

# Wales Vision Strategy 2018 - 2021

## Our priorities



## Current membership includes:



Inclusion & Sustainability  
Consultants



Cardiff Institute  
for the Blind  
Sefydliad y  
Deillion Caerdydd



Care & Repair Cymru



**Macular Society**  
Beating Macular Disease



**R N I B**  
Cymru  

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Golwg gwahanol  
See differently



Wales Council of the Blind

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# 1. The Wales Vision Strategy: an overview

## About the Wales Vision Strategy

The Wales Vision Strategy exists to deliver positive change for blind and partially sighted people in Wales, their communities and the general population including those at risk of sight loss.

The Wales Vision Strategy reflects the priorities of blind and partially sighted people and has been developed in collaboration with stakeholder organisations.

The Wales Vision Strategy is always open to new members who want to support our priorities and drive change for people with sight loss in Wales.

## Our priorities

- To improve the nation's eye health and end avoidable sight loss.
- To improve support across social care services.
- To improve awareness of sight loss and create an inclusive society for all blind and partially sighted people.

## Aim of the Wales Vision Strategy 2018-2019

Achievement of the Wales Vision Strategy will:

- Improve the quality of life of people in Wales
- Positively impact on our health and social care system
- Reduce costs to the Welsh economy.

## Vision 2020: The Right to Sight

The Wales Vision Strategy aligns to the Vision UK Strategy, part of the global initiative known as 'VISION 2020: the Right to Sight' a joint programme between the World Health Organisation and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness.

VISION 2020 was launched in 1999 with the twin aims of eliminating avoidable blindness by the year 2020 and preventing the projected doubling of avoidable sight loss between 1990 and 2020. Vision 2020 seeks to promote "A world in which nobody is needlessly visually impaired, where those with unavoidable vision loss can achieve their full potential."



In 2016, an independent team from NCVO Charities Evaluation Services delivered a comprehensive review of the progress of the UK Vision Strategy, and also gathered ideas to shape the future of work in eye health and sight loss. The Wales Vision Strategy 2018-2020 is informed by the findings of that report.

## **Monitoring and reporting**

Progress towards achievement of the strategic priorities by the development of new targets and programmes of work, will be reported and monitored by the Wales Vision Strategy Advisory Committee.

## **Some key achievements of the previous Wales Vision Strategy 2014-2018**

The Wales Vision Strategy has delivered positive change for blind and partially sighted people in Wales, their communities and the general population including those at risk of sight loss. For example:

### **New Outcomes Focussed Measures for Ophthalmology**

A significant achievement over the last strategy term, has been our work with Welsh Government and eye care partners to develop new outcome focussed measures in ophthalmology to ensure that patients have timely access to treatment. Welsh Government is now working with health boards to ensure that these are implemented.

These new measures will provide clinically approved targets and prioritise patients according to their risk of irreversible sight loss, so that no one should lose their sight because of a treatable eye condition.

### **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Health Fair**

An annual health fair has been established which includes the promotion of eye health and the importance of regular eye checks to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities at risk of sight loss in Wales.

# An information database and newsletter for the sector and people with sight loss

A member was responsible for setting up and coordinating Perspectif, an online database of services available throughout Wales. Information about services in Wales was spread through Roundup newsletter quarterly to two-and-a-half thousand readers and through Sylw fortnightly bulletin, to 500 subscribers. The Perspectif supplements and directories went out to Roundup subscribers, health boards and local authorities. This information service is primarily aimed at informing the sector of organisations and initiatives that individuals may find useful to aid independent living.

## Research at Cardiff University

A number of research projects have been carried out by Cardiff University teaming up with various Wales Vision Strategy members. Four research projects are listed below.

### **Improving awareness of eye health in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities in Cardiff**

Several members of the Wales Vision Strategy worked in collaboration with Wales Ophthalmic Postgraduate Education Centre at Cardiff University, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Public Health Wales and Welsh Government and carried out an extensive research project investigating barriers and enablers to people from at risk Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups accessing primary eye care services. The results were published in a report and the recommendations influenced service delivery and the provision of staff training to increase uptake of eye care services by these at risk groups.

