



Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Low Vision Aid Clinic

Introduction

This leaflet provides information for patients due to attend the Low Vision Aid (LVA) Clinic.

What is an LVA?

LVA stands for Low Vision Aid. This is a tool used in visual impairment, to allow you to do a task which is no longer possible with spectacles alone.

LVAs are most often magnifiers of various sorts, but may also include telescopes, extra strong reading glasses, specially tinted sunglasses as well as some non-optical devices that can make life with reduced vision easier.

What happens at the LVA Clinic?

You will see an optometrist who will ask you about the visual difficulties you are having in your everyday life.

Your first visit to the clinic will last about 45 minutes to one hour. It may be useful to bring a relative or friend with you as you will be given lots of information and it may be good to have another person to talk it over with.

Before you come to the appointment, think about the tasks that you are finding difficult at home as we are best able to help if we have a clear idea what things you find hardest to do.

Things to bring with you to each appointment:

- Your glasses (reading, distance, TV, varifocal or bifocals).
- Any magnifying aids that you already have.
- Any specific examples of things that you would like to see better such as crosswords, needlework, books.

On your first visit the optometrist will assess your current vision and may check your glasses prescription. During your appointment a member of the team will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have about your eye condition. We will also give you advice on how to make the most of your vision.

Your appointment is not a full health check of your eyes. It is therefore important to continue with your Ophthalmology appointments.

If you have been discharged from the hospital Ophthalmology Clinic you should still have regular routine eye health checks with your local Community Optometrist.

We will give you the opportunity to try various magnifiers. These will be chosen depending on your level of vision and some of the tasks you want to carry out, as well as any physical limitations such as difficulty using your hands.

If we find a suitable magnifier that is helpful for you, you will be able to take it home to try out for your everyday tasks.

At the clinic we may also discuss things you can do which may help you with visual tasks, such as:

- Using an angle-poise lamp directed closely onto the page/task to increase the level of lighting.
- Using natural daylight to illuminate your task by turning your back towards the window/daylight.
- Reading large print books.
- Using different coloured backgrounds to provide contrast for specific tasks.
- Using a thicker, black felt tip pen for writing.
- Sitting closer to the television.
- Buying a talking watch or talking clock.

Do I have to pay for LVAs?

Any aids which you take away from the clinic are loaned to you for as long as you find them useful, so you do not have to pay for them. But please return any magnifying aids to us that you no longer use as we are able to re-use them for other patients.

LVA follow up

Once we have seen you in the LVA clinic we are keen to stay in touch, to make sure that the aids provided are working well for you. This is usually done by telephone.

One of the LVA team of optometrists will call you a few months after your first visit to the clinic. They will discuss how your magnifiers are working for you and whether a

further appointment is needed to look at alternative aids. After this we may discharge you back to the care of your Community Optometrist or review you, depending on your vision and how you get on with the aids.

If your magnifier breaks or is lost, we may be able to send a replacement by post. Please contact the Optometry Department on 0300 422 3190, Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm.

However, if you are concerned about new and sudden changes to your vision, for example a new distortion in the case of age-related macular degeneration, you should contact the Eye Clinic Casualty line. The number is at the end of this leaflet.

Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO)

When you attend the LVA Clinic you may also be offered a consultation with an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO).

ECLO's help people with sight conditions to get the support they may need, when they need it. They also provide advice on a range of topics including:

- Benefits and discounts you may be entitled to.
- Education, employment, housing and leisure.
- Emotional support.
- Talking books and other services specific to those having problems with their sight.
- Mobility advice and training, such as the use of a white cane to get around independently or special

methods of viewing to make the most of your remaining vision.

- Many other aspects of living with sight loss and staying independent.

You do not need to be registered sight impaired to be able to access the LVA clinic or the ECLO service.

