

Help in Dorset:

Sight and Sound Centres: Drop in information centres for people with visual or hearing impairment - appointments are not necessary

They provide:
 Advice
 Equipment to try
 One-to-one
 Information
 Contacts to other sources

Where	When
Bridport Allington Court St Swithins Road Bridport DT6 3JL	Open on Wednesdays between 10am & 1pm
Christchurch Christchurch Day Centre 250 Lyminster Road Highcliffe Christchurch BH23 5ET	Open on Wednesdays between 9.30am and 1.30pm
Dorchester Dorchester Day Centre Acland Road Dorchester DT1 1SH	Open on Wednesdays between 10am and 4pm (closed for lunch from 1pm - 2pm)
Wimborne Hanham Centre Hanham Road Wimborne BH21 1AS	Open on Wednesdays Between 10am and 12.30pm

Acknowledgments

This fact sheet was commissioned from the Dorset Blind Association, by the Dorset Equality Partnership, and funded by South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, as a tool to use when undertaking Equality Analysis.

The fact sheet reflects the views and opinions of the authors, which may vary from others sharing this protected characteristic, but will help to give you a starting point on which to base your analysis.

Useful numbers:

Adult Social Services
 Dorset: 01305 221016
 Bournemouth Social Services: 01202 454979
 Poole Social Services: 01202 633902
 Dorset Social Services: Helpline 01305 221016

Bournemouth Eye Unit:
 01202 303636

Dorset County Hospital:
 01305 251150

Dept Works & Pensions:
 01202 858555 or 01202 858556

Age Concern
 Dorchester: 01305 269444
 Bournemouth: 01202 530530

RNIB: 0303 1239999

NHS Direct: 0845 4647

Dorset Blind Association:
 01202 712869

Bournemouth Society for the
 Visually Impaired: 01202 546644

Macular Disease Society
 Helpline: 0845 241 2041

Glaucoma Association:
 0870 609 1870

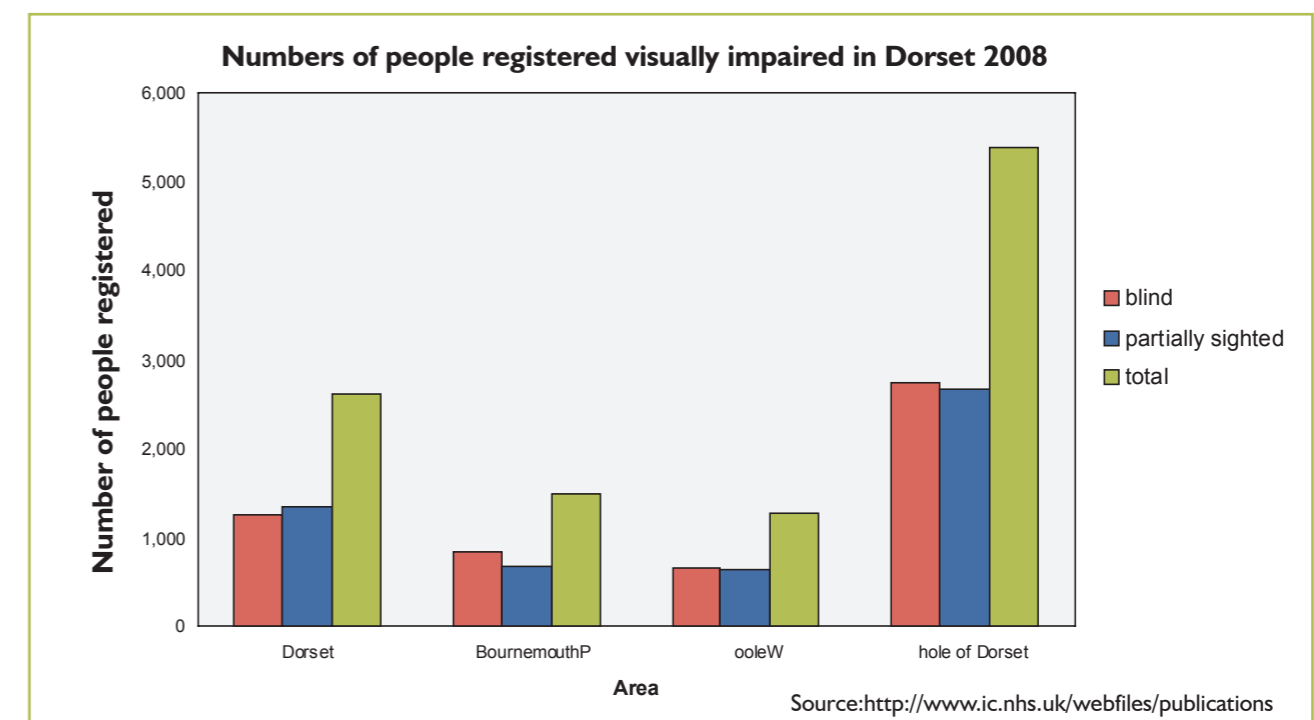
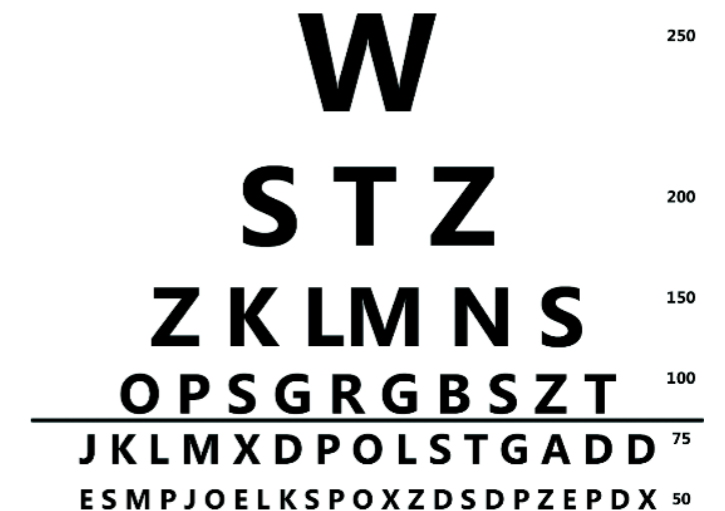
British Retinitis Pigmentosa
 Society: 01280 860195

