Sensory Impairment Awareness Training

Workbook

February 2009
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On behalf of the Scottish Government this pack has been developed by the Scottish National Federation for the Welfare of the Blind, Signature (formally known as CACDP), and Deafblind Scotland.

As a result of the work of the Sensory Impairment Action Plan Group within the Scottish Government a need for a training pack on basic sensory impairment awareness was identified. A working group including representatives of SNFWB, Signature and Deafblind Scotland, and funded by the Scottish Government, was set up to develop the day course and this pack is the result of those efforts. This pack is designed to provide basic training in sensory impairment to all levels of staff. It is designed to be delivered by people who have experienced sensory loss as it is considered essential for participants to meet people who have sensory loss.

Signature is a UK awarding body of accredited qualifications aimed at advancing communication between deaf and hearing people. Content marked with * in this workbook is taken from the Signature level 1 Certificate in Developing Awareness and Communication with Deaf and Deafblind People (DAC1). With some additional hours of training, individuals could achieve the DAC 1 qualification.

SNFWB is the Scottish umbrella organisation for visual impairment organisations. SNFWB has just developed a new training pack and information on this and other VI training is available from SNFWB.

Deafblind Scotland is a specialist membership organisation serving adults who have a dual sensory loss.

Contact details of organisations are to be found on page 31 and information on training pathways on page 32.
Programme

9.30am  Icebreaker
        Introductions
        Ground rules
        Course aims and objectives, learning outcomes

10.00   Sensory Impairment or Sensory Loss
        What does it mean?
        What are the numbers?
        What are the causes?

11.00   Break

11.15am Sensory Impairment - commonly used terms
        Which is better and why?

11.25am Common causes of deafness, blindness and partial sight, and deafblindness

11.35am How do we recognise sensory impairment?

12.00pm What are the Communication and Access problems? The impact on the individual?

12.30pm Lunch

1.30pm  What can I do to maximise communication?

2.15pm  Practical communication skills

2.30pm  Break
2.45pm  How can I improve the environment
         What practical help is available?

3.30pm  Useful Organisations

3.45pm  Any questions?

4.00pm  What next?
Course Aim

To increase awareness of sensory impairment issues and assist participants to make positive changes in their workplace

Course Objectives

Participants will:

- be able to more effectively identify sensory impairment in those they come into contact with
- become aware of the full range of sensory impairments
- be aware of the terminology used
- become aware of some of the needs of individuals who have a sensory impairment
- be able to address sensory impairment issues in the workplace with greater confidence
- be more effective in communicating with those who have a sensory impairment
- have an awareness of the wider services available for people who have a sensory impairment
Learning Outcomes

Participants will understand:-

- Some of the causes of sensory impairment
- The use of effective communication tactics
- Alternative ways of accessing information
- Helpful organisations, equipment, and websites, for those with a sensory impairment
- Further training opportunities

This course is aimed at frontline staff whose work involves assisting people who have a sensory impairment, particularly those employed in social care and health.
Sensory Impairment or Sensory loss

What does it mean?

Sensory impairment or sensory loss is an umbrella term used to describe loss of the distance senses i.e. sight and hearing. This term may be used for example to describe a centre where deaf people or blind/partially sighted people can access services or to describe the contents of a report. Individuals would rarely describe themselves as having a sensory impairment. Individuals are more likely to use the terms below.

There are three very distinct groups within sensory impairment:

- Blind and partially sighted people
- Deaf people
- Deafblind people

Each of these groups:

- may or may not come into contact with the other two groups
- has its own range of very distinct needs
- is made up of individuals with their own distinct needs.

We will look in more detail at each of the three groups.
Blind/Partially sighted - what does it mean?

There is a definition of blindness which is 60 years old and really quite out of date. This states that the person can be registered blind when they are

unable to carry out any work for which eyesight is essential (National Assistance Act, section 29, 1948)

An ophthalmologist will suggest registration via a BP1 form when the person’s visual acuity is less than 3/60 or when they have a severely reduced field of vision. Registration is voluntary on the part of the individual, but local authorities are required to keep a register.

Visual acuity of 3/60 means that the person can see an object at 3 metres distance what a person with standard eyesight would see at 60 metres distance.

Many elderly people, particularly those who are frail, will not take the trouble to be registered.