### **Certification of Vision Impairment research**

Research has been carried out by Cardiff University School of Optometry and Vision Sciences investigating the feasibility of issuing the Certification of Visual Impairment to relevant patients at community optometrists. The results and a report are due to be published in 2018-19.

### **Importance of early rehabilitation for patients with sight loss**

Research was carried out involving a member of Wales Vision Strategy and Cardiff University School of Optometry and Vision Sciences highlighting the importance of early rehabilitation leading to greater improvement in visual function, for patients with sight loss. A research paper was published in Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences Journal (IOVS) 2016 by Acton, Molik, Court and Margrain.

## **Low vision and depression**

Research was carried out with researchers at Cardiff University School of Optometry and Vision Sciences teaming up with a Wales Vision Strategy member to highlight the importance of screening for depression in low vision clinics. The Depression in Visual Impairment Trial (DEPVIT) found that 43 per cent of people who lose their sight go on to battle depression, however NHS low vision services focus only on the physical need, and psychological screening or therapy is not yet an integral part of rehabilitation.

## **Digital inclusion**

A three year digital inclusion project "Online Today" funded by the Big Lottery, was delivered by Wales Vision Strategy members from 2015 to 2018. The project enabled over 6000 blind and partially sighted people to get online in Wales and upskilled organisations to build their knowledge, confidence and skills to support people with sight loss to use digital technology.

We continue to work with Digital Communities Wales to ensure that blind and partially sighted people have the information and support they need to access and use digital technology.

## **Mandatory disability awareness training for taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers**

Following extensive work by Wales Vision Strategy members Welsh Government accepted a recommendation that new national standards being drawn up should include a requirement for all taxi and Private Hire Vehicle drivers in Wales to complete general disability awareness training. Developing accessibility awareness training for staff will be included in the Welsh Government's accessible transport objectives, to be published by the end of 2018. Local licensing authorities will be expected to make sure that all drivers operating in their areas undertake the training.

## **Rights Advice and Information Service**

A Wales Vision Strategy member delivered RAISE, the Rights Advice and Information Service, funded for three years by the Big Lottery, supported blind and partially sighted people in Wales to secure £13million in unclaimed benefits.

The service worked closely with the Department of Work and Pensions to break down the barriers experienced by blind and partially sighted people which prevented them from claiming their benefit entitlement.

## **Reducing isolation and loneliness**

Wales Vision Strategy members in North and South Wales, delivered a highly successful Big Lottery funded project that led to 79 per cent of project beneficiaries saying they felt less isolated and lonely; 76 per cent saying they felt more confident and 85 per cent saying they were doing more things outside of the home, such as visiting friends, shopping and taking part in social or leisure activities.

## **Accessible Housing resource for Councillors in Wales**

A member of Wales Vision Strategy was commissioned to write the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Accessible Housing resource for Councillors in Wales with Tai Pawb. These guidelines are applicable for improving the environment for people with sight loss. The toolkit, entitled 'Housing for disabled people: A toolkit for local authorities in Wales' was recently launched aimed at local authority councillors in Wales, particularly those involved in housing and planning.



## 2. Supporting legislation and work

**There have been a number of legislative developments and programmes in recent years which align to, and strengthen the aims of the Wales Vision Strategy.**

### Welsh Government Eye Care Delivery Plan

The Welsh Government's "Together for Health, Eye Care Delivery Plan 2013-2020" aims to improve eye health in Wales, and support those living with sight loss. Key priorities of the plan include:

- Preventing avoidable sight loss and improving eye health.
- Early identification of poor eye health and sight problems.
- Providing high quality, efficient, accessible services.
- Ensuring integration of services and patient focussed delivery.
- Providing care and support for people living with sight/dual sensory impairment.

