

GOOD WORK

Norfolk

GUIDE 4

Supporting Employees Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired



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Practical ways to create a more accessible workplace

Sight loss affects people in different ways, and the support someone needs will depend on their individual circumstances, preferences and role. Some people may have partial sight, while others may be blind, and many will use technology, mobility aids or other strategies to work independently.

The most effective approach is to ask the employee what works for them and make practical adjustments that enable them to access information, navigate their environment and participate fully in the workplace.



Practical ways to create a more accessible workplace

- Recognise that sight loss affects people differently. Some individuals may have partial sight, while others may be blind. Discuss their specific needs and preferred ways of working.
- Avoid making assumptions about the support, equipment or adjustments a person may require. The employee is often the best source of information about what works for them.
- Use clear verbal communication and avoid vague directions such as "over there". Instead, provide specific guidance such as "the door is on your left" or "the meeting room is straight ahead".
- Introduce yourself when meeting someone and let them know when you are leaving a conversation so they are aware of who is present.
- Ensure important information is available in accessible formats, such as large print, audio, screen-reader compatible documents, or other formats requested by the employee.
- Familiarise yourself with any assistive technology or support tools the employee uses, such as screen readers, magnification software, Braille displays or audio devices.



Supporting independence and equal participation

- Provide verbal explanations during meetings, training sessions and workplace activities, particularly when visual information is being presented.
- Ensure workspaces, meeting rooms and communal areas are free from unnecessary obstacles and are easy to navigate safely.
- Be aware that some employees may use mobility aids such as a white cane or guide dog and ensure these can be accommodated appropriately.
- Consider accessibility when planning workplace events, travel, training or changes to the working environment.
- Allow extra time where tasks require reading, navigation or adapting to unfamiliar environments.
- Ensure signage, documents and digital systems are accessible wherever possible.
- Understand that some workplace activities may require additional planning, concentration or effort, which can contribute to fatigue.
- Encourage inclusion during meetings and social activities by ensuring everyone is aware of who is speaking and by making introductions where appropriate.
- Offer assistance when appropriate but always ask first and respect the individual's preferences if support is declined.
- Maintain a consistent and organised workplace environment wherever possible and communicate any significant changes in advance.



Key principle

Accessibility starts with communication. Ask employees what support works best for them, focus on removing barriers, and ensure they have equal access to information, opportunities and workplace activities.