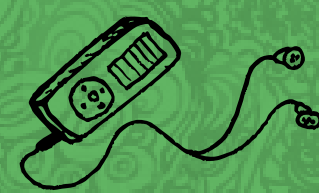
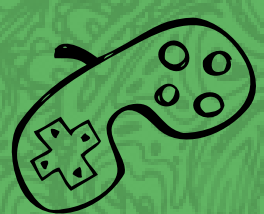
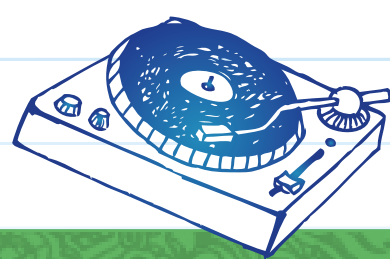
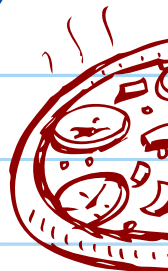


# Services for Children and Young People with a Visual Impairment



FRIEND



Central Bedfordshire

Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council working together

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust



Dear Parent or Guardian,

It can be overwhelming when you first discover that your child has sight problems. There are often many professionals involved in your child's eye care, and it can be difficult to remember who does what, and establish what help or services are available for your child. We hope that this booklet will provide you with answers to many of the questions you may have.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the production of this booklet and hope that the information proves useful.

**Bedford Borough Council Visual Impairment Team  
Children's Service at Moorfields Eye Hospital (Bedford)**

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## Statutory Services Across Bedfordshire

### Careers Advice for 16-19 year olds (Bedford)

The responsibilities of providing careers guidance has now been transferred to schools, but if you have any general queries about options and what support is available for young people please contact:



-  **Education Support Service**  
Careers Advice at the Jobs Hub  
15 Greyfriars  
Bedford, MK40 1HJ
-  01234 223510
-  thejobshub@bedford.gov.uk

### Child Development Centre

The Child Development Centre (CDC) is an assessment and treatment centre where a multi-disciplinary team of professionals work closely with parents/carers if there is a concern about a child's development. Working in partnership ensures that appropriate intervention is made in order to maximise the child's future potential.

Children may present a range of problems and/or difficulties with:

- Developmental Delay
- Physical (Motor) Delay/Disorders
- Co-ordination
- Speech and Language
- Learning
- Vision and Hearing
- Attention
- Social Skills
- Communication

-  **Child Development Centre**  
Hill Rise  
Kempston  
Bedford, MK42 7EB
-  01234 310278

## Statutory Services Across Bedfordshire

### Children with Disabilities Team

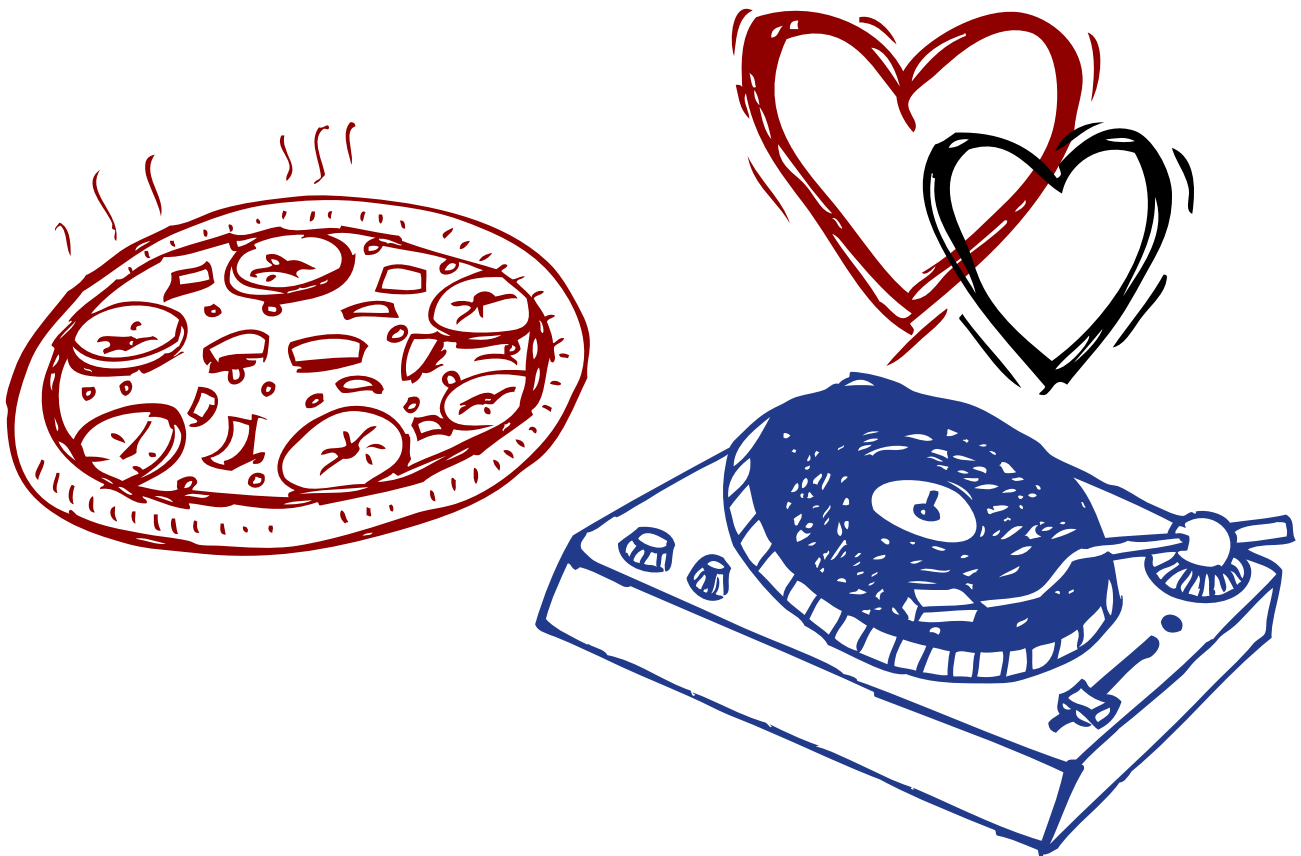
The Children with Disabilities Team is made up of social workers that work with disabled children and their families. You can ask for an assessment, however this service is based on assessed needs therefore there is no guarantee of a service being offered.

