



# Sight Loss Dorset factsheet

## INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED

### REGISTRATION OF BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED PEOPLE

Registration is voluntary and may entitle you to a range of concessions:

- VAT exemption to buy necessary equipment
- Discounts for some leisure activities
- Discounted travel on public transport

You do not have to register to be eligible to help from Social Services and registration does not automatically mean you will qualify for services

Registration for sight loss can only take place on the recommendation of a qualified ophthalmologist, a doctor who specialises in eyes and eye care. Referral to the ophthalmologist clinic can only be done through a GP who will refer you if they think it is necessary. Your High Street Optician will ask you to contact your GP if they detect any significant sight loss that requires attention from an Ophthalmologist.

If you are then registered blind or partially sighted the ophthalmologist will inform your GP and, if you wish, Adult Social Services, who keep a register of all the blind or partially sighted people in their area.

### SIGHT & HEARING TEAMS – SOCIAL SERVICES

Your local Adult Social Services will have a Sight & Hearing Team and they can help you with support and information. Contact the following number:

Dorset: - Dorset Direct 01305 221016

Services available include:

- Practical advice about how to manage in your own home
- Information about specialist equipment to help you with day to day living
- Registration of sight impaired people where appropriate
- Access to support groups
- Details of local and national voluntary agencies who also offer advice and support

Christchurch Sight and Hearing Services

Christchurch Sight and Hearing Team are specialist workers who are there to listen to your needs and offer support. They can talk to you about your sight condition, how it might affect your future, give advice about registration and tell you about other organisations able to help. Assessments conducted by the team will give you ample opportunities to talk about all your circumstances and needs, and will always take into account any needs that derive from your ethnic background or cultural beliefs. A support plan will be drawn up to show how your needs will be supported. You will be provided with a copy of this. The team are able to support you with a wide range of practical advice about monetary benefits, housing, leisure and educational opportunities, personal care, meal provision, and suitable equipment, all aimed at helping you maintain your independence.

Sight and Sound Centres are drop-in information centres staffed by the Sight and Hearing Team for people with a visual or hearing impairment. The centres are located throughout Dorset, a local Sight & Sound Centre for residents of Christchurch is located at:

#### Christchurch Sight & Sound Centre

Christchurch Library

Druitt Buildings

High Street

Christchurch

BH23 1AW

Tel: Dorset Direct On 01305 221016 for further information

Open: Wednesday between 9.30am – 12noon.

#### Dorset Sight and Hearing Services

Dorset Sight and Hearing Team are specialist workers who are there to listen to your needs and offer support. They can talk to you about your sight condition, how it might affect your future, give advice about registration and tell you about other organisations able to help. Assessments conducted by the team will give you ample opportunities to talk about all your circumstances and needs, and will always take into account any needs that derive from your ethnic background or cultural beliefs. A support plan will be drawn up to show how your needs will be supported. You will be provided with a copy of this. The team are able to support you with a wide range of practical advice about monetary benefits, housing, leisure and educational opportunities, personal care, meal provision, and suitable equipment, all aimed at helping you maintain your independence.

Sight and Sound Centres are drop-in information centres staffed by the Sight and Hearing Team for people with a visual or hearing impairment. The centres are located throughout Dorset; a local Sight & Sound Centre for residents of East Dorset is located at:

There are local Sight & Sound Centres at the following locations:

#### Wimborne Sight & Sound Centre

The Hanham Centre

Hanham Road

Wimborne

Tel: 01202 877445

Fax: 01202 876604

Textphone: 01202 868262

Open: between 10am and 12.30pm. Contact: 01202 877445 for further details and appointments.

#### Dorchester Sight & Sound Centre

Dorchester Day Centre  
Acland Road  
Dorchester  
DT1 1SH

Open: Wednesday between 10am – 4pm (closed for lunch between 1pm -2pm).

Bridport Sight & Sound Centre

Allington Court  
St Swithins Road  
Bridport  
DT6 3JL

Open: Wednesdays between 10am – 1pm.



## HELP & CARE CONTACT DETAILS

Help us to help you

As a charitable organisation Help & Care relies heavily on the donations and goodwill of the local community. However large or small, every gift makes a difference!

Please contact us using the contact details below if you would like information about:

- *How to make a one off donation or*
- *How to set up a regular monthly donation or*
- *How to remember us in your Will*

Help & Care contact details

Help & Care offer a range of services and factsheets to older people, carers, and disabled people across Dorset. If you would like to know more about our information and support services, Advocacy, and our Handiworks Plus services, or you would like a copy of this factsheet in your own language, large print, Braille, or on audio tape or compact disc please contact us on the details below.

