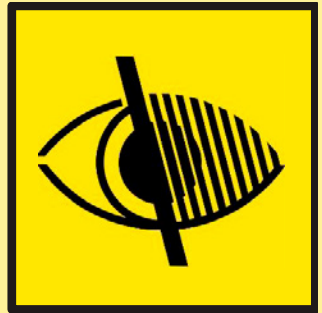


Hearing and Vision Team

A positive choice

Services for people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired or have dual sensory loss



Wiltshire Council

The Wiltshire Hearing and Vision Team

We are a specialist team providing services to people living in Wiltshire aged 18+ who:

- Are visually impaired
- Are d/Deaf or deafened
- Have an acquired hearing loss
- Are deafblind – sometimes known as dual sensory impairment – people who have a combination of significant hearing and sight loss.

Our staff

The Hearing and Vision Team consists of:

- Social Workers with Deaf People – supporting British Sign Language (BSL) users (page 10)
- Rehabilitation Officers with people who are visually impaired (ROVI's) (page 19)
- Rehabilitation Officers with people who are hearing impaired (ROHI's) (page 11)
- Dual Sensory Specialists (page 15)
- Communicator Guides/Intervenors – experienced in supporting those with a dual sensory loss where eligible (page 17)

What we do

We give information and advice by:

- Telephone, textphone and SMS text
- Email and in writing
- Answering public enquiries face-to-face
- Facetime, Skype, MS Teams and WhatsApp video call
- Visiting our resource centre
- At cultural centres/social groups, such as Deaf clubs/clubs for visually impaired people
- Use of our website

We take referrals from:

- Customers with a sensory impairment, the public, including carers, relatives, friends and neighbours
- Other professionals, such as health, education, environmental health and other social services staff
- Voluntary agencies.

We assess how to meet your needs:

While everyone can receive specialist information and advice from us, we can also assess your situation to identify any eligible social care needs and discuss how we can work with you to meet these – this may be through the services we offer within our team or from other sources of local and national support. Our

assessments include the everyday needs of adults, in relation to sensory difficulties and those relating to the ability to live safely and independently. Our trained professionals will visit you and discuss your needs within your own home, but we also have specialist trained staff at our resource centre.

What does the Care Act 2014 say?

Prevention:

It is important for local authorities to have an appropriate prevention strategy for people with a sensory loss. The Care Act recognises that rehabilitation for people with a visual impairment is a specific form of reablement, which the Hearing and Vision Team provides through our team of specialist rehabilitation officers for people with a visual impairment.

Assessment:

Where an assessment is carried out with a deafblind person, our dual sensory specialists are trained and skilled to meet the specific training requirements outlined by the Care Act. Our dual sensory specialists work with people to understand their specific difficulties, the support we can offer and to look at the support available in the community.

The Care Act requires that the person carrying out the assessment is able to communicate with the

adult and the guidance makes reference to the need for a qualified interpreter with the appropriate training where the adult is Deaf/deafblind. This ensures the person being assessed is involved in the assessment process as fully as possible. Furthermore, information about assessments is available in accessible formats.

A significant part of the work that we do is to support people with a sensory impairment to relearn skills and how to make best use of their remaining hearing and/or vision. The work we offer is one to one and is tailored to meet the individual needs of each person.

We provide:

Support to people experiencing the effects of vision and/or hearing loss, both from birth or acquired later in 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 safely with sight loss and getting out and about safely
- Training in communication skills, such as reading Braille, learning deafblind manual and making the most of your remaining hearing
- Registration as severely sight impaired, sight

impaired, deaf with/or without speech, dual sensory/deafblind and hearing impaired

- Providing advice and demonstrations on a wide range of equipment
- Advice on communications services, such as sign language interpreters
- Advocacy
- Support for those with a dual sensory loss to access the wider community, which may include a communicator guide
- Support to carers
- Information on benefit advice
- Sensory awareness training for relatives, carers and other professionals
- Liaising with and supporting voluntary agencies, including those engaged in user group consultation.

Hearing resource centre

Our hearing resource centre in Devizes is available via an appointment system. Please contact us for further information via the contact details below.

The centre is open to anyone living with hearing loss, their friends and family wanting advice on hearing loss as well as demonstrating a wide range of equipment for you to try. The equipment reflects

a wide range of what is available commercially and offers the chance to see and discuss with a trained worker, if there is appropriate equipment that may overcome difficulties in daily life resulting from a sensory impairment.

What specialist equipment is on display?

