



Information from Counsel and Care: 39

If you can't see and/or hear well: what help and support is available?

As people grow older, some will be affected by difficulties with their hearing and/or their sight. Being unable to see or hear as well as you used to is not inevitable. There is help and support available if you need it.

This guide provides advice and tips on how to make the most of your sight and hearing so that you may lead a fulfilling and enjoyable life.

Counsel and Care is the national charity working with older people, their families and carers to get the best care and support. If you have found our service helpful, please consider making a donation or leaving a legacy in your Will. You can arrange either by telephoning 020 7241 8555 or using the secure service on our website www.counselandcare.org.uk.

Counsel and Care is a national charity; however the creation of the Scottish Parliament, and the Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies means there are differences in the ways each country cares for and supports older people. The information in this guide applies essentially to England although there may be similarities with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

We also produce five separate guides for both Scotland and Wales covering the community care assessment of need process; paying care home fees and making a formal complaint which are the key areas where the policy and legislation differ significantly to England.

Throughout this guide we refer to other guides.

Copies of all our guides are available free

- by downloading from www.counselandcare.org.uk/helping-you/guides
- by post, leave a message on our guide orderline on 020 7241 8522.

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1 Introduction

As you grow older, you may find it harder to see or hear. Too often professionals, older people, their relatives and carers respond by asking: "What do you expect at this age?"

This guide shows that, whatever your age, if you are finding it harder to see or hear, there is help available and things you can do to make the most of your hearing and sight and enjoy life. This guide provides information, tips and signposts to organisations and professionals that can help you find support.

Each person's situation is different. Finding out about your needs and what support is available is the first step to getting resources that can improve your quality of life and keep you independent.

Older people, their families and friends and some professionals are often not aware of the range of support that is available to meet different needs resulting from hearing or sight loss. For example, new equipment like a 'loop system' makes it easier to hear the TV or better lighting in the kitchen makes cooking easier and safer. Small changes like these can make a big difference to what you see and hear and help you enjoy life.

Not being able to hear or see as well as you want to can be worrying. You may be feeling anxious or upset, and handling these feelings can be difficult.

Specialist local services and various organisations can provide information, advice and a range of practical help. The guide will help you find those that suit you. Section 11 lists useful sources of information and advice.

2 Hearing loss

If you have noticed that you have problems hearing conversations, the TV, music or the telephone, you may have tried to adjust to that or ignored it without seeking any help. Many people think nothing can be done to improve their hearing. Some people find it easier to pretend they can hear when someone is talking to them. It can be hard to admit you are finding it difficult to hear, but if you (or a close relative on your behalf) contacts your local council social services department for an assessment or to arrange an appointment with your GP, you can find useful support.

2.1 Assessment, diagnosis and equipment

Your GP will look in your ears using a special instrument called an otoscope to check for obvious problems such as wax build-up or infection, then carry out some basic tests to establish whether you have hearing loss. These include checking what sounds you can hear and asking about any hearing problems you have. If the GP thinks you have hearing loss you will be referred to the audiology clinic or the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) department of your local hospital for an assessment by an audiologist (a hearing specialist). The audiologist will try to diagnose the cause of your hearing loss and, depending on your needs, suggest what may improve your hearing.

If hearing aids are likely to help you, you will be advised on the type that best suits your needs. Hearing aids are either analogue or

digital. The new digital models provided by the NHS are behind-the-ear models; similar in appearance to analogue aids, but the way sound is processed is different. Digital aids have a tiny computer inside so they can be programmed to meet individual needs and different settings. This means they are better than older (analogue) models. Organisations, such as the **RNID** and **Deafness Research UK**, provide information on different types of hearing aids, how to choose what suits you and how to maintain them.

At a first fitting appointment you will be shown how to use your new hearing aid, how to adjust to wearing it and how to look after it. A follow-up appointment with the audiologist is important. This is for any adjustments that may be needed or to discuss any problems you may have experienced. Ongoing support is then provided by a hearing therapist in a local health centre, GP Practice or audiology clinic.

Although digital hearing aids can be programmed to suit your hearing loss and adjusted to different environments, it still takes time to get used to the effect. It is important to be patient. People who wear hearing aids say it is very important to persevere. Hearing aids can put you back into contact with a world from which you may have felt cut off.

After your assessment the audiologist should refer you to your local sensory service. This may be provided by your local council social services team or a local voluntary organisation, so you need to ask for information on who to contact. A hearing specialist in the

sensory service will work with you to find the best way of meeting your needs. The hearing specialist can provide information and equipment to help. See section 7.2 of this guide for information about the assessment process.

A range of equipment, such as television listening devices, amplified telephones, flashing or vibrating alarm clocks and doorbells could be helpful. An induction loop system is a cable which goes around the area where you want to hear. It reduces background noise and could help your hearing aids work more effectively.

2.1.1 Paying for hearing aids and equipment

Digital hearing aids and batteries are provided free of charge by the NHS audiology clinic in your local NHS hospital. So are new ear moulds, tubing and repairs. If you lose your hearing aids, you may be asked to pay something towards the cost of replacement. People who currently have an analogue hearing aid are entitled to a free upgrade to NHS digital hearing aids. There may be a waiting list.

Some people may want to buy their hearing aids from a private dispenser. They can cost between £600 and £3,500 so it is important to make sure you buy one that is suitable for your needs. You will also have to pay for batteries and for any repairs that may be required after the warranty expires. The **RNID** provides detailed advice about buying a hearing aid. The law requires that all hearing aid dispensers must be qualified and are registered with

the **Health Professionals Council (HPC)**. The HPC can provide details of whether a local dispenser is registered with them. The **British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (BSHAA)** can provide a list of local dispensers.

Specialised equipment to improve your hearing may be provided free by the NHS, through the audiology clinic or local council social services department or by your local sensory service.

The **RNID** provides detailed information and advice on equipment and sells a range of products.

2.2 Registration

If you have a hearing loss your local sensory service may offer you the option of registering as 'deaf or hard of hearing.' This is voluntary and may bring concessionary benefits. To register you must be assessed by an audiologist and referred to your local sensory service.

You do not need to register to have your needs assessed or for information, advice and practical help to be provided.

2.3 Communication

People with hearing loss find that hearing aids and equipment make it easier to communicate and keep in touch. There are other useful approaches.

- **Face the person who is talking:** this means you can see their whole face as they speak and 'read' their lips and body

language; if you can, encourage people to speak slowly and clearly, and if they are in good light that can help too.

