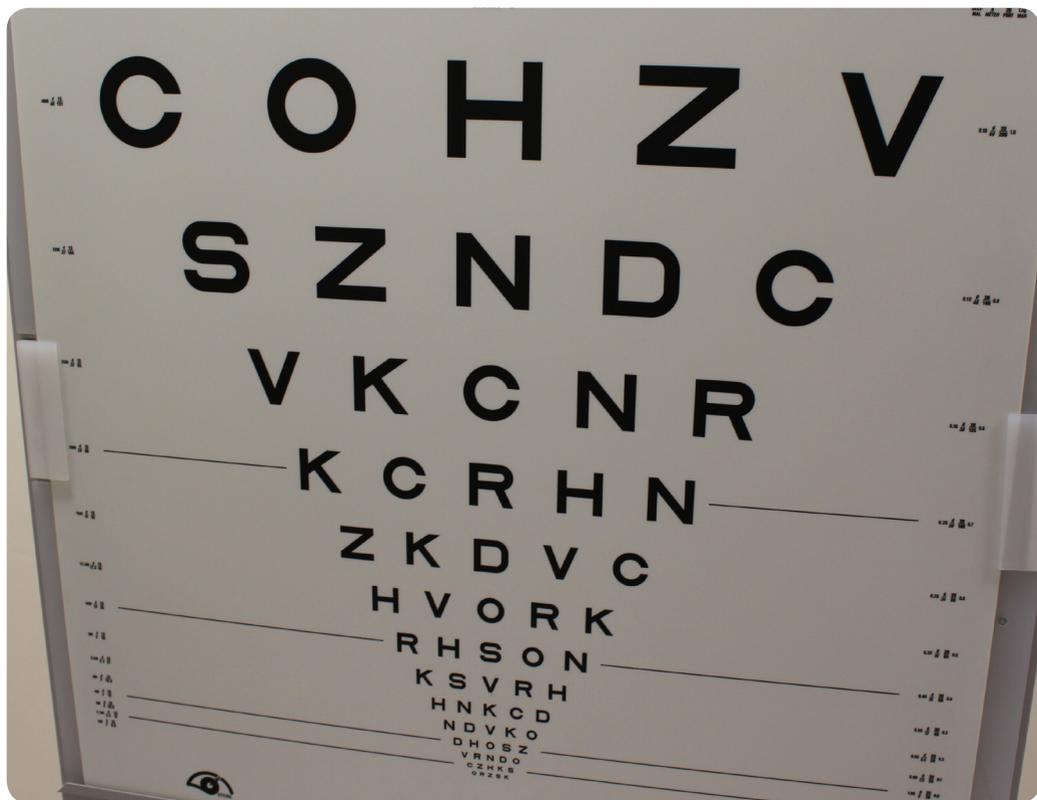




## The benefits of registering



For more information, please contact

**T 0116 249 8839**

**E [info@vistablind.org.uk](mailto:info@vistablind.org.uk)**

**W [www.vistablind.org.uk](http://www.vistablind.org.uk)**

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## Summary of benefits and concessions

This is a summary of the benefits and concessions you may be entitled to if you are registered Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) and Sight Impaired (SI).

### Entitled to

<b>Benefit/concession</b>	<b>SSI</b>	<b>SI</b>
Blind person's tax allowance	✓	
Television licence fee reduction	✓	
Blue Badge Scheme – car parking	✓	
Free postage – "Articles for the blind"	✓	✓
Free NHS eye examination	✓	✓
Disabled Persons Railcard	✓	✓
Free bus travel	✓	✓
Free directory enquiries	✓	✓
Cinema pass for carer	✓	
Protection under the Equality Act	✓	✓
Assessment by social services	✓	✓

## May be entitled to

<b>Benefit/concession</b>	<b>SSI</b>	<b>SI</b>
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	✓	✓

Please note that the information in this leaflet is for guidance only and is not an authoritative statement of the law. Contact details for each benefit and concession can be found on Page 11.

## Introduction

Losing your sight can be an incredibly difficult experience, but there is help and support available in order for you to be able to carry on with your life.

Registering can give you access to this support and also means that you will be entitled to concessions, and possible reductions in your council tax.

Registering does not automatically give you access to benefits, but it can help when you are applying for benefits.

## Registration

### What is registration?

Each local authority keeps a register of people who are sight impaired or severely sight impaired. In Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, Vista holds the register on behalf of local authorities. Registration is important because it means the help that you need can be made available to you.

