

Information about Wiltshire Council services can be made available on request in other languages including British Sign Language (BSL) and formats such as **large print** and audio. Please contact the council by telephone **0300 456 0100**, by textphone 01225 712500, or email customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk

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by team mobile

0300 456 0111(via SMS)

by post

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County Hall, Trowbridge, Wiltshire. BA14 8JL

by email

customeradvisors@wiltshire.gov.uk

Hearing and Vision Team

A positive choice

Services for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing,
Blind or Partially Sighted or have Dual Sensory Loss



The Wiltshire Hearing and Vision Team

We are a specialist team providing services to people who:

- are Visually Impaired
- are Deaf
- have an acquired hearing loss
- are Deafblind – sometimes known as dual sensory impairment – people who have a significant combination of hearing and sight loss.

Our staff

The Hearing and Vision Team consists of the following members of staff:

- Social Workers with Deaf people – qualified British Sign Language (BSL) users
- Support Workers with Deaf people - (qualified BSL users)
- Rehabilitation Officers with people who are Visually Impaired (ROVIs)
- Rehabilitation Officers with people who are Hearing Impaired (ROHIs)

- Support Workers with Deafblind people – experienced in Deafblind manual, BSL and clear speech
- Specialist management and administrative staff

What we do

We give information and advice:

- by answering public enquiries face-to-face
- by telephone, including textphone
- by fax, email and letters
- by visits to resource centres
- at cultural centres, such as Deaf clubs
- in social groups, such as clubs for visually impaired people
- by use of our web site, (see contact details at the back)
- by producing publications in a variety of formats such as Braille.

We take referrals direct from:

- the public, including carers, relatives, friends and neighbours
- other professionals, such as health, education, environmental health and other social services staff
- voluntary agencies.

Hospitals

Swindon Great Western Hospital - **01793 604020**

Eye Clinic - **01793 604505**

Audiology - **01793 604209**

Bath Royal United Hospital - **01225 428331**

Eye Clinic - **01225 824616**

Audiology - **01225 824035**

Salisbury Hospital - **01722 336262**

Eye Clinic - **01722 429337**

Audiology - **01722 429335**

Talking Books / Newspaper Services

RNIB (subscription charges apply) - **0303 123 9999**

Calibre (free service) - **01296 432339**

Talking Newspaper Association of the UK (TNAUK) (subscription charges apply) - **01435 866102**

Eden Interactive - **0845 643 1561**

Talking newspapers - local - **0871 226 5506**

Sight loss

SW Retail - **01226 764082**

RNIB - **0303 123 9999**

Cobolt - **01493 700172**

Haggar Electronics - **0845 8820505**

AbilityNet - **0800 269545**

Optelec - **01923 23 13 13**

Telesensory - **01249 814309**

Queen Alexandra College - **0121 4285050**

Assistive dogs

Guide dogs for the Blind Association - **0118 983 5555**

Hearing dogs for Deaf People - **01844 348 100**

Assistance Dogs UK - **01844 348100**

Benefits advice

Department of Work & Pensions -

Benefit Enquiry Line - **0800 88 22 00**

or Textphone **0800 24 33 55**

Disability Living Allowance

and Attendance Allowance - **0845 7 12 34 56**

or Textphone **0845 7 22 44 33**

Carers Allowance - **0845 608 4321**

or Text phone **0845 604 5312**

Citizens Advice Bureau Wiltshire - **0844 375 2775**

We assess how to meet your needs:

While everyone can get information and advice from us, we also assess your situation and decide how best to meet your needs – this may be through our own services or from other sources of support. We will check what kind of help you need; examples include whether you need:

- any specific equipment, such as a telephone with amplifier and/or large buttons to help resolve daily living problems
- help with communication, or to get around, such as mobility and orientation training.

Our assessments include the everyday needs of adults, both in relation to sensory difficulties and those relating to the ability to live safely and independently.

We provide:

Help for people experiencing the effects of vision and/or hearing loss, both from birth or acquired in later life. We do this by providing a wide range of specialist services, for which we will have assessed your eligibility.

These services include:

- training in independent living skills, such as cooking, getting around in and out of your home (indoor and outdoor mobility training)
- advocacy
- training in communication skills, such as use of textphones and reading Braille
- advice on communications services, such as sign language interpreters
- sensory awareness training, for relatives, carers and other professionals
- providing access to a wide range of equipment such as talking books, large-print labels and markers, visual, audible and tactile alarms etc
- support to carers
- information on benefits advice and help with claims
- registration as Blind, Partially Sighted, Deaf and Hearing Impaired
- liaising with and supporting voluntary agencies, including those engaged in service user consultation.

