



Assisting blind and partially sighted people

Achieving access for all





Assisting blind and partially sighted people.

Many partially sighted people neither use a guide dog nor a white cane. This is because most blind or partially sighted people retain a degree of useful vision.

Some visually impaired people may need assistance because of very high or very low light levels affecting their vision. Direct sunlight or bright artificial light may cause glare and many partially sighted people have difficulty with deep shade and poorly lit rooms.

- Show consideration for people using a white cane or using a guide dog. **A red band on a white cane indicates that the person is also deaf or hard of hearing.**
- If you suspect that a person is blind or partially sighted, **ask if they require assistance.**
- Introduce yourself by name.
- If you think the person might need help, say: “Do you need any assistance?”.
- If the person needs to be guided, offer your arm. **Never grab a blind person’s arm to guide them.**
- Think before you give directions to a person who is partially sighted. Speak naturally and clearly without shouting. Do not point but give clear verbal instructions.
- When offering a seat, if appropriate place the person’s hand on the back or arm of the chair.



- Remember not to leave the person talking to an empty space. Say if you are going to move away.
- As you guide people, describe your surroundings and potential obstacles, for example when approaching stairs, say whether they are ascending up or descending. Likewise, indicate whether doors open towards or away from you as you approach.
- Describe the location of the destination in relation to emergency exit(s) and the procedure for evacuation.
- When a blind person purchases food or drink, place or hold the items in front of them and explain where they are in relation to the person's hands.
- Many blind people are familiar with the clock method for locating items, for example your drink is at one o'clock.
- When giving change to a visually impaired person it may be helpful to count out the money as you hand it to them.
- When providing information for blind and partially sighted people ensure that it is presented in an accessible format, for example large print (appropriate font size on A4 paper) or Braille. Always ask what the person's preference is.
- Where there is a queuing system, be aware that blind and partially sighted people may need assistance as they may not be able to see a numbering system.

More detailed information on assisting blind and partially sighted people can be obtained from, Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind via Richard James, CVAB Director, on **020 8688 2486**, by fax on **020 8681 7525**, or by E mail; **cvab@croydonvisual.plus.com**

For further guidance on making information accessible see Card 5.