The register is completely confidential. Your details will not be passed on to anybody else.

There are two levels of registration, known as sight impaired (used to be partially sighted) and severely sight impaired (used to be registered blind).

### How to register

To be registered as sight impaired and severely sight impaired, you will need to be certified and have a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI).

First you will need to see a certified eye specialist, called a consultant ophthalmologist. There is nobody else that can certify your condition to be registered. To be referred to an ophthalmologist, talk to your GP.

Your eye specialist will assess your sight and measure how good you are at seeing detail at a distance (visual acuity) and how much you can see from the side of your eye when you are looking straight ahead (field of vision).

### **How will your sight be assessed?**

Your visual acuity is measured by reading an eye chart called a Snellen Chart. The result of the test is called a Snellen score.

Your field of vision can be assessed in a number of ways. Virtually all visual field testing is performed one eye at a time, with the opposite (contralateral) eye completely covered to avoid errors. In all testing, you must look straight ahead at all times in order to avoid testing the central vision rather than the periphery.

Most modern visual field testing devices also continuously monitor fixation, or the ability of the patient to maintain a consistent straight ahead gaze.

## **Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI)**

The CVI includes the results from your eye test, information about your condition, and your circumstances.

The ophthalmologist will complete the CVI form and will ask you to sign this if you agree with their conclusions.

By signing the CVI form you are agreeing to be registered. If this is the case, then the form will be given to you, your GP and your local social services department. Your ophthalmologist should do this within five working days of you signing the form.

### **What happens after the CVI is signed?**

Your local social services department should contact you within 14 days of receiving the form to check that you want to be included on the register, and also discuss the option of carrying out a needs assessment with you. This is sometimes called a Community Care Assessment.

This assessment is to find out your care needs and to decide how best to help you with things such as adaptations, equipment, care and domestic help.

There are also some concessions that are available when you are registered. These are listed on page 11 of this booklet.

## Summary of steps to registration:

- Visit your GP or optician to be referred to an ophthalmologist
- Your sight will be assessed and your situation discussed with your ophthalmologist
- Your ophthalmologist will complete a form called the Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) which you will need to sign
- The CVI form will be sent to your GP and the local social services department
- Your details will be logged on the register held with Vista
- Within 14 days you should be contacted by your local social services department
- They will do an assessment of your needs
- Vista can help you at any stage of this process to provide guidance and support

Please be aware that being registered does not automatically entitle you to any benefits, but it can help to show how serious your condition is if you choose to claim benefits.

If your sight loss is not permanent and you are undergoing treatment, it may not be possible to

be certified until the outcome of your treatment is known.

If your sight loss is in one eye, you may not be eligible to be certified. If your ophthalmologist does not suggest being registered, you must ask them about this. If you have a problem getting registered, please call our Vista helpline on **0116 249 8839**.

### **What if you don't want to be registered?**

If you decide you do not want to be registered, you may still be able to get help from your local social services department - call our Vista helpline and we will point you in the right direction. The same applies if you need help before your registration is completed.

Alternatively, you can obtain a Low Vision Leaflet (LVL) from your optometrist or a Referral of Vision Impairment (RVI) from your eye hospital or clinic. They will fill in your details and send them to social services.

### **Understanding the results of your CVI**

To be registered as severely sight impaired (blind), your sight results have to fall into one of the following categories (whilst wearing any glasses or contact lenses that you may need):

- Visual acuity of less than 3/60 with a full visual field
- Visual acuity between 3/60 and 6/60 with a severe reduction of field vision
- Visual acuity of 6/60 or above but with a much reduced field of vision, especially if a lot of sight is missing in the lower part of the field.

To be registered as sight impaired or partially sighted, your sight has to fall into one of the following categories:

- Visual acuity of 3/60 to 6/60 with a full field of vision
- Visual acuity of up to 6/24 with a moderate reduction of field of vision, or cloudiness in parts of the eye or your lens has been removed and not replaced with a lens implant
- Visual acuity of up to 6/18 if a large part of your field of vision - for example, a whole part of your vision is missing or a lot of your peripheral vision is missing.

## Understanding the Snellen Scale

Visual acuity is measured using the Snellen Scale. The Snellen test usually consists of a number of rows of letters which get smaller as you read down the chart.

Normal visual acuity is called 6/6, which corresponds to the bottom or second bottom line of the chart.