- Amplified telephones
- Big button telephones
- Portable doorbells
- TV listening devices.

Please note, equipment cannot be purchased at the resource centre, but information can be provided on suppliers.

Opening times: by prior appointment only

Address: Hearing and Vision Team Resource
Centre, Devizes Leisure Centre,
Southbroom Road,
Devizes, SN10 5AB

Tel: **01380 826480**

Email: hearingandvisionteam@wiltshire.gov.uk

Vision resource centre

The vision resource centre is run by Wiltshire Sight at their centre in Devizes. The centre is open to anyone living with sight loss, their friends and family and has a wide range of demonstration equipment for you to try, as well as information packs and leaflets. A sight advisor will be on hand to show you around and demonstrate all the equipment on display.

What specialist equipment is on display?

- Lighting options
- Gadgets for help in the kitchen such as liquid level indicators, and talking scales and measuring jugs
- Talking clocks and watches
- Symbol canes and other mobility aids
- Handheld and electronic magnifiers
- Easy-to-see telephones and radios
- Synapptic phones and tablets
- Laptop computers with a range of screen reading and magnification software.

Please contact Wiltshire Sight to find out more or to book an appointment.

Address: Wiltshire Sight St Lucy's Sight Centre,
Bath Road,
Devizes, SN10 2AT

Tel: **01380 723682**

Deaf services

In our team we have Specialist Social Workers with Deaf People who can support:

- People who are Deaf and whose first language is British Sign Language (BSL)
- The parents and carers of people who are Deaf
- Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing people who need additional help or advice.

We also support social care professionals and other local organisations with guidance on the needs of Deaf people and their rights relating to appropriate communication support with for example:

- Social isolation
- Mental health difficulties
- Housing related matters
- Parenting associated with Deafness
- Managing at work
- Information and advice including specialist equipment and disability related benefits, allowances and claims
- Provide contact information for qualified and registered BSL/English interpreters
- Signposting to local support and social groups.

We provide a range of drop in sessions with our specialist social workers for Deaf people across the county each month. Please contact the team for further details.

Interpreters and legislation

Wiltshire Council is committed to working with appropriately trained BSL interpreters to assist in communicating with Deaf people. The Equality Act 2010 also places a duty on the council to provide BSL/English interpreters to make it easier for Deaf people to use its services.

Hard of hearing services

In our team we have Rehabilitation Officers with Hearing Impaired People (ROHI's) who:

- Give information and support with hearing loss.
- Provide confidential advice where a hearing impairment may be causing difficulties.
- Can discuss equipment that could potentially make life a bit easier. Or adapting current equipment to suit.

We can support:

- People with an acquired hearing loss
- People who wear hearing aids
- People who are hard of hearing who may not be able to wear hearing aids
- Family and carers of people who are hard of hearing.

We can support:

- Supporting those important to you to understand your hearing loss and how best to communicate with you.
- Hearing items around the home such as the smoke alarms, doorbell, telephone or television.
- Advice and guidance on assistive technology.
- Working with audiology at your local hospital, as well as offering advice to other social care professionals and organisations
- Other areas of communication such as: lip-reading and sign language. We can provide details of local classes/teachers and national organisations.
- Involvement in offering sensory awareness sessions at care homes and to carers groups and families

Specialist equipment:

Some of the equipment our ROHI's can demonstrate includes:

- Loop systems and TV listeners for use with television
- Alerting devices such as doorbells, telephone/ minicom, smoke alarms, alarm clocks
- Telephones that are amplified, hearing aid compatible, big button or cordless.

Much of the equipment demonstrated can be used in conjunction with hearing aids.

Registration as Deaf/hard of hearing

Registration is voluntary, and your details will be kept confidential. If you are concerned about your hearing, in the first instance please contact your GP who may refer you onto an Audiology clinic. In Audiology you will have a hearing test and they will issue you with an Audiogram. This would be your evidence for registration.

There are three separate registers:

1. Hard of Hearing
2. Deaf with speech
3. Deaf without speech

On receipt of your request for registration we will ask which register best describes your level of hearing loss

Why register?

- Have official documentation to evidence your hearing impairment.
- VAT exemption evidence on some equipment purchases.
- Potential discount on public transport such as a disabled person's rail card.
- Possible concession or free entry at some cinemas and/or theatres.

How to register:

To be registered you will need to provide the Hearing and Vision Team with a copy of your most recent audiogram. This can be emailed to the team or posted (see contact details on page 26).

