphones.)****Email: [socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk)****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 the 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 book 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.

- **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 in the form and send it to our Adults' CarePoint. See contact details on page 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).
- **Consultant ophthalmologist.** If an ophthalmologist gives you a Certificate of Visual Impairment, WSCC will contact you to discuss registration.
- **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. Many services are available without being registered.

### The process of registration

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

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 diminish 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](mailto: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).

### Visual impairment services

We have ROVIs, who have been trained to help visually impaired children and adults. They will discuss your needs with regard to your sight loss and advise you about new ways of coping with any aspect 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.

### Deaf and hard of hearing people

We have specialist workers who can help Deaf or hard of hearing people. They work with adults, children, and people who may have additional needs.

If you meet our eligibility criteria you will be offered an assessment by a member of our Deaf Services Team to find out what support you need.

Please see our information booklet 'Your life, your choice' which you can find at [westsussex.gov.uk](http://westsussex.gov.uk) under Adults' social care publications. You can also contact our Adults' CarePoint and ask for a copy to be sent to you. See page 2 for contact details.

Members of the Deaf Services Team can also provide advice and information on a range of support services available including:

- employment, housing, advocacy, audiology, welfare benefits, parenting, interpreters and communication services;
- local support groups;
- advice to young people approaching adulthood; and
- assessment leading to provision or advice about equipment to help alert you to various sound sources, i.e. doorbell, smoke alarm and telephone, and equipment for listening to the TV and radio.

### **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.

- Phone: 01444 415582
- Email: [info@actionfordeafness.org.uk](mailto:info@actionfordeafness.org.uk)
- Website: [actionfordeafness.org.uk](http://actionfordeafness.org.uk)

### **RNID (previously 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: [rnid.org.uk](http://rnid.org.uk)
- Phone: 0808 808 0123
- Text phone: 0808 808 9000

### **Dual sensory loss**

Independent Living Services are able to provide specialist assessments for adults with a dual sensory loss and may provide the following.

- Advice and information
- Equipment
- Arrangements for specialist services, such as a volunteer or communicator guide.
- Support through the self-directed support process for 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  
Text and Voice: 01733 358100  
Helpline text and voice: 0800 132320  
Fax: 01733 358356  
Website: [deafblind.org.uk](http://deafblind.org.uk)  
Email: [info@deafblind.org.uk](mailto:info@deafblind.org.uk)

- **Sense**  
101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG  
Phone: 0300 330 9256  
Text phone: 0300 330 9256  
Fax 03003309251  
Website: sense.org.uk  
Email: info@sense.org.uk

## Family and friend carers

If you are providing unpaid care for family, partners or friends you are entitled to ask for a carer's assessment. This makes sure that your needs and wellbeing are taken into account.

### Carers Support West Sussex

This organisation carries out carers' assessments on behalf of the County Council and, in addition, can offer you the following services.

- 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 learning difficulties
- Creative and therapeutic workshops

### Contact details

- Phone: 0300 028 8888
- Email: info@carerssupport.org.uk
- Website: carerssupport.org.uk

Please also see our information booklet 'Your life, your choice' which you can find at [www.westsussex.gov.uk](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk) under Adults' social care publications. You can also contact our Adults' CarePoint and ask for a copy to be sent to you. See page 2 for contact details.

## Finance

### Benefits

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

#### Attendance Allowance

- Phone: 0800 731 0122
- Text phone: 0800 731 0317

#### Personal Independence Payment

- Phone: 0800 917 2222
- Text phone: 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: 4sight.org.uk

**Age UK West Sussex, Brighton and Hove**

- Phone: 0800 169 2081
- Website: ageuk.org.uk/westsussex

**Inland Revenue**

People who are registered SSI and pay income tax can claim an extra allowance, which can be transferred to a spouse or civil partner. Contact your tax office to organise this.

- Phone: 0300 200 3300
- Text phone: 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**

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. Citizens Advice offices can be found throughout the county.

- Phone: 0344 477 1171
- Website: 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 that using a chip and pin card is 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 different types of white cane to meet your needs. They can also show you and your family how you can be safely guided.

- For further information and advice on mobility contact Adults' Care Point (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, contact Guide Dogs.

- Phone: 0118 983 5555
- Website: 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 the following.

