

Sight loss, older people and complex needs: Training for health and social care professionals

R N I B

See differently



Sight loss, older people and complex needs: Training for health and social care professionals

“The knowledge gained through RNIB’s Vision Champion training gave me an insight into the different eye conditions, how these eye conditions affect your vision and what your field of vision is.”

Sarah Shovlin, Community Learning Disability Nurse

Summary

This leaflet will provide an introduction to our training and a comprehensive overview of the courses RNIB offers around sight loss and older people and people with complex needs.

It details our processes and the outcomes from our training, as well as the basis for the courses we offer.

If you have any questions, please contact the Older People and Complex Needs team on **olderpeopleandcomplexneeds@rnib.org.uk** or telephone **0141 739 3682**.



Contents

- 04 Did you know? Facts and statistics
- 05 What does RNIB training provide?
- 06 Our training courses
- 07 Vision training
- 11 Sighted guide support training
- 12 Training for optometrists
- 13 Visibly Better training suite
- 17 Online resources and podcasts
- 18 Get in touch
- 19 Awards and testimonials
- 20 References

Do you work with older people or people who have one or more of the following conditions?

- Learning disabilities
- Autism
- Dementia
- Stroke

As a health and social care professional, you are ideally placed to play a key role in improving the lives of older people and people with complex needs. Our training can help you to understand the impact sight loss can have on older people and people with complex needs. It will improve the care and support you provide, as well as help you to recognise the signs of potential sight loss that are often missed.

For older people and people with complex needs there is a danger of diagnostic overshadowing. This is when all other issues are thought of as being caused by a major condition, leaving other co-existing conditions undiagnosed. This leads to sight loss or eye conditions often going undetected and being left untreated.

Did you know? Facts and statistics

The older you are, the greater your risk of sight loss. In the UK, there are 1.2 million people living with sight loss who are aged 75 years and over. The proportion of people living with sight loss in the UK is:

- One in nine people aged 60 years and over.
- One in five people aged 75 years and over.
- One in two people aged 90 years and over [1, 2].
- A high proportion of sight loss in older people is caused by cataract and uncorrected refractive error [3]. Both conditions can be diagnosed by a simple eye test and in most cases the person's sight could be improved by prescribing correct glasses or cataract surgery.

Sight loss among people with complex needs can often be underdiagnosed:

- At least a quarter of a million people are living with both sight loss and dementia in the UK [4].
- Adults with learning disabilities are 10 times more likely to experience sight loss than the general population [5].
- Across all people with learning disabilities, the prevalence of visual impairments is 40 per cent and can be as high as 100 per cent in people with severe or profound learning disabilities [6].
- People who have had a stroke may have a visual problem as a consequence. It is estimated that 60 per cent of stroke survivors have visual problems immediately after their stroke. This reduces to about 20 per cent by three months after stroke [7].
- Unnecessary sight loss can severely affect a person's quality of life and may lead to an increase in stress, distress and behaviours that challenge. At least half of all sight loss is avoidable [8].

What does RNIB training provide?

Our training and resources can help you and your teams to:

- Increase your awareness of sight loss in older people and people living with complex needs.
- Be aware of the prevalence of sight loss.
- Identify potential sight loss.
- Recognise the links between sight loss, stress, distress, behaviours that challenge and “hidden” sight loss.
- Understand the impact of sight loss and its effect on communication, independence and mobility.
- Work towards a person-centred approach by including sight loss within your assessment processes, and care and support plans.
- Improve independence for the people you support.
- Reduce barriers to accessing eye care services.
- Develop skills to enable you to implement strategies that can reduce the impact of sight loss alongside other health conditions.



Our training courses

Overview and format

All of our training courses are developed with a range of learning styles in mind. They combine a variety of teaching techniques, such as learning through simulated experiences, additional resource packs and reading lists, group work activities and film footage. They feature case studies of older people and people living with complex needs and sight loss.

Our training courses can be delivered in-house at your organisation and generally cater for up to 15 participants. However, larger groups can be accommodated with additional trainers. A number of open courses are held across the UK throughout the year. For more information about these open courses please contact us at **olderpeopleandcomplexneeds@rnib.org.uk**.

