



Fact Sheet HA01 May 2014

Visual Impairment

First steps

If you have poor vision you first need to visit your GP or optician, who may refer you to an ophthalmologist (eye specialist) for more investigation.

He or she will decide if you require a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) if you are:

- **sight impaired** (SI/ partially sighted)
- **severely sight impaired** (SSI/ blind)

Being SSI does not necessarily mean you are totally blind or that you will become blind. There are many degrees of visual loss.

The specialist will send copies of the certificate to you, your GP and the adult social care services at Barnet Council.



How we can help

You do not need to be registered in order to receive our services.

Our **Sensory Impairment Team** offers information, advice and support to anyone in Barnet who has a significant visual loss. Our Rehabilitation Workers and Access Enablement Officers will:

- help you understand your particular sight problem
- work out with you and your family how best to enable you to maintain your independence
- try to help you overcome any difficulties you may experience
- advise you of any benefits you may be able to claim.

Contact us

Social Care Direct

T: 020 8359 5000

E: socialcaredirect@barnet.gov.uk

Getting registered

We will then contact you to ask if you agree to go on our register of people who are sight impaired or severely sight impaired.



Registration is voluntary and confidential but it can enable you to claim certain benefits.

Benefits

If you are registered and, depending on your age and other circumstances, you may be eligible for certain welfare benefits, including:

Personal Independence Payment (for under 65's who need care)

Tel: 0845 850 3322
Textphone: 0845 601 6677

Attendance Allowance (for over 65s who need care)

Tel: 0345 6056055
Textphone: 0845 6045312

Tax Allowances

People registered SSI have a higher personal allowance before tax

Tel: 0300 200 3000
Website: www.hmrc.gov.uk

Covering medical costs

If your optician thinks you need **complex lenses** you can get a voucher towards the cost of glasses. You can get free NHS eye tests if:

- you have a low income
- you have an income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- you receive Income Support or Guaranteed Pension Credit
- a relative has been diagnosed with glaucoma.



Useful contacts

There are many local and national organisations that can help you with everyday issues.

Barnet Association for the Blind

Tel: 0845 838 0480
Website: www.aftb.org.uk

Barnet Borough Sight Impaired (BBSI)

Tel: 020 8200 5462
Website: www.barnetbbsi.org.uk

Royal National Institute for the Blind

Tel: 0845 702 3153
Website: www.rnib.org.uk

If you need this factsheet in a different format, please contact the Communications Officer for Adult Social Care and Health on:

Tel: 020 8359 7150

Email: adultsocialservices@barnet.gov.uk