

Registration of Sight Impaired and Severely Sight Impaired Patients

Why register?

If you have poor vision, it is a good idea to think about registering as sight impaired or severely sight impaired. The aim of registration is to help local authorities provide the best services for individuals with sight loss. The register is strictly confidential.

Some people worry that registration is a backward step, they are afraid that officials will interfere and that this will eventually mean a loss of independence. This is not the case. **You are always in charge.** A bit of support can make all the difference in retaining independence. Registering is also essential for claiming some financial benefits and concessions.

How do I register?

If you already attend the outpatients department within the hospital all that is required is to ask the ophthalmologist at your next visit if you are eligible for registration. If you are not attending the hospital then ask your family doctor to refer you to a named consultant ophthalmologist (in writing) to the consultant giving their name not just "Dear Doctor".

What happens next?

The consultant will check your sight and if appropriate will then certify you as sight impaired (SI) or severely sight impaired (SSI) by completing a CVI form (previously BD8). If you are eligible for registration as severely sight impaired, this does not necessarily mean that you are without sight. Only 4% of 'blind people' cannot see anything.

Different eye conditions give patients different levels of vision. Loss of sight in one eye does not qualify a patient for registration, unless the vision in the other eye is very poor. If the consultant agrees to the registration, they will complete the certification form, giving details of your vision and registering you as sight impaired or severely sight impaired.

You are then asked to sign the form. You will receive a copy of the form in the post, (this is your copy for your own records), as will your family doctor and social services sensory team. The sensory team will then contact you to ask if you would like to be placed on their register and will offer you an assessment. The assessment is a home visit to have an informal chat about the difficulties you are experiencing due to your sight loss. They will be able to offer some practical solutions. There is no cost to have a visit from your local sensory team.

A copy of your certificate of visual impairment is also kept by the hospital in your case records. A census form is also part of the CVI which is sent to the relevant department. This form does not reveal your name or personal details, only your eye condition.

Services for people with a sight loss vary from area to area. Whilst some social service departments give equipment and aids free of charge, others may signpost you to where you can purchase equipment from. If you change address or move to a different area it is important that you inform the new social services department that you have a certificate of visual impairment.

Registration can be the first step on a new road to independence.

Summary of Benefits and Concessions if you are registered SI or SSI

Benefits / Concession	SSI	SI
Blind Person's tax allowance	✓	
Television licence fee reduction	✓	
Blue Badge Scheme	✓	
Free Postage – 'Articles for the Blind'	✓	✓
Free NHS eye examination	✓	✓
Disabled persons rail card	✓	✓
Free Bus Travel (if SI then only free travel within certain time period)	✓	✓
Free directory enquiries	✓	✓
Cinema Pass	✓	
Protection under the Equality Act	✓	✓
Assessment by Social Services	✓	✓
Personal Independent Payment	✓	✓
Attendance Allowance (65+)	✓	✓

Carer's Allowance	✓	✓
Employment and Support Allowance	✓	✓
Tax Credits	✓	✓
Housing Benefit	✓	✓
Council Tax disability reduction	✓	✓
Universal Credit	✓	✓
Pension Credit	✓	✓
Free ticket for a guide at theatres, galleries and attractions	✓	✓

Useful telephone numbers

Henshaws Patient Support in the Outpatient Department Manchester Royal Eye Hospital

Telephone: (0161) 276 5515 Mobile 07449 561085 Monday – Friday 9.00am – 4.30pm
Mobile 07970 637665 Tuesday and Wednesday only 9.00am – 4.30pm

Henshaws Manchester

Email: info@manchester.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 222 5555 Monday – Friday 9.00am – 4.30pm

Laura Ross

Children and Genetics Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO)
Manchester Royal Eye Hospital

Telephone: (0161) 701 4258 Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm
Mobile: 07989 145471

Email: laura.ross@mft.nhs.uk