

# Managing Sight Loss

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# Introduction

**When you learn that your sight is failing, you may react with disbelief, anger, shock and fear about the future. The thought of life with deteriorating sight is a difficult one.**

**Failing sight will bring changes to your life, but you can deal with these changes more easily if you know where to get help and support from people who understand what you are going through.**

**This booklet will point you in the right direction to get that help and support.**

**Services that were previously provided by the Social Services Department are now separated between the Adult Services Department, and the Children's Services Department. However, the same Sensory Services teams provide services for both new departments.**

# So who can I contact?

## ■ Your doctor

Your doctor can refer you to a consultant ophthalmologist, usually at an eye clinic. They will examine your eyes and talk to you about possible treatments. Early treatment may help to avoid permanent sight damage.

- Your doctor can tell you about Low Vision Clinics where staff can loan you a range of magnifiers and special glasses.
- Your ophthalmologist can tell you whether you qualify to be registered as blind or partially sighted.
- Your eye clinic may have a Sight Loss Advisor who can offer emotional support as well as advice about the help you can get from Hampshire County Council Sensory Services Teams and other organisations.

## ■ Hampshire County Council Sensory Services teams

We have a range of specially trained staff who can give you information and advice.

These staff can arrange a meeting where you can talk about the effect of your sight loss on you, your family and your friends.

You will be able to find out if there is any help available or any special equipment to help you manage the tasks of day-to-day life.

A Rehabilitation Worker can help you with getting around, both in and out of doors, kitchen skills and communication skills. They can also offer advice on lighting and magnifiers and help you to build your confidence.

For more information, contact your local Sensory Services Team. You will find the addresses on pages 8 and 9 of this booklet. Useful information can also be found on our website

■ **Hampshire Association  
for the Care of the Blind (HACB)**

**HACB provides support and advice to help  
blind and partially sighted people to live as  
full and independent a life as possible.**

**For more information about HACB contact:**

- **Hampshire Association  
for the Care of the Blind  
25 Church Road  
Bishopstoke  
Eastleigh, SO50 6BL**

**Telephone 023 8064 1244**

**Email [info@hacb.org.uk](mailto:info@hacb.org.uk)**

**Website [www.hacb.org.uk](http://www.hacb.org.uk)**

# Registration

If your sight loss is likely to be permanent, it may make it easier to get help, advice and some concessions if you register as blind/severely sight impaired or partially sighted/sight impaired.

Nine out of ten people registered as severely sight impaired still have some sight, so don't think you have to have no sight at all to be able to register.

Hampshire County Council maintains these registers, but the only person who can decide whether you qualify for registration is a consultant ophthalmologist.

If you want to be registered, and the ophthalmologist decides that you can, they will complete a form with you and ask you to sign it. They will send copies to your doctor and to Hampshire County Council. We will then either arrange a visit or send the registration card to you.

Remember that registration is voluntary and you can ask to be removed from the register at any time.

# What does registering entitle me to?

**If you are registered you are entitled to:**

- a Disabled Persons' Railcard – you can get details from your local train station
- some reduced travel costs – your local council can give you details of schemes operating in your area
- free NHS eye tests
- free use of Directory Enquiries – you can get details and an application form by calling 0800 587 0195
- equipment to help you at work – your local Job Centre can give you details of this.

**In addition, if you are registered blind/severely sight impaired you are entitled to:**

- **an extra tax allowance from the date you register – check the details with your local tax office**
- **additional benefits – your local Benefits Agency can give you details**
- **a 50% reduction on any TV licence bought in your name – remember, too, that if you are over 75, you can get a free TV licence anyway**
- **parking concessions – you can apply for a ‘blue badge’ which gives free street parking for any car you are travelling in. Contact the Blue Badge Unit, Elizabeth II Court, The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UH. Telephone 01962 847650  
Email [blue.badge@hants.gov.uk](mailto:blue.badge@hants.gov.uk)  
Website [www.hants.gov.uk/bluebadge1.html](http://www.hants.gov.uk/bluebadge1.html)**

# How to contact Hampshire County Council Sensory Services Teams

## ■ Alton

Park House, High Street, Alton, GU34 1EN

Tel 01420 544255

Email [SSD.alton@hants.gov.uk](mailto:SSD.alton@hants.gov.uk)

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## ■ Basingstoke Sensory Services Team

Social Work Department, F Floor, North  
Hampshire Hospital, Aldermaston Road,  
Basingstoke, RG24 9NA

Tel 01256 313401

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## ■ Gosport

133 Stoke Road, Gosport, PO12 1SD

Tel 0845 600 4555

Email [SSD.gosport@hants.gov.uk](mailto:SSD.gosport@hants.gov.uk)

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## ■ Havant

Town End House, PO Box 61,  
East Street, Havant, PO9 1UB

Tel 023 9247 1644

Email [SSD.havant@hants.org.uk](mailto:SSD.havant@hants.org.uk)

# Sensory Services Teams

- **Hythe**

**West Shore House, West Street, Hythe,  
Southampton, SO45 6AA**

**Tel 023 8084 6953**

**Email [SSD.hythe@hants.gov.uk](mailto:SSD.hythe@hants.gov.uk)**

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- **Romsey**

**Former Magistrates Court, Church Street,  
Romsey, SO51 8AQ**

**Tel 01794 526000**

**Email [SSD.romsey@hants.gov.uk](mailto:SSD.romsey@hants.gov.uk)**

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- **Winchester**

**Corinium House, 10/14 Andover Road,  
Winchester, SO23 7BX**

**Tel 01962 869313**

**Email [SSD.winchester@hants.gov.uk](mailto:SSD.winchester@hants.gov.uk)**

# **Are there any other useful organisations?**

**There are many groups and voluntary organisations providing services for visually impaired people. These include dial-a-ride, talking newspapers and local groups such as Neighbourcare, which offer a wide range of help.**

**You can also speak to an employment advisor at your local Job Centre.**

**You can get details of organisations local to you from the Hampshire Association for the Care of the Blind, or from your local Council of Community Service.**

# Other useful phone numbers

## Equipment

- **Cobolt Systems Ltd**  
01493 700172

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- **IC**  
0114 221 1665

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- **Optima**  
01803 864218

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- **Partially Sighted Society**  
01302 323132

# Other useful phone numbers

## Support Organisations – General

- **Action for Blind People**  
020 7635 4800

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- **National Benefits Enquiry Line**  
0800 882200

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- **Deafblind UK**  
01733 358100

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- **Guide Dogs for the Blind**  
023 8076 8800

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- **Hampshire Association for  
the Care of the Blind (HACB)**  
023 8064 1244

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- **National Federation of the Blind**  
01924 291313

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- **RNIB Helpline**  
0845 766 9999

# Other useful phone numbers

## Support Organisations – Specialist

- **British Blind Sport**

**01962 424247**

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- **British Retinitis Pigmentosa Society**

**0845 123 2354**

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- **Diabetes UK**

**(formerly British Diabetic Association)**

**0845 120 2960**

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- **International Glaucoma Association**

**0207 737 3265**

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- **LOOK**

**0121 428 5038**

**support for parents of visually impaired children**

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- **Macular Disease Society**

**0845 241 2041**

# Other useful phone numbers

- **Nystagmus Network**  
**01636 627004**
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- **Sense**  
**020 7272 7774**  
for younger deafblind adults and children
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- **Sense South East**  
**020 8541 1147**

## Taped information

- **Calibre Cassette Library**  
**01296 432339**
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- **RNIB Talking Books**  
**0845 762 6843**
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- **TNAUK**  
**01435 866102**  
national magazines on tape

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