

How common is sight loss?



How does sight loss affect people's lives?

A number of sight loss sector organisations have assessed and agreed a series of key facts for everyone to use. The way they are worded should not be altered in any way: doing so may make them wrong.

Please contact research@rnib.org.uk if you have any questions about the statistics used here.

Key facts about sight loss

- There are over two million people in the UK living with sight loss [1]. This included around 350,000 people registered as blind or partially sighted who have severe and irreversible sight loss [1]. It also includes those that have uncorrected refractive error or cataract that may be reversed [2].
- Sight loss affects people of all ages but especially older people: 1 in 5 people aged 75 years and over and 1 in 2 aged 90 years and over are living with sight loss [1].
- There are over 25,000 children with visual impairment aged 16 years or under in the UK. That is equal to 2 in 1,000 children. As many as half of these children have other disabilities [3].
- Feelings of wellbeing are lower amongst people with sight loss when compared to the rest of the population [4].
- Three out of four registered blind and partially sighted people of working age are not in employment [5].
- The number of people in the UK with sight loss is set to increase in line with population ageing: by 2050 the number of people with sight loss in the UK is projected to be nearly four million [1].

References

1. Access Economics (2009) Future Sight Loss 1; updated with ONS population estimates for 2017.
2. Data taken from the most recently published information on the number of registered blind and partially sighted people in each UK country.
3. Morris and Smith (2008) Educational provision for blind and partially sighted young people in Britain; ONS (2015) UK population estimates.
4. Flynn and Lord (2015) Living with sight loss: updating the national picture.
5. Slade and Edwards (2015) My Voice.