



**Sight Loss
Councils**

Ask. Don't assume

**How to support
a blind or partially
sighted person**

**This short guide has
been created by Sight
Loss Council members
to accompany vision
awareness training. Links
to more information can be
found on the final page.**



Not everyone sees the same

Visual impairment is a spectrum from low vision and partial sight through to full blindness. Not all visually impaired people are totally blind. Read more on common eye conditions and watch the film 'What do we see' which simulates the six common sight conditions in the UK on Thomas Pocklington Trust's website.



Not everyone looks blind

Sight loss can often be hidden. Not everyone carries a cane, wears dark glasses or has a guide dog.



How to communicate with a blind or partially sighted person

- **Ask. Don't assume.** The person may not need help. Let them tell you how they wish to be supported.
- **Always talk to the person directly** – not to their sighted companion or their guide dog (it happens!).
- **Do not grab.** Definitely – do not grab or pull them.
- **Talk normally.** You do not need to shout, talk down to them or use over-simplified language.



Guiding a blind or partially sighted person



Ask if and how the person wishes to be guided.

- Preferred methods: linking or gripping your elbow, hand on your shoulder or simply following you.
- Ask which side is best.
- When walking – check if the pace is OK.
- Tell them when approaching doors, steps, stairs and seating.

When approaching stairs, let them know if the stairs go up or down and check if they want to continue to be guided or if they prefer to use the handrail.

After you have finished guiding ask them for feedback, then tell them you are leaving and, if relevant, inform someone that they are there.



Remember always to

Ask.

Don't assume

And ...

Explore how your organisation can be more accessible for blind and partially sighted people – including how you present information and your premises.

More info

www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk

[www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/
common-eye-conditions](http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/common-eye-conditions)

[www.rnib.org.uk/advice/guiding-
blind-or-partially-sighted-person](http://www.rnib.org.uk/advice/guiding-blind-or-partially-sighted-person)



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