

Why is this issue important?

The 2010 Equality Act defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ (completing a task takes much longer than it usually would) and ‘long-term’ (12 months or more) negative effect on ability to do normal daily activities”.¹

Sensory disabilities include blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment, or a combination of these. There are over two million people with visual impairments in the UK, which is expected to increase by a quarter of a million people by 2020.² There are more than eleven million with some form of hearing loss, of whom approximately 8% have severe to profound deafness.³ The number of people with hearing loss in the UK is estimated to rise to 15.6 million by 2035. It is conservatively estimated that 24,000 people use sign language as their first language.³

It is also estimated that there are 250,000 people in the UK with both sight and hearing loss, 88% of aged 70 or over.³

Nationally there are around 144,000 people aged 18-44 years with a moderate or severe hearing impairment. At around the age of 45-50 the proportion of people with hearing loss begins to increase sharply. It is estimated that there are around 1.13 million people aged 45-64 years who have a moderate or severe hearing impairment and 11,000 who have a profound hearing impairment.⁴ Of those aged 65 or over, there are estimated to be 4.08 million with a moderate or severe hearing impairment and 109,000 people with a profound hearing impairment.⁵ Age-related damage to the cochlea is the single biggest cause of hearing loss: 71% of over 70 year-olds and 42% of over 50 year-olds have some form of hearing loss.⁶

¹ Great Britain. Equality Act 2010. Chapter 15. London: stationary office. Available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6> [Accessed 19/08/2016]

² Royal National Institute of Blind People. Key information and statistics. Available at: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/knowledge-and-research-hub/key-information-and-statistics> [Accessed 15/07/2016]

³ Action for Hearing Loss. Statistics. Available at: <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/your-hearing/about-deafness-and-hearing-loss/statistics.aspx> [Accessed 04/07/2016]

⁴ Institute of Public Care. Projecting Adults Needs and Service Information (PANSI). Available at: www.pansi.org.uk (password required)

⁵ Institute of Public Care. Projecting Older People Population Information System available at www.poppi.org.uk (password required)

⁶ Action on Hearing Loss, Hearing Matters report, 2015

Research has suggested, within the UK, that the financial cost of interventions for deaf and hearing impaired people is approximately £214,000 for every 1,000 people affected, over the course of a lifetime.⁷

The prevalence of sight loss increases with age and can lead to a loss of independence and increased risk of poverty. It is estimated that nationally three out of four blind or partially sighted older people live in poverty or on its margins, compared with one in four across all older people.⁸

Key outcomes

- ***Social care-related quality of life (Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework)***
- ***Client satisfaction with care and support (Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework)***
- ***Health-related quality of life for people with long-term conditions (NHS Outcomes Framework)***
- ***Preventable sight loss (age related macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, sight loss certifications) (Public Health Outcomes Framework)***

Impact in Brighton & Hove

It is estimated in Brighton & Hove in 2015 there were (Table 2):

- 125 people aged 18-64 with a serious visual impairment and 3,383 people aged 65 or over with a moderate or severe visual impairment.
- 6,086 people aged 18-64 with a moderate or severe hearing impairment, and 50 people aged 18-64 with a profound hearing impairment.
- 16,069 people aged 65 or over with a moderate to severe hearing impairment and 462 aged 65 or over with a profound hearing impairment.^{9,10}

In 2014 there were 920 Brighton & Hove residents registered as blind (535, or 58%, were aged 75 or over). Of these, 365 residents were recorded as having an additional disability (270 aged 65 or

⁷ Deafness Research UK. Deafness – the facts. 2009

⁸ Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB). Unseen: Neglect, isolation and household poverty among older people with sight loss. 2004.

over), including 200 with a physical disability, 110 who were deaf or hard of hearing, 25 with a learning disability and 25 with mental health problems.¹¹

Of those people receiving long term support for a sensory impairment from Brighton & Hove City Council in 2015/16 23 (47%) received support for a visual impairment, 17 (35%) for a hearing impairment and 9 (18%) for a dual impairment. Of people receiving long term support, 65% were aged 65 or over and 55% received support in the form of a council managed personal budget, with 18% of these Direct Payments.¹²

Table 2 shows the prevalence of sight loss conditions locally and nationally. In general Brighton & Hove rates are comparable to the national figures. However the local rate of age related macular degeneration (AMD) is higher than the national average.

