

**R N I B**

Visibly Better

Living

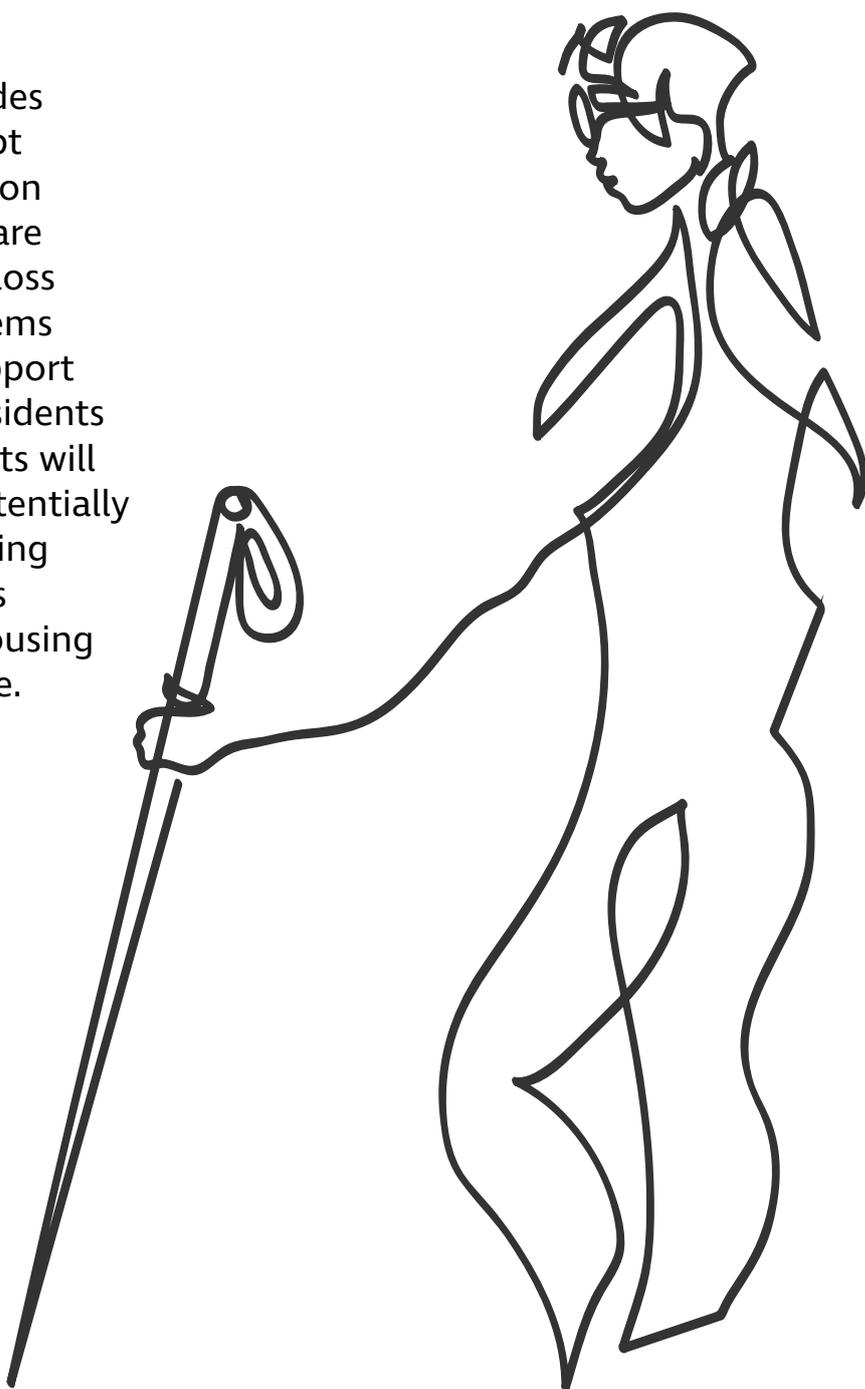
# Visibly Better Living Certification Summary



# Introduction

Visibly Better Living is a comprehensive certification scheme developed by RNIB and is designed to provide social housing providers and care home staff with the skills and knowledge to meet the individual needs of the increasing number of residents living with sight loss.

The certification scheme provides structure and guidance to adapt existing or new housing provision to create environments which are inclusive for people with sight loss and for the embedding of systems and practices that not only support current residents but future residents who acquire sight loss. Residents will benefit from these changes potentially regaining independence, enabling them to stay as independent as possible within their current housing provision for as long as possible.



# Why is it important?

Today there are more than 2 million people living with sight loss in the UK, over half of those are (1.2 million people) aged 75 years and over. The number of people living with sight loss is set to increase dramatically by 2050 to over four million. [1]

Losing your sight can be difficult to come to terms with, with common effects being depression, experiencing a process similar to bereavement and reduced wellbeing.

Having to re-learn how to do everyday things is the reality of losing your sight. Moving safely around in your own home and the internal communal areas and gardens of supported living schemes can become difficult as poor lighting levels, pattern carpets and everyday hazards have to be negotiated.

250,000 people are living with sight loss and dementia but often sight loss is missed due to diagnostic overshadowing or not considered. [2]

Undiagnosed sight problems in older residents can lead to an increase in falls, greater dependency for everyday tasks, a change in behaviour, withdrawing from activities and becoming increasingly depressed.