### Guide Dogs

- Phone: 0118 983 5555
- Email: [myguide@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:myguide@guidedogs.org.uk)
- Website: [guidedogs.org.uk/myguide](http://guidedogs.org.uk/myguide)

## 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 [westsussex.gov.uk](http://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:

- Phone: 0345 605 0525
- Text phone: 0345 601 0132
- Email: [disability@raildeliverygroup.com](mailto:disability@raildeliverygroup.com)

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

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

- Phone: 03457 48 49 50
- Website: [nationalrail.co.uk](http://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 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** (specialises in talking equipment)

- Phone: 01493 700172
- Website: cobolt.co.uk

#### **RNIB**

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

#### **Partially Sighted Society**

- Phone: 01302 965195
- Website: partsight.org.uk

#### **Optima** (specialises in lights and magnification)

- Phone: 01803 864218
- Website: 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'**

A weekly large print newspaper available on subscription.

- Phone: RNIB 0303 123 9999
- Website: 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 Adults' CarePoint (see page 2 for contact details).

# Spoken word services

**RNIB talking book service**

Talking Books is a free service using DAISY CD or USB formats.

- Phone: 0303 123 9999
- Website: 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: calibre.org.uk

**National Talking Newspapers and Magazines (TNAUK)**

For a subscription TNAUK provide most weekly national newspapers and a wide range of magazines in a variety of formats.

- Phone: 0303 123 9999
- Website: tnauk.org.uk

**Local talking news**

Many areas have a local talking news organisation, which produce extracts from local newspapers on tape, CD or other formats. To find your local Talking Newspaper:

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

**Libraries**

- Phone: 01903 704818
- Website: westsussex.gov.uk/libraries

Audio books for use by visually impaired people are available for free loan 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 e-books** – download digital versions of books for free to read on your computer, smartphone, tablet or e-book reader.

**Borrow e-Audiobooks** – 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 AND you or your partner receive Pension Credit 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 [tvlicensing.co.uk](http://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 Adults' CarePoint (see page 2 for contact details).

## Cinema

Some cinemas are now offering audio description. For more information visit the website: [yourlocalcinema.com](http://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: 01244 526 016
- Textphone: 18001 01244 526 016
- Email: [info@ceacard.co.uk](mailto:info@ceacard.co.uk)
- Website: [ceacard.co.uk](http://ceacard.co.uk)
- Postal address: CEA Card, PO Box 199, Deeside, CH5 9BW.

## Theatres and museums

Audio description and 'touch tours' are becoming increasingly available. 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: [rnib.org.uk](http://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

Whether you're travelling alone, as a couple, or with friends, Traveleyes will invite you to join small and sociable groups and provide sighted assistance.

- Phone: 0303 303 0145
- Website: [traveleyes-international.com](http://traveleyes-international.com)

## Gardening

Thrive is an organisation which can advise on techniques to keep gardening. They run courses and produce information in various formats for visually impaired people.

- Phone: 0118 988 5688
- Website: 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.

### RNIB

Phone: 0303 123 9999

### British Blind Sport

- Phone: 01926 424247
- Website: 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: rda.org.uk

## Adults 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
- Website: rnib.org.uk

### Open University (OU)

The OU has a wide range of support services for students with disabilities. Contact the Disability Support Team.

- Phone: 01908 655978
- Website: open.ac.uk

## Adults 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 to clarify the support you need. For further information:

- Phone: 0345 601 0161
- Website: [aspire Sussex.org.uk](http://aspire Sussex.org.uk)

## Employment

There are several organisations that can advise you about the facilities available to help you find or continue work or to retrain.

### Disability Employment Advisors (DEA)

They 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

The service 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

### Contact details

- Phone: 0800 121 7479
- Text Phone: 0800 121 7579
- Website: [gov.uk/access-to-work](http://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 730 044
- Email: [info@impact-initiatives.org.uk](mailto:info@impact-initiatives.org.uk)
- Website: [impact-initiatives.org.uk](http://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 to schools 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 County Council may decide to make a formal statement outlining your child's special educational needs and how these will be met in school.

- Phone: 01903 270430
- Email: sensory.support@westsussex.gov.uk

## The Family Information Service

The service is run by the County Council to offer free, impartial information on a wide range of activities and support including childcare.

- • Phone: 01243 777807
- • Email: family.info.service@westsussex.gov.uk
- • Website: familyinfoservice.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: rnib.org.uk

## Blatchington Court Trust and Look Sussex

These are charities working with children and young adults who have a visual impairment.

- • Phone: 01273 727222
- • Email: info@blatchingtoncourt.org.uk
- • Website: blatchingtoncourt.org

## National Blind Children's Society

The society offers:

- family support and information;
- Education advocacy;
- IT assessments, advice and support;
- customising large print books; and
- activities.