NB. Although there are currently limited benefits to registering your hearing impairment, it is anticipated that gaining more realistic statistics on the number of Hard of hearing and D/deaf people in Wiltshire may influence future service provision and increase the benefits of being registered.

What happens once you are registered?

The Hearing and Vision will issue a registration card and certificate and add your details to the appropriate register.

NB: It is important to note that many people registered as hearing impaired or D/deaf retain some hearing and that the classification does not necessarily mean that you have no hearing.

What happens if I lose my card or my details change?

If you should lose your registration card or your details change, please contact The Hearing and Vision team on **01380 826480** and a replacement or updated card will then be issued.

Please note it is not necessary to register in order to access our services.

Dual sensory loss/deafblind services

What is deafblindness?

Deafblindness is more than 'just' the loss of your hearing and vision, 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

These difficulties are vast when you consider that some people can either be congenitally deafblind or can acquire a combined hearing and sight loss over the course of their life. Most deafblind people are over the age of 60 and come into the second group.

The definition of deafblindness means that anyone who has both a hearing and 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.

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.

Dual Sensory Impaired/Deafblind Services

In our team we have:

- Dual Sensory Specialists
- Communicator Guides/Intervenors

Every effort is made to communicate with people using their preferred communication method(s).

Dual sensory specialists have communication skills in:

- British Sign Language
- Hands-on sign language
- Clear speech
- Deafblind manual
- Block alphabet

Most deafblind people in Wiltshire have acquired their dual sensory loss as a result of the ageing process. The team also works with people with congenital deafblindness, and those who have multi-sensory impairments and/or a learning disability.

The dual sensory assessment may identify the

need for specialist one-to-one support such as a communicator guide or intervenor. It may be necessary for customers to contribute towards the cost of this service, in line with the Council's financial eligibility criteria.

Communicator Guides

Communicator guides work on a regular one-to-one basis to assist people with a dual sensory impairment to improve or maintain their independence within their own home or community – a human “enabler” who acts as the eyes and ears of the deafblind person.

Intervenors

Intervenors usually work with people who have congenital sight and hearing impairments, who may also have other difficulties such as learning or physical disabilities. Intervenors also work on a regular one-to-one basis.

Registration as Dual Sensory Impaired/ Deafblind

Please note it is not necessary to register in order to access our services.

To be registered as deafblind under the Care Act 2014 you will need to provide the hearing and vision team with:

- A copy of your certificate of visual impairment, and
- A copy of your audiogram, or other medical proof of your hearing impairment.

Please see registration as severely sight impaired (SSI) or sight impaired (SI) and registration as d/Deaf or hard of hearing for further details.

The Hearing and Vision Team will then issue a registration card and certificate and add your details to the appropriate register.

It is important to note that many people registered as deafblind retain some hearing and some vision and the classification does not necessarily mean that you have no hearing or sight.

We offer every person who has a new dual sensory impairment registration the opportunity to have their needs assessed by a Dual Sensory Specialist.

Visual impairment services

In our team we have Rehabilitation Officers with Visual Impaired people (ROVI's) who:

- Enable people with a visual impairment to remain, or become, as independent as possible
- Work across the county and can provide advice, information and assessments
- Can recommend equipment or adjustments necessary to enable you to carry on leading an independent life.
- Can refer people with a visual impairment to other useful services, and organisations both locally and nationally.

Who can we support?

- People with a diagnosed eye condition
- People registered as Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) or Sight Impaired (SI)
- Family and carers of people who have a visual impairment
- Parents who are visually impaired.

What can we support with?

- Understanding your eye condition
- Making best use of your remaining vision
- Adjusting to living with sight loss
- Supporting those important to you to understand

your sight loss and how best to support you

- Training in independent living skills, such as cooking safely with sight loss
- Orientation and mobility training to include use of mobility aids to enable you to get out and about safely and independently
- Advice and guidance on assistive technology for example smartphone applications
- Advice and guidance on suitable lighting within the home
- Appropriate use of magnification
- Learning new methods of communication such as Braille or Moon
- Working closely with the eye clinic at your local hospital, as well as offering advice to other social care professionals and organisations
- Signposting to local support and social groups.
- Involvement in offering sensory awareness sessions at care homes and to carers groups and families.

Specialist equipment:

Some of the equipment our ROVI's can demonstrate includes:

- Mobility aids – symbol canes, guide canes, long canes and support canes/walking sticks
- Tactile marking – to aid location of dials on kitchen

and household appliances

- Audible devices including liquid level indication for safe pouring of hot liquids
- Lighting including task lighting, daylight bulbs and floor standing lamps
- Eye protection – a range of UV shields to assist with reducing glare
- Electronic and handheld magnifiers
- Talking products including clocks and kitchen aids
- Writing frames and guides
- Telephones
- Listening devices, radios and talking books.