- **Lipreading skills:** take practice but once learned can be a great help, especially in a noisy place. Classes in lipreading may be run in your area: contact the **RNID** for details.
- **Fingerspelling, or the manual alphabet:** is a way of communicating in which you use your hand to 'spell out' the letters of the alphabet in order to communicate to others – such as the names of people, places or important things. Contact **DeafBlind UK** and the **RNID** for more information on this technique. RNID provides a handy-sized information card listing the manual alphabet and for information on an internet-based learning tool.
- **British Sign Language:** a universal language used by 50,000 hearing impaired people in the UK. Contact the RNID for details of local classes and, if you have access to the Internet, download 'Start to sign', an online learning tool.
- **Sign Supported English:** the English language, but with signs. Contact the RNID for details of local classes.

Contact **British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists:**

- email: secretary@bshaa.com
- website: www.bshaa.com
- letter: 6th Floor Remo House, 310-312 Regent Street, London W1B 3BS

Contact **DeafBlind UK:**

- telephone/textphone: 01733 358 100
- helpline: 0800 132 320
- fax: 01733 358 356
- email: info@deafblind.org.uk
- website: www.deafblind.org.uk
- letter: National Centre for Deafblindness, John and Lucille van Geest Place, Cygnet Road, Hampton, Peterborough, PE7 8FD.

Contact Deafness Research UK:

- telephone: 0808 808 2222
- textphone: 020 7915 1412
- fax: 020 7278 0404
- email: contact@deafnessresearch.org.uk
- website: www.deafnessresearch.org.uk
- letter: 330-332 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8EE.

Contact Health Professionals Council:

- telephone: 020 7582 0866
- fax: 020 7820 9684
- email: registration@hpc-uk.org
- website: www.hpc-uk.org
- letter: Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU.

Contact RNID:

- telephone: 0808 8080 0123
- textphone: 0808 8080 9000

- fax: 020 7296 8199
- email: informationline@rnid.org.uk
- website: www.rnid.org.uk
- letter: 19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL

3 Sight loss

Sight loss may be caused by different health conditions, eye disease or ageing of the eye. Correct up-to-date prescriptions in glasses or contact lenses can resolve many problems, but some causes of sight loss need other actions.

Sight loss becomes more common as you grow older, so it is important for older people to have regular eye examinations. These are provided by an optometrist, usually working in a local optician's practice. If you cannot leave your home for an examination some tests can be provided in your own home. Contact your GP for information on how to arrange a home visit.

3.1 Assessment, diagnosis and equipment

Regular eye examinations assess eye health and check vision. They identify whether you need prescription lenses to correct your sight loss and will check whether your glasses or contact lenses are correct for your needs. Examinations can detect the early stages of an eye condition, often before you notice any problems with your sight. This is especially important for eye diseases, such as glaucoma, in which early treatment can prevent sight loss.

If an eye examination shows that glasses or contact lenses can improve your sight you will be given a prescription for the lenses you need. You can take this to any supplier to prepare your glasses

or contact lenses. The supplier must make sure that your new glasses or lenses fit well, feel comfortable and that you are confident wearing them. Keeping glasses clean is very important in helping you see properly.

If an eye test shows cause for concern you will be referred to an eye specialist or clinic, sometimes via your GP.

Glasses or medical treatment may not be able to improve your sight. You will then be offered an appointment with a low vision service. Low vision services help people make the most of their eyesight. This may include using optical equipment such as magnifying glasses as well as support and advice to make the most of your sight. Your local service may be based in the eye department of your local hospital, a community optician's practice or a local voluntary society. **VISION2020UK** provides information on local services across the UK and your **local voluntary society for people with visual impairments** can provide local contacts.

Your optician, GP or eye clinic will refer you to your local council social services team for an assessment of your needs and for a referral to the local sensory service. This may be provided by your local council social services team or a local voluntary organisation so you need to ask for information on who to contact. A sight loss specialist will work with you to assess your needs, find the best ways of meeting them and provide information (and sometimes equipment) to help you. See section 7 of this guide for more information about this process.

You may be advised about

- equipment (from simple tools that help in making tea or help to get audio books and magazines)
- changes to lighting in your home (many people find that good lighting makes a big difference to vision)
- ways of making the most of daylight in your home
- 'mobility training' that can help you get out and about
- or a mix of all those!

See section 7 for more information on this.

Whether equipment or changes to your home are provided by the sensory service or you buy them yourself, you need to feel confident in your decision and in using any new equipment. The sensory service, your **local voluntary society for visually impaired people**, **Action for Blind People** and the **RNIB** can all provide information and advice to help you find and choose equipment. Your local society or the RNIB may run a local centre where you can try equipment.

See sections 5 and 6 of this guide for more details about equipment that may help you in and outside your home.

3.1.1 Paying for eye tests and glasses

You are entitled to free routine NHS eye examinations if you are aged 60 or over. Some health conditions make younger people eligible for free examinations too, and your optometrist can advise. People of all ages on low incomes may be eligible for NHS

vouchers toward the cost of spectacles or lenses or refunds of recent costs. If you think you may be eligible ask for advice from your optometrist, local **Age UK** or **society for visually impaired people**. The **RNIB** and **Action for Blind People** produce leaflets on this subject. and Counsel and Care's guide **Pension Credit** (guide number 2) provides more details. It is available to download for free from: www.counselandcare.org.uk/helping-you/guides

3.2 Registration

If your sight loss is serious and cannot be corrected by wearing prescription lenses you may wish to register as sight impaired (also called partially sighted) or severely sight impaired (also called blind). Your ophthalmologist (usually at an eye clinic) will ask you to sign your 'Certificate of Vision Impairment' and notify your local sensory service. Registration is voluntary and may bring concessionary benefits. See section 7 for more information on this process.

3.3 Communication

People with sight loss find that different tactics improve communication.

- **Spectacles and lenses:** you should check regularly that these meet your needs, are clean and in good working order
- **Magnifiers:** these may not be easy to use. Most people find it helps to have training and advice on how to make the most of them; this can be provided by your low vision service

- **Eccentric viewing:** this is a technique that makes use of peripheral vision. It may be useful if you have macular degeneration (contact the **Macular Disease Society** for more details)
- **Face people who are talking:** and if possible with good lighting on the other person's face and away from noisy places
- **Writing:** with a thick pen, in large letters is a simple help; plastic 'guides' can help your writing stay in lines or on the right part of a cheque; many documents can be provided in large print
- **Reading aids:** computer based software and 'screen readers' can make it possible to read standard printed text
- **Audio:** many books, newspapers and magazines are available in audio format on tape, CD, Daisy (digital talking books) or MP3. Most local libraries will loan copies and further information is available from **The Audio Book Store** (formerly **Talking Books**) and **Calibre**
- **Braille** (a series of raised dots) or **Moon** (raised symbols for letters) may be useful new ways to read and write. These take time to learn and need specialist equipment, but people who use these techniques say the benefits are worthwhile.