Table 1. Rate of preventable sight loss conditions per 100,000 population, 2014/15, Brighton & Hove and England

Condition	Brighton & Hove	England
AMD (age 65+)	153.8	118.1
Glaucoma (age 40+)	12.1	12.8
Diabetic eye disease (age 12+)	2.8	3.2
Sight loss certifications	40.9	42.4

Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework.

<http://www.phoutcomes.info/>

The Adult Social Care Survey asks those receiving adult social care services how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with indicators of quality of life, such as personal cleanliness and safety. These answers are then combined to give an overall score of social care related quality of life. In 2014/15 Brighton & Hove scored 19.5 points out of a possible 24 for this measure, which is slightly higher than the national average of 19.1. This is for

all individuals receiving long-term support and is not available separately for those with sensory impairments.¹³

When asked about satisfaction levels of care and support services, 66% of users of local services were either extremely or very satisfied with their care and support. The national average was 65%.¹³

Where we are doing well

Brighton & Hove City Council commission the following services for people with sensory impairments locally:

- Community support for people within their own home who have either or both sight and hearing loss
- Volunteers to befriend and support people with sight impairments in their own homes
- Social groups and activities for people with sight and dual sensory loss
- An Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (jointly funded with the Clinical Commissioning Group) to support and signpost people with visual impairments
- Independent advocacy
- Funding has been agreed to develop engagement with the deaf and partially hearing community.

The Council also provides:

- A team of Rehabilitation Officers for the Visually Impaired (ROVI's) and the Low Vision Clinic where people receive advice, information, support and aids.
- Supported Employment to people with disabilities and sensory impairments to help them secure or maintain paid or voluntary work. In 2015/16 56 people with physical/sensory disabilities were supported.

There are also charitable organisations that provide information, advice and social activities to the deaf community.

¹¹ NHS Digital Registered blind and partially sighted people, 2014. Available at: <http://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB14798> [Accessed 19/08/2016]

¹² Adult Social Care Performance team, Brighton & Hove City Council

¹³ Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework. Available at:

<http://ascof.hscic.gov.uk/Outcome> [Accessed 02/09/2016]

Only a sample of users of social care was surveyed for the measures mentioned, and the sample is not comprised exclusively of those with learning disabilities.

Local inequalities

In 2015/16 of those receiving support for a sensory impairment 14% were from Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) groups.

Not all sensory services have been collecting data on the numbers of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans (LGBT) service users but from April 2016 they will all be collecting this data. Of those that have collected this data a service for people with hearing impairments reported 18% LGBT in 2015/16 and a service for people with visual impairments 7% LGBT.

With regard to gender, approximately the same number of men and women are in receipt of Adult Social Care services until the age of 65 and above where the figures change and twice as many women are receive a service than men. This information is not available specifically for those with sensory impairments.¹²

Feedback from the local advocacy provider is that where they have advocated for people it is primarily in relation to finance or benefits, social care and housing.

The location of a school and further education college for the deaf in Brighton & Hove attracts young people from outside of the area and feedback from local deaf organisations is that there is a need for more accessible activities and peer support for young deaf people.

Nationally, military veterans are more likely to experience difficulty hearing and also have high rates of tinnitus. From a household survey conducted by the Royal British Legion 11% of veterans experienced hearing difficulties compared to 3% of the general population.¹⁴ There is no information for Brighton & Hove but locally veterans are well served by the local Blind Veterans UK centre that provides assessment, rehabilitation, ongoing support and social activities.

Predicted future need

It is estimated, by the RNIB, that the two million plus people living with sight loss in the UK is predicted to increase to over 2.25 million by 2020 and double to 4 million by 2050.²

The proportion of the population with co-occurring impairments is predicted to increase as the ageing population lives longer. The rate of people with co-occurring severe deaf and blind impairments is predicted to rise from 212 people per 100,000 in 2010, to 343 per 100,000 by 2030.¹⁵

Table 2 summarises the projections for changes in the number of people with sensory impairments (based on applying national prevalence estimates to expected demographic changes). In total there will be over 10,000 more people living in the city with a sensory impairment in 2025. The biggest increases are for those with a moderate to severe hearing impairment. There will be almost 1,000 more people aged 18-64, and over 3,000 more people aged over 65 with this condition.

