

**.henshaws**

**sight loss  
support team**



**How Henshaws Can Help  
You Live Independently  
with Sight Loss**



## About us

**We are a North West sight loss charity offering a range of services to provide visually impaired people with an improved quality of life.**

We work with people of all ages living with sight loss and a range of other disabilities. We aim to empower them to take steps to change their lives for the better.

We do this through offering a bespoke package of support, activities and training which are tailor-made to the needs of each person.

Our friendly and experienced staff and volunteers are passionate and committed to delivering valuable services that change lives.

# How can we help you?

**Our First Step Team can provide you with specialist information and advice as well as emotional and practical support, to help you overcome everyday challenges and take your next steps.**

**Contact us for more information 0300 222 5555**

We offer a comprehensive Patient Support Service at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital and Altrincham Hospital, including confidential conversations, liaison with medical professionals, clear explanations of medical information, and guidance on local services, aids, and equipment. We also work closely with Stepping Hill Hospital and Optegra Stockport to provide follow-up care for patients receiving a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI). Additionally, we extend our CVI follow-up and support to most children and young people at MREH, ensuring they receive the help they need. We can also connect you with other relevant organisations for further support.

## Register with us

In order to access our services, you will first need to register with Henshaws. This is so we can make referrals easily to the services you would like to access, and keep a record of how you are using our services.



# Support we offer

Once you have contacted our First Steps team, we can help you with these services:



## **ENABLEMENT SUPPORT**

Helps those with sight loss access local services and live independently through personalised plans.

## **LIVING WELL WITH SIGHT LOSS**

This course offers information, advice and guidance to make living with sight loss easier, building confidence and independence.

## **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Our social groups help people with sight loss make friends, reduce loneliness, and build support networks.

## **HINTS AND TIPS**

Provides articles, videos, and guides on living with sight loss and supporting others.

## **DIGITAL ENABLEMENT**

Supports individuals with sight loss to access essential online services and stay connected independently.

## **COUNSELLING**

Six weekly sessions to help individuals cope with the emotions of sight loss in a safe and confidential setting.

## **I CAN DO IT**

Our I Can Do It residential programme enables children and young people with sight loss to develop their independence skills.



## Enablement Service

**Our Enablement Service supports individuals of all ages with sight loss to access services and live more independently in their local area.** We have Enablement Officers covering Salford, Trafford, Manchester, Oldham and Bolton, so they can provide support and give you information about the services that are local to you.

Once you are referred to our Enablement Service, the Enablement Officer for your area will create a personal plan with you – this can either take place face-to-face, or over the phone. The personal plan will help identify the support you need. Following the personal plan, the Enablement Officer will recommend appropriate support.

# Living Well with Sight Loss

**We empower people to build confidence and independence through our Living Well with Sight Loss course. This course offers information, advice and guidance to make living with sight loss easier.**

Throughout these practical and engaging sessions, participants can develop a variety of life skills and build resilience. Course participants also benefit hugely from peer support and meeting other people also living with sight loss.

Sessions can include cooking tips, safety in the home, assistive aids advice, equipment demonstrations and guidance on transport.



# Social activities

**Meet new people and make friends in our popular social groups. With a programme of activities ranging from coffee drop-ins and tech groups to walking outdoors and museum visits, there is something for everyone.**

Our social support groups are designed to reduce the loneliness that can be experienced by people with sight loss. We want to help you build a strong network of support by connecting you with others who have similar lived experiences. Engaging in our activities can significantly support you on your sight loss journey.

Our social and specialist groups provide opportunities for our service users to come together, spend quality time with people who understand their experiences, share ideas, and participate in a variety of activities. From social gatherings and interest-based groups, such as our Museums and Galleries group, to specialist groups like Tech Talk, there's a place for everyone.

Our community groups are a fantastic opportunity to meet new people living with sight loss, enjoy an array of activities, or simply have a chat.

Joining these groups can be a meaningful step towards building friendships and finding support.



“It’s a great opportunity to get together and just chat. We can talk about anything, and they have helped me through so many things.”

# Sight beyond vision

## A Beginners Guide to Visual Impairment

This digital guide offers essential information on support options, helping visually impaired individuals and their loved ones find the right services and feel reassured about seeking help when needed.