Their role is to:

- Assess the needs of children and families.
- Offer support, advice and information.
- Plan a programme of care for children and families when this is needed.
- Liaise with other agencies such as Health and Education to make sure that the help and support offered to families is co-ordinated and appropriate.
- Provide short-term breaks and long-term care for children and young people when this is needed.

 Bedford Borough: 01234 267422

 Central Bedfordshire: 0300 300 8169



## Statutory Services Across Bedfordshire

### Edwin Lobo Child Development Centre

A consultant-led service for children and young people in Luton and under some South Bedfordshire GP's with a suspected disability, neurodisability, or developmental delay. Referrals to this service can be made by health and social care professionals.

#### Edwin Lobo Child Development Centre

✉ Redgrave Children and Young People's Centre  
Redgrave Gardens  
Luton, LU3 3QN

☎ 01582 700300

🌐 [www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk](http://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk)

#### Services are also provided at:

✉ Liverpool Road Health Centre  
9 Mersey Place  
Liverpool Road  
Luton, LU1 1HH

Clinics are also held periodically at the special schools.

### Hospital Eye Team

There may be more than one member of the team involved in your child's care. On most clinic visits you may see more than one of the team.

The ophthalmologist is a doctor who has specialised in the diagnosis of eye disorders, and where possible provides medical and/or surgical treatment. It is the role of the consultant ophthalmologist to certify children as sight impaired (formally known as partially sighted) or severely sight impaired (formally known as blind) by completing a certificate of visual impairment (CVI).

The orthoptist is a person trained specifically in measuring children's vision. They test the alignment of your child's eyes. They will use different equipment to assess the 3D vision and how the eyes move in different directions. Babies and pre school children can't read letter charts so the orthoptist will assess their vision by other means. They may use pens with smiley faces and shine a harmless small light in your child's eye whilst covering the other eye. They may show pictures of differing sizes. These are all special tests that help measure your child's vision. The orthoptist will liaise with qualified teachers of visually impaired pupils (QTVI's).

The optometrist (also known as an ophthalmic optician) will determine if there is a need for



## Statutory Services Across Bedfordshire

your child to wear glasses or contact lenses, they may also assess older children to see if there are any magnifying aids to help them at school.

The vision of children with a significant visual impairment cannot always be improved with treatment, but these specialists will provide you with information about your child's vision and eye condition.

The paediatric nurse is trained to look after children. She is experienced in their care and will be able to talk to you about any procedures that may take place. She may administer eye drops to dilate the pupils. She is able to give you information leaflets and direct you to helpful websites for further information.

The play leader supports the children who visit the clinic. She is experienced in helping children to play and uses play to help distract from the procedures. Children look forward to coming to clinic when there is a friendly happy fun environment to be seen in. This also helps the parents to relax and alleviate anxieties.

### Low Vision Service

Optical low vision aids help provide magnification for near or distance tasks. Normally they are hand held devices but sometimes they can be mounted on glasses. Electronic aids may be provided by the Local Education Authority. The optometrist will assess your child's needs and will advise on the magnification that is needed.

Low vision aids are supplied on loan from the hospitals/clinics. They should be returned/exchanged if not used or no longer needed.

Children can benefit from aids as early as 3 years old. It is important for your child to be assessed before they start school.

#### Low Vision Aid Clinic (north of the county)

✉ Sight Concern  
245 Ampthill Road  
Bedford, MK42 9AZ

☎ 01234 311555

@ office@sightconcern.org.uk

#### Low Vision Aid Clinic (south of the county)

✉ Sight Concern  
1 Union Street  
Luton, LU1 3AN

☎ 01582 655554

@ lutonservices@sightconcern.org.uk

## Statutory Services Across Bedfordshire

### Visual Impairment Team (Education)

Part of the Education Department, this service caters for children and young people who have a medical diagnosis of visual impairment. It also caters for pupils who have additional disabilities, some of whom have both visual and hearing impairments.

Referrals are taken from medical personnel, head teachers, educational psychologists and other professionals. Support is available for children and their families from the time of diagnosis to leaving school. The amount of support given is determined by each child's individual needs, following consultation with parents and schools.