By telephone: 0300 111 3303

By fax: 01202 432299

Opening hours are: Monday - Thursday 9am -5pm and Friday 10am - 4.30pm. Answering machine available outside these hours.

Textphone for hard of hearing: 01202 416047

Email: [contact@helpandcare.org.uk](mailto:contact@helpandcare.org.uk)

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

Use the "Contact" form within the website to let us know how best we can help you.

Contact by post: Help & Care, The Pokesdown Centre, 896 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, BH7 6DL

You can also make an appointment to call in and see us at The Pokesdown Centre, Bournemouth.

This information has been researched and produced by Help & Care and was believed to be correct at the time of production. Inclusion does not imply a recommendation by Help & Care.

*Last IS Review in May 2009. Next total review due Sept 2011.*

*Latest amendment added: Sept 2014.*



# LOCAL VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND SUPPORT GROUPS

**THERE ARE VARIOUS AGENCIES THAT CAN SUPPORT, GIVE ADVICE AND PROVIDE EQUIPMENT TO AID YOU.**

Dorset Blind Association

17 Bournemouth Road  
Lower Parkstone  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH14 0EF  
Tel: 01202 712860  
Email: [info@dorsetblind.org.uk](mailto:info@dorsetblind.org.uk)  
[www.dorsetblind.org.uk](http://www.dorsetblind.org.uk)

Dorset Blind Association provides a resource centre for people who are visually or hearing impaired throughout Dorset. They offer advice, support, contacts, information and equipment, social opportunities across the county. Services include:

- Resource Centre – a wide range of low vision aids and equipment is available to help improve life for people with sight loss. For people with hearing loss a member of the local Social Services Sight and Hearing Team can be seen by appointment contact 01202 712869 to arrange this. The Resource Centre is open Monday – Friday 9am – 12 noon.

- Home Visiting Service – provides visits by trained and vetted volunteers to members in their own home. A flexible service adapted to the individual members needs, help is offered with going on short walks, assisting with forms and paperwork, sorting/reading mail, tidying kitchen cupboards, writing letters or cards, general friendship. Younger members can also access this service on request.

There are five Home Visiting Co-ordinators covering Christchurch & East Dorset:

- Christchurch, Highcliffe, Ferndown, Verwood, Wimborne - Lorraine Smith tel: 07989 671908

There are two Home Visiting Co-ordinators covering Purbeck and North Dorset:

- Dorchester and Purbeck – Swanage, Wareham, Studland, Upton – Helen Basson tel: 01929 481110.

- North Dorset – Blandford, Sturminster Newton, Gillingham, Sherborne and Shaftsbury – Leah Cross tel: 07789 997620.

There are three Home Visiting Co-ordinators covering West Dorset areas:

- Dorchester and Purbeck – Swanage, Wareham, Studland, Upton – Helen Basson tel: 01929 481110.

- North Dorset – Blandford, Sturminster Newton, Gillingham, Sherborne and Shaftsbury – Leah Cross tel: 07789 997620.

- West Dorset – Weymouth, Portland, Bridport, Beaminster, Lyme Regis – contact the main office on 01202 712860

- Audio Library – an extensive catalogue of up to 2,000 talking book titles are available through our Audio Library. Titles are available through our mail order service which operates under the free Articles for the Blind postage service. For more information contact the Resource Centre on 01202 712869.

- Social, Handicraft, Activity Clubs – We run clubs in many areas of the county managed and supported by volunteers. The format of each club differs slightly offering a range of entertainers, speakers, quizzes, bingo and raffles. Handicraft clubs work on knitting, sewing, basket making, and cane work. Activity clubs range from ballroom dancing, talking book clubs, to Indoor Bowls. For info about clubs in Christchurch and Highcliffe contact 01202 712860.

- Sight Equipment Vehicles – travel the county promoting the charity and taking low vision equipment to members in their own homes enabling them to touch and try out equipment to suit their needs.

## **LOW VISION SERVICES**

The RNIB is working with Social Services, Primary Care Trusts and other Voluntary Agencies to develop UK-wide, high-quality low vision services. Low vision services are available to people who despite having regular eye tests, wearing up-to-date glasses or contact lenses, are still experiencing problems with their sight but are not registered blind.

