

Benefits of registering as sight impaired or severely sight impaired



About BID Services

BID Services is a charity dedicated to removing barriers and empowering people who are D/deaf, hard of hearing, sight impaired, deafblind, or living with other disabilities to live full and independent lives.

We deliver a wide range of specialist services across the country, including information, advice and guidance; community services with welcoming social groups and activities; children and young people's services; awareness training and British Sign Language courses; communication support and interpreting services; assessment and rehabilitation for people with sight loss or who are deafblind, including mobility training and independent living skills; hearing aid clinics; and assistive technology and equipment assessments and training.

Self refer online

If you need support or you know someone who does, you can make a referral on our website:

www.bid.org.uk/contact-us

Use the camera on your smartphone to scan this QR code and self-refer online, or go to the end of this booklet for alternative contact information.



Introduction

Losing your sight can be a difficult and life-changing experience. However, help and support are available to help you stay independent and live your life.

Registering your sight loss can help you access support services, concessions, and possible reductions in your council tax. While registration does not automatically give you benefits, it can support your applications.

What is registration?

Your local authority keeps a confidential register of people who are sight impaired or severely sight impaired. In some areas, organisations like BID Services manage this register.

Being registered means that the right support can be offered to you. Your personal details will always be kept confidential.

There are two levels of registration:

- **Sight impaired** (previously called partially sighted)
- **Severely sight impaired** (previously called blind).

How to register

To register, you need a **Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI)** completed by a consultant eye specialist (ophthalmologist).

Steps to register:

1. Ask your GP or optician to refer you to an ophthalmologist
2. Your eyesight will be assessed
3. The ophthalmologist will complete a CVI form
4. You sign the form if you agree to be registered
5. The form is shared with your GP and social services
6. Your details are added to the register
7. Social services will contact you within 14 days to confirm that you want to be included on the register and discuss next steps.
8. Social services may offer you a needs assessment to identify support you may need.

If BID Services works in your area, we can support you at any stage of this process.

After you register

Social services may carry out an assessment (sometimes called a Community Care Assessment) to understand how best to support you.

This could include **equipment or adaptations, help at home, mobility support** and **access to services and activities.**



How your sight is assessed

Your eyesight will be tested in two main ways:

Visual acuity - how clearly you see detail (using an eye chart).

Field of vision - how much you can see around you.

Understanding your CVI

Your CVI includes:

1. Results of your eye test
2. Details about your condition
3. Information about your circumstances

To be registered as **severely sight impaired (blind)**, your eyesight must meet one of the following:

- Visual acuity of **less than 3/60** with a full visual field.
- Visual acuity of **3/60 to 6/60** with a severely reduced field of vision
- Visual acuity of **6/60 or better** but with a very limited field of vision, especially lower vision.

To be registered as **sight impaired (partially sighted)**, your eyesight must meet one of the following:

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- Visual acuity of **3/60 to 6/60** with a full field of vision.
- Visual acuity of up to **6/24** with a **moderate reduction in field of vision**, or other eye conditions.
- Visual acuity of up to **6/18** with a significantly reduced field of vision.

Visual acuity is measured using the Snellen Scale. This is explained below.

Your ophthalmologist will use these measurements to decide which category applies.

You must sign the CVI to agree the registration.

Understanding the Eye Test (Snellen Scale)

Eye tests use a chart with rows of letters:

- 6/6 means normal vision.
- 6/60 means you see at 6 metres what someone with normal vision sees at 60 metres.
- The larger the second number, the more your vision is affected.

Important Information

- Registration does not automatically give you benefits, but it can support your claims.
- If your condition is still being treated, registration may be delayed.
- If you have sight loss in only one eye, you may not be eligible.
- If registration is not mentioned, you can still ask your ophthalmologist about it.

If you have difficulty getting registered, support is available.

If you choose not to register

You can still get help without being registered. Social services may provide support, and we can guide you to the right services.

You may also be referred through:

- **A Low Vision Leaflet (LVL)** from your optician
- **A Referral of Low Vision Impairment (RVI)** from a clinic or hospital.

Need help?