The service offers:

- Home-based support and advice for families/carers following diagnosis.
- Support for the pupil, their family/carers and school staff during the transition stage from pre-school to school based provision.
- Assessment of pupil's functional vision and communication skills.
- Information concerning the education and social implications of the pupil's visual impairment.
- Assessment of appropriate mode of communication.
- Advice on the adaptation of the learning environment for a visually impaired pupil.
- Advice on teaching materials/resources appropriate for visually impaired pupils.
- The loan to schools of some specialised equipment, for example CCTV.
- Direct support to assist the development of specialist curricula areas for individual pupils, for example Braille tuition or self-help /organisational skills.
- Referrals to, and liaisons with other agencies, including voluntary agencies, both locally and nationally.

#### Bedford Borough contact details:

- ✉ Sensory and Communication Support Team  
The Child Development Centre  
Hill Rise  
Kempston  
Bedford, MK42 7EB
- ☎ 01234 300710
- @ scst.cdc@bedford.gov.uk

#### If you live in Central Bedfordshire and/or your child attends a Central Bedfordshire school please contact:

- ✉ Visual Impairment Team  
The Chiltern School Secondary Site  
Parkside Drive  
Houghton Regis  
Beds, LU5 5PX
- ☎ 07834 790050

## Statutory Services Across Bedfordshire

### Visual Impairment Team (Social Services)

Bedford Borough Council provides the statutory visual impairment service for people living in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. It keeps records of everyone living in these areas that have been certified as sight impaired or severely sight impaired by their consultant ophthalmologist.

Your child's ophthalmologist may have asked you to sign a form certifying your child as sight impaired or severely sight impaired. This form (Certificate of Visual Impairment or CVI) will be sent to the Social Services Visual Impairment Team, who will get in touch with you when they receive it to discuss any queries you may have, and will offer your child an assessment. Registration is voluntary, but by agreeing for your child to be registered the council can monitor numbers of visually impaired children and plan services accordingly.


The assessment carried out by a Rehabilitation Officer will also provide information, advice, practical help and support to children who are having difficulties caused by impaired sight, and to their families and carers. More specialised support can involve mobility and rehabilitation training both within schools and at home.

The team works with other agencies including:

- Education
- Child Development Centre (CDC)
- Schools and Colleges
- Other Social Services Teams
- Sight Concern Bedfordshire
- Royal National Institute of Blind People
- Guide Dogs
- Self-help Groups

Even if your child is not registered you can still request an assessment if he/she has a significant sight loss that cannot be corrected by glasses. In order to keep records up to date and to be able to provide you with accurate information, it is important that your contact details are correct. Please notify the team of any changes.

#### Visual Impairment Team

 Borough Hall  
Cauldwell Street  
Bedford, MK42 9AP

 01234 718318

 [visualimpairment@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:visualimpairment@bedford.gov.uk)

## Local Services

### Bedford Borough Family Information Service

A 'one stop' information and advice service to help children, young people, and families in Bedford Borough to find the services they need, including activities for children with a disability. They run an online Family Services Directory and also hold a register for children with disabilities.

 0800 023 2057

 [www.fis.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.fis.bedford.gov.uk)

 [fis@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:fis@bedford.gov.uk)


### Carers in Bedfordshire

A registered charity existing to help family carers and former carers cope with the mental and physical stress arising from their role. They offer support, practical help, training, advocacy, advice and information. Almost everything they offer is free.

Other services include:

- All age carers support groups
- Free pampering therapy
- Social events
- Activity clubs and workshops via the Sibling Project (for children 4-17 who are affected by a siblings disability)
- Carers Breaks
- Carers Cafes
- Young carers grants
- 1:1 support for children and young people.

#### Carers in Bedfordshire

 Suite K, Sandland Court  
Pilgrims Centre  
Brickhill Drive  
Bedford, MK41 7PZ


 0300 111 1919

 01234 314766

 [contact@carersinbeds.org.uk](mailto:contact@carersinbeds.org.uk)

 [www.carersinbeds.co.uk](http://www.carersinbeds.co.uk)

#### Sea Cadet HQ




 4 Station Road  
Biggleswade  
SG18 8AL

 01767 315079

## Local Services




### Central Bedfordshire Family and Youth Information Service

Provides a Family Information Directory (an online local and national service directory for parents, carers, young people and professionals).

-  0300 300 8585
-  [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/fyis](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/fyis)
-  [fyis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:fyis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

### Children with Disabilities Register

Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council each hold a register to keep families of children with disabilities informed of local services and activities in their area. This also helps both councils to plan and develop services for children with a disability.

-  Bedford Borough 0800 023 2057
-  Central Bedfordshire 0300 300 6311
-  [christine.collis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:christine.collis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

### Disability Resource Centre

This is an independent organisation run by disabled people. Facilities include an extensive Information Service and an equipment display area, which is open Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm. Whilst no appointment is necessary; telephoning before turning up is recommended in case the room is in use.

### Disability Resource Centre

-  Poynters House  
Poynters Road  
Dunstable  
Beds, LU5 4TP
-  01582 470900
-  [information@drcbeds.org](mailto:information@drcbeds.org)

## Local Services

### Families United Network (FUN)

FUN is a registered charity and membership organisation which works to support children, young people and families living with disabilities throughout Bedfordshire. They provide activities that allow the whole family to participate. They also support parents and carers, providing information and signposting to other services.

