

# Barnsley Sensory Impairment Services

## Spotlight on vision rehabilitation

**RNIB**

Supporting people with sight loss



**BARNSELY**  
Metropolitan Borough Council



# Barnsley Sensory Impairment Services

Moira Fuller, senior rehabilitation officer at the South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, tells us about Barnsley vision rehabilitation service. She highlights how they work towards the goals of **See, Plan and 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?

Barnsley Sensory Impairment Service is part of the NHS South West Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust. We have been contracted by Barnsley Council to provide their vision rehabilitation services.

## Who makes up your team?

Our team has one senior rehabilitation officer, two rehabilitation officers and a technical officer who works with people with hearing loss. They are located within the equipment, adaptations and sensory impairment service and they work with occupational therapists and equipment and adaptation officers. This helps to build effective communication between the services. We also have an eye clinic liaison officer based at the eye clinic.

## How many clients do you work with?

We currently have around 2,500 registered blind and partially sighted people living in Barnsley. The team receive around 21 referrals every month. Our service has an efficient referral pathway with the eye clinics in South Yorkshire, strengthened by the eye clinic liaison officer (ECLO) being based within the clinics. To reduce delays, Barnsley Eye Clinic sends the CVI (Certificate of Vision Impairment) directly to the sensory team. This means cases are triaged quickly and people are contacted within two working days (**Principle 1**).

## What is working really well with your service?

We are proud that our service provides all information in the client's preferred format. This includes any assessment, plan or other resources. The rehabilitation officer asks the person how they would like to receive the information, for example, in large print, electronically, Braille or audio. This process starts early on the person's journey. I am confident we are working to the NHS Accessible Information Standard

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/> as we always send each person a copy of their assessment in their preferred format. **(Principle 8)**

Since we had a number of blind and partially sighted people raising issues with their GP surgeries about not providing information in their preferred format, our rehabilitation team has provided training to over half of the GP surgeries in Barnsley about the requirement for them to provide information in an accessible format to blind and partially sighted patients. The training focuses on the benefits this provides to both the surgery and the patient.

The team facilitates a number of working groups with blind and partially sighted people every year. Each group has a different theme such as environment or employment.

We have also found that a large number of people who have experienced sight loss later in life have difficulty using smart phones and computers. So we have been working collaboratively with RNIB and Barnsley Device Doctors, offering taster sessions using phones and tablets.

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

The demand for the service is steadily increasing, and ensuring that we respond as quickly as possible will continue to be a challenge. Ensuring our relationship with the eye clinic remains positive will help us to continue responding efficiently.

We will be hosting a consultation this year, to give Barnsley residents feedback about what has been achieved by providing GP awareness training and any improvements in accessible environments. We will be asking people with a visual impairment what they want us to focus on over the coming year and working with them to improve the every day lives of people with sight loss.

## 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](http://rnib.org.uk/rehab-principles)



National Helpline 0303 123 9999  
[helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

Follow us online:



[facebook.com/rnibuk](https://facebook.com/rnibuk)



[twitter.com/RNIB](https://twitter.com/RNIB)



[youtube.com/user/rnibuk](https://youtube.com/user/rnibuk)

© 2018 RNIB  
Registered charity numbers  
226227, SC039316

[rnib.org.uk](http://rnib.org.uk)