Registration as Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) or Sight Impaired (SI)

Please note it is not necessary to be registered in order to access our services. Wiltshire Council has a legal duty to maintain a register for both SSI and SI classifications.

Only an ophthalmologist can confirm your eligibility to be certified as SSI or SI. If eligible, you will be asked to sign a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI). People believe that by signing this form they are 'registered', but at this point, this is not so, this is certification.

A copy of your CVI will be sent to the Hearing and Vision Team and to your GP.

Once we have received your CVI, a ROVI will contact you to discuss registration. It is important to note registration is entirely voluntary. If you wish to proceed you will receive a registration pack and your details will be added to the appropriate register.

We offer every person who has a new registration the opportunity to have their needs assessed by a ROVI.

Organisations for support, advice and information:

Deaf / Hard of Hearing:

RNID

Tel: **0808 808 0123**

Textphone: **0808 808 9000**

SMS: **0780 0000 360**

BioAcoustics

Tel: **01582 431000**

Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

Tel: **0117 9398653**

SMS: **07749313085**

Email: **office@centrefordeaf.org.uk**

Connevans

Tel: **01737 247571**

Email: **info@connevans.com**

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

Tel: **01844 348 100**

Deafblind:

Deafblind UK – **0800 132 320**

Deafblind Enablement – **01733 686969**

SENSE – **0845 127 0060**

Sight loss:

AbilityNet (technology support) – **0800 269 545**

Blind Veterans – **0800 389 7979**

Calibre (talking books) – **01296 432339**

Guide Dogs – **01189 838892**

International Glaucoma Association – **01233 648170**

Macular Society – **0300 3030 111**

Retina UK – **01280 821334**

RNIB – **0303 123 9999**

Talking News Federation (local talking news) –
01793 497555

Wiltshire Sight – **01380 723682**

Household

Bobby Van – **01380 861155**

Lifeline – **01380 735583**

Oakhouse Foods – **0333 370 6700**

Wiltshire Farm Foods – **0800 077 3100**

Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

(Safe and Well home safety check) – **0800 038 2323**

Other

Age UK – **01380 727767**

British Legion – **0808 802 8080**

SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) – **020 7463 9200**

Wiltshire Service Users' Network – **01380 871800**

Benefits advice

Attendance allowance enquiries (DWP)

Tel: **0800 731 0122**

Textphone: **0800 731 0317**

Blue badge team (Wiltshire Council)

Tel: **01225 713002**

Carers allowance unit

Tel: **0800 731 0297**

Textphone: **0800 731 0317**

Citizens Advice Bureau Wiltshire

Tel: **0800 144 8 444**

Disability living allowance enquiries (DWP)

Tel: **0800 121 4600**

Textphone: **0800 121 4523**

Personal independent payments enquiries (DWP)

Tel: **0800 917 2222**

Textphone: **0800 917 7777**

Wiltshire CIL

Tel: **0300 1233 442**

Hospitals

Bath Royal United Hospital - 01225 428331

Audiology – 01225 824035

Eye Clinic – 01225 824602

ECLO (Heidi Koloska) – 07518 088156

Salisbury District Hospital - 01722 336262

Audiology - 01722 429335

Eye Clinic - 01722 429337

ECLO (Louise O'Connor) – 07711 917641

Swindon Great Western Hospital – 01793 604020

Audiology – 01793 604065

Eye Clinic – 01793 604505

ECLO (Chris Gough) – 01793 60485

Contact details

Postal address (not open to the public)

Hearing and Vision Team,
Kennet House,
Sergeant Rogers Way,
Hopton Industrial Estate,
Devizes, SN10 2ET

Tel: 01380 826480

SMS text only, no calls: 07899 067466

Minicom: 01380 732126

Email: hearingandvisionteam@wiltshire.gov.uk

Website: adults.wiltshire.gov.uk/Services/62/Hearing-and-Vision-T

The hearing and vision service is contactable from
8.45 - 17.20 Monday to Thursday
and 8.45 - 16.20 Friday.

Notes:

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

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For further copies, please contact us:

by team mobile

0300 456 0111(via SMS)

by post

Wiltshire Council, Department of Community Services,
County Hall, Trowbridge, Wiltshire. BA14 8JL

by email

customeradvisors@wiltshire.gov.uk