#### Families United Network


-  The Disability Resource Centre  
Poynters House  
Poynters Road  
Dunstable  
Beds, LU5 4TP
-  01582 470999
-  [www.familiesunitednetwork.co.uk](http://www.familiesunitednetwork.co.uk)

### Keech Hospice

The hospice supports families who are caring for a child with a life-limiting condition or cancer. Care is available in-house at the children's hospice in Great Bramingham Lane, near Streatley, Luton, or via the Keech Community Team, and is provided free-of charge.

Facilities at Keech Hospice include a multi-sensory room, music room, an adolescents' den, hydrotherapy pool and spa and an outdoor playground designed to accommodate children of all abilities, including those who use wheelchairs. They run a weekly support group (Tots and Toys, Thursday 10.30-12.30) for parents with children under five who use Keech Hospice. They also have a Sparklers Club every two months for siblings between five and twelve years.



#### For more information contact:

-  Keech Hospice Care  
Great Bramingham Lane  
Streatley  
Luton  
LU3 3NT
-  01582 492339
-  [info@keech.org.uk](mailto:info@keech.org.uk)
-  [www.keech.org.uk](http://www.keech.org.uk)

## Local Services

### Parent Partnership

Education Health Care Plans will replace Statements of Educational Need in September 2014. Parent Partnership can provide guidance through this process and assist in getting the correct support in place for your child. Free confidential support for parents and carers of children with special needs.


-  Bedford Borough 01234 276267
-  Central Bedfordshire 0300 300 8088

### Sight Concern Bedfordshire

Sight Concern Bedfordshire is a local charity offering a range of services to enhance the independence and quality of life of blind and partially sighted people throughout Bedfordshire and Luton.


Two resource centres, one in Bedford and another in Luton provide access to a wide range of aids and equipment for independent daily living. There are opportunities to try before buying. Examples of stock include games, talking watches, large print computer keyboards, large print calendars, electronic aids, key ring voice recorders, mobile phones etc. They can also provide general information and signposting to other relevant agencies/services.

The 'News and Views' newsletter is offered in a range of formats and includes an Eye Spy section for younger readers and their families. Children with sight loss and their families can also come along to the Luton office on the first Saturday of every month between 10am-12pm. This is an opportunity to meet other families, get information and share experiences. Sight Concern also run the Low Vision Service in Bedford and Luton.

 Bedford Office  
Kings House  
245 Ampthill Road  
Bedford, MK42 9AZ

 01234 311555

 office@sightconcern.org.uk

 Luton Office  
Union Street  
Luton  
LU1 3AN

 01582 655554

 lutonservices@sightconcern.org.uk

## Local Services

### Special Needs Action Panel (SNAP) Central Bedfordshire

A forum (made up of parents and carers of people aged 0-25 with special educational needs or disabilities) formed to influence the planning and delivery of local authority and NHS services in Central Bedfordshire.

By providing a way for parents and carers to share their opinions, views and experiences with local service providers it hopes to raise the standard of education, social and health provision within Central Bedfordshire.

-  SNAP  
Disability Resource Centre  
Poynters House  
Poynters Road  
Dunstable  
Beds, LU5 4TP
-  [snap@bedfordshireforums.com](mailto:snap@bedfordshireforums.com)
-  07984 545044




### Sure Start Children's Centres

Government strategy is to provide quality services to children, young people and their families.

**Services offered will vary from centre to centre and may include:**

- Support for children with special needs
- Child and family health services
- Parenting groups
- Support to access wider services
- Advice on training and employment
- Childminder networks

Contact your local Sure Start Children's Centre for more information on what they offer. To find your nearest centre, type the following onto your browser:

-  [www.gov.uk/find-sure-start-childrens-centre](http://www.gov.uk/find-sure-start-childrens-centre) or contact
-  0800 023 2057 (Bedford Borough)
-  0300 300 8000 (Central Bedfordshire)




## Local Services

### Toy Library

This library lends toys to children with special needs for a couple of months at a time. They have a drop-in on the first Wednesday of every month, 10am -12 noon.

Toy Library (North Beds)  
Child Development Centre  
Hill Rise  
Kempston  
Bedford, MK42 7EB

#### Contact Sue Hatton

 01234 407152

If you live in Central Bedfordshire, some Sure Start Children's Centres operate toy libraries. Contact your local centre to see if there is a toy library in your area.



## National Organisations

### Action for Blind People

Part of the RNIB group, this national charity aims to provide practical help and support to blind and partially sighted people of all ages.

#### Services include:

- help with employment
- benefits
- housing issues
- aids and adaptations
- holiday breaks
- information on local services

#### The local Action Team for Bedfordshire comes under their London office:

- ✉ 105 Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9NE
- ☎ 020 7391 2151
- @ actionlondon@sendactionforblindpeople.org.uk
- 🌐 www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

### Albinism Fellowship

Provides information and support for people with Albinism and their families. They have a twice yearly magazine, an online discussion forum, and offer local support.

