Understanding Sight Loss
Raising awareness about people with visual impairment

Short courses that let your staff discover how to respond appropriately

What are these courses about?
Your staff are bound to come across people with little or no sight during the course of their work. How should they respond? Are there dos and don’ts? What kind of help would be appropriate?

Failing sight is not always easy to spot, and staff are often uncertain what to say or how to react. This course will help dispel the many myths and misconceptions about blindness, and give frontline workers the confidence to know what to say and do.

Your staff will learn how to make simple adjustments to the way in which they interact with people. This can make sure you stay within the laws about anti-discrimination, and provide a quality service to blind or partially sighted customers.

Who is the course for?
This short course is ideal for staff who meet the public, especially if they are in customer care or any kind of frontline role which includes support or advice. Through prior discussion, the content of the course will be tailored to match the specific needs of those who attend.

Which topics will be covered?
- How can tell if someone has limited vision?
- What does it feel like to have little or no sight?
- How do people cope when they can’t see?
- What practical steps can I take to help?
- Why don’t better glasses solve the problem?
- Are gadgets available to make life easier?
- What if someone also has poor hearing?
- How can I safely guide someone who does not see well?
- What services are there to help?
- Where can I find out more after the course?

How will staff learn?
The learning is very hands-on, with quizzes, practical exercises, plenty of opportunities for questions and the chance to try out simple gadgets and techniques which can help.

Sessions include video clips featuring visually impaired people talking about their situation, and on-screen “adverts” to bring home some of the key learning points.
A typical programme

Depending on length and delegate needs, courses are likely to feature some or all of these topics:

- **Myths and misunderstandings about blindness and partial sight**
  - A fun quiz and discussion
  - Who do you know that has impaired sight?
- **The effects of sight loss**
  - Practical exercises
  - The emotional impact
  - Public & personal attitudes
- **The different types of impaired vision**
- **How to spot visual impairment**
  - . . . and when and how to refer
- **How to approach and safely guide a blind person**
- **What you should and should not do**
  - Simple actions that cost nothing
- **Where you can find out more**
  - A guide to key agencies and resources is provided on the day
  - Access is granted to the customers-only area of the Seeing Sense website

Approaches to learning

- An informal atmosphere that encourages questions and contributions
- Learning through experiential exercises
- Use of multimedia presentations
- Short videos to hear from a range of those with sight loss
- Amusing anecdotes to make serious points
- On screen “Commercial breaks” to highlight key learning
- Case scenarios to promote problem solving

Each staff member is given several opportunities during the course to think through and note down those aspects of the learning they can apply to real-life situations in their current work.

About the trainer

Our lead trainer is Richard Cox. He has many years experience providing support to visually impaired people for several councils and the RNIB. He is a qualified social worker and rehabilitation officer for visually impaired people. He holds a PG Cert (HE) for teaching adults. Richard is himself partially sighted from birth.

Course numbers

It is usually possible to train up to 15 staff at any one time. If two or more courses are required, it may be beneficial to consider training staff from more than one establishment on the same course. This can be helpful so that some staff continue to be available for duty.

Seeing Sense provides training and consultancy for health and social care providers about best practice for those with limited vision