Contact **Action for Blind People:**

- telephone: 020 7635 4800

- helpline: 0800 915 4666
- fax: 020 7635 4900
- email: info@actionforblindpeople.org.uk
- website: www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk
- letter: 14-16 Verney Road, London, SE16 3DZ.

Contact **Age UK:**

- telephone: 0800 00 99 66
- website: www.ageconcern.org.uk
- letter: FREEPOST (SWB 30375), Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7ZZ

Contact **Calibre:**

- telephone: 01296 432 339
- fax: 01296 392 599
- website: www.calibre.org.uk
- letter: Calibre Audio Library, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5XQ.

Contact your local voluntary society for visually impaired people through the **National Association of Local Societies for Visually Impaired People (NALSVI):**

- telephone: 01777 705 299
- email: sue.ferguson@visionary.co.uk
- website: www.nalsvi.cswebsites.org/
- letter: PO Box 178, Retford, DN22 1DL

Contact the **Macular Disease Society:**

- telephone: 01264 350 551

- fax: 01264 350 558
- email: info@macularisease.org
- website: www.macularisease.org
- letter: PO Box 1870, Andover, SP10 9AD.

Contact **RNIB**:

- telephone: 0303 123 9999
- fax: 020 7388 2034
- email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
- website: www.rnib.org.uk
- letter: 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE.

Contact **The Audio Store (formerly Talking Books)**:

- telephone: 020 7486 7040
- email: Frances@audiobooks.co.uk
- website: www.talkingbooks.co.uk
- letter: The Audio Store, 36 Baker Street, London, W1U 3EU.

Contact **VISION2020UK**:

- telephone: 01708 456 832
- fax: 01708 446 310
- email: m.brace@vision2020uk.org.uk
- website: www.vision2020uk.org.uk
- letter: 80 Elms Farm Road, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 5RD.

4 Dual sensory loss

The impact of losing both senses (sometimes called 'deafblind' or 'dual sensory loss') is much more than the combined loss of each sense because loss of both senses means that one cannot compensate for another. If you find that you can't see and can't hear too well, you are likely to find that it is harder to let other people know your thoughts and wishes and to understand what is going on around you.

The degree and impact of hearing loss and sight loss is unique to each person, so it is important that your family and friends and other people who support you understand how your loss of sight and hearing affects your life. It can affect social, psychological and emotional aspects of your life as well as your ability to get around and live independently.

4.1 Assessment, diagnosis and equipment

You should contact your GP if your hearing and sight are both getting worse. Depending on your needs, he/she may refer you to a specialist in dual sensory loss and should refer you to your local council social services for a specialist assessment.

A specially trained member of your local sensory service will work with you to assess your needs and find ways of meeting them. Sometimes health or social care professionals in contact with you may not realise that your needs require particular or specialist

attention. It is important that you or your family or carer should insist on this specialist assessment.

Depending on your needs, specialist services may be offered such as:

- one-to-one support
- a communicator guide (see section 4.1.2)
- equipment to support your hearing or sight (sections 5 and 6) inside and outside your home
- access to benefits, information and advice
- mobility and communications training.

4.1.1 Paying for equipment

See sections 2.1.1 and 3.1.1 of this guide for information about what aids or equipment you are entitled to get free of charge, such as hearing aids or glasses, and what equipment you might have to pay for.

4.1.2 Communicator guides

A communicator guide is a person who can give you one-to-one support in and outside your home. They can help you with any tasks where you might need assistance, such as reading your post, interpreting telephone calls, act as an escort and a communication link with the outside world when you are shopping, visiting the GP or taking part in social activities. Communicator guides may be provided by local councils, voluntary organisations such as **Sense** or private care organisations.

4.2 Registration

You do not have to be registered as 'deafblind' to receive specialist assessment and support. You may wish to register as sight impaired or severely sight impaired or as having hearing loss. See sections 2.2 and 3.2 for more information.

4.3 Communication

If you can't see too well and can't hear too well, you are likely to find it difficult to let people know what you want or think and to know other people's views. This is very frustrating, especially if you are a person who loves to chat with others and/or your difficulties have developed rapidly and you have had little time to adjust. Sometimes, people become withdrawn and feel depressed.

It is very important to establish a way of communicating with your family, friends and those who support you so that you can let people know what you want and think and know their views.

Hearing aids and glasses may help make the most of your vision. There is more information in sections 2 and 3 about these and other resources. Other approaches are useful too.

- Ask people to practise '**clear speech**' when they talk with you. They should speak clearly and a little more slowly, and sit or stand in good light, away from noisy places.
- **Writing** information, questions or instructions in large print with a thick pen is a simple and useful approach.

- **Touch** is important in communication with poor hearing and sight. Various techniques have been developed that make the most of touch. Learning these may seem daunting but people who persevere say it is worthwhile. Try different approaches and use a mix that suits you.
- **'Block'** is a technique where someone uses their finger to trace each letter of a word, in block capitals, on the palm of your hand, placing each letter on top of the last.
- **The 'manual alphabet,'** or finger spelling, is a technique where someone spells out words on your palm with each letter of the alphabet represented by a particular place on your hand. For example, the tip of your forefinger designates the letter 'e'.
- **Objects of reference** are almost a personal code in which you decide on a particular object to represent an activity in your life and others use the object to tell you about the activity. For example, if someone wants to tell you that it is dinnertime they put a fork into your hand; if a new cleaner wants to tell you what they are doing, they put a duster in your hand.

You can contact either **Deafblind UK** or **Sense** for further advice.

Contact DeafBlind UK:

- telephone/textphone: 01733 358 100
- helpline: 0800 132 320
- fax: 01733 358 356
- email: info@deafblind.org.uk
- website: www.deafblind.org.uk
- letter: National Centre for Deafblindness, John and Lucille van Geest Place, Cygnet Road, Hampton, Peterborough, PE7 8FD.

Contact Sense:

- telephone: 0845 127 0060/ 020 7520 0999
- textphone: 0845 127 0062/ 020 7250 0959
- fax: 0845 127 0061/ 020 7520 0958
- email: info@sense.org.uk
- website: www.sense.org.uk
- letter: 101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG.