- ✉ Albinism Fellowship  
PO Box 77  
Burnley  
Lancashire, BB11 5GN
- ☎ 01282 771900
- 🌐 www.albinism.org.uk

## National Organisations




### Aniridia Network UK

Services include a befriending scheme; meet up events, education advice, medical advice, and disability rights advice.

-  Aniridia Network UK  
22 Cornish House  
Adelaide Lane  
Sheffield, S3 8BJ
-  07792 867 949
-  [info@aniridia.org.uk](mailto:info@aniridia.org.uk)
-  [www.aniridia.org.uk](http://www.aniridia.org.uk)

### Association of Blind and Partially Sighted Teachers and Students (ABAPSTAS)

Offers information, support and advice for visually impaired teachers and students




-  Lindsey Armstrong  
BM Box 6727  
London  
WC1N 3XX
-  0117 966 4839
-  [www.abapstas.org.uk](http://www.abapstas.org.uk)

### Blind in Business

Helps blind and partially sighted graduates to compete equally with sighted candidates for good jobs. They can help if you are:

- A blind or partially sighted teenager, looking for career advice or technology advice.
- A parent or carer of a blind or partially sighted child.
- A blind or partially sighted undergraduate or graduate looking for support in finding work.
- A blind or partially sighted undergraduate or graduate looking for support at University.

Even if you are outside of these groups, they often sign post people to the right services that are available throughout the UK.

-  020 7588 1885
-  [info@blindinbusiness.org.uk](mailto:info@blindinbusiness.org.uk)
-  [www.blindinbusiness.org.uk](http://www.blindinbusiness.org.uk)

## National Organisations

### **Childhood Eye Cancer Trust** (formerly known as The Retinoblastoma Society)

Aims to provide information and support to individuals and families with retinoblastoma.

✉ Childhood Eye Cancer Trust  
The Royal London Hospital  
Whitechapel Road  
London, E1 1BB

☎ 020 7377 5578

📠 020 7377 0740

@ info@chect.org.uk

🌐 www.chect.org.uk

### **Contact a Family**

Provides support for families who care for children with a disability or special need. They can put you in touch with national groups for specific conditions and offer opportunities to meet other families.

✉ Contact a Family  
209-211 City Road  
London, EC1V 1JN

☎ 020 7608 8700

☎ Helpline: 0808 808 3555 Monday-Friday 9.30am– 5pm

@ helpline@cafamily.org.uk

🌐 www.cafamily.org.uk

## National Organisations

### Deafblind UK

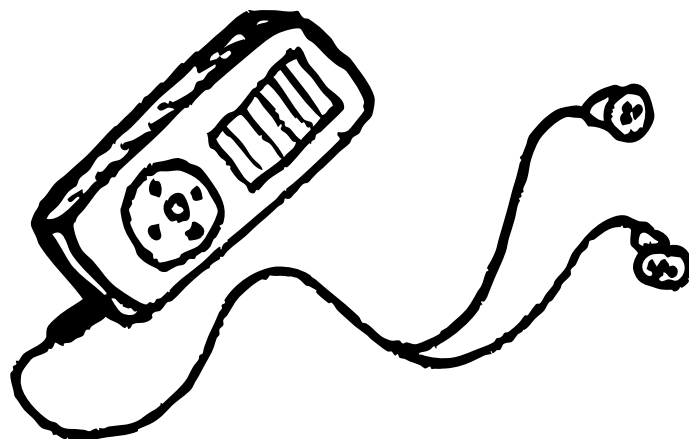
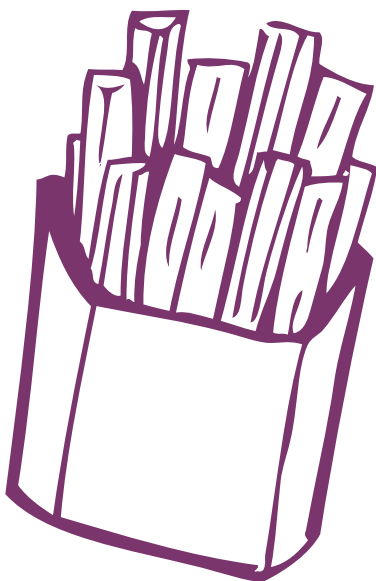
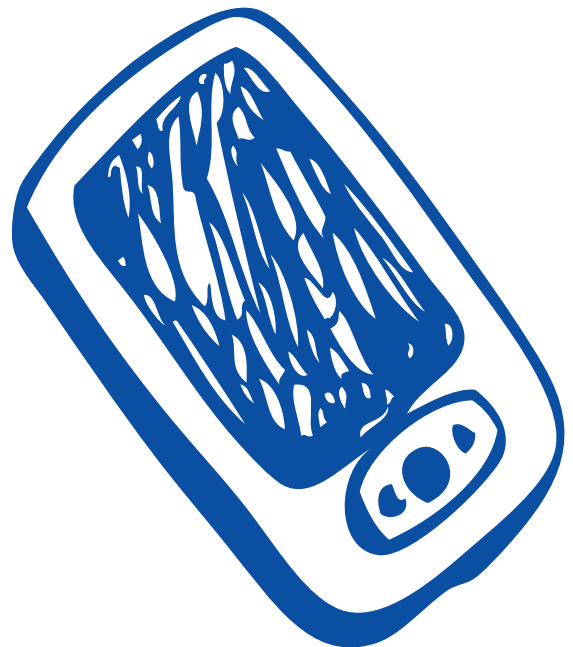
Deafblind UK's vision is to highlight that people who have a combined sight and hearing loss should have the same rights, access and opportunities as others. They champion the rights and interests of all people who are deafblind or have a combined sight and hearing loss and deliver services to give these individuals autonomy and control over their lives. For more information contact:

✉ Deafblind UK Head Office  
National Centre for Deafblindness  
John & Lucille van Geest Place  
Cygnet Road  
Hampton  
Peterborough, PE7 8FD

☎ 01733 358 100

📠 01733 358 356





@ info@deafblind.org.uk



## National Organisations

### Diabetes UK

Information, advice and support to help people manage their diabetes

-  Macleod House  
10 Parkway  
London  
NW1 7AA
-  0345 123 2399
-  [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)
-  [info@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:info@diabetes.org.uk)

### Guide Dogs

This national organisation manages all assessments and responsibilities for its guide dog services. There is no longer a minimal age for guide dog ownership, staff will assess if your child is suitable. A Buddy Dogs Service also gives children the opportunity to take on the responsibilities of a dog (not a guide dog) to establish the necessary skills for future guide dog ownership.

**For further information contact the local guide dog centre which covers Bedfordshire:**

-  Welwyn Garden City Mobility Team  
Unit 3, Stroud Wood Business Centre  
Park St  
St Albans  
Hertfordshire  
AL2 2NJ
-  0845 372 7429
-  [welwyn@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:welwyn@guidedogs.org.uk)
-  [www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)




### In Touch Programme (Radio 4, Tuesdays 8.40-9.00pm)

Blind broadcasters combine their personal experiences of visual impairment with journalistic skills. They report with personal understanding on developments that affect the lives of over a million people in Britain with a visual impairment.

## National Organisations

### International Glaucoma Association (IGA)

Provides useful information and advice.





-  Sightline: 01233 648170 Mon-Fri 9.30-5pm
-  [www.glaucoma-association.com](http://www.glaucoma-association.com)
-  [info@iga.org.uk](mailto:info@iga.org.uk)

### Laurence-Moon-Bardet-Biedl Society

Offers advice, information, encouragement and the opportunity to meet other families. There is a regular newsletter.

#### New Families Contact:

Claire Anstee

-  01604 880386 (after 4.30 Mon-Fri).
-  [www.lmbbs.org.uk](http://www.lmbbs.org.uk)
-  [claire@anstee2.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:claire@anstee2.orangehome.co.uk)
-  [chris.humphreys4@ntlworld.com](mailto:chris.humphreys4@ntlworld.com)

### LOOK - National Federation of Families with Visually Impaired Children.

LOOK provides practical help, support, advice, information and opportunities for families to meet together during long weekends. They have a comprehensive library of materials on eye conditions and produce an online magazine.

#### LOOK National Office

-  C/o Queen Alexandra College  
49 Court Oak Road  
Harborne  
Birmingham, B17 9TG
-  0121 428 5038
-  [information@look-uk.org](mailto:information@look-uk.org) [www.look-uk.org](http://www.look-uk.org)


## National Organisations

### National Blind Children's Society

Founded in December 1995, NBCS aims to provide the resources to ensure that educational goals can be achieved.

#### Their services include:

- Educational support and advice to ensure the child is placed in the most appropriate learning environment
- Personalised ICT, sensory and other specialist equipment to help children access up-to-date technology
- Day and weekend family events, social, holiday and adventure activities when funds allow
- Large-print fact and fiction titles, plus school revision guides, customised to the needs of individual children's eye condition
- Immediate and on-going 'one stop' emotional and practical support and information

 Central Office  
Hillfields  
Reading Road  
Burghfield Common  
Reading, Berkshire  
RG7 3YG

 Helpline: 0800 781 1444 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

 [www.blindchildrenuk.org](http://www.blindchildrenuk.org)

 [services@blindchildrenuk.org](mailto:services@blindchildrenuk.org)


### Nystagmus Network

The leading patient information, support and scientific research charity for Nystagmus in Europe. They offer a helpline most weekdays 9-5pm but resources are limited, so they may have to get back to you.

Contact John Sanders

 0845 634 2630 (UK only)

 [info@nystagmusnet.org](mailto:info@nystagmusnet.org)

 [www.nystagmusnet.org](http://www.nystagmusnet.org)




## National Organisations

### Royal National Institute of Blind People

RNIB is a national organisation providing information, support, publications and advice for anyone with a sight loss and their families/carers.

- Services include:
- products to make life easier
- advice about money
- eye health
- local services
- parenting
- education
- employment and much more.

 RNIB Headquarters  
105 Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9NE


 Helpline Tel: 0303 123 9999

 [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

 [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

### Sense

A national charity that supports and campaigns for deafblind children and adults. They offer a range of housing, educational and leisure opportunities.

 Sense  
101 Pentonville Road  
London  
N1 9LG

 0845 127 0060 / 020 7520 0999

 [info@sense.org.uk](mailto:info@sense.org.uk)

 [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

**Sense also have a base at Keech Hospice in Luton.**

Contact Anthony Saunders

 01582 492339.

