

Introducing the UK Vision Strategy



The UK Vision Strategy seeks a major transformation in the UK's eye health, eye care and sight loss services. A determined and united cross-sector approach will make that change a reality. Three strategic outcome areas are identified:

1. Improving the eye health of the people of the UK

Five-year aim: To raise awareness and understanding of eye health among the public, including those people most at risk of eye disease, to allow every individual to develop personal responsibility for eye health and to achieve maximum eye health for all. To raise awareness of eye health among health and social care practitioners, and to ensure the early detection of sight loss and prevention where possible.

2. Eliminating avoidable sight loss and delivering excellent support for people with sight loss

Five-year aim: To improve the coordination, integration, reach and effectiveness of eye health services, and services and support for those people with permanent sight loss.

3. Inclusion, participation and independence for people with sight loss

Five-year aim: To improve the attitudes, awareness and actions of service providers, employers and the public towards people with sight loss and to remove significant barriers to inclusion, so that people with sight loss can exercise independence, control and choice. To achieve improved compliance with disability discrimination Legislation.

The UK Vision Strategy, a ground-breaking UK-wide initiative, brings together for the first time:

people with sight loss, users of eye care services, eye health and social care professionals and statutory and voluntary organisations - in order to produce a unified framework for action on all issues relating to vision.

The UK Vision Strategy has been developed in response to the World Health Assembly VISION2020 resolution to reduce avoidable blindness by the year 2020 and improve support and services for blind and partially sighted people. The UK Vision Strategy responds to shortfalls in the UK's eye health and sight loss services and addresses the exclusion of blind and partially sighted people and widespread ignorance and apathy about eye health.

Hundreds of individuals and organisations played a direct role in developing the Strategy and people who use the services were instrumental in its formulation. This powerful combination gives the UK Vision Strategy a credibility that cannot be ignored.

The UK Vision Strategy is underpinned by the following values:

- Fair and equitable access for all members of society to eye health, eye care and sight loss services.
- Person-centred delivery of excellent services and support in the most appropriate way for each individual.
- Evidence-based policies and services to guide resource allocation and effective services.
- Awareness of and respect for people with sight loss and full compliance with equality legislation.

The UK Vision Strategy implementation plans will need clear objectives which will be monitored to ensure that progress is maintained across the Strategy's five-year span. This will include regular reviews.

The delivery of the UK Vision Strategy requires a united eye health and sight loss sector, speaking with one voice to strongly influence the future direction and prioritisation of eye health and sight loss. Implementation needs the same collaborative approach that enabled the development of the UK Vision Strategy. It must also respect the divergence of priorities and arrangements between the countries within the UK.

Maintenance of a united and cooperative stance will be the cornerstone for achieving the UK Vision Strategy outcomes. It has a power that cannot be ignored and will be the key to its success.

For a full copy of the strategy report visit www.rnib.org.uk/ukvisionstrategy

A VISION 2020 UK initiative led by RNIB and championed at a local level by BlindVoice UK.

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