

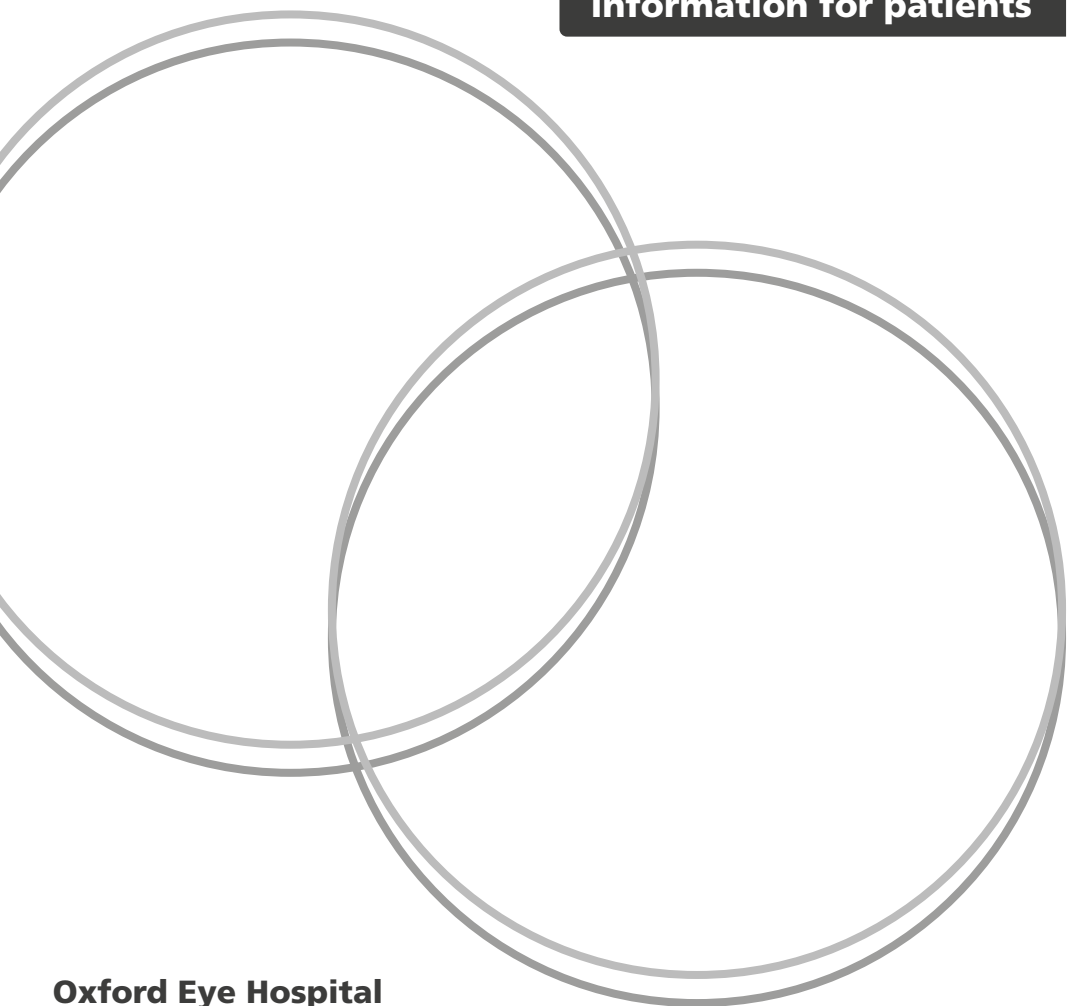


Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Sight Loss

Registering your visual
impairment, benefits
and concessions

Information for patients



Oxford Eye Hospital

What is registering with a visual impairment?

If you have sight loss, you may be entitled to certification and registration. This process is formal recognition of your visual impairment and can mean you become eligible to apply for certain benefits and concessions.