Most of our training packages can also be offered online through a series of webinars and digital learning platforms, tailored to your staff needs.

Once you've completed any of our courses, you'll receive a certificate of attendance. The training packages are supported by a range of Open Badges that evidence learning. Open badges are free digital certificates recognising the development of skills and achievement. These badges have been developed in partnership with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and are available to anyone who completes training. More information can be found on the SSSC Open Badges website (**bit.ly/2S7l4Gv**).

The training will also provide a suite of resources to undertake further self-directed learning. All of our courses can be adapted to make them accessible to different learning groups' needs. Please discuss any requirements with our team.

We offer courses on vision, sighted guide support, training for optometrists, as well as a suite of Visibly Better courses aimed at environmental adaptations supporting independence and sight loss. In addition to our training packages the Older People and Complex Needs team have also developed a series of free downloadable resources and podcasts to support independent learning. More information on all of our courses and resources can be found in the next sections of this brochure or by contacting us at **olderpeopleandcomplexneeds@rnib.org.uk**.



Vision training

The content of our vision training packages are tailored to the needs of the organisation and can focus on either older people, learning disabilities, autism, dementia or stroke. Each course can be delivered independently to meet the needs of the service.

We have three levels of vision training that increase in terms of the depth of information covered and participant commitment. Participants are not required to have completed previous training levels in order to complete higher levels.

- Level 1: Vision Awareness training
- Level 2: Vision Friends training
- Level 3: Vision Champion training

Sighted guide support training

This training will provide the necessary skills to support guiding an older person living with sight loss or a person with sight loss and complex needs, such as learning disability, autism, dementia or stroke.

Training for optometrists

This training is for optometrists, dispensing opticians and practice staff. The training supports teams to improve the experience of older customers who have sight loss and customers who have sight loss and complex needs, by adopting sight loss friendly principles and complex needs friendly principles of practice.

If you have a bespoke training need that is not covered by these courses, please contact us to discuss your requirements at olderpeopleandcomplexneeds@rnib.org.uk.

Visibly Better training suite

The Visibly Better training suite focuses on environmental adaptations that promote safety, independence, dignity and wellbeing. Courses consist of:

- Introduction to sight loss awareness
- Sight loss and housing
- Dementia, sight loss and the built environment
- Learning disability, sight loss and the built environment
- Access auditing for sight loss and the built environment
- Tenant assessors.

Online resources and podcasts

The RNIB Older People and Complex Needs team have produced a variety of free online resources and podcasts **available to download on the RNIB webpages (bit.ly/36g3pVd)**.

Level 1: Vision awareness training

Overview

Supporting an older person or someone with complex needs and sight loss requires specialist skills and insight. Our awareness training will help you to:

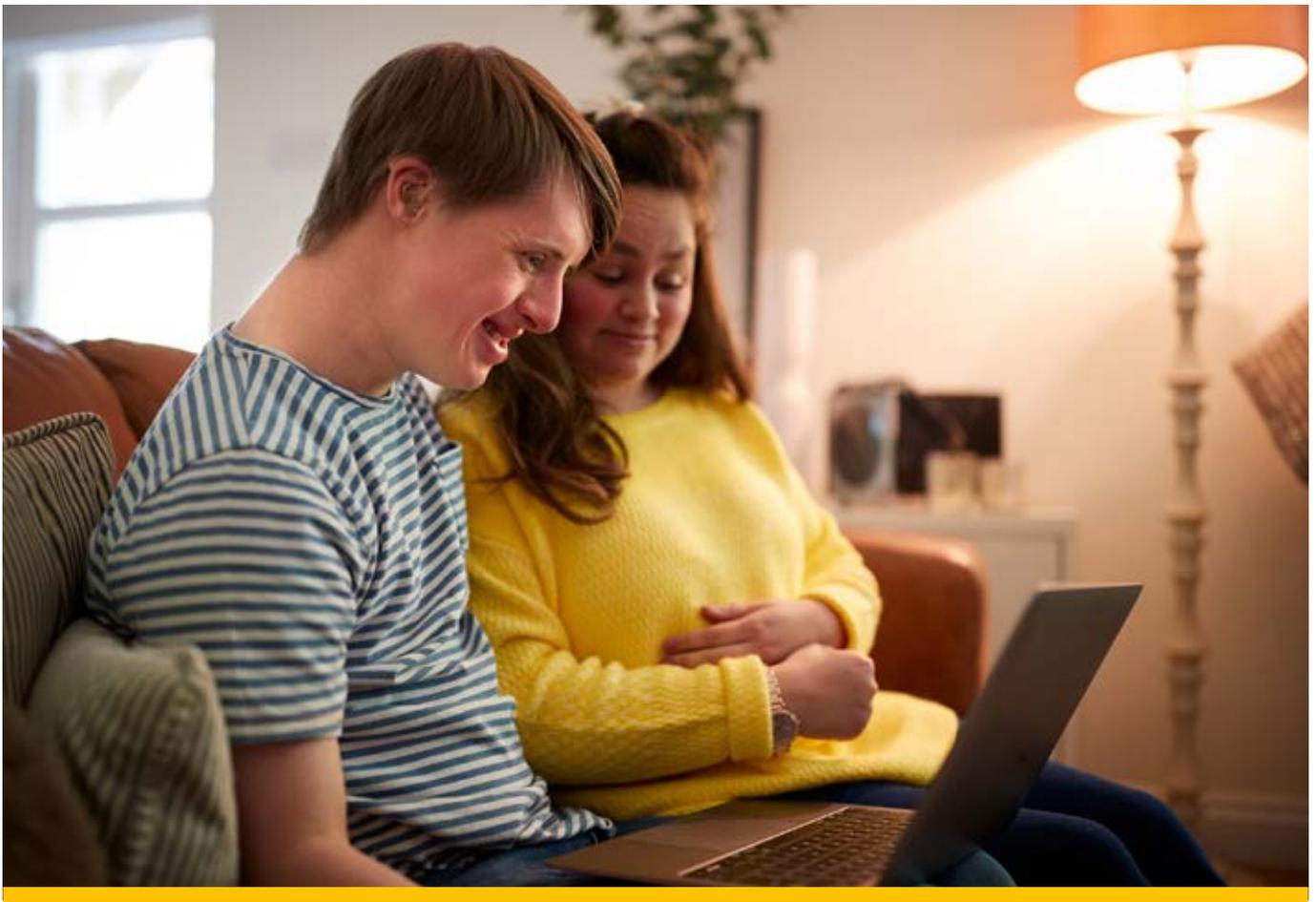
- understand the impact sight loss has on daily life
- develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to meet the needs of your customers, patients and service users.

Course content

Our awareness courses can include a combination of the following modules:

- understanding vision and the eye
- prevalence of sight loss

- common eye conditions
- functional vision and assessment of functional vision
- introduction to sighted guide support
- recognising behaviours linked to potential sight loss
- hidden sight loss
- impact of environment and simple adaptations
- communication strategies
- reducing barriers to eye care
- visual processing.



Level 2: Vision Friends training – supporting older people and people with complex needs

Overview

This training focuses on creating Vision Friends within the work environment to better support older people and people with complex needs who access health and social care services. The course will provide the learner with a suite of resources which can be taken back to their workplace to share with other staff and support service wide development.

Becoming a Vision Friend will enable you to:

- raise awareness of the impact of sight loss within your workplace
- use your Vision Friends reference pack to promote and support access to eye health care

- help people to understand the importance of wearing prescribed glasses
- implement optometrists' recommendations.

Course content

This training will include the modules in level one vision awareness course as well as the following modules:

- how to implement eye care professionals' recommendations
- impact and importance of corrective glasses
- alternative aids and adaptations.



Level 3: Vision Champion training

Overview

This two-day course includes the level one vision awareness course and supports the development of expertise in supporting older people with sight loss or people with sight loss and complex needs, as a Vision Champion. The role of a Vision Champion is to provide support and practical advice to individuals and their carers before, during and after assessment by an optometrist.

