



**Sight problems?**



**Who can help?**



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## Where to go for support

Your doctor or optician may have referred you to the Peterborough City Hospital Eye Clinic. Staff can advise you about practical things, such as lighting and vision aids and let you know about further sources of help and support. To help make the most of the sight you do have, they may be able to loan you equipment.

If you have been identified by your consultant at the Eye Clinic as suffering serious sight loss you will be contacted by Peterborough City Council's 'Front Door' team to enquire if you want to be registered. Ask to be assessed by a Rehabilitation Worker for Visually Impaired People who can then do an assessment of how your life is affected by your sight loss (such as mobility, communication and independent living skills) and suggest services and products that may be helpful.

**Peterborough Association for the Blind** (PAB) is a charity for blind and partially sighted people and their families. As a local group, they can provide tailored 'face to face' support. As well as providing information, they offer social activities, training in support for carers or family members, and regular home visits by trained

volunteers. Their website has details of many more local charities and companies and a Facebook page which instantly shares news with you or your friends and family. Their office is based in the city centre for easy access.

Call: 01733 344 844

Email: [info@mypab.org.uk](mailto:info@mypab.org.uk)

Website: [www.mypab.org.uk](http://www.mypab.org.uk)

### **Royal National Institute of Blind People**

(RNIB) is the UK's leading charity for people with vision loss, providing nationwide information and support. You can talk with specialist advisors over the phone, access their extensive library or attend courses to help with the practical and emotional challenges of sight loss.

They also offer free telephone counselling and support, as well as phone groups where you can socialise and share information with others.

Call: 0303 123 9999

Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

Website: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

**Action for Blind People** is a national charity providing tailored information, guidance and support, such as their "Living with Sight Loss" confidence building courses.

Call: 0303 123 9999

Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

Website: [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk)

# Understanding your eye condition

Don't hesitate to ask staff at the Eye Clinic to explain what is happening to your sight.

RNIB provide useful information on individual eye conditions which is medically checked and is designed to be as useful as possible. On their website you will also find a list of charities and support groups who offer specialised advice on more rare conditions. For more information visit [www.rnib.org.uk/eye-health/eye-conditions](http://www.rnib.org.uk/eye-health/eye-conditions)

RNIB only provide general information that is not intended to be a substitute for a proper medical assessment.

Even if you are no longer visiting the Eye Clinic, it is still important to have regular sight tests so your optometrist (eye specialist) can check for further changes in your eyes and give you advice about how to make the best use of your vision.

## Coming to terms with sight loss

Reactions to being diagnosed with sight loss tend to be similar to bereavement. You may experience feelings of denial, anger or fear and ask yourself “why me?”

You may be worrying about how you are going to cope. It's OK to feel like this. These emotions are part of a process, and there will be a period of adjustment.

Many people need help to find ways to deal with the emotional impact and practical implications of sight loss. Seeking and accepting support is a healthy and normal response to such a life-changing situation and isn't a sign of weakness or failure.

Developing practical techniques and strategies to help you to readjust to life with sight loss will help you to regain self-esteem and confidence.

Everybody is different. You do not have to seek professional help if it is not right for you, or if you do not require it. You may find that the love and support of a partner, relatives and friends is enough. You may simply want to try to return to as normal a routine as you can.

## Independent living

There is a vast array of equipment to help around the home. These can sometimes be expensive to buy new, but can often be obtained second hand. The RNIB's website has a good selection of gadgets and technology to choose from. Visit <http://shop.rnib.org.uk>

If you would prefer to try the products before you buy, your nearest resource centres are Huntingdon Society for the Blind (call 01480 453 438 or visit [www.huntsblind.co.uk](http://www.huntsblind.co.uk)) and Camsight in Cambridge (call 01223 420 033 or email [info@camsight.org.uk](mailto:info@camsight.org.uk)).

Talking equipment like watches, microwaves, kitchen scales and audible liquid level indicators (to let you know when a liquid is nearing the top of the cup) can help you remain independent.

There are also many different types of labelling to help you identify items, from using big bold writing on an adhesive label to talking colour detectors which identify the colour of your clothes. There are audio labels, washable labels for clothes and also tactile labels for marking microwaves or washing machine settings. There are many other products you may find useful:

- Screen readers for phones, or reading machines (standalone or Computer based) which can read letters or books. Voice recognition software is available for phones and computers.
- Large keypad mobile phones with basic functionality for making or receiving calls, or large button/picture landline telephones.
- Talking alarm clocks with large numbers and programmable large button remote controls can be used to replace multiple standard remotes.
- Binocular telescopic glasses for the theatre, bird watching or magnifying the TV. Electronic table top magnifiers (CCTVs) enlarge objects on a screen for tasks like sewing or using makeup.
- Talking computer operating systems for standard PC's like 'Dolphin Guide'. A wide range of computer keyboards are available, such as large key, contrasting keys, colour coded keys or simplified versions - only using 63 keys.

