

Sight Concern

Information Booklet



**Introduction**

These information sheets have been produced by Sight Concern Worcestershire to provide information about some of the local and national services available to people with sight loss. This is not an exhaustive list. The staff and volunteers from Sight Concern Worcestershire have access to information about a far wider range of services and are happy to provide support to assist people to access these services or find out more about them.

This document can be made available in large print, Braille or in audio. For further information please contact Sight Concern Worcestershire 01905 723245.

**Disclaimer**

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this booklet is correct at the time of going to print. However due to the nature of the information Sight Concern Worcestershire cannot be held responsible for any discrepancies.

**Revised April 2019**

**INDEX**

1. Certification & Registration

2. Information & Support

• Sensory Impairment Team

• Hospital Services

• Children’s Services

• Local Organisations

• National Organisations

• Organisations for Specific Eye Conditions

3. Communication

• Talking Books, Newspapers & Magazines

• Further Reading and Listening

• Large Print Newspaper

• Radios, Cassette and CD players

• Information on Computers

• Directory Enquiry Services

4. Equipment

5. Money Matters

• Benefit Advice

 • Financial Benefits

• Concessions

• Banking and Bills

6. Leisure

• Holidays

• Cinema, TV and Theatre

• Living Paintings

• Sport

7. Travel & Transport

• Blue Badge

• Bus Travel

• Community Transport

• Rail Travel

8. Education, Training & Employment

• Education and Training

• Employment and Training

9. Other Useful Information

**1- Certification & Registration**

What is certification and registration?

People with a significant degree of sight loss are eligible to be officially registered as sight impaired (partially sighted) or severely sight impaired (blind).

The term visually impaired describes people with different degrees of sight loss, but some official terms, such as partially sighted and blind are still used at times, so they may be used in some parts of this booklet.

Being registered as severely sight impaired (blind) does NOT necessarily mean that you have total loss of vision or that you will lose your sight completely. Many people who are registered still retain a useful level of vision.

Registration is voluntary but can give entitlement to certain benefits.

The Sensory Impairment Team, part of Worcestershire County Council can register you, but first you must be seen by a Consultant Ophthalmologist at the Ophthalmology department of the hospital you attend. They can then authorise the registration status.

The Adult and Community Services Department of Worcestershire County Council has a legal responsibility to keep an up to date register of severely sight impaired/blind or sight impaired/partially sighted people living in the county. The team are made aware of this via the Ophthalmology Departments and the CVI (Certificate of Visual Impairment). Being registered may be a pre-requisite for accessing some benefits and other services.

**2- Information & Support**

**The Sensory Impairment Team**

The Sensory Impairment Team includes specialist Social Workers for deaf and hard of hearing people, specialist Social Workers and Rehabilitation Workers for visually impaired people and a specialist Deafblind Services

Co-Ordinator.

The team offers a countywide service to people with a visual and/or hearing impairment in their own homes.

The team also provides specialist support to deafblind people. The overall task of the team is promoting independence and assisting people to live in the community.

The Sensory Impairment Team can offer an assessment of a person’s needs in their own home. From the identified issues they may:

Help people to remain or become independent.

Provide rehabilitation services enabling people to take increasing control of their own lives, enhancing their independence, quality of life and personal choices

Discuss practical problems or other issues relating to sight and hearing loss.

Offer registration to people who have had a CVI (certificate of visual impairment) completed by an Ophthalmologist.

Help people learn new skills to enable them to continue with daily tasks, such as how to get around safely and cooking.

Assist service users and carers to maximise their income and advise on welfare benefits.

Highlight other services and organisations relevant to needs.

The team may offer some items of specialist mobility, and also aids and equipment without charge following an assessment. They may also be able to demonstrate some other items in the person’s own home and advise on purchasing equipment.

**Worcestershire County Council**

Access Triage and Intervention

Sensory Impairment Section

County Hall, Spetchley Road

Worcester

WR5 2NP, 01905 765 707

**Hospital Services**

Within Worcestershire, there are a number of Ophthalmology units based within local hospitals.