The RNIB produce an 'Adapting to Sight Loss' guide, other information products and aids that offer practical advice and assistance on how to make the best of your sight. The guides cover low vision aids such as magnifiers and give ideas for changes you can make at home to make things easier to see. The RNIB also offer help with:

- Information on your eye condition and available treatments
- Advice on financial benefits and discounts you may be entitled to
- Let you know of support available in your local area via RNIB and Action for Blind People
- Recommend products to make life easier
- Provide information about social groups, leisure time activities
- Audio Library Service
- Employment, Training, Education opportunities
- Housing options
- Emotional support and access to counselling services

For further information contact:

Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB)

105 Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9NE  
Tel: 020 7388 1266 (Admin).  
Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)  
[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

Helpline: 0303 123 9999 – Open: Monday – Friday 8.45am – 5.30pm. Answerphone available out of hours.

## **LOCAL LOW VISION CENTRES**

Royal Bournemouth Hospital (Eye Clinic)  
Outpatients Appointments: 01202 704355 open 8.30am – 5pm Monday – Friday

Able to provide written information, individual information and support, referral from GP or other health professional required for treatment.

Dorset Blind Association also staff a Help & Advice Desk at the Eye Unit, Royal Bournemouth Hospital as a way of providing people who are newly diagnosed with severe sight loss or see their condition worsening, with immediate information and support of a non-medical nature.

Out of hours emergencies please visit the Accident and Emergency Dept.

Clinics may also be held at:

Dorset County Hospital  
Royal Eye Infirmary  
Williams Ave  
Dorchester, Dorset  
DT1 2JY  
Tel: 01305 255254

Able to provide written information, individual information and support, referral from GP or other health professional required for treatment.

Bridport Community Hospital  
Out Patient Dept  
Hospital Lane  
North Allington  
Bridport  
Dorset, DT6 5DR  
Tel: 01308 422371  
Fax: 01308 426239

Yeatman Hospital  
Hospital Lane  
Sherborne  
Dorset  
DT9 3JU  
Tel: 01935 813991

Swanage Hospital  
Out Patient Dept  
Queens Rd  
Swanage  
Dorset  
BH19 2ES  
Tel: 01929 475021

## **NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

British Blind Sport

Pure Offices, Plato Close  
Tachbrook Park  
Leamington Spa  
Warwickshire  
CV34 6WE

Tel: 01926 424247  
Fax: 01926 427775  
Email: [info@britishblindsport.org.uk](mailto:info@britishblindsport.org.uk)  
[www.britishblindsport.org.uk](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk)

The work of the charity enables visually impaired people to have the same opportunities as sighted people to access and enjoy sport and recreational activities in the UK.

#### British Telecom (BT)

BT offers a range of services to older or disabled customers to help them communicate more effectively. For further information contact: 0800 800 150 or visit the website: [www.btplc.com/inclusion](http://www.btplc.com/inclusion)

BT Basic is a low cost line rental scheme for customers on the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

For further details contact BT on 0800 783 1675 or visit the website: [www.bt.com](http://www.bt.com)

#### Healthcall Optical and Hearing Services

Unit 5, Titan Court  
Laporte Way  
Luton  
Bedfordshire  
LU4 8EF

#### Local office

Unit 3 & 4 Arena Business Centre  
9 Nimrod Way  
Ferndown  
Dorset  
BH21 7SH  
Tel: 0845 601 7241  
Email: [info@healthcalloptical.co.uk](mailto:info@healthcalloptical.co.uk)  
[www.healthcalloptical.co.uk](http://www.healthcalloptical.co.uk)

A full and comprehensive eye examination within your own home using the most up-to-date equipment specifically designed for home visits. Our teams carry a large variety of spectacle frames, ranging from budget styles (provided free to those entitled to an NHS voucher) to the latest designer frames, plus all types of lenses at highly competitive prices. (Please note the lenses are not carried by our clinical staff).

When the spectacles are ready they are delivered to the patient's home and expertly fitted by one of our dispensing opticians or trained clinical assistants. For further details and to book an appointment call 0800 089 0166.

Healthcall are also able to carry out hearing tests in your own home if you require one, for details and appointments for the hearing test contact 0845 644 5000.

The Macular Disease Society



PO Box 1870  
Andover  
Hampshire  
SP10 9AD  
Helpline: 0300 3030 111  
Email: [info@maculardisease.org](mailto:info@maculardisease.org)  
[www.maculardisease.org](http://www.maculardisease.org)

The Macular Disease Society aims to build confidence and independence for those with central vision impairment by offering a range of support and information services to those newly diagnosed and those with an interest in Macular Disease.

#### Partially Sighted Society

7/9 Bennthorpe  
Doncaster  
DN2 6AA  
Tel: 0844 477 4966  
Fax: 0844 477 4969  
Email: [info@partsight.org.uk](mailto:info@partsight.org.uk)  
[www.partsight.org.uk](http://www.partsight.org.uk)

The Partially Sighted Society provides information, advice, equipment, and clear print material for people with a visual impairment to help them to make the best use of their remaining sight. The Society can call on the skills of ophthalmologists, optometrists, and lighting and rehabilitation specialists.