5 Your living environment

Whilst you will always find your home familiar, if you are not able to see, you may find it difficult to find your way about or find the things you need as quickly and as safely as you did in the past.

Small changes to your living environment can make the most of your vision and make a big difference to the way you move around and find things.

- **Colour contrast** makes different objects easier to see. For example, sticking coloured tape around plug sockets or light switches creates a contrast with the wall and makes them easier to see
- **Good lighting**, especially in the kitchen, in cupboards, the hall and near steps, provides light where you need it and prevents dim areas where things may be concealed and bumps and trips are more likely
- **Glare** from lights or windows may cause a problem; use light but evenly opaque shades, such as paper moons , that surround the light bulb and light coloured vertical blinds at windows
- **Daylight** can be increased by keeping windows clean and clear of heavy curtains
- **'Tactile clues'** can help with everyday tasks, such as making lunch: one rubber band around a tin of soup and two

around a tin of beans makes menu choices easier! Raised plastic dots, often in bright colours (called 'bump-ons'), or foam letters can be stuck on equipment to ensure that knobs and dials are used correctly. Some items have Braille labelling

- **Audio labels** like the ones in talking birthday cards can be stuck on tins, boxes and other items.

When people visit you at home make sure they remember not to move anything without telling you or leave things where they may be in your way.

You may be concerned that hearing loss means you won't hear the doorbell or alarms. Specially designed equipment can help.

- Portable flashing doorbells, vibrating alarm clocks, pagers and smoke alarms are useful
- Text or screen phones and faxes that use sight to communicate with family, friends and those who help you are useful as is computer software that makes emails audible
- Induction loop systems in a room at home can make your hearing aids more effective
- Devices that make radio or TV easier to enjoy mean you don't miss out on news, views and entertainment.

Action for Blind People, DeafBlind UK, local societies for visually impaired people, RNIB, RNID and Sense all provide information on equipment for your home and can advise on choices that meet your needs. Some of these organisations provide local resource centres where you can try equipment.

'Assist centres' around the UK provide information and advice about equipment to support daily living. They have permanent exhibitions of products and equipment so that you may see and try out products. One centre in London, **the Disabled Living Foundation**, provides factsheets on different equipment.

Contact **Action for Blind People**:

- telephone: 020 7635 4800
- helpline (shared with RNIB): 0303 123 9999
- fax: 020 7635 4900
- email: info@actionforblindpeople.org.uk
- website: www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk
- letter: 14-16 Verney Road, London, SE16 3DZ.

Contact **Assist UK** for contact details of local Assist Centres:

- telephone: 0161 238 8776
- textphone: 0870 770 5813
- email: general.info@assist-uk.org
- website: www.assist-uk.org/
- letter: Assist UK, 1 Portland Street, Manchester M1 3BE

Contact **DeafBlind UK**:

- telephone/textphone: 01733 358 100
- helpline: 0800 132 320

- fax: 01733 358 356
- email: info@deafblind.org.uk
- website: www.deafblind.org.uk
- letter: National Centre for Deafblindness, John and Lucille van Geest Place, Cygnet Road, Hampton, Peterborough, PE7 8FD.

Contact the **Disabled Living Foundation:**

- telephone: 0845 130 9177
- textphone: 020 7432 8009
- email: info@dlf.org.uk
- website: www.dlf.org.uk
- letter: Disabled Living Foundation, 380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU.

Contact your **local voluntary society for visually impaired people** through the **National Association of Local Societies for Visually Impaired People (NALSVI):**

- telephone: 01777 705 299
- email: sue.ferguson@visionary.co.uk
- website: www.nalsvi.cswebsites.org/
- letter: PO Box 178, Retford, DN22 1DL

Contact **RNIB:**

- telephone: 0303 123 9999
- textphone 020 7388 2525
- fax: 020 7388 2034

- email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
- website: www.rnib.org.uk
- letter: 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE.

Contact **RNID**:

- telephone: 0808 8080 0123
- textphone: 0808 8080 9000
- fax: 020 7296 8199
- email: informationline@rnid.org.uk
- website: www.rnid.org.uk
- letter: 19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL

Contact **Sense**:

- telephone: 0845 127 0060/ 020 7520 0999
- textphone: 0845 127 0062/ 020 7250 0959
- fax: 0845 127 0061/ 020 7520 0958
- email: info@sense.org.uk
- website: www.sense.org.uk
- letter: 101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG.

6 Getting out and about

If you cannot see and/or hear too well, you may have lost your confidence in getting out and about and join in fewer trips or social activities away from your home.

To help with this you may be offered 'mobility training' after you are assessed by a sensory specialist. Mobility training is made up of advice, support and training to move around your home and local area safely, develop confidence in the journeys and places you regularly visit and how to use specialist equipment such as walking canes.

It is commonly recognised that if you cannot see too well you may have problems with getting around safely. It is not often understood that if you cannot hear too well you may also lose confidence in getting out and about. Hearing loss may sometimes affect your balance and your ability to avoid potential hazards, for example, when crossing a road. Just as importantly, it is also frightening to feel that should you need help, you would find it difficult to communicate with passers-by.

To boost your confidence and manage your activities more safely:

- a rehabilitation worker can help you learn routes that you want or need to take; to do this they will help you identify things on the way that you will recognise and remember

such as scented planting, raised kerbs or change of pavement surfaces and particular sounds as well as potential hazards to be aware of, such as lampposts and crossroads. Once you gain confidence, you can make these journeys without support. This technique is also helpful when you need to become familiar with a new place, such as a friend's house or supermarket

- a rehabilitation worker can train family and friends in simple guiding techniques
- **local voluntary societies for visually impaired people** may provide escorts or guides for shopping or other outings
- local community transport schemes may offer support from escorts or guides
- some people find a **Guide Dog, Dog for the Disabled** or **Hearing Dog** is a support to mobility in and outside the house. These dogs, and the people who use them, are specially trained and supported to work together.

A range of voluntary organisations offer advice, support and equipment to enable people with sight and/or hearing loss to continue or develop daily activities, hobbies and leisure interests such as gardening and cooking, go on holiday and join in tours of museums and galleries.

- **Thrive** supports the National Blind Gardening Club.
- **BlindArt** organises talking tours and multi-sensory art collections.

- **RNIB** provides information, some equipment, a collection of audio books, Daisy digital talking books, adapted games and contact details for organisations that support sport, recreation activities and holidays for people who can't see well
- **Hearing Concern LINK** provides information for people who can't hear well and offers tailored holidays and tours.

