



The impact of sight loss: how could you best support an employee?



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What is visual impairment?

Visual impairment is the term used to describe a loss of sight that cannot be corrected using glasses or contact lenses. There are two main categories of visual impairment:

Registered partially sighted

Which means the level of sight impairment is moderate

Registered blind

Which means a severe sight impairment where activities that rely on eyesight become difficult or become impossible

Vision loss can be temporary, permanent, instant or deteriorating over time.

It can be a loss from birth or due to an accident or illness and even age.

It can be in one or both eyes.

Being told you have a visual impairment that can't be treated can be difficult to come to terms with.

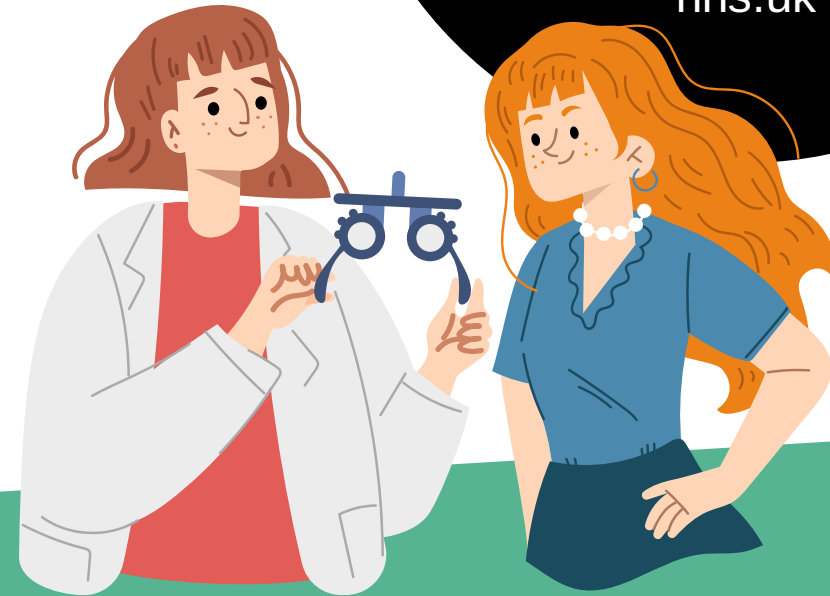
Some people go through a process similar to bereavement, where they experience a range of emotions including shock, anger, and denial, before eventually coming to accept their condition.

There are many different reasons for sight loss but the most common eye conditions in the UK today are **Cataracts, Diabetic Retinopathy, Retinitis Pigmentosa, Hemianopia, Age-related Macular Degeneration and Glaucoma.**

Macular degeneration (AMD) is the most common condition, generally affecting people over the age of 55.

In the UK,
more than 2 million
people are living with
sight loss. Of these,
around 340,000 are
registered as blind or
partially sighted.

nhs.uk



How we can support

When talking with a person who is blind or has a vision impairment:

- Always identify yourself and any others with you, especially if using online meeting tools such as Teams
- Ask if the person requires assistance, and listen for specific instructions, however, be prepared for your offer to be refused
- If guiding a person, let them take your arm, rather than taking theirs, and describe any changes in the environment such as steps, obstacles etc
- Always describe things verbally
- Ensure front of office staff are briefed and prepared on how to greet and assist people with vision impairment



How we can support

- The guide dog will go on command – always advise where this can be such as an outside garden area
- If the person has a guide dog, please remember the dog is working and should not be patted, fed or distracted
- Allow more time and greater flexibility for training and inductions
- Offer minutes of meetings well in advance and provide accessible presentation slides prior to delivery
- Be aware that glare and poor lighting may exacerbate vision impairment
- Relax; many people find it's ok to say common phrases like “see what I mean” and won't take offence



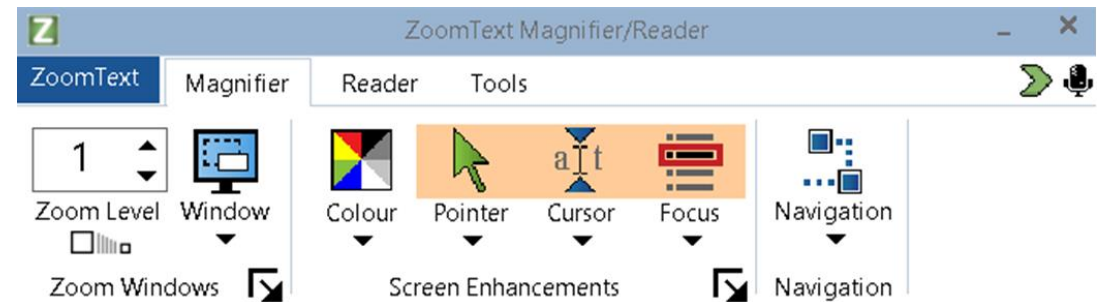
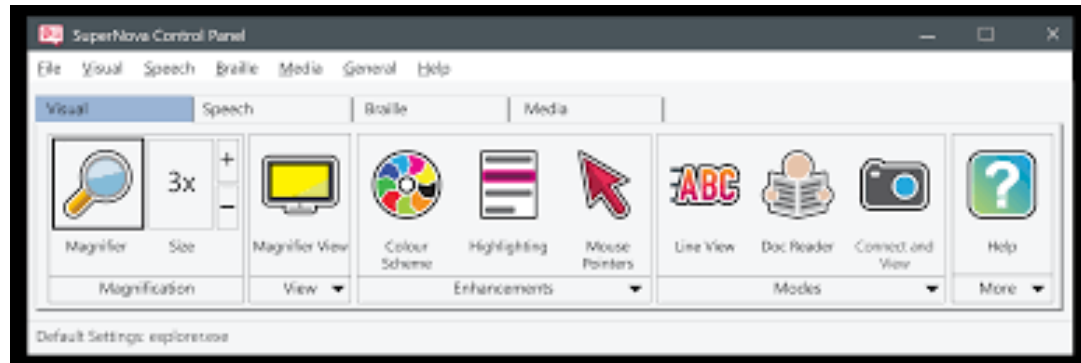
Posturite's services supporting visual loss

- Sight Loss Assessment
- Awareness training and impact training
- Building and working location audits
- Assistive Technology and training



Assistive Technology solutions

Magnification software



Assistive Technology solutions

Screen reader software



Powerful screen reader for Windows computers



Assistive Technology solutions

Hi-visibility peripherals



Assistive Technology solutions

Magnifiers



Assistive Technology solutions

Braille devices



Assistive Technology solutions

OrCam



Andrew Sherman

Assistive Technology Senior Service Manager, Home Office

- Civil servant for last 24 years
- Provides support to HO staff who use assistive technology
- Became visually impaired at 18
- "Being blind puts obstacles in the way, but there is always a way around them"





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