These are:

Worcestershire Royal 01905 763333

Kidderminster 01562 823424

Tenbury 01584 810643

Redditch 01527 503030

Bromsgrove 01527 488000

Evesham 01386 502449

These clinics see and treat patients with varying degrees of sight loss and different eye conditions. Many people go to an Ophthalmology clinic on a regular basis.

**Low Vision Clinics**

Most hospitals within the county hold Low Vision Clinics on a regular basis. These are run by Orthoptists who assess a

person’s level of vision and then issue the appropriate strength magnifier on loan. During this appointment, different types of lighting may also be discussed.

Clinics within Worcestershire are held at the following hospitals:

Worcestershire Royal 01905 763333

Kidderminster 01562 823424

Redditch 01527 503030

Bromsgrove 01527 488031

Evesham 01386 502449

Sight Concern Worcestershire also holds low vision clinics. All magnifiers issued during these appointments are loaned free of charge. During this appointment the individual has the opportunity to find out about other aids and equipment which can help with day to day tasks.

**Children’s Services**

Information about services for children with disabilities can be obtained from the Children with Disabilities Team at Worcestershire County Council by telephoning the Family Front Door Team on 01905 822 666

**Contact A Family**

Help for families who care for children with any disability or special needs. Telephone: 0808 808 3555 [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/)

**LOOK - National Federation of Families with Visually Impaired Children**

Telephone: 01432 376314 [www.look-uk.org](http://www.look-uk.org/)

**Blind Children UK**

Telephone: 0800 781 1444 [www.nbcs.org.uk](http://www.nbcs.org.uk/)

**RNIB Children’s Services**

Telephone helpline: 0303 123 9999 [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk/)

**Local Organisations**

**Sight Concern Worcestershire** is a local charity that offers a wide range of services, information, advice and support for people affected by sight loss across Worcestershire.

Our community based activities take place across the districts and include local based social groups, advice and support officers and volunteers who enable people to remain living independently at home and enjoying their community.

Our other services include:

-Low Vision Clinics and loan of magnifiers.

-Resource room stocked with aids and equipment. We operate an appointment system for this service, so please call us for further information.

-Agents for British Wireless for the Blind.

-Sight loss awareness training.

If you would like further information about any of Sight Concern’s services please telephone 01905 723245 or email info@sightconcern.co.uk

**Macular Degeneration Groups**

There are three local groups in Worcester, Kidderminster and Barnt Green.

For more information, contact the Macular Society Helpline on 0300 3030 111.

**Pershore Pathfinders** is a group that meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday mornings each month at the Council Chamber, Pershore Town Hall, Main Street, in Pershore. This group has guest speakers, quizzes and outings. Like the other groups, the members are all visually impaired and they find that the information sharing is invaluable.

For more information please contact Sue Cox on 01386 710294. (Text 0796 6314 092). www.pershorepathfinders.com

**Redditch Association for the Blind** is a local society that supports visually impaired people living in and around

Redditch. They meet once a fortnight on a Thursday afternoon between 12.00pm and 2.00pm.

For further information contact Mrs Barbara Bakewell on 01527 68379

**Share and Learn Evesham** is a local group of visually impaired people who meet at Yates Court, 95-97 High St, Evesham WR11 4DN every Monday morning. A variety of activities take place throughout the morning.

For more information please contact Jean Smyth on 01386 244 873.

**National Organisations**

**Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA)**

The head office is based in Reading and can be contacted on 0118 983 5555, www.guidedogs.org.uk.

Alternatively, there is a team based in Worcestershire and they can be contacted on 0845 372 7434. GDBA can provide information and advice for anyone wishing to apply for a guide dog.

**Listening Eye**

Telephone: 0800 783 1979 (free phone)

A National helpline for anyone with a sight problem and their carers. They can be contacted Tuesday to Thursday from 6.00pm– 10.00pm.

**Partially Sighted Society (PSS)**

Telephone: 01302 965 195 [www.partsight.org.uk](http://www.partsight.org.uk)

PSS provides information and advice on all aspects of living with sight loss. They can be contacted Monday to Friday, 9.30am – 4.30pm.

