.**first step** **certificate of vision impairment (CVI)**

**If your sight loss reaches certain levels, you can be certified as severely sight impaired or sight impaired by your eye specialist (ophthalmologist).**

**A**[**Certification of Vision Impairment (CVI)**](https://www.henshaws.org.uk/our-guide-to-the-certificate-of-vision-impairment-cvi/)**form is completed by your eye specialist and a copy is sent to your local council, your GP and to you.**

**As part of a new project this CVI form will also now be sent to the Greater Manchester First Step CVI Service.**

**The First Step CVI Service has been set up to ensure that everybody who receives a CVI has access to support at that time. The team will provide information, advice and guidance to patients and make sure they are referred on to organisations which can help to support them.**

**How it works**

**The CVI forms will be sent to the First Step CVI Service, the team will contact patients by phone to explain the service and the support available to them. Patients can also contact the team directly for support at the time they need it (all contact details are below).**

**We know that not everybody who receives a CVI gets information and support at the time of diagnosis. This new service aims to ensure that everyone who receives a CVI is aware of what they are entitled to and where they can go for further support. Sight loss can have a huge impact on peoples’ lives, the service aims to ensure people know they are not alone. It will help to guide them to the support available.**

**What if I don’t feel ready?**

**The team will also make regular contact with patients to ensure they have the right support at the right time. Not every patient feels like they are ready to engage with referrals and support at that time, so It’s important to give patients the opportunity to engage with the service later. Receiving a CVI can be an emotional time, it can take time to come to terms with, the service will be there when the patient is ready.**

**Who will the service make referrals to?**

**The First Steps CVI team will discuss your situation and help you make informed decisions as to the referrals you would like. These are the four main services they will make a referral to:**

**Your local authority’s sensory team. This team is based in your local authority’s adult social service, they can offer support, solutions and training to help with day-to-day tasks. They can offer support and training with getting out and about.**

**Patient Support and Eye Clinic Liaison Officers. These teams are based in the eye hospitals and are your link to information and advice. A Patient support officer or ECLO can talk you through your eye condition, help with appointments. They are a listening ear, at a time when it’s difficult to take in the situation. These services can also help with low vision appointments, and patient transport.**

[**Henshaws**](https://www.henshaws.org.uk/)**- A local charity supporting people with sight loss in Greater Manchester, with a wider digital National offer.**

[**The RNIB**](https://www.rnib.org.uk/) **offer many services from Benefits checks to talking books, the service will make a referral to the RNIB on your behalf.**

[**Click here to go to our patient support page**](https://www.henshaws.org.uk/what-we-offer/community-services/hospital-support/)

**Online support in our Knowledge Village**

**Our online resources including eBooks, videos and our blog provide free information on living with sight loss, so you can access our help and advice no matter where you are. These resources are useful if you or a family member are blind or visually impaired, or if you are a healthcare professional.**

[**Explore our Knowledge Village**](https://www.henshaws.org.uk/knowledge-village/)

**RNIB Resources**

**The RNIB offer many services from Benefits checks to talking books, the service will make a referral to the RNIB on your behalf.**

[**Visit the RNIB website**](https://www.rnib.org.uk/%C2%A0)

**Who is running the service?**

**The service is a partnership between the NHS and Henshaws. This project is being managed in partnership with the**[**Greater Manchester Combined Authority**](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/)**, Manchester Royal Eye Hospital,**[**RNIB**](https://www.rnib.org.uk/)**and**[**Thomas Pocklington Trust**](https://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/)**.**

**Contact Details:**

**First Step CVI Service**

**Phone number – 0300 303 5787**

**Email Address –**[**FirstStep.CVITeam@mft.nhs.uk**](mailto:FirstStep.CVITeam@mft.nhs.uk)