Contact **BlindArt**:

- telephone: 020 7245 9977
- fax: 020 7245 1228
- email: info@blindart.net
- website: www.blindart.net
- letter: PO Box 50113, London, SW1X 9EY.

Contact **Dogs for the Disabled**:

- telephone: 01295 252600
- fax: 08700 776601
- email: info@dogsforthedisabled.org
- website: www.dogsforthedisabled.org/
- letter: The Frances Hay Centre, Blacklocks Hill, Banbury, Oxon OX17 2BS.

Contact **Guide Dogs (Guide Dogs for the Blind Association)**:

- telephone: 0118 983 5555
- fax: 0118 983 5433

- email: guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk
- website: www.guidedogs.org.uk
- letter: Burghfield Common, Reading RG7 3YG.

Contact Hearing Concern LINK:

- telephone: 01323 638230
- text/minicom: 01323 739 998
- fax: 01323 642968
- email: info@hearingconcernlink.org
- website: www.hearingconcernlink.org
- letter: 19 Hartfield Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 2AR

Contact Hearing Dogs for Deaf People:

- telephone: 01844 348 100 (voice and minicom)
- fax: 01844 348 101
- email: info@hearingdogs.org.uk
- website: www.hearingdogs.org.uk
- letter: The Grange, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire HP27 9NS.

Contact your local voluntary society for visually impaired people through the National Association of Local Societies for Visually Impaired People (NALSVI):

- telephone: 01777 705 299
- email: sue.ferguson@visionary.co.uk
- website: www.nalsvi.cswebsites.org/
- letter: PO Box 178, Retford, DN22 1DL

Contact RNIB:

- telephone: 0303 123 9999
- fax: 020 7388 2034
- email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
- website: www.rnib.org.uk
- letter: 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE.

Contact Thrive:

- telephone: 0118 988 5688
- fax: 0118 988 5677
- website: www.thrive.org.uk
- letter: The Geoffrey Udall Centre, Beech Hill, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 2AT.

7 Social care assessments

Assessments should find out what you want to achieve in your daily life, what is preventing you doing that and what may help you achieve it. They aim to promote and support your independence and wellbeing. Different professionals can address different areas of your needs:

- social workers assess your general care needs, including mobility, health and daily living needs
- specialist sensory workers or rehabilitation workers aim to identify your particular needs related to hearing loss, sight loss or dual sensory loss
- occupational therapists assess how you manage your daily life, including preparing food, bathing and personal care.

The **Single Assessment Process (SAP)** aims to make sure that all the health and social care professionals involved in assessing your needs work closely together and share information. The SAP mainly affects people with complex health and social care needs. It provides a common assessment framework that makes sure assessments are more 'joined up' and that you are not asked the same questions by different professionals.

There are four different types of social care assessment.

- A **contact assessment** collects basic information such as name address, etc.

- An **overview assessment** takes a broad look at different aspects of your life affect you, such as your current health, housing needs, etc.
- The **specialist assessment** identifies the care and support you need, especially in relation to visual or hearing impairment.
- The **comprehensive assessment** is used when several different health and social care professionals are involved in your care over a long period of time.

Once your needs have been assessed, a care plan (which is a summary of your needs) is drawn up. It outlines the services that will be provided and who will provide them. You keep a copy of this plan.

You have to agree that information collected about you as part of the assessment process can be shared with the professionals who care for you. Those who need to share your information, such as your GP, nurse, or social worker, have a legal duty to handle your information securely and confidentially. Your information cannot be used for any purposes other than those you agree to as part of the assessment process.

Systems are being introduced to help people assess their own needs (called 'self-assessment') and the responses that could be helpful. Counsel and Care offers up to date information and advice on changing assessment approaches.

This section provides information about the current role of different health and social care professionals in assessments.

7.1 Social worker's assessment

If you need general care and support because of your health, ability or hearing or sight loss you may already be in touch with the local council social services team and have had an assessment of your needs. If not, your hearing and sight loss may mean that an assessment should take place. You, or one of the health or care professionals that you are in contact with, can contact the local council social services team and request an assessment. To do this a social worker will visit you and discuss the support you need in all aspects of your daily life. A written report and care plan will set out your needs and how they will be met. It may help for a relative or friend to be with you at the visit. You keep a copy of the report and care plan. For more information, see our Counsel and Care's guides **Assessment and services from your local council in England** (guide number 12). If you live in Scotland, see our guide **Assessment and services from your local council in Scotland** (guide number 50) and, if you live in Wales, **Assessment and services from your local council in Wales** (guide number 70).

Depending on your needs, your local council social services team may provide

- information
- advice
- equipment

- general care or support services, such as home care, day care, meals on wheels.

You may be offered a personal budget which you can use in the form of a direct (or cash) payment instead of services or a mix of both direct payment and services. These are ways in which your local council helps you buy the care and support services you need. For more information see Counsel and Care's guides **Help at home: what may be available in your local area** (guide number 14) and **Home care – using Direct Payments and Personal Budgets** (guide number 23).

7.2 Sensory worker's assessment

Specialist assessment of your needs in relation to your hearing loss or sight loss or dual sensory loss is carried out by your local sensory service. It will include staff (often called 'rehabilitation' workers) who are specially trained and can offer detailed knowledge of your needs and appropriate responses.

Sensory assessments can be requested by your GP, optician, ophthalmologist or audiologist. You can ask for an assessment for yourself, or a family member or friend can ask on your behalf, by contacting the local council social services team.

A rehabilitation or dual sensory loss worker will visit you and discuss what you want to be able to do and what resources may help you. Depending on your needs your local sensory service may provide:

- information
- advice
- mobility training
- support to use IT equipment that may help you
- equipment to support you in daily tasks
- minor adaptations to your home.

7.3 Occupational therapist's assessment

An assessment of your everyday living skills may be provided by an occupational therapist (OT) working in your local council social services team or, to help you leave hospital, an OT working in your NHS Trust.

The OT will discuss any difficulties you have (such as using a bath or stairs), identify equipment or adaptations that may benefit you and can arrange for them to be provided. It is important that the OT shows you how to use new equipment or adaptations so that you feel confident and are safe.

Local councils differ in their policy on providing equipment or adaptations free of charge.

- Some provide information and advice on how to purchase low cost items such as kettle tippers, portable lights or 'easy reachers' whilst others may provide them at no cost.
- All should offer 'small' adaptations costing less than £1,000 free of charge, which might include a bath or shower seat, freestanding or fitted frames and handrails.

- All should support applications for **Disabled Facilities Grants** to fund more substantial adaptations to your home depending on your income.