**SENSE Information and Advice Service**

Telephone: 0300 330 9256 or 0207 520 0972 [www.sense.org.](http://www.sense.org.)uk. SENSE provides support for people who have both visual and hearing loss. For further information contact SENSE on the number above.

**Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB)**

Telephone: 0303 123 9999 [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk/)

The RNIB provides comprehensive support and information service, including publications, talking books and products. They also operate a helpline from 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

**www.whitestick.co.uk** is a website specifically to assist visually impaired people to locate information and services relating to sight loss.

**QAC Sight Village**

Telephone: Queen Alexander College on 0121 428 5050 [www.](http://www/) qac.ac.uk Sight Village is held at a large venue in Birmingham, every July and showcases the latest technology, products and support services available to people with sight loss.

**The Accessible Friends Network** [www.tafn.org.uk](http://www.tafn.org.uk/)

A registered charity providing computer training, support and social networks for people with a visual impairment.

**Organizations for Specific Eye Conditions**

The following organizations provide support for those with a specific eye condition:

**Macular Society**

Telephone Helpline: 0845 2412041 www.macularsociety.org

Open Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00p

**International Glaucoma Association**

Telephone: 01233 648170 www.glaucoma-association.com

**Charles Bonnet Syndrome**

Some people who have significant sight loss may experience visual hallucinations. For more information contact Sight Concern Worcestershire on 01905 723245 or RNIB on 0303 123 9999

**RP Fighting Blindness**

Telephone: 01280 821334 [www.rpfightingblindness.org.uk](http://www.rpfightingblindness.org.uk/)

Primarily to raise funds for research and offer support and advice to people and their carers who have Retinitis Pigmentosa. They also operate a national helpline open

Monday to Friday 9.00am - 9.00pm which can be contacted on 0845 1232354.

**The Albino Fellowship**

Telephone: 01282 771900 [www.albinism.org.uk](http://www.albinism.org.uk/). A helpline which is open Tuesday and Friday from 2.00pm - 3.00pm.

**Behcet’s Syndrome Society**

Helpline: 03451 307329 www.behcets.org.uk

**The Childhood Eye Cancer Trust (CHECT)** formally the Retinoblastoma Society Telephone: 020 7377 5578 [www.chect.org.uk](http://www.chect.org.uk)

**Cone Dystrophy Information**

(Visual Impairment Scotland - VIS)

Telephone: 0131 651 6078 [www.viscotland.org.uk](http://www.viscotland.org.uk/)

**Diabetes UK**

Telephone: 0345 123 2399 www.diabetes.org.uk. Advice and support on all aspects of Diabetes including sight loss.

**Keratoconus Self Help and Support Group**

Telephone: 020 8993 4759 [www.keratoconus-group.org.uk](http://www.keratoconus-group.org.uk/)

**Laurence-Moon-Bardet-Biedl Syndrome**

Telephone: 01633 718415 [www.lmbbs.org.uk](http://www.lmbbs.org.uk/)

**Nystagmus Network Helpline**

Telephone: 0845 634 2630 or 02920 454242

www.nystagmusnetwork.org Helpline is open from Monday to Thursday, from 6.30pm - 8.00pm.

**Stargardt’s Macular Dystrophy**

Contact the RNIB helpline on 0303 123 9999

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

**Stroke Association**

Telephone: 0303 3033 100 [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk/)

**Uveitis Information Group**

Email: info@uveitis.net www.uveitis.net

**3- Communication**

**Talking Books, Newspapers and Magazines**

**Local Talking Newspapers**

Local talking newspapers are a free service. The local newspaper is recorded on tape, CD or memory stick and sent through the post free of charge. There are also nearly 500 other local talking newspapers in the country.

