

Managing Sensory Loss

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Introduction

When you learn that your sight/ hearing is deteriorating, you may react with disbelief, anger, shock and fear about the future. The thought of life with a sensory loss is a difficult one.

Sensory loss will bring changes to your life, but you can deal with these changes more easily if you know where to get help and support from people who understand what you are going through.

This booklet will point you in the right direction to get that help and support.

Adult Services Sensory Team provide support & services for people aged 18 and over who have hearing loss, sight loss, a dual sensory loss or are BSL users. (For people under 18 please contact Childrens Services on 0300 555 1384).

The Sensory Team can offer you an assessment over the phone, at a sensory clinic or possibly a home visit (eligibility criteria applies).

An assessment is a discussion, or several discussions, between you and a Sensory Officer to decide what help you need and how it may be provided. You can discuss the difficulties you are having and why you need support.

We may be able to demonstrate some equipment and tell you where it may be obtained. We can suggest possible solutions to any specific problems you may be having.

We can also refer your details on to other providers who may be able to give you with further support.

Who to contact

■ Hampshire County Council Adult Services department

Telephone: 0300 555 1386

Out of hours: 0300 555 1373

Minicom: 0300 555 1390

Email: adult.services@hants.gov.uk

■ Sensory Team

To make contact with your sensory team, you can use any of the numbers above.

To email the sensory team direct:
adult.services@hants.gov.uk

For more information visit:
www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/sightorhearingloss

■ **Deaf Services Team**

The Deaf Services Team is a specialist team who provide information, advice and services specifically for Deaf sign language users in Hampshire.

The team can make a full assessment of your needs in sign language and can arrange some services to support you.

They cannot provide or manage interpreters but can give you contact details.

All members of the team have good British Sign Language skills

To contact the team:

Capital House, 48-52 Andover Road, Winchester,
SO23 7BH

Tel/Minicom: **01962 846601**

Fax: **01962 814607**

SMS: **07797 877012**

Email: **deaf.services.team@hants.gov.uk**

For more information, visit
[www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/
adultsocialcare/sightorhearingloss](http://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/sightorhearingloss)

Who to contact

So who should I first contact?

■ Sight – Optician/GP

If you are experiencing problems with your eye sight then you can ask your Optician/doctor to refer you to a Consultant Ophthalmologist at your local eye unit. Early treatment may help to avoid permanent sight damage.

Following your appointment with the Ophthalmologist you may be referred to a Low Vision Clinic for an assessment to see whether low vision aids, such as magnifiers and special glasses, can help you. Some of this equipment can be issued free of charge.

Your local eye unit may have an Adult Services Sensory Officer linked to the clinic who can offer support and advice on the services that are available.

If you also have a hearing loss, remember to advise the clinic staff as some tests may affect your vision and you may not be able to lip-read.

■ **Hearing – GP**

If you are experiencing problems with your hearing, which cannot be treated by your doctor, then your GP can refer you to a ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) Consultant or an NHS Audiologist for diagnosis of your hearing loss.

Alternatively, you may use a private hearing aid company for your diagnosis. This does not exclude your access to our service.

As a result of this diagnosis you may be issued with a hearing aid.

Your local Audiology Department may have a Hearing Therapist or a Sensory officer available who can offer support and information on the services available.

Disability registration

If your sight and hearing loss is likely to be permanent, it may be easier to get help, advice and some concessions if you are registered as disabled with Hampshire County Council Adult Services Department.

You do not have to be registered as disabled to be eligible for our services.

To be registered as having a sight loss

you will need to have a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) from your Ophthalmologist.

There are two categories for sight loss registration

- Severely sight impaired (Blind)
- Sight impaired (Partially Sighted)

To be registered with a hearing loss

you need to have a diagnosed hearing loss (hearing test via NHS or private dispenser).

There are three categories for hearing loss registration:

- Hard of Hearing (prescribed hearing aid)
- Deaf (signing/writing)
- Deaf (speaking/lipreading)

8 You will then be issued with a registration card.

How do I register?

Registration is voluntary and once registered you can ask to be removed from the register at any time. Your Sensory Team can help with this or you can register yourself by using the online form at www.hants.gov.uk/registerasdisabled or by telephoning **0300 555 1386** for a form.

What does registering entitle me to?

If you are registered you **may** be entitled to:

- a Disabled Persons' Railcard – you can get details from your local train station
- some reduced travel costs – Hampshire County Council can give you details of schemes operating in your area **0300 555 1376**
- free NHS eye tests (VI only)
- free use of Directory Enquiries (VI only) – you can get details and an application form by calling **0800 587 0195**
- equipment to help you at work – Access to Work can give you details of this

Disability registration

- certain concessions in various social venues, such as theme parks, theatres, museums etc.
- some benefits

In addition, if you are registered blind/severely sight impaired you qualify for:

- blind persons tax allowance – contact the Blind Person’s Helpline at HMRC on **0845 366 7887**
- some benefits – for the latest information, visit **www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/overview** or call the Disability Benefits helpline: Telephone: **0345 712 3456**
Textphone: **0345 722 4433**
- a 50% reduction on any TV licence bought in your name – remember, too, that if you are over 75, you can get a free TV licence anyway
- a blue badge which gives specialised parking for any car you are travelling in. Contact the Blue Badge Unit on 0300 555 1376 or email blue.badge@hants.gov.uk. There is more information at **www.hants.gov.uk/bluebadge**

Useful information

Please visit the adult social care pages on our website at www.hants.gov.uk or call **0300 555 1386** to request a free copy of our ***Guide to Better Care and Support*** which includes a wealth of practical information and advice for independent living including an A-Z listing of home care providers.

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