Table 2. Population with a sensory impairment in 2015 and predicted population for 2025, Brighton & Hove

	2015	2025
Serious visual impairment (18-64 years)	125	132
Moderate or severe visual impairment (65+)	3,383	3,991
Registrable eye condition (75+)	1,171	1,427
Moderate or severe hearing impairment (18-64)	6,086	7,057
Profound hearing impairment (18-64)	50	61
Moderate or severe hearing impairment (65+)	16,609	19,731
Profound hearing impairment (65+)	462	527

Source: Institute for Public Care. PANSI and POPPI.

The Care Act 2014 is expected to have an impact on people with visual impairments as the legislation acknowledges rehabilitation for blind and partially sighted people in statutory guidance. The Act specifies that: assessments are carried out by competent, skilled people; rehabilitation is not limited to six weeks; minor aids and adaptations must be free and; information must be accessible.

What we don't know

There is limited engagement with people with hearing impairments locally and therefore funding has been established to engage with the hearing

¹⁴ Royal British Legion. 'Lost Voices' – A Royal British Legion report on hearing problems among Service personnel and veterans, 2014.

¹⁵ Emerson E and Robertson J. Estimating the number of people with co-occurring vision and hearing impairments in the UK. Centre for Disability Research. April 2010.

impaired community. The City Council and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are jointly funding some deaf engagement work which is being commissioned via the Communities and Third Sector Commissioning Prospectus 2017-20.

There is limited local data available on social deprivation, learning disability, and gender reassignment.

Key evidence and policy

Key national policy relating to physical and sensory disability includes:

- The Care Act (2014)¹⁶
- The Disability Discrimination Act (2005)¹⁷
- National Service Framework for long-term conditions (DH, 2005)¹⁸
- Improving the life-chances of disabled people (Cabinet Office, 2005)¹⁹
- Independent Living; a cross Government strategy about independent living for disabled people, (Office for Disability Issues, 2008)

Recommended future local priorities

Priorities have been identified using feedback from local sensory organisations and Possability People (formerly The Fed) who are a Brighton & Hove disability user led organisation:

1. Increased integrated working between Health and Social Care to include: increased access to Self Directed Support options for adults accessing health and social care services – Personal Budgets; Direct Payments; and Personal Health Budgets.
2. Improved accessibility for hearing impaired users of health and social care services, for example hospital passports, loop systems, communication tools and greater use of interpreting.

¹⁶ The Care Act 2014. Available at The National Archives:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents> [Accessed 01/08/16]

¹⁷ The Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Available at The National Archives: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/13/contents [Accessed 22/08/16]

¹⁸ Department of Health, National service framework: long term conditions. Available at:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4105361 [Accessed 22/08/16]

¹⁹ Cabinet Office, Improving the life chances of disabled people.

[webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/disability.pdf](http://www.webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/disability.pdf) [Accessed 22/08/16]

3. Information and advice on finance, benefits, social care and housing is made more accessible.
4. More peer support and accessible activities for young people with hearing impairments.
5. More support to find and maintain employment.
6. Increased uptake of assistive technology options, including Telecare.
7. Increased awareness amongst public and universal services with regard to communication and accessibility.
8. Increased understanding at the planning and development stages of building and retrospectively to ensure that acoustics are considered.
9. Services need to encourage and be accessible to men over the age of 65.

Key links to other sections

- Carers
- Housing
- Children and young people with disabilities and complex health needs
- Adults with learning disabilities
- Adults with physical disabilities
- Musculoskeletal conditions
- Ageing well
- End of life care

Further information

Disability in Brighton & Hove 2015

<http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/content/reports>

Action for Hearing Loss

www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/

Sense www.sense.org.uk/

Possability People

<http://www.bhfederation.org.uk/>

Last updated

August 2016