Below are the contact details for your local talking newspaper:

**Bromsgrove and Redditch Talking Newspaper** Call Margaret Mountford on 01527 451 292 or email mmountford@blueyonder.co.uk

**Malvern Talking Newspaper**

Contact Anne Dicks on malverntalkingnews@gmail.com or call Sight Concern Worcestershire on 01905 723245

**Wyre Forest Talking Newspaper**

Register online at [www.wftn.org.uk](http://www.wftn.org.uk/) or phone listener liaison officers Christine Key or Janet Sheldon on 07581 899 977

**Worcester Talking News**

Contact the Chairman at Colin Chance House,11 Wyld’s Lane, Worcester, WR5 1DA or telephone 01905 767766

**Evesham Talking Newspaper**

Telephone 01386 422812 or the Chairman—Peter Wisbey on 01386 41165

**Pershore Talking Newspaper**

Contact Nicola Templeton Ward on 01684 565082 or by email nntw@me.com

**Birmingham Talking Newspaper**

Contact Lizzy Hunting by email info@btna.org.uk or by post at 25

Raddlebarn Farm Drive, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6UN

**Black Country Talking Newspaper**

Contact The Pocklington Resource Centre, Mary Stevens Centre,221 Hagley Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 2JP. Phone 01384 443 680 or email claire.bayley@ pocklington-trust.org.uk

For further information on national talking newspapers and magazines please contact the RNIB on 0303 123 9999 or visit [www.tnauk.org.uk](http://www.tnauk.org.uk).

**Calibre Audio Library**

Telephone: 01296 432339 [www.calibre.org.uk](http://www.calibre.org.uk/)

They hold over 8000 books which are recorded in full. Available on audio cassettes, CD and in MP3 format. There is a single payment joining fee and thereafter the service is free of charge, any contributions are purely voluntary. Please send a photocopy of a registration card, a photocopy of a BD8 certificate or a doctor’s certificate. Apply direct on the above telephone number.

**RNIB Talking Book Service**

Telephone: 0303 123 9999 [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk/)

The RNIB provide a talking book service. They hold an extensive range of books on a variety of topics and are available as a download on USB or Daisy CD.

**RNIB Magazine Service**

Telephone: 0303 123 9999 [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk/)

Topical magazines available in large print, Braille and audio.

**Torch Trust**

Telephone: 01858 438260 [www.torchtrust.org](http://www.torchtrust.org/)

Torch Trust produces Christian literature in formats which visually impaired people can access.

**Worcestershire Council Library Services**

All Worcestershire libraries cater for people with visual impairments. Large print books, spoken word cassettes, CDs and music cassettes are available. Free reservations and reading aids are also available. Spoken word cassettes, CDs and music cassettes can be borrowed free of charge for 21 days if you are registered as partially sighted or blind. There is also the Library at Home service. This is a free service for people who cannot visit the library because of age, disability or long-term illness. Books including large print and audio plus CDs are brought to your home by library volunteers. Please contact your local library for more information on this service.

**Further Reading and Listening**

**ClearVision**

Telephone: 020 8789 9575 [www.clearvisionproject.org](http://www.clearvisionproject.org/) ClearVision is a UK postal lending library of mainstream children’s books with added Braille. ClearVision’s books have Braille, print and pictures, making them suitable for visually impaired or sighted children and adults to share. There are over 12,000 books in the collection, including tactile board books, plus fiction and non-fiction in grade 1 and grade 2 Braille. They also have a small collection of very simple books with added Moon text.

**National Listening Library (Listening Books)**

Telephone: 020 7407 9417 [www.listening-books.org.uk](http://www.listening-books.org.uk/) The National Listening Library is an audio book charity offering MP3, CDs, tape and internet streaming. They have 4000 titles available on loan and your choice is sent through the post.

**Oculus**

Telephone: 0844 477 4966 [www.partsight.org.uk](http://www.partsight.org.uk/)

Oculus is a bi-monthly magazine in large print produced by the Partially Sighted Society. There is an annual subscription.

**Radio**

**Amateur Radio Enthusiasts**

Telephone: 0800 028 8660 [www.raibc.org.uk](http://www.raibc.org.uk/)

The Radio Amateur Invalid and Blind Club offer services for disabled and blind radio amateurs.

**In Touch**

[**www.bbc.co.uk/radio4**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4)

‘In Touch’ is a radio programme on Radio 4 every Tuesday evening between 8.40pm – 9.00pm. This programme is of special interest to people with a visual impairment. After the programme there is an off-air phone-in.