Lifeline provide technology based services which can help you live more independently at home, including personal alarms and health monitoring devices, which can give peace of mind. Ask your GP for more information or call Lifeline on 01733 396439 or email: [lifeline@crosskeyshomes.co.uk](mailto:lifeline@crosskeyshomes.co.uk)

If you feel that you do need assistance at home, The Peterborough Care Directory lists providers for things such as Home Care, meal delivery and personal assistants. Call 01733 74 74 74 or visit [www.peterboroughcaredirectory.org.uk](http://www.peterboroughcaredirectory.org.uk)

Shopping alone can become more difficult. Don't be afraid to ask for support as most shops are happy to help if they can. Online shopping can be made easier with screen readers or by increasing the size of website pages.

The Sainsbury's Assisted Shopping scheme allows customers to place orders over the telephone if they are unable to access stores or use the internet. Call Sainsbury's on 0800 328 1700.

Peterborough Association for the Blind, Deafblind UK, Macular Society, Age UK and the RNIB all offer support groups and befriending schemes, where trained volunteers can visit you regularly in your own home or accompany you outdoors for exercise or trips to the shops.

Inspire Peterborough promotes accessible sport and leisure activities for blind and partially sighted people and their family and carers. To find out more, call them on 01733 330 815 or visit [www.inspirepeterborough.com](http://www.inspirepeterborough.com)

# Entertainment

Many cinemas, theatres and sporting events provide audio description services accessed through wireless headphones, so you can still sit with other members of your party. Contact the venue to check and reserve.

Most new films released on DVD now have audio description options running along side the film. This is indicated on the back cover of the DVD.

Inspiring Peterborough radio show is dedicated to providing advice, guidance and information on disability issues. This airs every other Friday from 12-2pm on 106.2 FM.

BBC Radio 4's 'In Touch' show is every Tuesday evening from 8:40pm on 92-95 FM. It includes interviews, news, views and general information for people who are blind or visually impaired.  
Email: [intouch@bbc.co.uk](mailto:intouch@bbc.co.uk)

Radio 4 also broadcasts short stories or abridged books (often from new writers) and daily radio dramas. Visit [www.bbc.co.uk/radio4](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4)

Peterborough Association for the Blind organises regular meals out and other social events.

## Getting around

To continue to live an independent life outside your home, you may find mobility training helpful. A Social Services Rehabilitation Worker can help you to learn routes and recognise landmarks to ensure you stay safe. They will also provide training in using a white cane or support stick. Contact Peterborough City Council on 01733 74 74 74.

You may feel you would benefit from having a guide dog. Apart from the added freedom and independence this can bring, there is also an element of companionship. You can discuss this with Guide Dogs by calling 0845 372 7499 or visiting [www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)

If you are registered as Severely Sight Impaired (blind), you are eligible to apply for a Blue Badge. Although you would be unable to drive yourself, any driver you are with can use it to park in spaces reserved for disabled people. Call Peterborough City Council on 01733 452356 or email [blue.badges@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:blue.badges@peterborough.gov.uk)

You will be able to get a bus pass that gives you free concessionary travel. Contact Travel Choice on 01733 74 74 74.

The Disabled Person's Railcard gives at least one third off the price of certain rail tickets for the cardholder, and an accompanying adult where applicable. Even if you do not have the Disabled Person's Railcard, you can get discounted rail travel or free travel for a companion on certain tickets. You can also get assistance at the start and end of your train journey if you contact the train operating company in advance. For more information contact the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) on 0345 605 0525 or email [disability@atoc.org](mailto:disability@atoc.org)

Peterborough Travel Choice provide a service called Community Link, a wheelchair accessible service for anyone in the urban area who can't use standard public transport. The service will collect you from home and drop you off in the city centre (4 days a week) or at a supermarket (once a week) and return you home two and a half hours later. Additional trips may be organised on an ad hoc basis. Membership is £5 a year for individuals or £7.50 for a couple. Call 01733 74 74 74 to register.

The Royal Voluntary Service runs a community transport scheme in Peterborough, depending on the availability of volunteer drivers. The charge generally works out at about half the cost of a taxi. Call 01733 307304 for more information.

## Making the most of your sight

Things can be made easier for you to see by making them bigger and brighter, improving the lighting level and using contrasting colours.

You should make sure that you have as much light as you feel comfortable with for each task that you do. Specialty daylight lamps are available, but many high street retailers sell affordable reading lamps where the light can easily be directed onto the task in hand.