## National Organisations

### Stickler Syndrome Support Group

Offers newsletters, factsheets, and conferences for members.

✉ PO Box 3351, Littlehampton  
BN16 9GB

☎ 01903 785771

@ info@stickler.org.uk

🌐 www.stickler.org.uk

### MACS

The Micro and Anophthalmic Children's Society provides mutual support and information to families of children with Anophthalmia, Microphthalmia and Coloboma. There is a regular newsletter.

**Family and new member enquiries:**

☎ 0800 169 8088

@ enquiries@macs.org.uk

🌐 www.macs.org.uk

### The Partially Sighted Society

A national organisation providing information advice, equipment and clear print material to help make the most of your remaining sight. They also provide low vision assessments and produce a catalogue of mail order daily living equipment.

✉ The Partially Sighted Society  
1 Bennetthorpe  
Doncaster, DN2 6AA

☎ 0844 477 4966

@ reception@partsight.org.uk

🌐 www.partsight.org.uk

### RP Fighting Blindness

Offers information and support for people with Retinitis Pigmentosa including advice on how to work through a diagnosis with your child.

✉ PO Box 350, Buckingham  
MK18 1GZ

☎ 01280 821334

☎ Helpline: 0845 123 2354

@ info@rpfightingblindness.org.uk

🌐 www.rpfightingblindness.org.uk

## Financial Information

### Benefits

There are a number of financial benefits which families may be able to apply for, e.g. Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP, the DLA replacement for those applying age 16 or over) and/or Carers Allowance.



#### For general information contact;

- Your Local Citizens Advice Bureau
- Your local Benefits Agency
- Sight Concern Bedfordshire
- Carers in Bedfordshire
- [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

### Blue Badge Scheme Concession

Children over the age of two who are registered as severely sight impaired/blind are entitled to a blue badge for parking concessions, to be used in any vehicle in which they are travelling. In some cases children with additional disabilities are eligible before they are two years old.

#### For an application form contact:

-  Bedford Borough: 01234 267422
-  Central Bedfordshire: 0300 300 8000



### British Wireless for the Blind Fund

Registered children may be entitled to a free loan of CD/radio/cassette players. Contact Sight Concern, Bedfordshire's representative for the Fund.

-  01234 311555 or 01582 655554

### Bus Pass Concession

Registered children are eligible for a bus pass for free local travel throughout the county from the age of five. For an application form contact:

-  Bedford Borough: 01234 267422
-  Central Bedfordshire: 0300 300 8000

## Financial Information

### Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card Concession

The Ceacard is a national card that can be used to verify that the holder is entitled to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema. For an online application go to:

 [www.ceacard.co.uk](http://www.ceacard.co.uk)

### Disabled Persons Railcard Concession

Sight impaired and severely sight impaired children over the age of five can apply for a railcard and they and their accompanying adult can receive up to one third off rail tickets.


 [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)

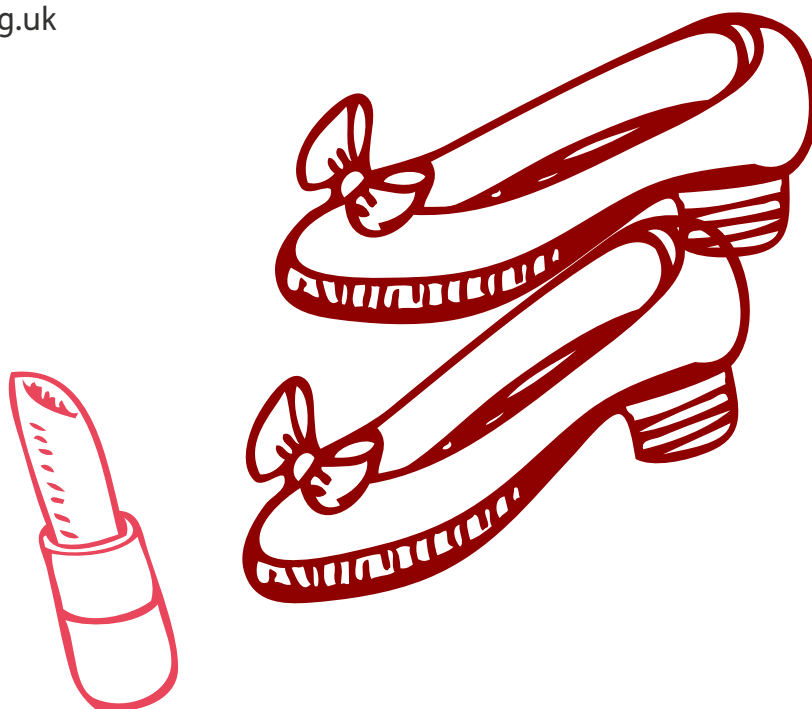
### Family Fund Grant

The Family Fund is the largest independent grant giving organisation helping low income families caring for a disabled child. The Fund issues grants that relate to the needs of a child, for instance sensory toys, computers, family breaks etc.

Family Fund  
4 Alpha Court  
Monks Cross Drive  
York, YO32 9WN

 01904 621115

 [info@familyfund.org.uk](mailto:info@familyfund.org.uk)




## Financial Information

### Half Price TV Licence Concession

You can get a 50% reduction on the TV Licence fee if you are severely sight impaired (blind). It is not available for people who are sight impaired (partially sighted).