However, research has shown with support, people with sight loss who engage in activities, linked to specialised support and have adaptations that assist vision loss falls, can be reduced by 41%.

Visibly Better Living can provide solutions for frontline staff with information on local and national services as well as suggesting appropriate minor adaptations that can assist residents to reduce falls, promote independency and autonomy.

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## References

1. RNIB (2019). "Key information and statistics on sight loss in the UK". London. Available at: <https://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/knowledge-and-research-hub/key-information-and-statistics> (Accessed 16/07/21)
2. [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)

# What is it?

Visibly Better Living provide clients with specific design skills in creating environments which are inclusive for people with sight loss meaning more people can enjoy using and moving around the environments of their homes including supported living schemes.

As part of the certification scheme, training will be provided to relevant staff who are responsible for the design, whether new build projects, cyclical refurbishment or maintenance projects and staff who are client/resident facing with understanding sight loss workshops.



The inclusive training is designed to achieve several benefits for participating organisations that include working towards national building regulations that are:

- Part M (national)
- Part K (National)
- BS8300 (National)
- Equality Act 2010 (National)
- WHQS (Wales)

Much traditional interior design is not inclusive for people with sight loss but if we make minor changes to our design approach, we can create homes that are better for anyone and everyone.

Furthermore, the Visibly Better Living certification scheme will provide staff with the confidence to help tackle many of the everyday challenges people with sight loss experience. Examples of the training into practice has included linking residents to vital local and national support such as counselling, residents become empowered by participating in confidence building networks, support for specialised everyday living items that make tasks easier with sight loss in leisure, cooking and self-care.

# How do I achieve it?

Participating organisations will achieve the RNIB Visibly Better Living award through relevant staff participating in training and apply learning in the workplace. Clients can evidence these practices through completing the appropriate Visibly Better Living standards for the desired level of award. A summary of the standards are displayed below.

## Achieving the standards

There are two levels of Certification, which are:

- Visibly Better Living Award awarded on achievement of standards 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- Visibly Better Living Platinum certification awarded on achievement of standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6



# The Visibly Better Living Certification five compulsory standards summary

**Standard 1 (Visual awareness training for staff)** - Participating organisation can give evidence of compulsory visual awareness training for staff and show the incorporation of this training into its daily practices and organisation's induction and training policies.

**Standard 2 (Accessible communication)** - Participating organisation will ensure that people with sight loss receive the same standard of information and choice as is available to their fully sighted counterparts.

**Standard 3 (Internal physical environment)** - Participating site(s) has inclusive design features to maintain independence and minimise risks to people with sight loss. Compulsory Sight loss and the built environment training has been undertaken by staff responsible for refurbishment or new design project

**Standard 4 (Promotion of eye health and local and national support)** - Eye health is actively promoted to ensure continued independence and people with sight loss are linked up to local and national sight loss services.

**Standard 5 (Whole organisational standard)** - Residents with sight loss receive their full entitlement as residents of the site and association.

**To obtain the Visibly Better Platinum standard 6 the External physical environment must be undertaken**

**Standard 6 (External physical environment)** - Participating site(s) has external features to promote independence, mobility and use of the outdoor environment appropriate for people with sight loss.

In addition to the Visual awareness training and the sight loss and the built environment training the following workshops and training are also available to encourage resident participation as part of the client's participation strategy goals:

- Learning disability and sight loss training
- Dementia and sight loss training
- Tenant Assessor
- Tenant information sessions.

# What does a participating organisation get out of it?



Each client organisation will have continued support throughout the partnership to achieve the Visibly Better Living standards agreed. Access to consultancy via action plans and meetings will help negate inclusive design mistakes and keep costs low through reasonable design applications. Also, our Copyright publication on creating inclusive environments 'Building Sight' is available to clients only.

A key benefit of Certification is that upon gaining the award you will be permitted to display the RNIB Visibly Better Living logo on all your communications that include promotions, internal and external information such as website, letters and other relevant correspondence published by your organisation.

Furthermore, your respective building(s) that has achieved the RNIB Visibly Better Living award will be provided with a plaque that will represent excellent application of policy and practice for residents with sight loss. RNIB is one of the UK's leading sight loss charities with a recognisable brand and a trusted partner amongst our social landlord clients.

Your organisation can hold and display the RNIB Visibly Better Living logo for up to three years. After three years we will re-assess practices to ensure the RNIB Visibly Better Living standards are maintained. If the re-assessment is successful, then your organisation can continue to use the logo and plaque for a further three years

# Visibly Better Living client testimonials

## Providing the best quality housing possible:

'We have aging demographic and sight loss is more prevalent in older people... it makes sense that our accommodation is the best it can be for people with sight loss...if a person hasn't got sight loss when they move in that doesn't mean that they won't... in fact there is a good chance they will...so it's about thinking about the solutions before they are needed... Visibly Better Living has helped us to achieve our aim to enable people to stay living independently in their own home for longer.'

Visibly Better Living Client.

## It's not just about housing:

'We know providing accommodation especially for older residents is more than just providing someone with a place to live...it's about meeting individual's needs... We know that a good internal and external environment can reduce the barriers that prevent people from living independently...this is where Visibly Better has really helped...'

Visibly Better Client.

## The small things matter:

'The Visibly Better Living principles are so simple and easy to implement and doesn't cost anything extra as part of a refurbishment project – why on earth would providers not do this...it's the small things that matter like good lighting and contrast.'

Visibly Better client.

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