Making things bigger usually makes them easier to see. Portable or desk based magnifiers are available from the RNIB shop (the Eye Clinic may be able to provide them free of charge).

They also stock many easy-to-see products that could help you in your daily life, such as large number clocks, watches and telephones, or large print books and calendars.

It is harder to see things that are similar in colour to the background that they are on. Try different colours to make them stand out.

Writing with a black felt-tip pen makes it easier for you to see what you have written.

# Registration

Most people choose to register as severely sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted) with their local council. Registration is voluntary and totally confidential.

Some people do not want to accept their sight problems or do not want to be labelled as disabled. If you choose not to register, it won't stop you getting help from social services, but you cannot claim a wide range of concessions.

Life can be made more affordable with things like a half-price TV Licence, help with NHS costs and Council Tax bills, tax allowances and free public transport. Which concessions you are entitled to depends on whether you are registered as severely sight impaired or sight impaired. The RNIB has a comprehensive guide on whether registration is right for you.

To register, your ophthalmologist first needs to certify your sight loss. You will then be contacted by Peterborough City Council's Front Door team and assessed by a Rehabilitation Worker for Visually Impaired People. They will assess how your life is affected by your sight loss and can also suggest other useful services and products.

# Financial help and concessions

If you are registered Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) or Sight Impaired (SI) you may be entitled to financial support to help you adapt to living with sight loss. The list below is not exhaustive so please contact the organisations listed for details of full entitlement. These may include:

- Independence Payment (PIP). This replaces Disability Living Allowance (age 16 to 64).
- Attendance Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Tax Credits
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Disability Reduction
- Universal Credit

Call the HMRC Priority Telephone Line: 0300 200 3301 or visit [www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled](http://www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled)

Call the Department for Work and Pensions' Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 88 22 00

Call the RNIB Tax Advice Service line on 0845 330 4897 or 0151 702 5721. Alternatively, email them at [tax@rnib.org.uk](mailto:tax@rnib.org.uk)

Blind Person's Tax Allowance is available for people registered as Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) only and is in addition to personal tax allowances. It can be transferred (in whole or part) to your husband, wife or civil partner if you do not have enough taxable income to use it.

People who are registered as SSI are entitled to a 50% reduction on their TV licence fee. If you are living with someone who pays the full licence fee, you can transfer their licence into your name and benefit from the reduction. If you have already paid the full fee for a TV Licence, but qualify for a blind concession, you may be entitled to a refund. Contact the TV Licence Helpline on 0300 790 6071.

Blue Badge Scheme - This can be used in any vehicle in which the holder is travelling and allows the driver to park in spaces reserved for disabled people. People who are registered as SSI are automatically entitled to a badge. Call Peterborough City Council on 01733 452356 or email [blue.badges@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:blue.badges@peterborough.gov.uk)

The Disabled Person's Railcard generally gives at least one third off the price of certain rail tickets for both the cardholder and an accompanying adult. Call ATOC (Association of Train Operating Companies) on 0345 605 0525.

For a free concessionary travel bus pass, contact Travel Choice on 01733 74 74 74.

Telephones for the Blind provides mobile phones and grants towards line rental or installation of BT landlines in the UK. Email [info@tftb.org.uk](mailto:info@tftb.org.uk).

BT offer a free Directory Enquiries service if you are unable to read a telephone directory due to your sight loss (even if BT is not your telephone company). Call BT on 0800 587 0195 to register.

Check with cinemas and other attractions to see if they offer a free pass to your guide. You may be asked for a CEA card. Call 023 922 48545 or visit [www.ceacard.co.uk](http://www.ceacard.co.uk) to apply for one.

'Access to Work' Grants can pay for practical support such as specialist equipment, fares to work, a support worker or a communicator. It can help you start working, stay in work or move into self employment. Phone 0345 2688489 or visit [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work).

Free NHS eye examinations and help towards other NHS costs are available if you are unable to leave your home without the help of another person. This could include help towards the cost of glasses or free medical prescriptions. Ask your optician or GP for more information.

## Your rights

The 2010 Equality Act law protects individuals from unfair treatment (during work or social activities) and promotes a fair and more equal society. Visit [www.gov.uk/browse/disabilities](http://www.gov.uk/browse/disabilities)

If you feel you have been badly treated, you can contact Disability Peterborough (01733 265551 or [www.disabilitypeterborough.org](http://www.disabilitypeterborough.org)) or Citizens Advice on 0344 499 4120.

Employers must make reasonable adjustments to make sure disabled workers (including contract workers, trainees, apprentices and business partners) aren't disadvantaged when doing their jobs. This could include training, providing specialised equipment or making physical changes. For more advice, contact the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) at your local Jobcentre Plus office.

Service providers such as utility companies and banks are legally required to make their services accessible, by providing information in different formats such as large print, braille or audio.