Household

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service

Home Safety Check - **0800 389 7849**

Bobby Van - **01225 79 46 52**

Handihelp - **01380 73 55 55**

Lifeline - **01380 73 55 83**

Wiltshire Farm Foods - **01225 776793**

Oakhouse Foods

(Groceries delivery service available) - **0846 8333 858**

Other

Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network - **01380 871800**

Age UK - **01380 727767**

SSAFA - **0845 1300 975**

British Legion - **020 3207 2100**

St. Dunstan's - **0800 389 7979**

Equipment suppliers:

Deaf / Hard of Hearing / Deafblind

Action on Hearing Loss - **01733 361199**

BioAcoustics - **01582 431000**

Hearing Products International - **01614 808003**

Gordon Morris - **01458 272121**

Connevens - **01737 247571**

National organisations for support, advice and information include:

Deaf / Hard of Hearing

Action on Hearing Loss - **0808 808 0123**

Bath Deaf Club (SMS) **07535 660357**

Bristol Centre for Deaf People - **0117 9249868**

Deafblind

SENSE - **0845 127 0060**

Deafblind UK - **0800 132 320**

Sight loss

RNIB/Action for Blind People

(Both use the 0303 123 9999 number)

Local organisations for support, advice and information include:

Sight loss

Wiltshire Blind Association - **01380 723682**

RNIB / Action for Blind People - **0303 123 9999**

Macular Disease Society - **0845 241 2041**

Deaf

On our team we have a:

- specialist social worker with Deaf people
- support worker with Deaf people

We can help:

- people who are Deaf and whose first language is BSL
- the parents and carers of people who are Deaf
- Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing people who need additional help or advice.

With, for example:

- information and advice and disability benefits, registration as Deaf, the effects of deafness on learning and information on how to book a BSL interpreter
- difficulties with caring for children
- support with social isolation
- mental health difficulties
- managing at work
- housing related matters.

Staff resources

- Our workers can provide contacts for suitable BSL/English interpreters to organisations which need them.

Our commitment

Wiltshire Council is committed to working with appropriately trained British Sign Language interpreters to assist in communicating with Deaf people. The Disability Discrimination Act also places a duty on the council to provide a BSL/English interpreter to make it easier for Deaf people to use its services.

Hard of Hearing

- Rehabilitation Officers with Hearing Impaired people (ROHIs)

If you have difficulties hearing things around the home that other people take for granted, such as your doorbell, telephone, or television, then our ROHIs may be able to help.

Communicator guides

The team has access to trained guide communicators who can work directly with Deafblind people to facilitate their safe access to information and everyday facilities to promote independence. However, this does depend on the outcome of the assessment by the Deafblind support worker, and it may be necessary for individual service users to contribute towards the costs. The intention is to make this service more uniformly available across Wiltshire.

Contact details

Hearing and Vision Team,
Unit C4, Beacon Business Park,
Hopton Industrial Estate,
Devizes, SN10 2EY

Tel: **01380 725201**

Fax: **01380 731437**

Minicom: **01380 732126**

Email: **hearingandvisionteam@wiltshire.gov.uk**

Website: **www.wiltshire.gov.uk/**

healthandsocialcare/hearingandvision

SMS text: **07899 067466**

Services in Wiltshire

Our responsibilities to Deafblind service users are outlined in Social Care for Deafblind Children and Adults – LAC (2001) 8 under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. This was issued by the Department of Health.

The Hearing and Vision Team has a wide range of experience of working with Deafblind people and employs specially trained workers who undertake assessments.

Most Deafblind people in Wiltshire are elderly and have lost their sight and hearing progressively. With agreement, their names are entered on Wiltshire's record of people who are Deafblind.

Independent communication support in various forms, including the Deafblind manual, is also available to give Deafblind people access to the services they need e.g. health services. Similarly, every effort is made to ensure social services literature is available in a variety of formats and that access to staff and services is generally made as easy as possible.

The Hearing and Vision Team has ROHs who work across the county and can provide advice, information and assessments. They can often recommend the equipment necessary to enable you to carry on leading an independent life. Our ROHs will visit you and discuss your needs within your own home, but we also have staff at drop-in centres in Salisbury – Wessex Sight Centre; Devizes (Please contact the team for details) and at Malmesbury – Primary Care Centre.