BID Services provides specialist support across the country. If we deliver support for those with sight impairments in your area, we will be able to provide

you with advice and support at any stage of this journey. To find out if we offer services near you, please check our list of regional services below or contact us on **0121 246 6100**. You can also send an email to **info@bid.org.uk**

List of regional services

Birmingham Advice and Support Service

Coventry Deaf and Hearing Loss Support Service

Cumbria Deaf and Hearing Loss Services

Leeds Sensory Services

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Sensory Services

Lincolnshire Sensory Services

Milton Keynes Sensory Services

Northumberland Sensory Services



Summary of benefits and concessions

This is a summary of the benefits and concessions you may be entitled to if you are registered Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) and Sight Impaired (SI).

SSI

Blind Person's tax allowance
Television license fee reduction
Blue Badge Scheme for car parking

SSI and SI

Articles for the Blind – free postage
Free NHS eye examination
Disabled Person's Railcard
Free bus travel
Free directory enquiries
Cinema pass for carer
Protection under the Equality Act
Assessment by Social Services

If you are SSI or SI, you may also be entitled to:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
Attendance Allowance
Carers Allowance
Employment and Support Allowance
Tax Credits

Please note that the information in this leaflet is for

guidance only and is not an authoritative statement of the law.

Benefits and concessions

The details about benefits and concessions can change frequently, so the following information is to be used for guidance only. We have tried to list the relevant organisations that you will need to contact to find out more details about the individual benefits and who will be able to advise you about your eligibility.

Blind person's tax allowance

0300 200 3300

www.gov.uk/blind-persons-allowance

Television licence fee reduction

0300 555 0286

Blue Badge Scheme (car parking):

Please contact your local council to check about the Blue Badge Scheme in your area.

Free postage (Articles for the Blind):

Contact the Royal Mail Customer Service Centre.

0345 774 0740

0345 600 0606 (textphone)

Free permanent loan of radios and CD players

Contact your local Social Services Department, ask for the British Wireless for the Blind Fund (BWBF).
01622 754757

Free NHS eye examination

If you are registered, your eye test will be free. Please inform your optician before the examination.

You may also qualify for 'voucher for complex lenses' and your optician should be able to advise on this.

There is also help that you may be entitled to regarding health related costs. To find out more, call the NHS Health Costs advice line on 0300 330 1343.

Disabled Persons Railcard:

0345 605 0525

0345 601 0132 (textphone)

www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

You can also get sighted assistance at the beginning and end of train journeys. Either call the relevant train company or go to www.disability-onboard.co.uk

Free bus travel

Contact your local authority or local transport providers for further details of travel concessions in your area.

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Free directory enquiries

0800 587 0195

Leisure concessions

For further details of what may be available, call the RNIB helpline on 0303 123 9999.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

0800 917 2222

0800 917 7777 (textphone)

www.gov.uk/pip

Attendance Allowance

0800 731 0122

0800 731 0317 (textphone)

www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

Carer's Allowance

0800 731 0297

0800 731 0317 (textphone)

cau.customer-services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/carers-allowance

Employment and Support Allowance

0800 328 5644

0800 328 1344 (textphone)

0800 055 6688 for new claims

www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance

Tax Credits

0345 300 3900

0345 300 3909 (textphone)

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/tax-credits-enquiries

Universal Credit

0800 328 9344

0800 328 1344 (textphone)

www.gov.uk/universal-credit

Pension Credit

0800 991 234

0800 169 0133 (textphone)

www.gov.uk/state-pension-age

Access to Work

0800 121 7479

0800 121 7579 (textphone)

www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Housing Benefit

For more information about Housing Benefit, please contact your local council.

Council Tax disability reduction

Please contact your local council to check what financial support is available with regards to Council Tax in your area.

The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 makes it law that every private, public and voluntary organisation must not discriminate against employees and people that use their services because of particular characteristics.

The Act brings together all previous laws, making them simpler, more effective and easier to understand. This means that you cannot be treated unfairly because of your disability. The Act applies in various situations including employment, services and facilities, transport and education.

If you would like more information, or believe that you have suffered discrimination, please contact us.

Did you know?



You can access our **Information Library online**, where you'll find a wide range of helpful resources. Topics include communication tips, health and wellbeing, finding and staying in work, and living independently with a disability.



To access the Information Library, visit
www.bid.org.uk/resources

If you require this booklet in an alternative format, please contact us.

Tel 0121 246 6100

Email info@bid.org.uk

Website www.bid.org.uk



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