- ✓ **Region-Specific Information:** The guide provides localised resources and services, making it highly relevant and practical for users in specific areas.
- ✓ **Support Options:** It outlines various support options available to visually impaired individuals, ensuring they can find the services that best meet their needs.
- ✓ **Empowerment Through Knowledge:** By educating newly diagnosed individuals and their supporters about the available resources and support systems, the guide empowers them to make informed decisions and seek help when they are ready.
- ✓ **Support for Loved Ones:** The booklet is also a valuable tool for family members and friends, helping them understand how to support their loved one through this transition.
- ✓ **Personalisation:** Recognising that each person's experience with visual impairment is unique, the guide offers diverse options to cater to different needs and preferences.



**SCAN HERE TO  
DOWNLOAD**

**.henshaws**  
**sight loss  
support team**

# **Sight beyond vision:**

A Beginners Guide to Visual Impairment -  
Help and Education for Individuals and  
their Supporters





# Digital enablement

**Henshaws digital enablement team give you the skills and confidence to use essential online services. We can help you access books, newspapers, letters, and product labels, and help you stay in touch with your friends and family. Our aim is to find the right solution for you, no matter what your sight level, age, or technical ability is.**

Following an informal assessment, we may be able to offer complimentary one-to-one training sessions in person, over the phone or over a video call. In certain circumstances, we may be able to assist with applying for funding or alternative ways of obtaining some products.

There are a wide range of products and solutions that can help you perform everyday activities that will enable you to maintain your independence and quality of life. Through a personal one-to-one chat, we'll assess what your needs are and make suggestions based on best solutions for you.

We can also offer some non-tech solutions, such as different techniques for making the most of any remaining vision.

Get in touch to book a session with our digital enablement team by emailing **info@henshaws.org.uk** or ring **0300 222 5555**

## SOLUTIONS INCLUDE:

- Optical or electronic magnifiers
- Smartphone and tablet devices
- Specialist text-to-speech devices
- Accessibility software for desktop computers and laptops
- Accessibility Features and Apps



# Hints and Tips

As a freely accessible online hub on our website, Henshaws Hints and Tips is dedicated to sharing our deep reservoir of knowledge and expertise with those affected by sight loss and other disabilities.

Whether you are someone experiencing sight loss, a supportive friend or family member, or a professional in the field, our Hints and Tips offers an extensive library filled with blogs, eBooks, videos, and downloadable resources.

These tools are designed to empower you with information on a range of topics from assistive technologies and daily living tips to specific advice tailored for children and their families.

Hints and Tips is a vital resource that reaches a wide audience efficiently, complementing the support and expertise from our First Step contact centre and local hub activities.



[henshaws.org.uk/hints-and-tips](https://henshaws.org.uk/hints-and-tips)



# Visual Impairment Awareness Training (VIAT)

**We provide training and support to organisations and individuals to enhance accessibility for people with sight loss. Our Visual Impairment Awareness Training and transcription services help organisations better accommodate clients, customers, and service users with sight loss.**

Visual Impairment Awareness Training (VIAT) offers practical and engaging sessions aimed at improving understanding of the needs of people with sight loss. Sessions include information on different types of vision impairments, practical training to support individuals with sight loss, and guidance on safely assisting them in various scenarios (sighted guide). Sessions can be customised to fit your schedule, ranging from hour-long sessions to half-day or full-day workshops.

# Counselling

**Our counselling service is designed to help you navigate the emotions that come with sight loss. Once referred, you'll be placed on a waiting list, and the counsellor will contact you to arrange six weekly hour-long sessions. These can take place either face-to-face or over the phone.**

The sessions provide a confidential and safe space to express feelings such as denial, grief, and anger. With non-judgemental guidance, the counsellor offers support that differs from family and friends, allowing you to be honest without fear of judgment. This personal time helps you explore your emotions and work towards improving your well-being. The counsellor will assist you in identifying steps to manage your emotions effectively.

The counsellor is sensitive to your pace and comfort level, ensuring you feel supported throughout the process. You can stop a session if uncomfortable and discontinue if unhelpful, with the counsellor continuously assessing your progress and prioritising your mental well-being.

By the end of the six sessions, you will likely feel more independent and better equipped to handle your emotions. The counsellor can also guide you to additional support if needed, ensuring a continuous path to well-being.



“Before counselling, I thought my life was over. I think differently now, I’ve stopped worrying about what I cannot control and started to live again!”

# Children and Young People (CYP)

**Our Children and Young People's team specialise in working closely with children and young people with sight loss and their families.**

Some of those we support may also have complex needs and additional disabilities. Considering the needs of the child or young person is at the heart of what we do whilst ensuring that we work closely with professionals to provide a holistic support approach.