A Disabled Facilities Grant is a local council grant to help towards the cost of adapting your home to enable you to continue to live there. A grant is paid when the local council considers that changes are necessary to meet your needs, and that the work is reasonable and practical.

For more information about the occupational therapist's assessment and a Disabled Facilities Grant, see **Counsel and Care's** guide **Housing – adapting your home to stay independent** (guide number 28).

The London based **Disabled Living Foundation** or a local **Assist Centre** can offer information on aids and equipment and local centres offer the chance to try equipment and find out which would be best for you.

Contact **Assist UK** for contact details of local Assist Centres:

- telephone: 0161 238 8776
- textphone: 0870 770 5813
- email: general.info@assist-uk.org
- website: www.assist-uk.org/
- letter: Assist UK, 1 Portland Street, Manchester M1 3BE

Contact the Disabled Living Foundation:

- telephone: 0845 130 9177
- textphone: 020 7432 8009
- email: advice@dlf.org.uk
- website: www.dlf.org.uk
- letter: 380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU

8 Support for carers and families

A relative or friend may support you, perhaps to get out and about or do shopping, if you have difficulties with your hearing and/or your sight. Depending on the type and amount of care and support they provide, your relative or friend may be able to receive some practical and financial help from their local council because they are 'a carer'. Their needs as a carer would be assessed by a local council social worker, who looks at how they can continue caring and at the same time balance their own health, work and family commitments.

Depending on their needs and the local resources available, carers may be offered support such as a sit-in service, day care or respite so they can have a break. There may also be local groups where they can meet other carers, and some groups may be able to provide sit-in services to enable them to attend the meetings.

They may be eligible for Carer's Allowance, which is a benefit paid to people who provide over 35 hours of care per week.

See Counsel and Care's guide **Carers: what support is available** (guide number 10) for more information. In your area there may be a local carers' centre supported by the **Princess Royal Trust for Carers**. Across the UK **Carers UK** offers advice and guidance to carers. If you can't see and hear well and have a carer, they can read Sense's guide, *The Good Life*, for advice and information. Contact **Sense** to request a copy.

Contact Carers UK:

- telephone: 0808 808 7777/ 020 7378 4999
- fax: 020 7378 9781
- email: info@carersuk.org
- website: www.carersuk.org
- letter: 20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LX

Contact Princess Royal Trust for Carers:

- telephone: 0844 800 4361
- fax: 0844 800 4362
- email: info@carers.org
- website: www.carers.org
- letter: Unit 14, Bourne Court, Southend Road, Woodford Green, Essex, IG8 8HD.

Contact Sense:

- telephone: 0845 127 0060/ 020 7520 0999
- textphone: 0845 127 0062/ 020 7250 0959
- fax: 0845 127 0061/ 020 7520 0958
- email: info@sense.org.uk
- website: www.sense.org.uk
- letter: 101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG.

9 The risk of misdiagnosis

If an older person seems unable to understand a conversation or what is going on around them, can't find things or seems to forget what has been said, professionals, family and friends may assume the person is confused or might have dementia. They may fail to recognise that these symptoms could reflect the impact of hearing and sight loss. In these situations it is important that hearing and sight are carefully checked, as well as other physical health issues.

Some people with dementia are also likely to have hearing and/or sight loss problems that are misdiagnosed as an aspect of their dementia, or more likely not diagnosed at all. Standard vision tests are rarely carried out when people are assessed for dementia. Hearing and sight tests rely on the person describing their problems. Someone with dementia may find it difficult to describe sight or hearing problems. It is also more difficult to test someone's memory and cognitive ability when they have sight and/or hearing loss.

For all these reasons a range of approaches should be used to diagnose hearing loss, sight loss and dementia so that the person's needs can be properly met. It is important for family, friends and carers to ask that hearing and sight loss issues are addressed directly in diagnosis of dementia and in assessments of need.

If you (or a relative you care for) cannot hear and/or see too well and also have dementia, the combined effect is much more severe

than one or other condition. Each person is affected differently but these conditions together can have a significant impact on every aspect of people's lives and especially on communication and everyday activities. This in turn may affect a person's confidence in their ability to manage independently.

Where dementia and a sensory loss are both diagnosed, care and support services will be more sensitive and effective if all the professionals involved are aware of the diagnoses and have a good knowledge and understanding of the impact of hearing loss, sight loss and dementia on daily life.

See Counsel and Care's guide **Memory loss, depression, 'confusion' and dementia** (guide number 9) for more information. You may wish to contact the **Alzheimer's Society** for information and advice.

Contact the **Alzheimer's Society**:

- dementia helpline: 0845 300 0336
- fax: 020 7423 3501
- email enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk
- website: www.alzheimers.org.uk
- letter: Devon House, 58 St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1JX.

10 Glossary

- **Audiologist** – a hearing specialist who diagnoses, treats and manages people with hearing impairment and/or balance problems. They work closely with ENT consultants, health visitors, speech and language therapists and other professionals to provide appropriate assessment and treatment for both children and adults.
- **Care plan** – a written summary of your needs, drawn up jointly with you once the needs assessment process has been carried out (see below). It outlines what services will be provided and who will provide them.
- **Communicator guides** – trained practitioners who offer one-to-one support for people with dual sensory loss.
- **Optometrists** – trained and qualified eye care professionals who provide regular eye examinations in ‘opticians’ practices’. Regulated by the General Optical Council (GOC) they examine eyes to detect disease and abnormalities of the eye, test sight and prescribe glasses or contact lenses. They are sometimes called **ophthalmic opticians** or just **opticians**. They are different from **dispensing opticians** who, although also regulated by the GOC, are qualified to supply and fit glasses and lenses to prescriptions provided by optometrists or ophthalmologists.
- **Ophthalmologists** – eye care professionals who are medically trained and specialise in dealing with eye disease and

surgery. Ophthalmologists usually work in hospital eye services.

- **Orthoptists** – a health professional who specialises in eye problems such as lazy eyes and double vision. Although known for their work with children, orthoptists also work with low vision and stroke rehabilitation services.
- **Occupational therapists** – professionals whose role is to promote and support a person's independence for as long as possible, through equipment and activities. Improving your ability to participate in everyday activities is a central part of occupational therapy. See section 7 of this guide for more details.
- **Needs assessment** – for general care needs this is carried out by a **social worker** from your local council **social services** team who will discuss your needs and lifestyle and suggest services and equipment that could be provided in order to meet those needs (see the **Single Assessment Process**).
- **Rehabilitation workers (RWs)** - practitioners who are specifically trained in rehabilitation who may work for the local council social services team or a national or local voluntary organisation. RWs can provide information, advice and support, 'mobility training' and training in the use of equipment. RWs who support people with sight loss are sometimes called rehabilitation officers for visual impairment (ROVIs).
- **Single Assessment Process (SAP)** – a national framework set up to ensure that all health and social care professionals

involved in assessing your needs work closely together and share information. The process is mainly for people with complex health and social care needs but all **needs assessments** should be carried out under the SAP framework. This is usually co-ordinated by a **social worker**, but other health professionals, for example, community matrons, may take a lead role.