**Contact details**

- Phone: 0800 781 1444
- Website: 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: 01903 240831
- Website: victa.org.uk

**Family Fund (London and South East area)**

Provides grants to low income families with severely disabled children; based on the families' views and needs.

- Phone: 01904 550055
- Website: 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: 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: 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 InTouch page at:

- Website: [bbc.co.uk/radio4](http://bbc.co.uk/radio4)

**Eye conditions**

There are several 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 or eye clinic. Alternatively, contact the RNIB.

- Phone: 0303 123 9999
- Website: [rnib.org.uk](http://rnib.org.uk)

**Retina UK (formerly RP Fighting Blindness and British Retinitis Pigmentosa Society)**

- Phone: 0845 123 2354
- Website: [rpfightingblindness.org.uk](http://rpfightingblindness.org.uk)

**International Glaucoma Association**

- Phone: 01233 648170
- Website: [glaucoma-association.com](http://glaucoma-association.com)

**Macular Society**

- Postal address: PO Box 1870, Andover, SP10 9AD
- Phone: 0300 3030 111
- Email: [info@macularsociety.org](mailto:info@macularsociety.org)
- Website: [macularsociety.org](http://macularsociety.org)

**Nystagmus Network**

- Phone: 01427 718093
- Website: [nystagmusnetwork.org](http://nystagmusnetwork.org)

**Diabetes UK**

- Phone: 01372 720148
- Website: [diabetes.org.uk](http://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: [-mpsonline.org.uk](http://-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:

- Postal address: Freepost RSTR-YCYS-TGLJ Royal Mail Door to Door Opt Outs, Kingsmead House, Oxpens Road, Oxford OZ1 1RX
- Email: [optout@royalmail.com](mailto: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
- Website: [btplc.com/Inclusion/#fault](http://btplc.com/Inclusion/#fault)

**Telephone Preference Service**

This cuts down on unwanted phone calls from sales people.

- Registration line: 0845 070 0707
- Email: [tps@dma.org.uk](mailto:tps@dma.org.uk)
- Website: [tpsonline.org.uk](http://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](mailto: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 on 01243 788122 ext. 3515
- Worthing Hospital on 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.

## **Sight Support Worthing**

The organisation 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
- Website: [sightsupportworthing.org.uk](http://sightsupportworthing.org.uk)

## Blatchington Court Trust

Works to promote the educational and employment needs of young vision impaired individuals under the age of 30 and living predominately in 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: [blatchingtoncourt.org](http://blatchingtoncourt.org)

## Look Sussex

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

- Phone: 01273 677731
- Website: [looksussex.co.uk](http://looksussex.co.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;
- 'Actionaire' groups for children and families;
- advice about assistive technology;
- holiday and hotel information; and
- equipment (order online or by phone).

## Contact details:

- Phone: 0303 123 9999
- Website: [actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://actionforblindpeople.org.uk)
- Website: [rnib.org.uk](http://rnib.org.uk)

## Blind Veterans UK (Formerly St Dunstan's)

Offers support and advice, training and rehabilitation, help with benefit claims, sport, 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: 020 7723 5021 (London) – 01273 307 811 (Brighton)
- Website: [blindveterans.org.uk](http://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: [torchtrust.org](http://torchtrust.org)

For other religious or cultural services for people with a visual impairment contact the RNIB.

- Phone: 0303 123 9999
- Website: [rnib.org.uk](http://rnib.org.uk)

## Macular Society

- Postal address: Macular Society, PO Box 1870, Andover,
- SP10 9AD.
- Phone: 0300 3030 111
- Email: [info@macularsociety.org](mailto:info@macularsociety.org)
- Website: [macularsociety.org](http://macularsociety.org)

## Eye care for adults with learning difficulties

1 in 3 people with learning difficulties also have sight loss. However, many of these people 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 learning difficulties.

- Phone: 01372 755000
- Email: [enquiries@seeability.org](mailto:enquiries@seeability.org)
- Website: [seeability.org](http://seeability.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:

- Drivers Medical Group DLVA, Swansea SA99 1DF
- Phone: 0300 790 6807

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. Your local DVLA office can be contacted by phoning 0300 7906802.

**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 called 'Code of Practice for Class 3 Vehicle Users', which is available from:**

- **Website: [gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchair-rules](http://gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchair-rules)**

# **Edition 16**

**[www.westsussex.gov.uk](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk)**

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