Visual impairment factsheet

Definitions of visual impairment

Visual acuity is measured using the Snellen Scale. A Snellen test usually consists of a number of rows of letters which get smaller as you read down the chart. The first number relates to the distance away from the chart you are and the second, the number of lines you can read on the chart with the top row being 60 and the bottom line 6. Normal vision is called 6/6—you can see the bottom or second bottom line from 6 metres. Generally the higher the second number the worse a person's sight is.

Severely sight impaired (full blind registration)	People substantially visually impaired eg 3/60 - 6/60 on the Snellen scale (Only the top letter of the chart can be seen.)
Sight impaired (partially sighted registration)	People with marked visual field loss - 6/18 Snellen or worse.



The main causes of visual impairment

Age-related Macular Degeneration: Eye condition resulting in a loss of central vision.

Cataracts: A cataract is an eye condition where the lens part of the eye clouds over.

Diabetic Retinopathy: a common complication due to diabetes.

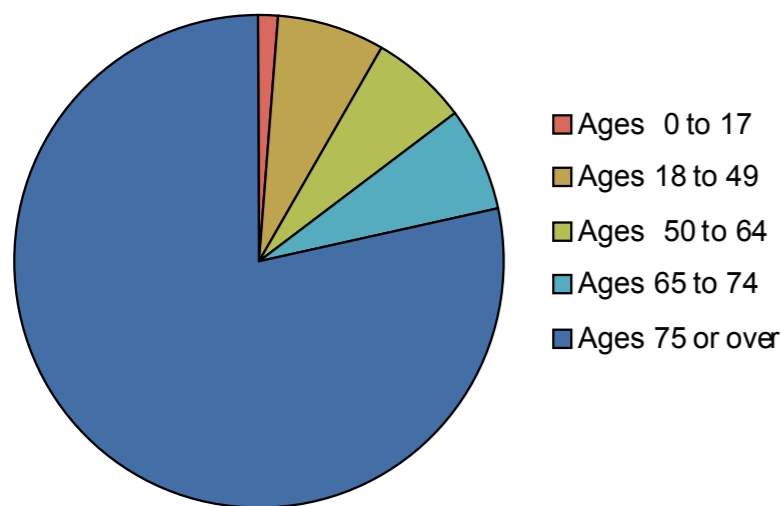
Glaucoma: eye condition where the optic nerve is damaged.

Retinitis Pigmentosa: this is a group of hereditary eye disorders affecting the retina

Some facts about visual impairment:

- Very few visually impaired people (vips) have no sight at all, only 4% have no sight at all, 14% can distinguish light from dark whilst 82% have potentially useful vision.
- 67% of vips have another permanent illness or disability.
- 35% of vips experience some difficulty in hearing normal speech (about 50% of those over 75).
- In the UK, age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the most common cause of visual impairment among older people. About 2% of people who are over 50 years of age have AMD. This rises to 8% of people over 65, and 20% of people over 85.
- 56% of visually impaired children have at least one other impairment
- Over 50% of vips in the UK live alone.
- In the UK there are 1/4 million people registered blind or partially sighted. 1 million people are eligible for registration therefore 3/4 million people are believed to have a disabling sight loss for which they are unlikely to be receiving appropriate help.

Numbers of blind & partially sighted registered Dorset 2008



Impact of visual impairment

- Loss of confidence
- Loss of self esteem
- Loss of independence
- Loss of reality
- Loss of communication
- Loss of mobility
- Loss of techniques of daily living.
- Loss of security both work and financial
- Feelings of grief, anger due to loss of vision.



When should you visit the optician?

Any decline in your sight should be checked by an optician. Signs that you need to seek help include:

- Colours look a bit washed out.
- You're finding it difficult to judge the depth of a step.
- Straight lines look wobbly.
- You find it hard to read.
- You're struggling to see signs when you're driving.

Things to do to help a visually impaired person:

Speak to make contact - the person may not be able to see you clearly.

Tell them your name - they may not be able to recognize your face.

Ask if they need help - don't assume they do. If they do require help ensure the person is aware of their surroundings by telling them what is happening.

Also

If giving directions, don't point, give verbal instructions.

When assisting a vip allow them to take your arm if they want to.

Remember

Do not assume that a person using a white cane or guide dog is totally blind.

Do not assume that a person who can see to do one thing can see to do everything.

Do not shout - speak normally and clearly.

Do not try to guess what a person can see and can't see, ask.



Registration:

Registration as severely sight impaired/blind or sight impaired/partially sighted is voluntary and may entitle an individual to a range of benefits and concessions. Although a person does not have to be registered to get help, information and support from their local authority.

How do they register?

An individual would need to be referred to see a consultant ophthalmologist who will conduct an eye test and complete a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI). A copy of the CVI is sent to their local Social Service department who should contact the individual within 48 hours.

The benefits of registration:

These vary depending on the level of visual impairment and an individual's personal circumstances, but can include:

- Reduction of 50% on TV licence fee
- Free NHS Sight Test
- Blue badge scheme
- Bus Pass
- Leisure concessions
- Council Tax disability reduction
- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Tax Credits
- Pension Credit

This is not the complete list for further advice please contact your local social services department.