- **Social worker** – a professional member of the **social services** team with a formal qualification and registered with the General Social Care Council, who carries out **needs assessment**, develops and monitors care plans.
- **Social services** – the local council team responsible for assessing your care, support and wellbeing needs and identifying appropriate services to respond to your needs. Some social services teams include a **sensory service** that assesses and advises on needs resulting from hearing and/or sight loss.

-

11 Useful contacts

The organisations included here are helpful sources of further advice, information and support. They are grouped under the guide's three main topic areas. A general section includes organisations that are relevant for all.

Hearing loss

Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults (ATLA)

- provides a list of lipreading classes in the UK.
- address: c/o Hearing Concern LINK, 19 Hartfield Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex
- Email: atla@lipreading.org.uk
- website: www.lipreading.org.uk

British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists

- gives details of different types of hearing aids and a list of member audiologists.
- address: 6th Floor Remo House, 310-312 Regent Street, London W1B 3BS
- email: secretary@bshaa.com
- website: www.bshaa.com.

Deafness Research UK

- a national charity dedicated to helping deaf and hard of hearing people through medical research and education.
- address: 330-332 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8EE
- telephone: 0808 808 2222
- textphone: 020 7915 1412
- email: contact@deafnessresearch.org.uk
- website: www.deafnessresearch.org.uk.

Health Professionals Council

- the government body that regulates the private hearing aid market. Providers of hearing aids in the UK must be registered with the council. Contact the council to find out whether a registered hearing aid dispenser in your area is registered with the council or complain about the standards of a hearing aid provider.
- address: Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU
- telephone: 020 7582 0866
- email: registration@hpc-uk.org
- website: www.hpc-uk.org

Hearing Concern LINK

- a national charity providing support, advice and information to people with a hearing loss and their families, including an advice helpdesk and a network of 'hard of hearing clubs' around the country.
- address: 19 Hartfield Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 2AR
- telephone: 01323 638230
- textphone: 01323 739998
- minicom: 01323 739998
- fax: 01323 642968
- email: info@hearingconcernlink.org
- website: www.hearingconcernlink.org.uk

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

- a charity that trains dogs to alert deaf people to sounds in the home, workplace or public buildings.
- address: The Grange, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire HP27 9NS
- telephone: 01844 348 100 (voice and minicom)
- fax: 01844 348 101
- email: info@hearingdogs.org.uk
- website: www.hearingdogs.org.uk.

RNID – Royal National Institute for Deaf People

- a national charity providing support, advice and information, selling equipment and undertaking campaigning on behalf of hard of hearing people.
- address: 19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL
- information line: 0808 808 0123
- textphone: 0808 8080 9000
- email: informationline@rnid.org.uk
- website: www.rnid.org.uk.

Sight loss

Action for Blind People

- a national charity providing free and confidential support for blind and partially sighted people, including advice and information, grants, employment support, holidays and housing schemes.
- address: 14-16 Verney Road, London, SE16 3DZ
- telephone: 020 7635 4800
- helpline: 0800 915 4666
- fax: 020 7635 4900
- email: info@actionforblindpeople.org.uk
- website: www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Blind Art

- a charity that supports art for those who can't see well and organises talking tours of art galleries and museums.
- address: PO Box 50113, London, SW1X 9EY

- telephone: 020 7245 9977
- email: info@blindart.net
- website: www.blindart.net.

College of Optometrists

- the professional body for optometrists that also provides public information (including tips about eye care and eye tests).
- address: 42 Craven Street, London, WC2N 5NG
- telephone: 020 7839 6000
- email: optometry@college-optometrists.org
- website: www.college-optometrists.org.

Diabetes UK

- a national charity providing information and advice for people with diabetes, their family, friends and carers.
- address: Macleod House, 10 Parkway, London, NW1 7AA
- Careline: 0845 120 2960
- telephone: 020 7424 1000
- email: info@diabetes.org.uk
- website: www.diabetes.org.uk

General Optical Council

- the professional body for opticians. It maintains a register of opticians and is the organisation that deals with complaints.
- address: 41 Harley Street, London, W1G 8DJ

- telephone: 020 7580 3898
- email: goc@optical.org
- website: www.optical.org.

Guide dogs or The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

- a national charity providing guide dogs, mobility and other rehabilitation services to meet the needs of blind and partially-sighted people.
- address: Burghfield Common, Reading, RG7 3YG
- telephone: 0118 983 5555
- email: guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk
- website: www.guidedogs.org.uk.

International Glaucoma Association

- a charity that provides up-to-date news and information about glaucoma.
- address: Woodcote House, 15 Highpoint Business Village, Henwood, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8DH
- helpline: 01233 64 81 70
- email: info@lga.org.uk
- website: www.glaucoma-association.com.

Macular Disease Society

- a UK charity dedicated to helping people with macular degeneration and central vision impairment.

- address: PO Box 1870, Andover, SP10 9AD
- telephone: 01264 350551
- email: info@maculardisease.org
- website: www.maculardisease.org.

National Association for Local Societies for Visually Impaired People (NALSVI)

- an association of local voluntary organisations for blind and partially sighted people. Contact for details of your local society for visually impaired people.
- address: PO Box 178, Retford, DN22 1DL
- telephone: 01777 705 299
- email: sue.ferguson@visionary.co.uk
- website: www.nalsvi.cswebsites.org/

Organisation of Blind Africans and Carribeans (OBAC)

- a charity that supports the needs of African and Caribbean people with a visual impairment living in London.
- address: 1st floor, Gloucester House, 8 Camberwell New Road, London, SE5 0TA
- telephone: 020 7735 3400
- fax: 020 7582 8334
- email: info@obac.org.uk
- website: www.obac.org.uk

Partially Sighted Society

- a national charity that offers a range of services to partially sighted people, catering for their education, employment, social, domestic and leisure needs.

- address: 7-9 Bennetthorpe, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN2 6AA
- telephone: 0844 477 4966
- email: info@partsight.org.uk.