We have ECLO's based at both main hospital sites:

Louise Birt at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 07702 961060

Monday to Wednesday, 10:00am to 5:00pm

Email: Louise.birt@rnib.org.uk or

Email: Louise.birt@nhs.net

Gary Learmonth at Cheltenham General Hospital

Tel: 07925 034 799

Wednesday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

Email: Gary.learmonth@rnib.org.uk or

Email: Gary.learmonth@nhs.net

Contact information

Optometry Department

Tel: 0300 422 3190

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm

Eye Clinic Casualty

Tel: 0300 422 3578

Monday to Friday 9:00 to 5:30pm

The line is closed between 1:00pm and 2:00pm

Further information

Local Charities and Support

Insight Gloucestershire

Insight Gloucestershire is a registered charity, dedicated to supporting sight impaired and blind people throughout the county, so they can continue to enjoy their lives and retain their independence. They give advice on living with sight loss and adjusting to a new diagnosis. Community hubs are held throughout the County.

81 Albion Street

Cheltenham

GL52 2RZ

Tel: 01242 221170

Email: info@insight-glos.org.uk

Website: <http://insight-glos.org.uk/>

Forest Sensory Services

Supports local people coming to terms with and learning to live with sight and hearing loss, through education, rehabilitation and peer support. They provide practical help, emotional support and access to specialist resources.

Forge Centre

Valley Road, Cinderford

Gloucestershire

GL14 2LJ

Tel: 01594 827711

Email: info@forestsensoryservices.org

Gloucestershire Social services

For all social care requests and rehabilitation

Adult Helpdesk Tel: 01452 426868

Children and families Tel: 01452 426565

Monday to Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm

Ocular Condition Specific

Diabetes UK

Supporting people with Diabetes

Helpline: 0345 123 2399

Email: helpline@diabetes.org.uk

Website: www.diabetes.org.uk

Glaucoma UK

Providing help to everyone living with Glaucoma

Helpline: 01233 648170

Email: helpline@glaucoma.uk

Website: <https://glaucoma.uk>

Macular Society

Advice and information service

Tel: 0300 3030 111

Email: help@macularsociety.org

Website: maculasociety.org

Supporter Care (membership and general enquiries)

Tel: 01264 350 551

Email info@macularsociety.org

Retina UK

Information and support for people affected by inherited sight loss

Helpline: 0300 111 4000

Email: helpline@RetinaUK.org.uk

Website: <https://retinauk.org.uk>

National Support

Blind Veterans UK

Support for ex-servicemen and women of every generation

Tel: 0300 111 2233

Email: supporter.services@blindveterans.org.uk

Website: www.blindveterans.org.uk/

Esme's Umbrella

Offering information and a safe shelter for anyone living with Charles Bonnet Syndrome

Helpline: 0303 123 9999

Email: judith@charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk

Website: <https://charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk>

Guide Dogs for the blind

Tel: 0800 953 0113

Email: information@guidedogs.org.uk

Website: <https://www.guidedogs.org.uk>

RNIB Emotional Support Service

A free telephone counselling service is available for anyone who has a visual impairment. It is confidential and may be useful in helping someone come to terms with their sight loss.

Helpline: 0303 123 9999

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 6:00pm

Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk

Website: www.rnib.org.uk

Sightline

Practical and emotional support to visually impaired people through a telephone befriending service

Tel: 0800 587 2252

Website: www.sightline.org.uk

Thomas Pocklington Trust

Supports visually impaired people of all ages to live the life they want to lead. Focuses on Education, Employment and Engagement

Tel: 020 8995 0880

Email: info@pocklington.org.uk

Website: <https://www.pocklington.org.uk>

Talking Books and Newspapers

Calibre Audio Library

Tel: 01296 432 339

Email: membershipservices@calibre.org.uk

Website: <https://www.calibreaudio.org.uk>

RNIB Talking Books

Talking book service – referrals to this service may be made through your local library or the ECLO

Helpline: 0303 123 9999

Website: <https://www.rnib.org.uk>

(Scroll to the bottom of the page and select **Talking Books** from the **Other RNIB Services** section)

National Talking Newspapers

Tel: 0303 123 9999

Website: www.tnauk.org.uk

Talking News Federation

Talking Local Newspaper

Tel: 03000 400 300

Email: enquiries@tnf.org.uk

Website: <https://tnf.org.uk>

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Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

***Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial.

Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



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Every donation you choose to give helps your local hospitals do more to care for you, everyone you love and our passionate NHS staff.

If you would like to find out more, please contact:

Charity Office 0300 422 3231 or visit gloshospitals.nhs.uk/charity

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