Our training:

- promotes proactive rather than reactive support for sight loss
- has been developed to be an integral part of everyday care and support
- builds capacity and sustainability in the workforce by providing the tools to inform practice and encourage knowledge sharing
- encourages the individual's sight loss needs to be considered during the development of holistic person-centred care packages
- provides teams with the skills to support older people and people with complex needs through their eye care journey of identification, assessment and treatment
- helps develop the skills to support those with sight loss; and provide support and information to colleagues and carers.

This approach is currently used by local authorities and health authorities, as well as voluntary organisations and care homes.

Course content

Training includes the Vision Champion toolkit and additional development resources. Our Vision Champion toolkit is flexible and can be adapted to suit different roles within health and social care. Elements of the toolkit can be used to expand existing assessment processes to support better identification of sight loss and allow for signposting, where appropriate, to eye care services. You can find out more about our Vision Champions course by watching our online video (bit.ly/2G13zFr).

Format

Our level one and two vision training courses are one-day training packages that can be delivered in-house at your organisation, accommodating up to 15 participants at a time. We can shorten the length of the level one training session to meet your needs, by focussing on fewer of the training modules.

The level three Vision Champions training course is a two-day package which is also delivered in-house and accommodates up to 15 participants. If you require training for larger groups, this can be accommodated by increasing the number of trainers involved in the course delivery.

All levels of our vision training can be delivered online through a series of webinars and digital learning platforms, tailored to meet your service and staff needs. Please contact us to discuss your training requirements at olderpeopleandcomplexneeds@rnib.org.uk.

Sighted guide support training to assist an older person or person with complex needs and sight loss

Overview and course content

This interactive training will provide you with the necessary skills to support guiding an older person with sight loss or person with sight loss and complex needs, specifically learning disability, autism, dementia and stroke.

The training will cover a range of techniques and scenarios associated with acting as a sighted guide, including:

- grip and guiding position
- transferring sides
- negotiating obstacles, such as doors, stairs, narrow spaces, seating and tables, getting in and out of a vehicle.

Format

This training is delivered as a one-day workshop, in-house at your organisation. We can accommodate up to 15 participants.

Our sighted guide support training can also be delivered online through a series of webinars and digital learning platforms, tailored to meet your service and staff needs. Please contact us to discuss your training requirements at olderpeopleandcomplexneeds@rnib.org.uk.



Training for optometrists: older people and complex needs friendly practice principles

Overview and course content

We offer training to support optometrists, dispensing opticians and practice staff to enhance the experience of all customers who have sight loss, older customers and customers with complex needs, by adopting person-centred principles of practice.

This interactive workshop will support participants to:

- gain a better understanding of the impact of sight loss and complex needs
- consider what older people and complex needs friendly eye care services and optometry practices might involve
- develop an action plan to promote and support access to a primary eye examination for older people and people living with complex needs
- consider what constitutes a local complex needs Eye Care Pathway
- engage with additional resources and will provide follow up contact information for ongoing support.

We'll tailor our training to suit your team's individual needs. We can also support organisations to achieve Continuing Education and Training (CET) points.

Format

This training can be delivered as a one-day workshop, in-house at your organisation or as a corporate evening event. We can accommodate up to 30 participants using two trainers to facilitate the workshop and discussions. The training can also be offered online through digital learning platforms.



Visibly Better training suite

Our Visibly Better courses provide an overview of common sight conditions with a focus on the built environment, equipping participants to apply key design principles that will promote the safety, independence, dignity and wellbeing of tenants and residents.

If you wish to enquire about bespoke training related to built environments, such as providing environmental adaptations to support residents and tenants, then please contact our team to discuss your training needs further at olderpeopleandcomplexneeds@rnib.org.uk.

Introduction to sight loss awareness

Overview and course content

This course will provide you with an overview of sight loss conditions enabling you to provide appropriate support to people who may have sight loss. The course will be tailored to the needs of the organisation, but can cover:

- overview of common sight conditions and the ageing eye
- identifying people with sight loss
- sight loss and mobility
- hallucinations and sight loss
- how to access local and national support for people with sight loss
- guiding techniques
- issues and challenges faced by people with sight loss in everyday living

- registration of sight loss and its benefits
- confidence in communicating with people with sight loss
- how to provide clear written communication for people with sight loss and alternative formats
- how to identify and remove trips and hazards
- demonstration of products that support independence in everyday living such as food and drink preparation; eating and drinking; leisure; support in taking medication and handling money.