RNIB – Royal National Institute of Blind People

- a national charity offering information, support and advice to people with sight loss. It runs some resource centres and sells equipment.
- address: 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE
helpline: 0303 123 9999
- email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
- website: www.rnib.org.uk.

Thomas Pocklington Trust

- a charity which provides housing, care and support services for people with sight loss and supports research and development. It has expertise in housing design and lighting at home and makes that available on its website.
- address: 5 Castle Row, Horticultural Place, Chiswick, London W4 4JQ
- telephone: 020 8995 0880
- fax: 020 8987 9965
- email: info@pocklington-trust.org.uk
- website: www.pocklington-trust.org.uk

VISION2020UK

- an umbrella organisation which facilitates collaboration and co-operation between organisations within the UK which

focus on vision impairment and operate on a national, regional or international basis. It offers a library and contact information.

- address: 80 Elms Farm Road, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 5RD.
- telephone: 01708 456 832
- fax: 01708 446 310
- email: m.brace@vision2020uk.org.uk
- website: www.vision2020uk.org.uk

Dual-sensory loss

Deafblind UK

- a national charity offering services and support to deafblind people and those who have progressive sight and hearing loss acquired throughout their lives.
- address: National Centre for Deafblindness, John and Lucille van Geest Place, Cygnet Road, Hampton, Peterborough, PE7 8FD
- helpline: 0800 132 320
- email: helpline@deafblind.org.uk
- website: www.deafblind.org.uk

Sense

- a national charity that supports and campaigns for children and adults who are deafblind, and their families. Such support includes day services, supported houses in the community, communicator guides and specialist advice.
- 101 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LG
- telephone: 0845 127 0060/ 020 7520 0999
- textphone: 0845 127 0062/ 020 7250 0959
- fax: 0845 127 0061/ 020 7520 0958
- email: info@sense.org.uk
- website: www.sense.org.uk.

General advice and support

Age UK

- Offers advice, support and essential services to people over 50 in the UK and work to influence public opinion and government policy about older people. At time of writing, both sets of contact details continue to operate.
- address: 207-221 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9UZ
- helpline: 0800 169 65 65
- website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society

- a national charity that works to improve the quality of life of people affected by dementia in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with information, advice and support.
- address: Devon House, 58 St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1JX
- helpline: 0845 300 0366
- telephone: 020 7423 3500
- email: enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk
- website: www.alzheimers.org.uk.

Assist UK

- leads a UK-wide network of local disabled living centres.
- address: 1 Portland Street, Manchester M1 3BE
- telephone: 0161 238 8776
- email: general.info@assist-uk.org
- website: www.assist-uk.org

Carers UK

- a national charity that gives advice and guidance to carers.
- address: 20 Great Dover Street, London, SE1 4LX
- telephone: 0808 808 7777
- email: adviceline@carersuk.org
- website: www.carersuk.org.

Counsel and Care

- the national charity working with older people, their families and carers to get the best care and support. We provide personalised, in-

depth advice and information, which informs our research and campaigning work.

- Twyman House, 16 Bonny Street, London, NW1 9PG
- adviceline: 0845 300 7585
- email: advice@counselandcare.org.uk
- website: www.counselandcare.org.uk.

Disabled Living Foundation

- a London based charity that provides free, impartial advice about all types of disability product and disabled equipment for older and disabled people, their carers and families.
- address: 380-384 Harrow Road, London, W9 2HU
- telephone 020 7289 6111 to make an appointment to visit the Equipment Demonstration Centre
- helpline: 0845 130 9177
- email helpline@dlf.org.uk
- website: www.dlf.org.uk

Princess Royal Trust for Carers:

- provides a range of information, advice and support services for carers in the UK through a network of carers' centres, young carers services and through an interactive website.
- address: Unit 14, Bourne Court, Southend Road, Woodford Green, Essex, IG8 8HD
- telephone: 0844 800 4361
- fax: 0844 800 4362

- email: info@carers.org
- website: www.carers.org

Stroke Association

- a UK-wide charity working to combat stroke in people of all ages. It funds research and helps people with stroke and their families through its rehabilitation and support services.
- address: Stroke House, 240 City Road, London, EC1V 2PR
- helpline: 0303 3033 100
- telephone: 020 7566 0300
- textphone: 020 7251 9096
- fax: 020 7490 2686
- email: info@stroke.org.uk
- website: www.stroke.org.uk

Thrive

- a national charity whose mission is to research, educate and support those with a disability to enjoy and continue gardening. They offer help and advice through an information service, and run or support garden projects in England.
- The Geoffrey Udall Centre, Beech Hill, Reading, RG7 2AT
- telephone: 0118 988 5688
- fax: 0118 988 5677
- website: www.thrive.org.uk and www.carryongardening.org.uk.

12 Useful publications

The publications included here are sources of further advice and information, grouped together under the guide's three main sections for ease of use.

Hearing loss

- 'Buying a hearing aid', RNID
- 'Caring for older people who have a hearing loss', RNID
- 'Choosing a hearing aid', Deafness Research UK
- 'Deaf and hard of hearing people', RNID
- 'Deafness in later life', Deafness Research UK
- 'Digital hearing aids', RNID
- 'Everyday Solutions', RNID
- 'Getting a hearing aid', RNID
- 'Living with someone who has a gradual hearing loss', RNID
- 'Loop and infrared systems – a guide for deaf people', RNID
- 'NHS hearing aid service', RNID
- 'Sign language', RNID
- 'Start to sign!', RNID

Sight loss

- 'Better Sight', Help the Aged
- 'Everyday options', RNIB
- 'Getting On', Action for Blind People
- 'Understanding diabetes related eye conditions', RNIB

- 'Understanding cataracts', RNIB
- 'Understanding glaucoma', RNIB
- 'Understanding age-related macular degeneration', RNIB

Dual-sensory loss

- 'Deafblind people', RNIB
- 'Hearing and sight loss in older people', Sense
- 'How do people who are deafblind communicate?', Sense
- 'The Good Life', Sense
- 'The importance of hearing and eye tests', Sense
- 'What is deafblindness?', Sense

Our advice workers can advise on a wide range of issues affecting older people, their families and carers. Counsel and Care produce a range of guides which can be downloaded from our website www.counselandcare.org.uk, or requested by calling our guide orderline on 0207 241 8522.

This guide is not a full explanation of the law and is aimed at people over 60.

Counsel and Care

Twyman House

16 Bonny Street

London NW1 9PG

Tel.: **0845 300 7585**

Email: advice@counselandcare.org.uk

Website: www.counselandcare.org.uk

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