

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

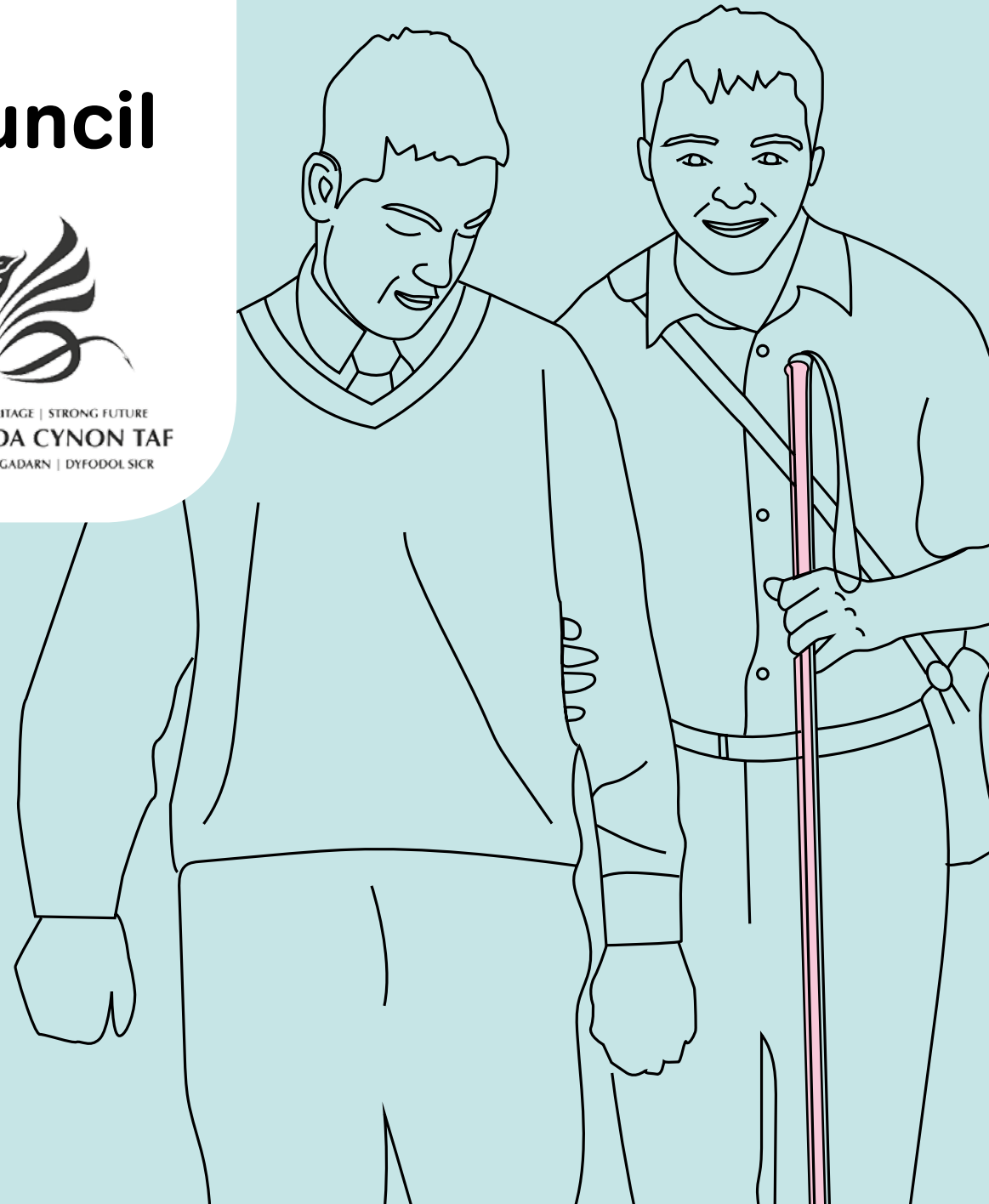
Spotlight on vision rehabilitation

RNIB

Supporting people
with sight loss



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
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Ian Moran, rehabilitation officer at Rhondda Cynon Taf County's Vision Rehabilitation Service, tells us about the services they provide. He highlights how they work towards the goals of **See, Plan, Provide**, seeing people for specialist face to face assessments and having plans in place within 28 days; and how they meet several **Good Practice Principles**.