Format

This is a half day course that can be delivered in-house at your organisation or can be delivered online through digital learning platforms.

R N I B

Visibly Better

Sight loss and housing

Overview and course content

This workshop is recommended for anyone involved in Housing Quality Standards (such as the Welsh Housing Quality Standards, WHQS), the Development Quality Requirements (DQR), Disability Facilities Grant and Physical Adaptations Grants.

The course covers modules of:

- common sight conditions and the ageing eye
- hallucinations and sight loss
- key design principles
- applying colour contrast to environments
- lighting solutions in and around a home
- wayfinding techniques
- cost friendly approaches to attractive and supportive design
- steps and stairs, ramps and walkways
- surface finishes
- developing multi-sensory approaches
- activities that replicate real life design scenarios that include Visibly Better design principles
- building on lifetime homes to incorporate sensory loss.

Format

This one-day course can be delivered in-house at organisations or participants can apply to attend an open training course.

Dementia, sight loss and the built environment

Overview and course content

The course considers the combination of dementia and sight loss, exploring how good inclusive design principles can help to alleviate the issues presented by dementia and sight loss, increasing residents' independence, mobility, dignity and wellbeing.

In addition to the modules covered in the Sight loss and housing course, this programme also covers modules of:

- dementia and functionality
- issues in everyday environments that can impact people with dementia.

Format

This one-day course can be delivered in-house at organisations or participants can apply to attend an open training course.



Learning disability, sight loss and the built environment

Overview and course content

The course considers the combination of learning disabilities and sight loss across a one-day training experience. The course supports participants to explore how good inclusive design principles can help to alleviate the issues presented by learning disabilities and sight loss, increasing individuals' safety, independence and wellbeing.

In addition to the modules covered in the Sight loss and housing course, this programme also covers modules of:

- issues in everyday environments that can impact people with learning disabilities.

Format

This one-day course can be delivered in-house at organisations or participants can apply to attend an open training course.

Access auditing for sight loss and the built environment

Overview and course content

This course is available to delegates who have already completed any of the following courses:

- Sight loss and housing
- Dementia, sight loss and the built environment
- Learning disability, sight loss and the built environment.

This training session will build on the principles learned from the previous course and provide participants with the tools to enable them to identify and record access issues and apply Visibly Better design principles. The training programme covers modules of:

- identifying standard design issues in and around everyday environments
- analyse lux levels within environments
- evaluating areas for colour and tonal contrast
- applying aesthetic and practical solutions to real life environments
- applying cost effective inclusive design recommendations
- developing user-friendly action plans to assist budget allocation and prioritise maintenance schedules.

Format

This course runs over a half day and is provided on-site to allow for practical, hands on experience. The training is available to those who have already completed a full day course on sight loss and housing, or sight loss and the built environment.

Tenant assessors

Overview and course content

This course provides tenants and residents an opportunity to become Champions of inclusive design and actively support housing providers with real solutions to everyday design problems which can affect people's safety, independence, dignity and wellbeing.