**Radio, Cassette and CD Players**

**British Wireless for the Blind Fund (BWBF)**

Telephone: 01622 754757

BWBF is an independent, registered charity that is able to supply specially adapted radios and cassette recorders. Machines may be purchased from BWBF or may be provided on free permanent loan to people who are registered blind or partially sighted. For further information please contact them direct at [www.blind.org.uk](http://www.blind.org.uk/)or Sight Concern Worcestershire on 01905 723245 who are agents in Worcestershire for the scheme.

**Information on Computer Technology**

**British Computer Association of the Blind**

Telephone: 0845 643 9811 [www.bcab.org.uk](http://www.bcab.org.uk/)

Provides support and advice to those who are computer experts or new to information technology.

**RNIB Technology Information Service**

Telephone: 0303 123 9999

This service can assist you in identifying your requirements and help with technical queries that you may have. Whether you need to write letters, read printed documents, access the internet or keep in touch with family by e-mail, they can create packages that will meet your needs.

**AbilityNet**

AbilityNet exists to change the lives of disabled people by helping them to use digital technology at work, at home or in education. Call 0800 269 545 abilitynet.org.uk

**Directory Enquiry Services**

**Free Directory Enquiries**

Telephone: 0800 587 0195 or 195 from your BT telephone. British Telecom provides a free talking directory enquiries service for those who are unable to use the telephone directory. For information and registration call one of the above telephone numbers. If your telephone line is not provided by BT you are still entitled to apply.

Alternatively, your own telephone provider may also provide a similar service, please contact them direct for further information.

**4-Equipment**

There are specific pieces of equipment that may help you overcome some of the frustrations that loss of sight may bring.

**The Sensory Impairment Team** (Tel: 01905 765 707) may be able to provide some pieces of equipment free of charge depending on the individual’s circumstances.

Sight Concern Worcestershire also give advice on specialist equipment, such as large button telephones, talking clocks and watches, talking microwaves or accessible mobile phones. Please contact us on 01905 723245 for an appointment. If you are interested in purchasing some equipment, you may be exempt from paying VAT on certain items.

Equipment can be purchased from the following specialist suppliers:

**Cobolt Systems Ltd**

Telephone: 01493 700172 [www.cobolt.co.uk](http://www.cobolt.co.uk/)

The Old Mill House, Mill Road, Reedham, Norwich, Norfolk, NR13 3TL.

**SW Retail Ltd / IC Vision Ltd**

Telephone: 01226 762513 [www.swretail.co.uk](http://www.swretail.co.uk/)

PO Box 4787, Sheffield, S35 5BW.

**Partially Sighted Society**

Telephone: 0844 477 4966 [www.partsight.org.uk](http://www.partsight.org.uk/)

Head Office: 7/9 Bennetthorpe, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN2 6AA.

**Royal National Institute of the Blind** Telephone: 0303 123 9999 [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk/) PO Box 173, Peterborough, PE2 6WS

**Sight Concern Worcestershire**

Telephone: 01905 723245

The Bradbury Centre, 2 Sansome Walk, Worcester, WR1 1LH. Please note that access to the Resource Room is by appointment.

**5-Money Matters**

**Benefit Advice**

Benefit Advice can be obtained from a variety of sources:

**The Citizens Advice Bureau:**

Worcester 0344 411 1303

Droitwich 0344 411 1303

Bromsgrove 0844 411 1303

Malvern 01684 563611

Evesham 01386 712100

Kidderminster 0344 411 1444

Tenbury 01584 810 860

**D.I.A.L (Disability Information Advice Line)** offices are located in Kidderminster and Worcester. Kidderminster DIAL can be contacted on 01562 60241. They cover the North Worcestershire area. DIAL South Worcestershire can be contacted on 01905 27790. [www.dialuk.org.uk](http://www.dialuk.org.uk/)

**The Sensory Impairment and Telecare Team** also has a benefits advisor who may be able to assist you.

Telephone: 01905 768053 for information.