Services include information, advice and guidance. This can include I Can Do It course, weekend and school holiday activities, regular groups and clubs, parent forums, post 16 groups, early years sessions and sight loss education in educational settings.

We also run different events and activities, including annual Christmas parties, fun days out, cycling, skiing, kayaking, horse riding, visiting the farm and theatre. Regular monthly sessions include youth zones and Online Artzone!

All our other sight loss services, including Enablement Support, Living Well with Sight Loss, Friendship Matters, Hints and Tips, Digital Enablement, and Counselling, are available to children and young people too.



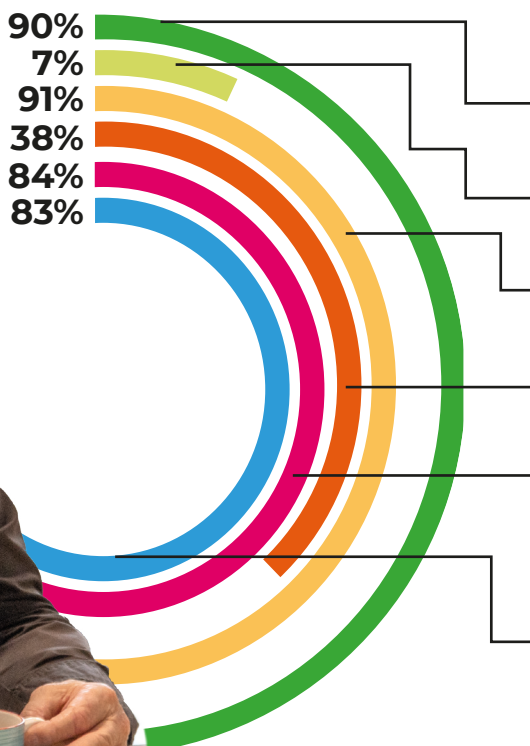
“He was very nervous at first and didn’t want to do it. After the staff spoke to him he got it and is absolutely made up he did it!”

# Our impact

**Our ability to monitor and understand the impacts of our services in real-time has been crucial.**

Positive responses consistently highlight improved access to essential information and support, as well as stronger networks among our clients. Many also report enhanced emotional well-being, increased confidence, and greater independence, reflecting the benefits of our tailored services.

**Feedback from those we've assisted has been overwhelmingly positive:**



Ongoing feedback reaffirms our commitment to delivering impactful support and cherishing meaningful changes in the lives of individuals navigating sight loss and other disabilities.

Listening closely to those we assist helps us refine our services to meet evolving needs, providing effective support and strengthening community engagement. This underscores our mission to empower individuals with sight loss and other disabilities, to ensuring they have all of the essential resources and encouragement to thrive.



### Information

**90%** have better access to information and support for their daily and future needs

a significant rise from **7%** pre-service.



### Support

**91%** have established a robust support network

up from **38%** before joining Henshaws.



### Wellbeing

**84%** reported improved emotional wellbeing.



### Confidence

**83%** now feel more independent and confident.

# Technology Partner

Our technology partner, Sight and Sound Technology has been a leading supplier and Master Distributor of Assistive Technology in the UK for over 40 years.

They provide a wide range of hardware and software solutions aimed at supporting individuals who are blind, visually impaired, or face challenges in learning, reading, and writing, thus enhancing their quality of life in professional, academic, and home environments.

With a commitment to excellence, Sight and Sound Technology's experienced and approachable team is well-equipped to offer tailored solutions to meet your specific needs.



Sight and Sound Technology offers a range of solutions tailored to address the needs of individuals with low and no vision. These include electronic handheld and desktop magnifiers, computer software such as ZoomText and Jaws, as well as wearable devices like Envision Glasses, OrCam, WeWALK smart cane, and Kapsys mobile phones. Additionally, they provide braille note-takers, displays, and embossers, and more!

All these technologies are designed for simplicity and ease of use, specifically catering to the requirements of users. Furthermore, they offer a 30-day money-back guarantee and comprehensive technical support on all products.



Please contact us to take the first step on your journey to independence. We are here to help, whatever your needs are.

As a charity, Henshaws continues to provide these valuable services largely through generous donations. Please consider donating to help people living with sight loss go beyond expectations at [henshaws.org.uk/donate](https://henshaws.org.uk/donate)

[henshaws.org.uk](https://henshaws.org.uk)

 0300 222 5555

 **henshaws**    **@henshaws**    **henshaws\_uk**

Henshaws Society for Blind People, Charity Number 221888