

A Guide to Services for People who have Sight Loss



☎ 01792 315969

This information is also available in Welsh and in alternative formats, such as large print, on audio CD, in Braille, or electronically.

Please phone 01792 636902 to request an alternative format.

About this factsheet

This factsheet provides information for those who have sight loss. It explains more about registering your sight loss and provides a guide as to what services are available from the Social Services at the City and County of Swansea and how you can apply for help.

Sight loss

Problems resulting from sight loss appear in many forms with very different effects. The most common conditions are cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration.

Sight loss can include blindness, partial sight and low vision.

The role of the optician and ophthalmologist

In order to discover any possible problem at an early stage it is important to have regular eye checks. If your optician discovers a problem with your eyes that may indicate a health issue s/he will refer you to your GP, an ophthalmologist (eye specialist) at a local hospital or a specialist Optometrist who may be able to offer advice and

equipment under the Low Vision Scheme.

At the Eye Clinic in Singleton Hospital there is an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer who may be able to offer support and advice.

A Consultant Ophthalmologist may complete a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) categorising your condition as either sight impaired or severely sight impaired. By signing this certificate you will have agreed for additional copies to be sent to your GP and the Local Authority (Social Services). This will enable you to have your sight loss entered on the Local Authority register of people with sight loss, kept in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014.

Is it compulsory to register?

No, applying to be registered as blind or partially sighted is completely voluntary. By not registering you will not be denied access to services.

Why register?

It makes it more straightforward for you to access certain services and benefits. It also allows your name to be included

on the register which assists your Local Authority in planning future services.

We have a factsheet *Disabled Registration for People with a Physical or Sensory Disability* which gives further information.

Support from Social Services

The Sensory Services Team is made up of specialist workers based at

Swansea Vale Resource Centre

Ffordd Tregof

Swansea Vale

SWANSEA

SA7 0AL

They can be contacted Monday to Friday between 9.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. by:

Telephone: 01792 315969 (Duty Line)

Text Relay: 18001 01792 315969

Fax: 01792 785021

SMS: 07919 626434

Email:

sensory.services@swansea.gov.uk

Facetime:

sensory.services@swansea.gov.uk

Skype: sensory.services.swansea

The Sensory Services Team offer advice and information about:

- Blue badge scheme
- Community alarm (Lifeline) and big button telephones
- Welfare benefits
- Bus and rail passes
- TV licence concessions
- Talking/large print books and newspapers,

- Housing issues
- Occupational Therapy services
- Carer's assessment
- Communication formats
- Guide Dogs Association
- Voluntary Organisations

We also have a Resource Centre of equipment for people with sensory loss, offering an opportunity to trial equipment for suitability before purchasing from providers.

Depending on your needs, there may be other services which Social Services can provide. These may be related specifically to sight loss, or to other needs that you might have which require support.

First you would need to have an assessment. Our factsheet *Social Services: Care and Support Assessments for Adults* explains more about what this means.

Rehabilitation Services for People with Sight Loss

The following types of service may be offered to people who meet the eligibility criteria.

- Orientation, safe and independent travel, which involves training and equipment to help you get around your home, to the local shops or further afield.
- Independent living skills programmes which aim to help you to remain independent in areas such as cooking, cleaning and leisure activities.
- Training in communication, which may involve a range of

accessible formats such as I.T. / training in touch typing, Braille, basic computer awareness and in the use of specialised packages. Criteria for this training are being in education, employment or seeking employment online shopping or maintaining contact with family in situations of extreme isolation

- Specialist training to help you to maximise the use of your vision.

As part of your assessment, the Rehabilitation Officer will discuss with you how we can best meet those needs, who will provide the service and where.

The work we do with you will be time-limited. For most people this means that once your identified goal is achieved you will no longer need our support.

Support for other needs

Depending on your individual needs and eligibility, Social Services may be able to offer you the following types of support.

- Direct Payments, which can enable you to arrange your own support, perhaps through employing a Personal Assistant.
- Domiciliary support if you need help to be able to live in your own home.
- Respite Care, enabling you and your carer to have a break from the daily routine.
- Residential Care Home services

We can give you copies of any of the factsheets mentioned in this document. Please ask your care manager or ring 01792 636902. Alternatively you can

read them on-line at www.swansea.gov.uk/socialcarepublications

Support from other organisations

There are a number of local and national organisations and services offering advice, information and support to people with sight loss. Details of these can be found on our website www.swansea.gov.uk/sightloss

Swansea Social Services and personal information

When you are in touch with Social Services, we will keep information about you in written records and computer files. We will keep this information confidential, except where we need to share it with people providing you with care, or to protect you or other people.

You have a right to ask to see records we keep about you.

We can give you more information about how we handle personal information. Phone 01792 636902 for the factsheet *Your Personal Information*.

Comments and complaints

We welcome any comments about our services – good or bad. We are interested to hear how we could do things better, and we like to know when we are doing well.

If you are unhappy with the services you receive, we encourage you to make a complaint. Full details are given in the factsheet *'Making a comment, complaint or compliment about Social Services.'*

For more advice or information about making a complaint, you can contact our Complaints Officers on 01792 637345.