Certification

If you have permanent sight loss, and are eligible, your Consultant Ophthalmologist may offer to certify you with a visual impairment. This is completely voluntary and confidential. It is designed to help you get access to benefits and support. The only thing you cannot do when certified is drive a car. Otherwise, there is nothing else you can no longer do once you are certified, and you are not obligated to tell anyone about it if you do not wish to do so.

The process is easy and straight forward. We certify you by completing a form together called a CVI (Certificate of visual impairment). Your Ophthalmologist may do this with you, but they may suggest that you need to see the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) who can explain the process in detail and complete the form with you.

Once the process is complete, the ECLO will send you a copy of your CVI to keep. You will need this should you want to apply for any benefits or concessions. We will also send a copy to your GP and a copy to Moorfields Eye Hospital (They are responsible for collecting the NHS UK data on sight loss and registration).

In order to be certified, your vision usually has to meet the following criteria:

**Severely sight impaired (SSI)
(formally known as the Blind certification)**

- Visual acuity worse than 3/60 (Snellen scale) with a full visual field.
- Visual acuity between 6/60 and 3/60 with severe loss of visual field.
- Visual acuity of 6/60 or better with extensive loss of visual field.

**Sight Impaired (SI)
(Previously known as partially sighted)**

- Visual acuity 6/60 or worse with a full visual field.
- Visual acuity 6/24 or better with a severe loss of visual field.
- Visual acuity of 6/18 or better with extensive loss of visual field.

These are guidelines and there are some circumstances which may be considered for certification that do not fulfill these requirements. If you are not sure, please contact the Eye Clinic Liaison Officers who can discuss eligibility for certification with you.

Registration

Once you are certified, your ECLO (unless you do not consent) will send the completed certificate to your local council. All councils operate a sensory impairment service. This may be as part of the council's adult social care teams or may be operated by a sight loss charity or organisation.

The council will issue you with a proof of registration card and letter. You can use this to claim concessions when out and about, or to ask for assistance in public places.

The council's sensory impairment teams have highly trained vision rehabilitation specialists. They will offer to visit you at home and discuss the tasks you are finding most difficult because of your vision loss. They can offer specialist equipment, lighting assessments, advice and training to help you maintain or regain some confidence and independence. They can help with benefit applications, and they can also refer on to other organisations and charities such as Blind Veterans or The Guide Dog Association. They will then keep in contact with you, and you will be able to contact them again in the future if you would like further assistance.

If you are not eligible to be registered as visually impaired but still feel you need some help and support, our Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) can answer any queries and signpost you to avenues of help. If you would like to discuss your needs, or anything covered in this leaflet, please do contact our ECLOs.

Telephone: **01865 231 137**

Email: **EyeClinicLiaisonOfficer@ouh.nhs.uk**

What benefits does being registered offer?

The following table is a summary of the benefits and concessions you may be entitled to if you are registered severely sight impaired (SSI) or sight impaired (SI).

Entitled to:

Benefit / concession	SSI	SI
Blind person's tax allowance	✓	X
Television licence fee reduction Telephone: 0300 790 6071	✓	X
Blue Badge Scheme – car parking	✓	X
Free postage – "Articles for the blind" Free postage for printed materials/books/ magnifiers/mobility aids and audio and electronic media	✓	✓
Free NHS eye examination	✓	✓
Disabled Persons Railcard Telephone: 0845 605 0525	✓	✓
Free bus travel	✓	✓
Free directory enquiries from landlines and mobiles Telephone: 0800 587 0195 to register for the service	✓	✓
Cinema pass for carer	✓	X
Protection under the Equality Act	✓	✓
Assessment by social services	✓	✓

Benefits you may be entitled to:

Benefit /concession	SSI	SI
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	✓	✓
Attendance Allowance	✓	✓
Carer's Allowance	✓	✓
Employment and Support Allowance	✓	✓
Tax Credits	✓	✓
Housing Benefit	✓	✓
Council Tax disability reduction	✓	✓
Universal Credit	✓	✓
Pension Credit	✓	✓
Free ticket for a guide at theatres, galleries or tourist attractions	✓	✓

(Table: adapted from Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Starting Out series)

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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