The first number given is the distance in metres between the chart and where you are sat. The second number corresponds to the number of lines that you are able to read on the chart.

If you can only read the top line of the chart, this is written as 6/60. This means you can see at 6 metres what someone with standard vision could see from 60 metres away. Generally, the larger the second number is, the worse your sight is.

## Benefits and concessions

The details about benefits and concessions can change frequently, so the following information is to be used for guidance only. We have tried to list the relevant organisations that you will need to contact to find out more details about the individual benefits and who will be able to advise you about your eligibility.

### **Blind person's tax allowance:**

**T** 0300 200 3301

**W** [www.gov.uk/blind-persons-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/blind-persons-allowance)

### **Television licence fee reduction:**

**T** 0300 790 6071

**Blue Badge Scheme (car parking):**

Please contact your local council to check about the Blue Badge Scheme in your area.

**Free postage (Articles for the Blind):**

Contact the Royal Mail Customer Service Centre.

**T** 03456 076140

03456 000606 (textphone)

**Free permanent loan of radios and CD players:**

Contact your local Social Services Department, ask for the British Wireless for the Blind Fund (BWBF).

**T** 01622 754757

**Free NHS eye examination:**

If you are registered your eye test will be free.

Please inform your optician before the examination.

You may also qualify for 'voucher for complex lenses' and your optician should be able to advise on this.

There is also help that you may be entitled to regarding health related costs. To find out more, call the NHS Health Costs advice line on 0300 330 1343.

**Disabled Persons Railcard:**

**T** 0845 605 0525

**W** [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)

You can also get sighted assistance at the beginning and end of train journeys.

Either call the relevant train company or go to [www.disability-onboard.co.uk](http://www.disability-onboard.co.uk).

### **Free bus travel:**

Contact your local authority or local transport providers for further details of travel concessions in your area.

### **Free directory enquiries:**

**T** 0800 587 0195

### **Leisure concessions:**

For further details of what may be available, call the RNIB helpline on 0303 123 9999.

### **Personal Independence Payment (PIP):**

**T** 0800 917 2222

0800 917 7777 (textphone)

**W** [www.gov.uk/pip](http://www.gov.uk/pip)

### **Attendance Allowance:**

**T** 0800 731 0122

0845 604 5312 (textphone)

**W** [www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance)

### **Carer's Allowance:**

**T** 0800 731 0297

0345 604 5312 (textphone)

**E** [cau.customer-services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cau.customer-services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

**W** [www.gov.uk/carers-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance)

**Employment and Support Allowance:****T** 0800 055 6688

0800 023 4888 (textphone)

**W** [www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance)**Tax Credits:****T** 0345 300 3900

0345 300 3909 (textphone)

**W** [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/tax-credits-enquiries](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/tax-credits-enquiries)**Universal Credit:****T** 0345 600 0723

0345 600 0743 (textphone)

**W** [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)**Pension Credit:****T** 0800 99 1234

0800 169 0133 (textphone)

**W** [www.gov.uk/pension-credit](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit)**Access to Work:****T** 0800 121 7479

0345 608 8753 (textphone)

**E** [atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)**W** [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)**Housing Benefit:**

For more information about Housing Benefit, please contact your local council.

## **Council Tax disability reduction:**

Please contact your local council to check what financial support is available with regards to Council Tax in your area.

## **The Equality Act**

The Equality Act 2010 makes it law that every private, public and voluntary organisation must not discriminate against employees and people that use their services because of particular characteristics.

The Act brings together all previous laws, making them simpler, more effective and easier to understand. This means that you cannot be treated unfairly because of your disability.

If you would like more information, or believe that you have suffered discrimination, please contact the Vista Helpline on **0116 249 8839**.

## **About Vista**

Vista is the leading local charity working with children and adults with sight loss in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Whether someone is newly diagnosed or has lived their whole life with reduced sight, Vista's specialist staff provide a vital lifeline to local people.

**T** 0116 249 8839

**E** [info@vistablind.org.uk](mailto:info@vistablind.org.uk)

**W** [www.vistablind.org.uk](http://www.vistablind.org.uk)

**If you require the information in this booklet in an alternative format (e.g. large print, audio or Braille) or in an alternative language, please contact Vista on **0116 249 0909**.**



**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE**

**For more information, please contact**

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16 New Walk  
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**[www.vistablind.org.uk](http://www.vistablind.org.uk)**

*Registered charity number 218992*