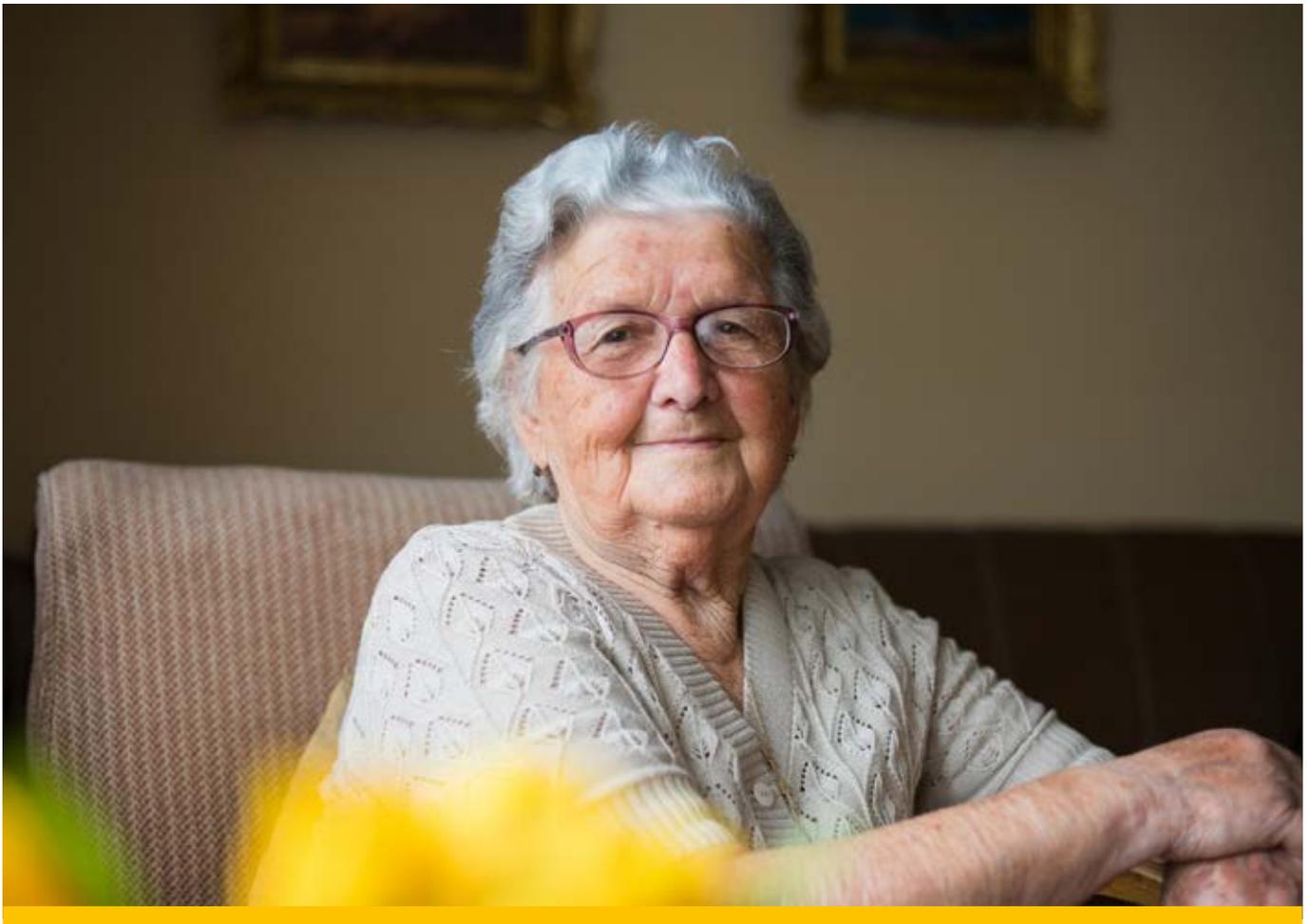
The Tenant Assessors workshop will help tenants, residents and staff to work closer together for the benefit of all housing tenants and residents.

The course covers modules of:

- common sight conditions and the ageing eye
- internal and external design issues
- Visibly Better design principles
- base line audit of internal and external environments
- how to submit findings and recommendations to the organisation.

Format

This is a full day course provided at the residency to support practical experience and learning.



Online resources and podcasts

Overview

The RNIB Older People and Complex Needs team has produced a variety of online resources that are available for free download on the RNIB webpages (bit.ly/3cD7TGG), along with a **series of podcasts** (bit.ly/36g3pVd). These resources and podcasts give information and advice on a variety of topics for older people living with sight loss, and for people who support adults with complex needs such as learning disabilities, dementia and stroke survivors.

These short podcasts make ideal listening if you want to begin developing your learning. The podcast series can be found on the RNIB webpages (bit.ly/36g3pVd). The podcasts are supported by the same range of Open Badges as our training courses. More information can be found on the SSSC Open Badges website (bit.ly/2S7l4Gv).

If you wish to find out more about online training resources and the podcasts available, please contact our team at olderpeopleandcomplexneeds@rnib.org.uk.