#### Wimborne and East Dorset Macular Degeneration Support Group

4A Tower Lane  
Wimborne  
BH21 2QP

A local support group for people with Macular Degeneration. For further information contact: Mr Alan Barr Tel 01202 887792.



# TALKING BOOKS AND NEWSPAPER SERVICES

## **BOURNEMOUTH AND WESSEX TALKING NEWSPAPER**

Tel: 07587 174297

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

Serving the conurbation of Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch, together with Wimborne, East Dorset and the Purbecks, Bournemouth and Wessex Talking Newspaper produce free tapes and CDs of local news for the Blind and Partially Sighted every two weeks. News is taken from local newspapers across Dorset. There are also magazine features, interviews and items of personal interest. Additional recordings of BH Life and Home News for Bournemouth Council on CDs are also available from Bournemouth Public Libraries.

The tapes and CDs are distributed free of charge on a fortnightly basis, all you need is a simple cassette or CD player. The charity is run entirely by volunteers and their work includes editing, reading, recording, duplicating, and administration. For further information or if you would like to refer some one or become a volunteer please contact the telephone number above.

## **CALIBRE AUDIO LIBRARY**

Aylesbury

Bucks

HP22 5XQ

Tel: 01296 380 554

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

Calibre Audio Library brings the pleasure of reading to people who have sight problems, dyslexia, or other physical disabilities. The service is subscription free, nationwide, and the postal service includes:

- A choice of over 8,500 unabridged audio books
- Fiction and non-fiction titles, carefully selected to appeal to members
- Books recorded by professional actors and broadcasters
- MP3 CDs and USB memory sticks that can be played on many standard players and computers/laptops
- Free postage and no charge for lost books
- A friendly, personal and quick service

The service charges a one-off joining fee of £35 and is the only Talking Books service that offers on-demand books through USB memory stick.

## **LOCAL LIBRARY – TALKING BOOKS**

Your local library service run a Home Library Service where if you have a sight loss, or difficulty holding a book you may be entitled to a home delivery of Talking Books. The audio cassettes and CDs can be delivered and collected by a volunteer, or

alternatively you can visit any local library and a member of staff will help you. Large print books, talking newspapers and magazines are also available. There are also reading groups arranged for the visually impaired. For further details contact:

Christchurch Library: 01202 485938 [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

Highcliffe Library: 01425 272202 [www.hants.gov.uk](http://www.hants.gov.uk)

New Milton Library: 0845 6035631 [www.hants.gov.uk](http://www.hants.gov.uk)

Dorset: 01305 224446 [www.dorsetforyou.com/libraries](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/libraries)

## **RNIB TALKING BOOK SERVICE**

RNIB National Library Service

PO Box 173

Peterborough

PE2 6WS

Tel: 0303 123 9999

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

RNIB's Talking Books service offers over 16,000 audio books, paid for by annual subscription and delivered directly to your door. Titles are recorded in DAISY format, making them easy to navigate and enabling a whole audio book to be put onto a single CD. A full annual subscription includes the loan of a lightweight DAISY player with accessible controls.

There are a variety of ways to choose books and you will have the support of professional librarians. A Talking Book catalogue is available to help you choose titles currently available for loan.

Subscription to Talking Books includes all the titles you read throughout the year. There are two subscription options:

- £82 - Full loan annual subscription – this includes the loan of a Plectalk PTX1 DAISY player.

- £50 – books only subscription



## OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

### CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL

For full details of Concessionary travel arrangements for blind or partially sighted people please request our Help & Care factsheet No 8 – Transport by calling us on 0300 111 3303 or visiting our website [www.helpandcare.org.uk](http://www.helpandcare.org.uk) . Alternatively you can contact your local authority on:

#### Christchurch and East Dorset Councils

Civic Offices  
Bridge Street  
Christchurch  
BH23 1AZ  
Tel: 01202 495000  
Fax: 01202 495234  
Email: [customer – services@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk](mailto:customer – services@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk)

#### Purbeck

Benefits Office  
Purbeck District Council  
Westport House  
Worgret Road  
Wareham, Dorset  
BH20 4PP  
Tel: 01929 556561  
Email: [customerserviceunit@purbeck-dc.gov.uk](mailto:customerserviceunit@purbeck-dc.gov.uk)  
<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/397459>

#### North Dorset

Contact: Lisa Cotton – Customer Services Manager  
Nordon  
Salisbury Road  
Blandford Forum  
Dorset  
DT11 7LL  
Email: [lcotton@north-dorset.gov.uk](mailto:lcotton@north-dorset.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01258 484186 Ext. 2186  
Fax: 01258 484186

#### West Dorset, and Weymouth & Portland

West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland District Council provide travel concessions to people who are permanent residents of the area and have reached state pension age or have certain disabilities. An application can be made at any time.

