



Sight loss

- Although some people are totally blind (severely sight impaired), or retain only light perception, a much greater number have varying degrees of useful residual vision.
- Some people have lost central vision while retaining peripheral vision, while for others it is the opposite; others may have “blotchy” or blurred vision.
- Some people will have good distance vision but poor close vision, e.g. for reading, while for others it will be the reverse.

Making open meetings accessible

- Members with poor sight may prefer to sit nearer the front (see also notes on people with hearing impairment and Notes for Speakers)
- Members with poor sight may appreciate help in finding a seat, or locating someone they wish to sit next to, and may welcome assistance with getting a cup of tea or signing up for other activities.
- Speakers using PowerPoint or similar should be encouraged to talk through their slides.

- Members may not be able to read a name badge or instantly recognise your voice, so introduce yourself by giving your name.
- When guiding someone with sight loss, remember that they take your arm and follow you half a pace behind. Do not propel them forward into the unknown.
- Try to reduce glare by positioning chairs with their backs to windows.
- Produce all written information in accordance with clear print guidelines and make it available by email or text.

Making interest groups accessible

The notes on meetings also apply to group activities and visits.

In addition:

- On a walk or ramble, different members of the group can assist by offering a guiding elbow, if required, and information on approaching features such as steps or overhanging branches.
- Cinema or theatre groups should consider timing their visits to coincide with audio-described shows.
- Book groups should check whether the titles they select are available in a form which the member can read, preferably on loan or at a reasonable price.
- Playing cards are available with tactile or with enlarged visual markings.
- Many board games are available in an adjusted form.
- For physical activities such as yoga or Pilates, the tutor should be encouraged to verbalise rather than just demonstrate.

Useful Links

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB): www.rnib.org.uk, National Helpline 0303 123 9999

Sightline Directory: www.sightlinedirectory.org.uk

Guide Dogs: www.guidedogs.org.uk; General enquiries 0118 983 5555

British Blind Sports: www.britishblindsport.org.uk; 01926 424247

Visionary (umbrella group for local voluntary societies): www.visionary.org.uk; 0208 090 9264