How would you describe your service?

We provide vision rehabilitation, registration and support to people who have a sight impairment. We have a population of over 235,000. There are some urban areas but is primarily very rural as it is situated in the Welsh Valleys. This is one of the biggest challenges for blind and partially sighted people living in the area as public transport in Rhondda has significant limitations.

How many clients do you work with?

There are approximately 1,180 registered blind and partially sighted people in Rhondda. The team receive around 340 referrals a year for people with sight loss. Roughly a third of referrals are from Certificates of Vision Impairment (CVIs). However, we also receive referrals from low vision services, other social care and housing professionals as well as people contacting our team directly.

Who makes up your team?

We have a sensory services manager, three rehabilitation officers and one rehabilitation assistant.

What's working really well about your service?

Our service looks to deliver an early response to every referral wherever possible. When our team receives a CVI, we log the person's details on to our computer system then the case is immediately allocated to a rehabilitation officer who will contact them by telephone within one day (**Principle 1**). The rehabilitation officer will discuss registration, what our service can offer and find out about their needs.

Our service also receives a large number of self-referrals through our contact centre. Our sensory team manager has worked closely with the contact centre to design scripts to equip staff to ask the right questions when speaking to people with sight loss.

The rehabilitation officer then undertakes a specialist assessment with the individual which covers five specific areas: low vision, communications, mobility, daily living and technology. We capture the details of each intervention to record the difference the service is making to each blind or partially sighted person as well as to their families.

What I am really proud of is the way our team has adopted an open environment where we feel comfortable to ask questions about any issues around our cases. Our team is keen to ensure that we are continually developing and being challenged (**Principle 10**).

Twice a year, I work with my manager or another member of the team to reflect on a piece of rehabilitation I am delivering. I share either my session plan or a copy of the assessment then I complete the session while being shadowed by them. Then we have a meeting where they provide constructive feedback on the session plan and my delivery of the session. We have found this process incredibly useful as we all get an opportunity to reflect on our practice and consider different ways to solve problems and come up with

alternative solutions.

Our sensory team has built strong links with other professionals such as occupational therapists, social workers, reablement workers and physiotherapists, as well as our contact centre staff. The council provides sight loss awareness training as part of the induction programme, so all staff are made aware of the benefits and importance of referring to our vision rehabilitation service. It helps that these teams are based in the same building as ours, making it easier to maintain strong relationships and communicate quickly on specific cases.



Over the next 12 months, what are the main challenges you are facing and how will you look to address these?

The new social care legislation has been implemented in Wales and this will have an effect on our service. Demands for the service are increasing due to the ageing population but we will continue to ensure that our service delivery is maintained. We are always looking at developing the team's practice and will continue to do so over the next 12 months.

Three steps of See, Plan and Provide

- **See:** everyone with a visual impairment must receive a specialist face to face assessment.
- **Plan:** everyone must have a plan in place, identifying the outcome of the assessment. The first two steps must take place within 28 days of first contact with the local authority.
- **Provide:** any agreed vision rehabilitation support must start within 12 weeks of the person's initial contact with the local authority.

10 Principles of Good Practice in Vision Rehabilitation

All blind and partially sighted people...

- 1** receive initial telephone contact within two working days of receipt of a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI), referral or self referral
- 2** are seen and receive a specialist assessment from someone with appropriate skills, knowledge, training and qualifications, within 28 days of initial contact

- 3** are offered a range of services at the specialist assessment. Services include those that address their eye health, emotional, physical, financial and social needs and those of their carer if appropriate
- 4** are provided with a vision rehabilitation plan within 28 days based on goals agreed in the assessment
- 5** are provided vision rehabilitation services free of charge, to meet agreed assessed needs
- 6** offered a full community care needs assessment when vision rehabilitation does not fully meet their needs
- 7** are provided with equipment, aids or minor adaptations free of charge, when it has been assessed that these help, reduce, prevent or delay the need for more costly care
- 8** receive information about services or support in a timely manner and in their preferred format
- 9** have the ability to access vision rehabilitation services in the future if required
- 10** are provided vision rehabilitation by someone who is trained to understand their sight loss related needs

To download a copy of the 10 principles
rnib.org.uk/rehab-principles



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