You do not have to pay VAT on specialised goods designed for blind and partially sighted people.

## Reading and writing

There are many products available to help with your reading and writing. Perhaps the simplest way to continue reading is to try larger print. Large print books are available at most public libraries and bookstores. You could use large print diaries, calendars and puzzle books too.

For those that prefer to write by hand rather than by computer, you could try thick-nibbed pens, paper with wider spacing and thicker lines. The RNIB sells various guides to help you keep your writing in straight lines.

If you prefer to use a computer, most standard programs already have a zoom function, or you could use additional technology to enlarge the text size. Adjusting the colour of the text or background can also make things clearer. Many websites have accessibility options for removing backgrounds and changing fonts. Screen readers can read the content to you. If making these changes is difficult for you, the RNIB technology Support Squad can assist you in setting up equipment in your home. Call 0303 123 9999.

RNIB also run 'Online Today' to help you gain basic computer, internet or technology skills.

Most libraries stock audio books and some offer eBooks, electronic versions of a book in MP3 format which can be played on your computer or compatible audio device (with a USB port).

There are several audio postal lending libraries available. Calibre Audio Library can send you MP3 versions of books through the post or to stream and download from their website. Call 01296 432339 or email [enquiries@calibre.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@calibre.org.uk)

Library Link can deliver audio or large print books to your home or visit you with their mobile library. Call them on 01733 864167 or email [librarylink@vivacitypeterborough.com](mailto:librarylink@vivacitypeterborough.com)

The RNIB offers several reading choices, giving you access to a wide range of books, magazines and newspapers in audio, braille and large print to suit your requirements.

British Wireless for the Blind Fund supply radio and CD players on free permanent loan. Call 01622 754757 or email [info@blind.org.uk](mailto:info@blind.org.uk)

Peterborough Talking Newspaper provides free weekly news articles read from the Peterborough Evening Telegraph. They also provide a monthly audio magazine. For more information, contact Peterborough Association for the Blind.

## Useful numbers

### **Peterborough Association for the Blind (PAB)**

Call: 01733 344 844

Email: [info@mypab.org.uk](mailto:info@mypab.org.uk)

Website: [www.mypab.org.uk](http://www.mypab.org.uk)

### **Royal National Institute of Blind People**

Call: 0303 123 9999

Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

Website: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

### **Action for Blind People**

Call: 0303 123 9999

Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

Website: [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk)

### **Social services (Peterborough Care Directory)**

Call: 01733 74 74 74

### **Lifeline**

Call: 01733 396439

Email: [lifeline@crosskeyshomes.co.uk](mailto:lifeline@crosskeyshomes.co.uk)

Website: [www.crosskeyshomes.co.uk/lifeline](http://www.crosskeyshomes.co.uk/lifeline)

### **Age UK**

Call: 0800 169 6565

Website: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

## **Deafblind UK**

Call: 01733 358 100

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

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

## **The Macular Society**

Call: 0300 3030 111

Email: [info@macularsociety.org](mailto:info@macularsociety.org)

Website: [www.macularsociety.org](http://www.macularsociety.org)

## **Calibre Audio Library**

Call: 01296 432 339

Email: [enquiries@calibre.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@calibre.org.uk)

Website: [www.calibre.org.uk](http://www.calibre.org.uk)

## **Inspire Peterborough**

Call: 01733 330 815

Email: [contact@inspirepeterborough.co.uk](mailto:contact@inspirepeterborough.co.uk)

Website: [www.inspirepeterborough.co.uk](http://www.inspirepeterborough.co.uk)

## **Guide Dogs**

Call: 0845 372 7425

Email: [peterborough@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:peterborough@guidedogs.org.uk)

Website: [www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)

## **Community Link** (Door to Door bus service)

Call: 01733 317460

Email: [buses@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:buses@peterborough.gov.uk)

Website: [www.travelchoice.org.uk](http://www.travelchoice.org.uk)

**PAB**

**Peterborough Association  
for the Blind**

Being told you have a serious eye condition can be an anxious time, but you can still enjoy a fulfilling life.

This leaflet gives you some ideas about what's available both locally and nationally, to inform and support you.

We are here to help you with information, advice and support when you need it. Our website is also full of information, links to other organisations and details of social events where you can talk to other people who have experienced sight loss.

You can also download the audio version of this booklet from our website. Please visit:  
[www.mypab.org.uk/about-us/downloads](http://www.mypab.org.uk/about-us/downloads)

For a free audio version on CD, please contact:

**Peterborough Association for the Blind (PAB)**

01733 344 844

[www.mypab.org.uk](http://www.mypab.org.uk)

[info@mypab.org.uk](mailto:info@mypab.org.uk)