**Action for Blind People**

Telephone via RNIB 0303 123 9999 [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/) Action for Blind People can provide independent and confidential advice regarding benefits for people with visual impairments.

**Department for Work and Pensions**

For people with a disability, carers and representatives.

0345 608 8545 www.dwp.gov.uk

**RNIB Welfare Rights and Community Care**

**Advocacy Service**

Telephone: 0303 123 9999

Provides a helpline which is open Monday to Friday, from 9.00am - 5.00pm

**Financial Benefits**

Depending on your circumstances you may be entitled to extra financial benefits and assistance. Welfare benefits are complex and there are frequent changes. We would advise you to contact one of the aforementioned organisations to ensure you receive up-to-date advice.

**Income Tax**

If you are registered as severely sight impaired you will be able to claim a Blind Person’s Allowance. A married couple can transfer any surplus allowance from one to the other. [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/)

**Concessions**

**TV Licences**

Telephone: 0300 790 6131 [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/)

A 50% concession applies if you are registered as severely sight impaired and are the licence holder. Anyone over 75 is entitled to a completely free licence.

**NHS Benefits**

You may be entitled to free NHS sight tests if you are

registered as blind or partially sighted and/or free prescriptions because of age, low income or medical conditions. For further information on entitlement and an application form you will need to complete a FP92A form available from your local doctor’s surgery, chemist or benefits agency.

**Council Tax Reduction**

You may be entitled to a reduction in your council tax bill if you need to use a specific room in your home due to a disability.

This may include the need to house specialist equipment such as CCTV or IT/scanning equipment. For further information contact your local county council.

**Banking and Bills**

Most banks and building societies offer a range of services to support you, including telephone banking, internet banking, large print or Braille bank statements and correspondence.

They may also be able to provide cheque book guides to assist with writing cheques. For further information please contact your bank.

There is also the option of having a “Chip and Signature” card rather than using a PIN number. The card is inserted into the machine as usual but it tells the cashier that a signature is required. For further information please contact your local bank, building society or credit card company.

Most companies will provide your bills in large print, read your bills over the telephone and may have other services that could assist you.

**6-Leisure**

**Holidays**

There are several organizations which provide holidays and hotels that cater for people with a visual impairment. Some of these are outlined below:

**Action for Blind People**

Telephone Vision Hotels: 0845 603 0051 [www.afbp.org/hotels](http://www.afbp.org/hotels) Have specific hotels and self-catering accommodation for people who have a visual impairment.

**Tourism for All**

Telephone: 0303 303 0146 [www.tourismforall.org.uk](http://www.tourismforall.org.uk/) Provides information and advice on holidays and places to visit for people with a disability including sight loss.

**Traveleyes**

Telephone: 0844 804 0221 [www.traveleyes.co.uk](http://www.traveleyes.co.uk/)

Holidays for blind and partially sighted people throughout the world. The company can assist with sighted guides for the lone traveller.

**ReVitalise**

Telephone: 0303 303 0145 [www.revitalise.org.uk](http://www.revitalise.org.uk)

Vitalise (formerly Winged Fellowship Trust and Guide Dog Holidays) provide holidays for visually impaired people.

**Cinema, TV and Theatre**

Many local cinemas provide “audio description” on a number of films. This involves wearing headphones which are provided and hearing a commentary of the “non-verbal” aspects of the film. Quite often the hidden looks and gestures which make up the fabric of the film are missed by someone with a visual impairment, audio description fills in the gaps. Please contact your local cinema for further information.

If you are registered blind/severely sight impaired and/or in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance you may be entitled to a free cinema ticket for the person accompanying you. The Cinema Exhibitors Association Ltd will issue a card which is accepted by the cinema. You must complete an application form which can be obtained from your local cinema. There is an administration fee of £5. For further information please contact CEA on 01244 526016 [www.ceacard.co.uk](http://www.ceacard.co.uk/)

**RNIB**

Telephone: 0303 123 9999

Provide film videos and DVDs with audio description for sale or rent with additional commentary describing facial expressions, body language and actions.