A key priority of the Eye Care Plan has been the development of new outcome focussed measures in ophthalmology. These are designed to reduce the risk of harm and irreversible sight loss for ophthalmology patients in Wales. They have been devised to account for both new and existing patients, based on clinical need and risk of harm. The new measures have begun shadow reporting from September 2018 with full reports available from April 2019.

### Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 came into force in April 2016. The Act requires public bodies, including the Welsh Government, to think more about the long-term, to work better with people, communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach – helping to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

## Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 provides the statutory framework to transform social services in Wales to improve the well-being of people who need care and support and carers who need support.

Everyone, adult or child, has the right to be heard as an individual to shape the decisions that affect them, and to have control over their day to day lives.

## A Healthier Wales

The Welsh Government's "A Healthier Wales" plan sets out a long term future vision of a 'whole system approach to health and social care' in Wales, which is focussed on health and wellbeing, and on preventing illness.





## 3. Wales Vision Strategy new priorities

### **Priority 1: Improve the nation's eye health and end avoidable sight loss.**

**1.1** People in Wales have timely access to treatment in eye care services to stop people losing their sight unnecessarily.

**1.2** People in Wales understand how to look after their eyes and have regular sight tests to prevent avoidable sight loss.

### **Priority 2: Improve support across social care services**

**2.1** Everyone affected by sight loss will receive the support they need at the right time.

### **Priority 3: Improve awareness of sight loss and create an inclusive society for all**

**3.1** Blind and partially sighted people accessing healthcare will receive accessible information and communication in their preferred format, and are empowered to understand and make informed decisions about their health.

**3.2** The experiences and needs of blind and partially sighted people are included into new programmes, legislation and services.

**3.3** The transport infrastructure in Wales will be fully accessible for people with sight loss to enable independent travel.

**3.4** Incidents of isolation and loneliness experienced by blind and partially sighted people are reduced.

**3.5** Blind and partially sighted people are able to live and move around safely and independently in inclusive environments including homes, communities and streets.

**3.6** Blind and partially sighted children and young adults have access to appropriate training and support to enable them to achieve their full potential in the learning environment.

**3.7** Blind and partially sighted people have the information and support they need to access and use digital technology.

**3.8** Leisure facilities and activities are fully accessible to everyone with sight loss including sport, exercise, hobbies and the visual and performing arts.





## 4. Our values

The Wales Vision Strategy is underpinned by a set of values and principles agreed by members.

We are:

- Informed and led by blind and partially sighted people: blind and partially sighted people are at our heart and influence everything we do.
- Collaborative: we work together to make the biggest difference, sharing and learning from experience.
- Creative: we understand challenges and find ways to overcome them and move forward.
- Inclusive: we include and value people with diverse experience, abilities and backgrounds.
- Co-production: we work together with blind and partially sighted people in an equal way, sharing influence, skills and experience.
- Bilingual and accessible: we ensure that information and communication is accessible and bilingual.
- Open and transparent: We are honest and transparent, challenging ourselves and others.
- Evidence-based: we ensure that our work is evidence-based.



## 5. Membership

The membership of the Wales Vision Strategy is made up of representatives from across government, the third, public and private sectors, in a collaboration which strives to drive change for people with sight loss in Wales.

The Wales Vision Strategy welcomes new members to help us to reach our ambitious goals and drive change for people with sight loss in Wales.

RNIB Cymru is the secretariat for the Wales Vision Strategy. For further information about the Strategy, contact: [cymru@rnib.org.uk](mailto:cymru@rnib.org.uk)

### Current membership includes:

Access Design Solutions  
Cardiff Institute for the Blind  
Care and Repair Cymru  
DeafBlind Cymru  
Guide Dogs Cymru  
Macular Society  
Optometry Wales  
RNIB Cymru  
Royal College of Nursing in Wales  
Sight Cymru  
Swansea University  
Vision UK  
Wales Council of the Blind  
Welsh Government  
Welsh Rehabilitation Officers' Forum