

# A Guide to Services for People who are Deafblind



**☎ 01792 315969**

This information is also available in Welsh and in alternative formats, such as large print, on audio CD, in Braille, or electronically. To request an alternative format email [smsu@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:smsu@swansea.gov.uk) or phone 01792 636693.

## About this factsheet

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

## More about Deafblindness

Deafblindness although difficult to define can be understood as follows:

People are regarded as Deafblind if their combined sight and hearing loss causes problems with communication, access to information and mobility.

Deafblindness can develop over time (acquired) or can be apparent from birth (congenital).

Both sight and hearing loss can appear in many forms with very different effects.

### Sight Loss

Some of the most common forms of sight loss include cataracts, glaucoma and Age-related Macular Degeneration. In order to discover any possible problem at an early stage it is important to visit the optician regularly.

### Hearing Loss

There are different causes of deafness. For example some people are born deaf and may use British Sign Language (BSL) as

their first language. Some may acquire hearing loss as a result of, for example, illness, a hereditary condition or ageing in which case speech ordinarily remains your first language.

## Registering your disability

If you have already visited a Consultant Ophthalmologist at a local hospital they may suggest registering as sight impaired or severely sight impaired in accordance with the definitions given in Section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948.

If you are eligible for registration the Ophthalmologist will complete a CVI (Certificate of Vision Impairment) to certify that you are sight impaired or severely sight impaired. A copy will be sent to you and also to your GP and the Sensory Services Team at Social Services. The Sensory Services Team will contact you to ask you if you wish to be entered on the local authority's Register of Disabled People.

If you have already visited an audiologist they may ask if you wish to be referred to Sensory Services. Your audiologist is not able to register any individual as hard of hearing or deaf. That is the role of the Sensory Services specialist Social Worker who will assess you in this respect. If they feel that you are eligible and you wish to register an application for registration will be made and registration details sent to you.

Our factsheet *Disabled Registration for People with a Physical or Sensory Disability*

explains more about the process of registration.

### **Is registration compulsory?**

No, applying to be registered as sight impaired or deaf is completely voluntary. If you prefer not to register 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 for you and other Deafblind people.

### **Referral to Social Services**

If you see an Ophthalmologist they will discuss with you whether a referral to Sensory Services at Social Services would be helpful and record this on your CVI.

Your audiologist may also ask you whether you wish to be referred to Sensory Services.

You, or a family member, may also directly refer yourself at any time by contacting the Sensory Services Team.

If a referral is appropriate someone from the team will contact you and, if you wish, will arrange a home visit to discuss any problems and to offer various services and information that may be of help to you.

### **What is available to help me?**

Social Services can give you advice and Information with regard to

- Welfare Benefits
- Communication formats
- Housing issues
- Referral to Adult Education/ employment services
- Bus Pass
- Rail and travel concessions.
- TV licence concessions

- Blue Badge Scheme
- Talking books and newspapers
- Occupational Therapy
- Community Alarm (Lifeline) and Big Button telephones
- Carer's Assessment

We have a Resource Centre of equipment for people with sensory loss offering an opportunity to trial equipment for suitability prior to purchase from providers

A number of other services may be available to people who meet the eligibility criteria to receive support from Social Services. For this to happen you would have to have an assessment. See our separate factsheet *Getting Help from Social Services: a Guide to Assessment and Eligibility* for further information.

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

- Functional assessment and issue of equipment to enhance independence, instruction in mobility and daily living skills.
- Instruction and demonstration of specially designed IT equipment with speech synthesisers, touch screen and large print text, etc.
- Learning opportunities including arts and crafts which can help to improve manual dexterity and provide a new interest.
- Direct Payments
- Respite Care
- Residential Care Home services
- Domiciliary support
- Occupational therapy Services
- Issue of equipment that would enhance independence. This would be fitted by our Technical Officer.
- Day opportunities

## Getting in touch

### Sensory Services Team

Swansea Vale Resource Centre  
Ffordd Tregof  
Swansea  
SA7 0AL

Tel: 01792 315969

Sms: 07919 626 434

Fax: 01792 785021

Email: [sensory.services@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:sensory.services@swansea.gov.uk)

Oovoo: [paul.lewis@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:paul.lewis@swansea.gov.uk)

[pauline.mabbs2@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.mabbs2@swansea.gov.uk)

## Other sources of support

The two organisations below support people who are Deafblind

### Sense Cymru

☎ 0845 127 0090

Text phone: 0845 127 0092

Email: [cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk](mailto:cymruenquiries@sense.org.uk)

Web site: [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

### Deafblind UK

☎ 01733 358100 (voice/text)

Web site: [www.deafblind.org.uk](http://www.deafblind.org.uk)

### Swansea Deafblind Group

This self help social group for Deafblind people meets on the third Tuesday of every month from 2.00 – 4.00 pm at the Civic Centre.

For more information:

☎ 02920 601472

Text phone: 07827 309770

Email: [deafblindcymru@deafblind.org.uk](mailto:deafblindcymru@deafblind.org.uk)

## 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 636693 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 leaflet *'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.