

# Hearing and Vision Team - Focus on Support for People with Visual Impairments

Emma Townsend  
Head of Living Well  
28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023

# Prevalence of Visual Impairment in Wiltshire

<b>Prevalence data from IPC, Oxford Brookes University</b>					
	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
People aged 18-64 predicted to have a serious VI	189	190	189	187	186
People aged 65-74 predicted to have a moderate or severe VI	3,259	3,321	3,802	4,155	4,077
People aged 75 and over predicted to have a moderate or severe VI	6,423	7,787	8,593	9,498	10,751
Age related macular degeneration is the most common cause of registerable sight loss in older people.					
<b>Wiltshire Council Sight Registers Data</b>					
Severely Sight Impairment	2939				
Sight Impairment	2960				
Child – Visual Impairment	94				

# The Hearing and Vision Team

The Hearing and Vision Team is a small county-wide specialist team of staff who work across a range of sensory loss areas:

- Team Manager
- Administrator
- Deaf community (dedicated social worker for Deaf people)
- People with Hearing Impairment
- **People with Visual Impairments**
- People with Dual Sensory Loss

# Dual Sensory Work

**Dual Sensory Specialists** have specialist communication skills

Most deafblind people in Wiltshire have acquired their dual sensory loss as a result of the ageing process.

The dual sensory assessment may identify the need for specialist one-to-one support such as a **Communicator Guide or Intervenor**.

The Care Act has a specific section in relation to local authorities' duties towards people who are deafblind:

- We must ensure that an expert is involved in the assessment of adults who are deafblind, and the Care Act describes the level of training that the specialist assessor must have.
- The Care Act provides detail on how the assessment should be undertaken; what it needs to consider in relation to a person's specific sensory needs when they have a dual diagnosis; and who to involve (interpreter etc).
- Any care and support put in place to meet eligible assessed needs has to be appropriate and able to meet those needs.

# Hard of Hearing/Support for Deaf community

**We are currently reviewing this aspect of our work**

➤ **Rehabilitation Officers with Hearing Impaired People (ROHIs) who:**

- Give information, advice and support with hearing loss; assessment and provision of specialist equipment, for example to help with hearing around the home like smoke alarms, doorbell, telephone or television, or adaption of current equipment/environment to suit.

➤ **Specialist Social Worker with Deaf People who can support:**

- People who are Deaf and whose first language is British Sign Language (BSL)
- Assessment of care and support needs and mental capacity assessments, and acting as Investigating Officer in safeguarding enquiries
- Provide a range of drop-in sessions with our specialist social worker for Deaf people across the county each month and are accessible via WhatsApp for referrals and enquiries

# Visual Impairment Registrations

- The Care Act gives us a specific responsibility to hold registers for people who are Sight Impaired (SI) and Severely Sight Impaired (SSI)
- Once the team has received the required documentation (copy of their certificate of visual impairment as Severely Sight or Sight Impaired), we are required by the Care Act to make contact within 14 days to discuss registration and to offer an assessment by ROVI
- Only an assessment by an Ophthalmologist can determine if person meets the criteria for SI or SSI registration. The team has a good working relationship with the Ophthalmology departments within our hospitals.
- The team also hold the children's CVIs.

# What is a ROVI (Rehabilitation Officer for Visually Impaired)

A ROVI is a specialist professional, qualified to assess and train people to gain the skills they need after losing sight/being diagnosed with sight loss, examples:

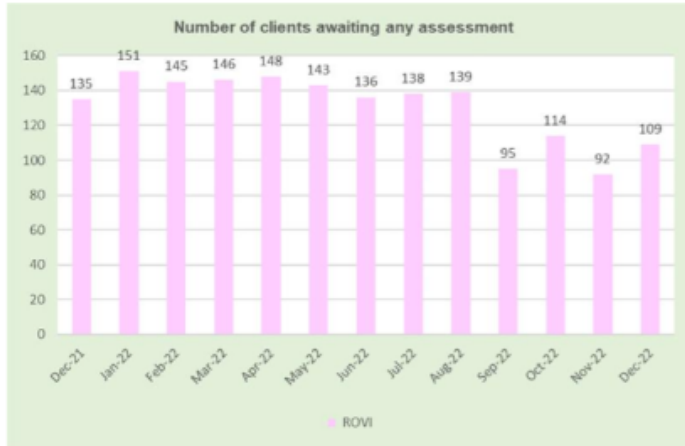
- safely preparing and cooking food
- navigating environments (inside and outside the home)

This service is specifically described in the Care Act 2014 as a means of local authorities meeting their preventative and enabling duties. The Care Act describes that, as aspects of independence training with sight impaired people require careful risk management, it should only be undertaken by professionals with relevant experience and training. It also describes it as being distinct from reablement, for example, it should be provided to the person for a period appropriate to meet their needs, rather than limited to 4-6 weeks.

The Rehabilitation Workers Professional Network (RWPN) established a register of qualified practitioners in 2019 - this register has now been accredited by the Professional Standards Agency – they estimate only about 500 ROVIs across the country

Also renaming the role to Vision Rehabilitation Workers

# Current demand and performance



- We have a small team of 3.65 staff, 2 of which have taken maternity leave over the past 2 years
- Waiting list grew over COVID as many people requested to delay their assessment and/or rehabilitation (had family support, not going out, felt vulnerable etc)
- September saw the team being back to full complement of staff, starting to show an impact on the waiting list



# Impact and Outcomes

1. A is registered as Severely Sight Impaired with light perception only. Her relationship has broken down and she is needing to learn to live and parent independently. ROVI has extensively supported her to:
  - Access voice over on her mobile phone to enable her to communicate independently
  - Direct Payment for a Personal Assistant to support her with reading, shopping and activities outside of the home.
  - Supported to develop independence in daily living tasks her such as using washing machine & dryer
  - Further work on independent mobility planned for the future once she has gained more confidence getting out and about with her PA.
2. B is a transition case; she has complex needs as well as registered Sight impaired. ROVI has supported her with:
  - Extensive daily living skills in the home for example, to regularly prepare & cook her own meals
  - Ongoing mobility training, she is now using her long cane when out in the community which is aiding her confidence and independence.
  - ROVI support has played an important part in her moving over into Adult Services.
  - All the skills LW is learning will help aid her move into independent living in the future.

# Areas of development

- Action plan developed to address individuals waiting including development of Lead role and implementation of practice standards for allocation and consideration of Apprenticeship route to fill vacancy
- Working with the Fire Service - Safe and Well visits
- Developing closer working relationships with Wiltshire Sight – ensure there's no duplication and we are working effectively together
- Developing closer working relationship with Children's services re transition
- Monitoring performance through monthly Performance Outcomes Group
- Review of the services we provide to people who are Deaf and hard of hearing