



Eye health and sight loss: local planning for the future

- People living with sight loss face a number of barriers which impact upon independent living and emotional wellbeing. This exclusion can include access to information, health services and services provided at a local authority level.
- The number of people living with sight loss is to double to four million by 2050. Over 50 per cent of sight loss can be avoided. Sight loss costs the UK economy more than £6 billion per year and is set to increase to £7.9 billion by 2013.
- Reducing unnecessary sight loss will not only help improve the quality of life of local residents, it makes financial sense by reducing the demand on local services and council budgets.
- There are strong links between sight loss and smoking, obesity, depression, social inequality and falls – these are key priorities for public health.
- There is strong and growing evidence of capacity issues in eye hospitals leading to delays in treatment of AMD, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and cataracts. These need to be addressed as a matter of urgency as delays can lead to irreversible sight loss.

Questions and actions for local authorities and health and wellbeing boards

- Are you aware of how many people in your area have a visual impairment and what services and support is available to blind and partially sighted people?
- Does your local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Health and Wellbeing Strategy recognise eye health as a public health need and plan for the increase in the number of people with sight loss in the future?
- Are the Health and Wellbeing Board and Clinical Commissioning Group aware of the Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator for eye health and sight loss?
- Registering sight loss with the local council can make it easier to get practical support from the social services department and can be a 'passport' to getting concessions and benefits. Are these registers regularly updated and how are people told about registration?
- There is a duty to provide information in a person's preferred format. Do your local authority and local health organisations provide information in braille, audio, large print and other formats?



More information

For contact details of your local RNIB Regional Campaigns Officer who will be able to provide further support and information:

visit [rnib.org.uk/campaigns](https://www.rnib.org.uk/campaigns)

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call **020 7391 2123**