Get in touch

We can deliver courses for small or large groups on-site or off-site or develop bespoke courses to meet the training needs of an organisation or service. We offer a very flexible service and can generally meet the demands of most groups, please feel free to contact us to discuss training needs.

We'd be delighted to talk through your specific course needs, available training opportunities and provide a cost. You can email us at **olderpeopleandcomplexneeds@rnib.org.uk** or call us on **0141 739 3682**.



Awards and testimonials

We're delighted to have achieved the following recognition for our work:

- Highly Commended in VISION 2020 UK Astbury Awards 2016 – Excellence in Collaboration
- Highly Commended in VISION 2020 UK – Astbury Awards 2015
- Finalists in the International Dementia Awards 2015 for Service Innovation
- Scotland's Dementia Awards 2012 – Best Educational Initiative
- The Herald Society Awards 2010 – Partnership Award
- Care Accolades 2006 – Best innovative and/or imaginative training programme.

“The course content has helped staff understand the impact of sight loss and take a more proactive response to promoting and raising awareness of good eye health.”

Allison O'Donnell, Practice Development Nurse (Specialist Learning Disability Services, Greater Glasgow and Clyde)

“We used the RNIB to deliver training for optometrists around the area of dementia and sight loss. The training events were interesting, engaging and informative. The feedback we received after the events was overwhelmingly positive. I would not hesitate to work with RNIB again.”

**Gordon Elliott, Optometrist,
Cheshire and Merseyside Local Eye Health Network**

References

- [1] Pezzullo, L., Streatfield, J., Simkiss, P. & Shickle, D. (2018). The economic impact of sight loss and blindness in the UK adult population. "British Medical Council Health Services Research", 18(63). Available from: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5791217/. (Accessed 29/6/20).
- [2] Office for National Statistics (2015). "National Population Projections: 2014-based Statistical Bulletin". London: Office for National Statistics. Available from: <https://tinyurl.com/hxlxgn>. (Accessed 29/6/20).
- [3] Access Economics (2009). "Future Sight Loss UK 1: Economic Impact of Partial Sight and Blindness in the UK adult population". London: Royal National Institute of Blind People. Available from: www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/FSUK_Report.pdf. (Accessed 29/6/20).
- [4] Bowen, M., Edgar, D., Hancock, B., Haque, S., Shah, R., Buchanan, S., Iliffe, S., Maskell, S., Pickett, J., Taylor, J.P. & O'Leary, N. (2016). The Prevalence of Visual Impairment in People with Dementia: A cross sectional study of 60-89 year-old people with dementia and qualitative exploration of individual, carer and professional perspectives. "Health Services and Delivery Research", 4(21).
- [5] Emerson, E., & Robertson, J. (2011). "Estimated prevalence of visual impairment among people with learning disabilities in the UK". London: Royal National Institute for the Blind & Seeability Learning Disabilities Observatory. Available from: www.rnib.org.uk/knowledge-and-research-hub/research-reports/prevention-sight-loss/prevalence-VI-learning-disabilities. (Accessed 29/6/20).
- [6] Li, J.C.H., Wong, K., Park, A.S.Y., Fricke, T.R. & Jackson, A.J. (2015). The challenges of providing eye care for adults with intellectual disabilities. "Clinical and Experimental Optometry", 98(5), 420-429. Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/cxo.12304>. (Accessed 29/6/20).
- [7] Rowe, F., Walker, M., Rockcliffe, J., Pollock, A., Noonan, C., Howard, C., Glendinning, R., Feechan, R. & Currie, J. (2013). Care provision and unmet need for post stroke visual impairment. "Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Diseases", 24(6),1131-44. Available from: www.stroke.org.uk/sites/default/files/final_report_unmet_need_2013.pdf. (Accessed 29/6/20).
- [8] Royal National Institute of Blind People. (2018). "Eye health and sight loss stats and facts". London: RNIB. Available from: <https://tinyurl.com/ybyhez8r>. (Accessed 29/6/20).

RNIB

RNIB Helpline 0303 123 9999
helpline@rnib.org.uk

Follow us online:



facebook.com/rnibuk



twitter.com/RNIB



youtube.com/user/rnibuk

rnib.org.uk