**Sight Loss Charities’ collective offer to blind and partially sighted asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the UK**

No single organisation provides all of the following but between us we can support access to provision such as:

**Advice and information**

Blind and partially sighted refugees, their family, or those supporting them, can call the helpline on **0303 123 9999** 8am-8pm on weekdays and 9am-1pm on Saturdays, to receive specialist advice and information.

When a caller requires an interpreter, we check if they have a family member or friend, they are happy to interpret for them, if not we can access a telephone interpretation service.

We will ensure callers get the right specialist advice and information, and signpost to appropriate services and organisations which can help them adjust to living in a new country.

We can also provide written specialist information, in large print if required, translated into in the person’s preferred language and other alternative formats in English.

**Offering Accommodation**

We can support individuals or families offering accommodation to a person with a visual impairment asylum seekers and refugeesin the UK including:

* Advice and information (see above)
* Sight loss awareness e-learning training
* Access to support services (see below)
* Free specialist equipment (see below)
* Advice on pet welfare
* Community connection locally and online
* Connection with any local sight loss organisations in the area.

**Emotional Support**

We can offer Mental Health Wellbeing Checks for blind and partially sighted asylum seekers and refugees. The service is able to offer an hour’s counselling space with a qualified sight loss counsellor supported by a translator if needed.

**Support services**

We can offer support to access the following:

* Eye health, including free eyesight tests and help paying for glasses
* To register as blind or partially sighted in the UK
* Employment support
* Money, benefits and finance
* Children, young people and education (including family fun days, pre-school activities and mobility skills training)
* Technology and useful products (including some technology grants)
* Advice on pet welfare
* Community connection locally and online
* Connection with any local sight loss organisations.

**Equipment**

We can supply free specialist equipment for adults and children including canes, eye shields, games, health and mobility items, and technology products.

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**Sight Loss Charities**

The Sight Loss Charities involved in supporting this response are:

Blind Veterans UK, Glaucoma UK, Guide Dogs, Macular Society, Retina UK, RNIB, Thomas Pocklington Trust and Visionary (a membership body representing 118 local sight loss charities throughout the UK).

Sight loss charities have come together to provide a joined-up approach to blind and partially sighted asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the UK. They have also pledged to respond jointly to the displacement of people with vision impairment resulting from similar geopolitical events.

**Contact**

Blind and partially sighted asylum seekers or refugees, their family, or those supporting them, can access any of the services above via the helpline on **0303 123 9999** 8am-8pm on weekdays and 9am-1pm on Saturdays.

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