We are happy to deal with any degree of hearing loss, whether you are profoundly Deaf or have noticed your hearing is not as good as it used to be. We work closely with other organisations such as the audiology department at your local hospital, as well as offering advice to other social or care workers. ROHs, along with the other members of the Hearing and Vision Team, are also involved in offering sensory awareness training at care homes and to carers groups and families.

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Specialist equipment

Below is a list of some of the equipment our ROHIs can demonstrate:

- Loop systems for use with television and radio (Hearing Impaired)
- Personal communicators (Hearing Impaired)
- Alerting devices – doorbell, telephone / minicom, smoke alarm, alarm clocks
- Telephones – amplified, big button
- Fax machines.

Much of the equipment demonstrated can be used in conjunction with Hearing aids. Although specific problems will always be referred back to the relevant audiology department, we can offer:

- advice on how to get the best out of your hearing aid
- advice about listening devices.

These difficulties are vast when you consider that some people can either be congenitally Deafblind, or can acquire a combined sight and hearing loss over the course of their life. Most Deafblind people are over the age of 60 and come into the last group. The needs of both these groups are very different, especially people born deaf or prelingually deaf, with the consequent difficulties of developing language and speech.

The definition of Deafblindness means that anyone who has both a hearing loss and a sight loss that causes them problems in everyday life is covered by the new guidance. People do not have to be completely deaf and blind.

Further information on the implementation can be found in 'Social Care for Children and Adults: a practical guide', produced by Sense.

- The Partially Sighted Society has a catalogue. Telephone 01302 323132 or e-mail them on info@partsight.org.uk
- SW Retail Ltd, trading as 'IC', has a useful catalogue - email swretail@amservice.net

Dual sensory loss/Deafblind

What is Deafblindness?

Deafblindness is a direct impairment that is more than 'just' the loss of your vision and hearing. It is a unique impairment. The impact of a dual loss is significantly different from a single loss as the individual's ability to compensate is greatly reduced

Just as the coping strategies and skills required by each Deafblind individual are different, so are the support services they require.

The Department of Health describes Deafblindness, or dual sensory impairment, in broad terms: Persons are regarded as Deafblind if their combined sight and hearing impairment cause difficulties with:

- communication
- access to information
- mobility.

You may be interested in other areas of communication such as:

- lip-reading
- sign language.

To help you cope with your hearing loss, we can give you details of local classes and teachers. The same applies to both local and national organisations; we can give you contact addresses and phone numbers. We can also look at smoke alarm systems, alarm clocks, one-to-one alerts and door entry systems

Visual Impairment

- Rehabilitation Officers with Visually Impaired People (ROVIs) are also known as Rehabilitation Workers or Mobility Officers.

The aim of a ROVI is to help visually impaired people to remain, or become, as independent as possible.

ROVIs can also put visually impaired people in touch with other useful services, e.g. talking newspapers and organisations both local and national.

Find out more:

If you feel that you, or someone you know, would benefit from the help of a ROVI see the contact details below.

Registration as Blind or Partially Sighted

Please note that it is not necessary to register as Blind or Partially Sighted in order to access our services.

- Only an ophthalmologist can confirm your eligibility to be certified as Blind or Partially Sighted. You will be asked to sign a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI).
- A copy of this will be sent to the team and your GP and a registration card will be sent out to you.
- People believe that by signing this form they are 'registered', but at this point, this is not so, this is certification. Your signature on the certificate gives us implicit consent that you wish to be 'registered' by Wiltshire Social Services. Please note this is entirely voluntary.
- Wiltshire Council has a legal duty to maintain a register for both classifications. Only the ophthalmologist will decide which register you are eligible for.
- It is important to note that many people registered as Blind retain some sight and the classification does not necessarily mean that you have no sight.
- We offer every person who has a new registration the opportunity to have their needs assessed by a ROVI.

Equipment to help visually impaired people

ROVIs can give advice on what may be helpful.

Below is a list of some of the equipment they can demonstrate:

- Big button telephones
- Talking clocks, watches and calendar clocks
- Signature guides
- Writing frames
- Anti-glare shields
- Liquid level indicators
- Bump-ons
- Boil alerts
- Symbol canes, guide canes and long canes.

Some equipment can also be seen and handled at:

- Wessex Sight Centre, Salisbury District Hospital
- Devizes (Please contact the team for details)
- Wiltshire Blind Association - 01380 723682
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) products can be located on their web site: <http://www.rnib.org.uk> or you can telephone 0845 7023153 and ask for a catalogue