Most people who are registered blind have a little useful vision. People can also be registered as Partially Sighted under Section 29, if they are substantially and permanently handicapped by defective vision, caused by congenital defect or illness or injury (National Assistance Act, section 29, 1948)

People who have a visual impairment, depending on the cause, can appear to see things very differently.
Exercise 1 – experiential exercise on sight loss

Below are just two examples of the different ways visual loss can present. For more examples see www.stlukeseye.com:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal vision</th>
<th>Loss of central Vision</th>
<th>Loss of peripheral vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Normal vision" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Loss of central Vision" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Loss of peripheral vision" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People who have lost central vision will find it difficult to read, focus, see faces, watch TV. Those who are losing peripheral vision will find it increasingly difficult to safely get around by themselves.

**What are the numbers on those who are blind or partially sighted?**

In the Scottish Executive Statistics Release Registered Blind and Partially Sighted Persons, Scotland 2007 the number registered are given as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Scotland</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people registered blind</td>
<td>22,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people registered partially sighted</td>
<td>15,435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority (85 per cent) of people with sight problems are older people, aged over 65. (www.rnib.org.uk - RNIB,2006)
Deaf - what does it mean?*

There is no definition of deafness. Deafness may be described, in medical terms, as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Level of hearing loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>20 – 40 decibels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>41 – 70 decibels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>71 – 95 decibels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profound</td>
<td>95+ decibels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparatively few people are profoundly deaf. They may use Sign Language or Lipreading to communicate.

It is more common for people to have a little useful hearing, particularly with the help of hearing aids.

At a loss of more than 60 decibels it becomes difficult to understand speech. If we ask the question "Can you hear me?" most people will answer yes. But they may not be able to hear enough to fully comprehend what you say.

Hearing aids amplify sound, including background noise. This can make it difficult for the wearer to hear speech clearly. A loop system might help this problem. For explanation of what a loop system is see page 29.
What are the numbers on people who are deaf?

Deaf people are not registered deaf. There is no central register of deafness. However RNID estimates that one in seven people in the UK have a hearing loss. Scottish Council on Deafness estimate that one in five of the Scottish population have a hearing loss.

Figures are given for the whole of the UK of which there are approximately 60 million people.

Signature estimate*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The total number of people of all ages with deafness ranging from mild to profound:</td>
<td>9 million (1 in 7 of the population)</td>
<td>750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of hard of hearing people:</td>
<td>8.3 million</td>
<td>715,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of deafened people (those who become profoundly deaf either suddenly or progressively):</td>
<td>123,000</td>
<td>10,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users:</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>4,300-5,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The incidence of deafness increases sharply with age, so the older you are the more likely you are to have a hearing loss.

Exercise 2 – experiential exercise on hearing loss
Deafblind - what does it mean?*

The generally accepted definition of deafblindness across Europe is:

Definitions are regarded as deafblind if they have a severe degree of combined visual and auditory impairment, resulting in problems with communication, information and mobility (Breaking Through Report, 1988).

The terms dual sensory loss, dual sensory impairment and deafblind are used interchangeably.

There are two recognisably very distinct groups within deafblindness, those who are:

**Congenitally deafblind**, having been born with a dual sensory impairment or having developed it in early childhood.

and those who have:

**Acquired deafblindness**, having been born with vision and/or hearing and having lost one or both some time after childhood, normally in later life. This group include those who have Usher Syndrome.

**What are the numbers on people who are deafblind?**

There is no registration for deafblindness. However, the Breaking Through Report (1988) estimated 4:10,000 people are deafblind, giving 2,500 people with a dual sensory impairment in Scotland.
In the Scottish Executive Statistics Release 2007, those who are registered blind or partially sighted and also have a hearing impairment number more than 2,600. However, these figures may not include people who have been deaf or hearing impaired since birth and may never enter the system for registration of visual loss.

Deafblind Scotland estimates there are 5,000 deafblind people in Scotland. Because of the effects of the ageing process, a large proportion of the numbers given for sensory impairment are people over 75.

Signature estimate that*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of people (mainly elderly) who experience some level of dual sensory loss:</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of deafblind people (defined as those who experience a level of dual sensory loss that has a significant effect on their ability to access communication, mobility and information):</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>2,040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise 3 – experiential exercise of deafblindness**
Commonly Used Terms - Which is better and why?
Commonly used terms within Sensory Loss or Sensory Impairment. List terms which may be acceptable or unacceptable.

GROUP DISCUSSION 1
Acceptable terminology*


Unacceptable terminology *

Don’t be afraid to use standard phrases like ‘Did you see?’ to a blind person, or ‘Did you hear?’ to a deaf person.