**TV**

Some programme broadcasters provide audio description. Like a narrator telling a story, it is an additional commentary describing body language, expressions and movements. Audio description gives you information about things you might not be able to see, meaning that you can keep up with the action. [www.tvhelp.org.uk](http://www.tvhelp.org.uk/)

**Theatre**

Many theatres provide audio described productions and concessions for visually impaired people and their companions.

For further information please contact the theatre showing the production you are interested in.

**VocalEyes**

A registered charity working across the country at a variety of venues and with a range of partner organisations. Their mission is to work with blind and partially sighted people to enhance engagement with the arts and theatre. To date, VocalEyes has described more than 700 performances at 108 venues throughout the UK.

The VocalEyes experience is unique and high quality. For more information, they can be contacted on 020 7375 1043 or visit [www.vocaleyes.co.uk](http://www.vocaleyes.co.uk/)

**Living Paintings**

The Living Painting Trust 01635 299771

[www.livingpaintings.org](http://www.livingpaintings.org/). Uses sound and touch to open up the arts to people with visual impairments. All products are available free to visually impaired people.

**Sport**

**British Blind Golf Association**

New Members Secretary John Eakin on 0208 3900699 or email johnpeakin@gmail.com, www.blindgolf.co.uk.

Anyone who is visually impaired and is either an existing golfer or interested in taking up golf, can apply to be a member.

**British Blind Sport**

Telephone: 01926 424247 [www.britishblindsport.org.uk](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk/) A charity which is a leading voice for people with a visual impairment in the world of sport. BBS is a membership organisation open to all visually impaired children and adults. The activities are run by the members themselves as volunteers. Sports include: archery, athletics, bowls, cricket, football, goalball, shooting, swimming and tenpin bowling.

Additionally, it has links to information about VI judo, chess, golf, riding, sailing, skiing and water sports.

**7-Travel & Transport**

**Bus Travel**

**Worcestershire Concessionary Travel Pass**

These passes allow free travel throughout Worcestershire from 9.30am on weekdays and all day at weekends and bank holidays. If you are registered blind, partially sighted or have other significant disabilities you are entitled to apply for a pass. If you are only able to access bus services with the assistance of a companion, you may be able to apply for a “companion pass” for their use. The pass does allow free travel throughout England.

To request an application pack or for further information, please telephone 01905 765765 or visit your Worcestershire Hub Customer Service Centre.

**Traveline**

Telephone: 0871 200 2233 [**www.traveline.info**](http://www.traveline.info/)

A useful link to local public transport information and for help choosing a route.

**Blue Badge**

For the whole county call 01905 765 765

If you have a visual impairment and/or physical disability you may be entitled to a Blue Parking Badge.

These are issued to people, not cars, so any vehicle in which you are a passenger can display the badge. The charge for a Blue Badge is £10.00.

 Customers can now apply either by visiting their local Worcestershire Hub Customer Service Centre or online at [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk/) where it is possible to track the progress of your application. The application will take up to two weeks, as badges are posted from a central location to the applicant’s home.

**Community Transport**

Community Transport Schemes are set up to assist people who are unable to use conventional transport or who do not have access to it. Many local areas within Worcestershire run such schemes.

Contact telephone numbers are:

* + **Bromsgrove Rural Rides** 01527 585893
	+ **Droitwich Community Transport** 01905 779778
	+ **Malvern Dial A Ride** 01684 891121
	+ **Pershore Volunteer Centre** 01386 554299
	+ **Redditch Dial A Ride** 01527 64910
	+ **Suckley Community Cars** 01886 884221
	+ **Upton Community Care** 01684 593633
	+ **Worcester Wheels** 01905 450654
	+ **Wyre Forest Dial A Ride** 01562 755084
	+ **Community Transport (NW Worcs)** 01299 405820
	+ **Evesham Community Cars** 01386 45035
	+ **Share Link Community Minibus** 01905 765765
	+ **Transport Trust - Tenbury** 01584 810491

**Rail Travel**

**Disabled Persons Railcard** Telephone:0345 605 0525, www.disabledpersonsrailcard.co.uk

If you are registered as partially sighted or blind you can apply for a Disabled Person’s Railcard.