You need a TV Licence if you wish to watch or record television programmes as they're being shown on TV. This includes the use of devices such as a TV, computer, mobile phone, games console, digital box or DVD/VHS recorder.

In a household where a child is severely sight impaired, the Licence will need to be transferred into the child's name to benefit from this concession. You will need to send a copy of your child's Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) or a letter from your local Visual Impairment Team as proof.

 See [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk) or the back of your current TV License for more information.

### Leisure Concessions

These are available at various leisure and recreational activities, for example free tickets for the person accompanying you. Call the venue in advance for details of any available concessions.

### Visually Impaired Children Taking Action (VICTA)

This charity provides grants to children and young people for equipment and services to help them develop socially, emotionally, and educationally. They also hold annual family weekends, youth weekends, and advice on educational issues, emotional support, and general information.

 01908 240831

 [victa.org.uk](http://victa.org.uk)

 [admin@victa.org.uk](mailto:admin@victa.org.uk)

## Reading

### Bedfordshire Libraries

Blind and partially sighted children and adults can borrow listening tapes and videos **free** of charge.

For more information contact your local library.

### ClearVision

A nationwide lending library of children's books, where the print is interleaved with Braille embossed on clear plastic sheets. This enables parents to read the print while the child reads the Braille. Membership is free to families.

#### For details contact:

ClearVision  
61 Princes Way  
London  
SW19 6JB

 020 8789 9575

 [info@clearvisionproject.org](mailto:info@clearvisionproject.org)

### RNIB National Library Service

The UK's largest library service. Access all the children's classics plus many more. You can borrow books in giant print (24 point type) or braille or audio.

 0161 429 1975 for more information and how to join

 [childrenslibrarian@rnib.org.uk](mailto:childrenslibrarian@rnib.org.uk)

## Reading

### Young Calibre

A one off £20 joining fee gives under 16 year olds access to hundreds of children's books in MPS format, either on CD, or memory sticks.

Young Calibre Audio Library

Aylesbury

Buckinghamshire

HP22 5XQ

☎ 01296 432339

@ info@youngcalibre.org.uk

🌐 www.youngcalibre.org.uk

Children over 16 can join the main Calibre Audio Library for a one off fee of £35. Contact the same telephone and email address as above.




## Sport

### British Blind Sport

Promotes and develops sporting opportunities for visually impaired people of all ages. They regularly organise national have a go sporting events for children.

British Blind Sport  
Pure Offices, Plato Close  
Tachbrook Park, Leamington Spa  
Warwickshire, CV34 6WE

 01926 424247

 [info@britishblindsport.org.uk](mailto:info@britishblindsport.org.uk)

 [www.britishblindsport.org.uk](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk)

### Sports Development (Bedford)

The aim is to provide quality opportunities at all levels of sport, promoting sport as an activity that enables individuals to develop their own performances to their maximum potential, whilst highlighting the personal and social benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Sports development is concerned with increasing sporting opportunities for **all** members of the community. They also run Sport Zone, a weekly sports club run by Bedford Borough Council Sports Development Unit. It provides the opportunity for young people between the ages of 6 - 25 years old who have learning or physical disabilities (and their siblings) to have fun, develop skills and try new sports in our multi-sport and multi-skills clubs.

 [www.bedford.gov.uk/sports](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/sports)

### Swimming

A number of swimming pools in the county have a special needs swimming session, when the entire pool is made available for children, and their families and carers.

Contact your nearest pool for further details.

### Tall Ship Voyages

The Jubilee Sailing Trust (JST) is a national registered charity and was established in 1978 with the aim of promoting the integration of able-bodied and physically disabled people through tall ship sailing. You could be sailing alongside the professional crew on the Lord Nelson or the Tenacious.

Applications are welcome from anyone aged over 16. For more information contact:

 JST: 023 8044 9108

 [www.jst.org.uk](http://www.jst.org.uk)



## Leisure


### Christmas Catalogues

Several large shops provide catalogues during the year, especially at Christmas e.g. Marks & Spencer and Boots. These are available by request on audiotape and in Braille. Please contact the store direct to identify whether this service is available.

### Living Paintings

Experience a wide range of art albums consisting of tactile representations of paintings and a cassette tape to interpret them and bring them to life.

#### For more information:

 Living Paintings  
Unit 8 Kingsclere Park  
Kingsclere  
Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 4SW


 01635 299771

 [www.livingpaintings.org](http://www.livingpaintings.org)

 [info@livingpaintings.org](mailto:info@livingpaintings.org)

### Vocaleyeyes

Enables blind and partially sighted people to experience the joy of live theatre through audio description. Includes pantomimes for children. To find out when a Vocaleyeyes production is coming to a theatre near you contact:

 Vocaleyeyes  
First Floor  
54 Commercial Street  
London, E1 6LT

 020 7375 1043

 [enquiries@vocaleyeyes.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@vocaleyeyes.co.uk)

 [www.vocaleyeyes.co.uk](http://www.vocaleyeyes.co.uk)

Services for Children and Young People with a Visual Impairment  
Bedford Borough Council Visual Impairment Team  
Children's Service at Moorfields Eye Hospital (Bedford)