Dorset Bus Pass allows you to travel for free within Dorset (including Bournemouth and Poole) and also on journeys that start or finish within Dorset, provided the journey does not involve a change of bus outside of the Dorset area. You are eligible for a Dorset Bus Pass if you:

- Have reached state pension age; or
- Disabled; or
- Not permitted to drive or likely to be refused a driving licence for medical reasons
- If you are blind or partially sighted irrespective of your age.

For further information and an application form for Travel Concessions contact:

Concessionary Fares, Customer Services,  
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council,  
North Quay, Weymouth  
Telephone: 01305 838000  
[www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

## **TV LICENSING AND TV SERVICE COMPANIES**

Qualify for a 50% blind concession on your TV licence

You need a TV Licence if you wish to watch or record television programmes as they are being shown on TV. This includes the use of devices such as a TV, computer, mobile phone, games console, digital box, or DVD/VHS recorder  
You are entitled to a 50% reduction on the TV Licence fee if you are blind/severely sight impaired. Your licence will also cover anyone who lives with you.

If you're registered blind or severely sight impaired:

- A blind concession TV Licence costs £72.75 for colour and £24.50 for a black and white TV Licence
- Please provide a copy of ONE of the following documents, to confirm that you're certified as either blind or severely sight impaired: a copy of the certificate or document issued by or on behalf of your local authority, or a copy of the certificate from your ophthalmologist. You won't need to provide this information again when you renew your TV Licence.

If you live with someone who is blind or severely sight impaired you can also benefit from the blind concession TV Licence. You just need to transfer the licence to the name of the blind person. For further information call 0300 790 6131.

How to apply for a blind concession

To apply for a blind concession you need to fill out an application form, contact:

TV Licensing  
Blind Concession Group  
Bristol  
BS98 1TL  
Tel: 0300 790 6131

Forms can also be downloaded from their website [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk) , send in a printed off copy along with cheque

payment and a photocopy of your local authority document or ophthalmologist's certificate. Please also include either your licence renewal notice or TV Licence number if you have a current TV Licence.

#### Free over 75 TV Licence – affecting aged 74 and over

When you reach the age of 75 you are entitled to a free over 75 TV Licence. You will be sent this licence every three years provided you have let TV Licensing know your National Insurance number. This can be found on your Pension Book, Bank Statement (if your pension is paid straight into your bank). If you don't have a National Insurance number please send a copy of one of the following documents as proof of age:

- Passport
- UK driving licence
- UK birth certificate
- National identity card

If you are currently aged 74 and your licence is due for renewal, you should buy a short-term licence. This will cover you up to your 75th birthday. For a free over 75 TV Licence or a short term licence contact 0300 790 6131 or apply online at [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)

If you are already aged over 75, apply for your free over 75 TV Licence and you will be refunded for each full month after your 75th birthday. You will receive your refund when your over 75 TV Licence is issued.

#### TV Accessibility Services

##### Freeview

If you have a sight impairment

Audio Description – is a service provided by some channels for visually impaired viewers. AD provides extra commentary in gaps between dialogue that describes the action, body language, facial expressions and anything else that helps understand the scenes being shown. To get AD on Freeview you require a special type of digital box made by Netgem or TVonics, or a digital TV from Sony or Panasonic which supports AD. For more information call RNIB on 0303 123 9999 or visit [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

##### SKY

If you have a sight impairment

Audio Description - 20% Audio Description is available on SKY channels with the exception of SKY News and SKY Sports who are not required to provide audio description due to the amount of spoken words used in news reading.

Accessible Remote Control – the SKY remote is designed for easy grip and has raised buttons with larger text.

Alternative Format Correspondence – a choice of alternative correspondence formats including Braille, Large Print, and Audio CD is available to visually impaired customers of SKY.

##### Virgin Media

If you have a sight impairment

If you subscribe to Virgin Media for your TV package, Audio Description is available on every channel that provides a pre-

mixed audio description. These services are accessible by pressing the 'HOME' button on the remote and then going to 'SETTINGS' and following the instructions from there. If you need further assistance contact Virgin Media by dialling 150 on your Virgin phone line. An Audio Description service is available for channels BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4 and 5.