This entitles you to discounted rail travel on certain tickets. This railcard also entitles a companion travelling with you to receive a third off their ticket. Application forms are available from most train stations or by calling the above number. Rail companies also provide assistance at stations to assist with connections etc. 48 hours notice is required, please contact telephone: 08457 484950 for further information.

**National Rail Enquiries**

Telephone: 03457 484950 [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/)

Provides details of local and national train times.

**Timetable Information**

**Traveline - Public Transport Information**

Telephone: 0871 200 2233 [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk/)

For all bus, rail and National Express timetable information Open 7.00am to 9.00

**8 - Education, Training & Employment**

**Education and Training**

Associations of National Specialist Colleges for students with a visual impairment:

**New College, Worcester**

Telephone: 01905 763933 [www.rnibncw.ac.uk](http://www.rnibncw.ac.uk)

**Queen Alexandra College, Birmingham**

Telephone: 0121 428 5050 [www.qac.ac.uk](http://www.qac.ac.uk)

**Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford**

Telephone: 01432 265725 [www.rncb.ac.uk](http://www.rncb.ac.uk)

**Local Colleges**

Most local colleges in Worcestershire provide supported assistance to people with a disability. For more information contact your local college.

**RNIB Library**

Telephone: 0303 123 9999 [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

Has a wide range of recorded textbooks and can record other books by request.

**Opsis**

Telephone: 0121 428 5037 [www.opsis.org.uk](http://www.opsis.org.uk)

The National Association for the Education, Training and Support of Blind and Partially Sighted People works to enhance opportunities for people who are visually impaired. If you are enquiring about issues concerning leaving college, looking for a job or looking for somewhere to live, then this site can certainly help by offering information on benefits, employment, housing, accessing information and support groups.

**Employment and Training**

**Access to Work**

Disability Employment Advisors provide advice and practical support to people with a disability and their employers. Access to Work grants may also be available to help employers with any extra costs in purchasing specialist equipment or providing support.

For further information and advice please contact your local Jobcentre Plus office.

**Action for Blind People (RNIB)**

Telephone: 0303 123 9999 [**www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk**](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/)

Has an employment service which provides blind and partially sighted people of working age with a one-to-one job search and mentoring support to help secure and sustain suitable employment. They also provide support in the workplace in helping employers to retain employees who are newly diagnosed or have deteriorating sight with specialist equipment, advice and adjustments to enable them to continue in employment.

**RNIB Employment Line**

Telephone: 0800 440 2255 [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

The RNIB produces fact sheets and practical information on all aspects of work and work related issues.

 **Local Job Centre**

They have a disability officer that can advise and support you in finding work.

**9-Other Useful Information**

**British Red Cross** Telephone: 01905 450400

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

Provides a variety of services throughout the county.

**Deaf Direct** Telephone: 01905 746301 www.deafdirect.org.uk

They work with deaf and hard of hearing people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. They offer communication services, family and volunteer services, information, advice and guidance.

**Outside Clinic** Telephone: 0800 854477

[www.outsideclinic.com](http://www.outsideclinic.com/)

A national provider of home eye testing in the UK. For people who are unable to attend a High Street optician due to illness or disability.

**RADAR Keys**

These are free to Blue Badge holders and to people who are registered as blind or partially sighted. This key allows you to gain access to particular public toilets throughout the county which the general public cannot use. They are much larger and more accessible than ordinary public toilets. Please contact one of the local council hubs situated throughout the county.

**Blind Veterans UK**

Telephone: 0800 389 7979 (Applications and

Admissions) Head Office: 020 7723 5021

www.blindveterans.org.uk

Blind Veterans UK is a national charity that provides rehabilitation, training and life-long after-care for ex-Service men and women who have lost their sight. They are given support to overcome issues they experience due to their sight loss.

**Worcestershire Association of Carers**

Telephone: 0300 012 4272 www.carersworcs.org.ukProvides information, support services and promotes the needs of carers throughout the county.