Don’t be quick to use the label ‘deafblind’ as people may not yet be ready to accept their dual sensory loss.
What are some of the causes of Sensory Impairment?

The following list gives examples of some common causes. For further information on the huge number of causes of sensory impairment, their symptoms and their effects, please refer to the appropriate websites on page 30.

**Blindness/partial sight**
- Macular Degeneration
- Cataract
- Glaucoma
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Genetic eg Retinitis Pigmentosa
- Nystagmus

**Deafness**
- Sensori-neural damage
- Childhood infections
- Exposure to loud noise
- Genetic

**Deafblindness**
- Usher Syndrome
- Congenital causes
- Maternal infection
- Ageing process
- Combination of causes of deafness and blindness
How do we recognise Sensory Impairment?

Loss of sight

Loss of hearing *

Loss of both sight and hearing *

GROUP DISCUSSION  2
What are the "clues" which may alert us to a person's visual loss, hearing loss, or dual sensory loss?

What are the difficulties involved in identifying dual sensory loss? How might we overcome them?
What is the impact of different sensory losses on the individual?

GROUP DISCUSSION 3
List the day to day difficulties identified

GROUP DISCUSSION
Discuss the possible longer term impact on the individual
Communication and Access

What are the problems referring to communication and access to information?

**Blindness/partial sight**
Not being able to access printed material
Difficulty in accessing Internet
Difficulty in getting to destinations and around the built environment
Accessing unfamiliar buildings and environments
Lack of awareness of how to help

**Deafness**
Not being able to access spoken material
English as a second language
Difficulties with lipreading
Difficulty in accessing BSL interpreters
Difficulty in accessing loop systems are satisfactory
Lack of awareness of how to help

**Deafblindness**
***All of the above plus***:
Not having access to guide/communicator service or communication support
Lack of awareness of the possibility of **dual sensory loss**
Lack of awareness of how to help
Maximising communication for blind/partially sighted people

- Always identify yourself even in known surroundings
- Always use names to identify people - especially in a group situation
- Keep the visually impaired person informed of people moving around and/or leaving the room/table etc. Every time.
- Don’t be concerned about using phrases such as “did you see Alice yesterday?”
- Do not use non-verbal communication e.g. pointing in the direction of something, shrugging shoulders, pulling faces
- Keep physical contact to a minimum
- Provide information in alternative formats
  CD, email
  Extra Large print
  Audio tapes
  Electronic formats,
  Braille
  Moon
  Large print
  Internet used as audio

Under Disability Discrimination Act, provision of information in alternative formats is considered reasonable adjustment.
Maximising communication for deaf people*

- Ask if they want to use a loop system
- Try to establish the person’s preferred communication method
- If necessary book BSL interpreters, lipspeaker, keyboard interpreter etc well in advance
- Face the person
- Use clear speech, normal lip pattern, don’t shout
- Use finger spelling
- Speak at ear level
- Repeat, rephrase
- Write things down
- Ensure there is no echo - room with soft furnishings
- Quiet situation

Maximising communication for deafblind people*

Follow all the guidelines for blind and deaf people and then additionally:

- Good lighting is essential
- Plain background
- Light must be on the person speaking and coming from behind the deafblind person.
- Distance is important, check their preferred distance.
• Use whiteboard, or paper, with black felt tip pen.
• Provide a guide/communicator to help deafblind person prepare for a meeting as well as support them on the day.

For all 3 groups

• Allow extra time
• Prepare an appropriate room
• Book the necessary communication support
• Arrange for the alternative formats to be provided
• Take time to get the environment right.
• Look at this as providing the equivalent of a ramp for wheelchair users.
Guiding Awareness

We do not teach guiding on this one day course, but awareness of the following steps may help keep a deafblind person safe.

If the person can hear, talk to them, tell them what is around them and where exactly it is

Ask the person what you can do to help. If they wish to be taken a short distance e.g. to a nearby room then proceed as follows:

- You must always be in front, the deafblind person will follow
- Offer them your elbow then keep your elbow at the side of your body. This will automatically mean you are in front.
- Don’t look at their feet, look ahead
- Take their hand and gently put it on the chair/door/cup
- Never push them backwards into a chair, take their hand and gently put it on the back of the chair

More specific training on guiding skills can be obtained from a range of organisations. Refer to the website found on page 30.
## Benefits and Concessions

People with a sensory impairment may benefit from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits and Concessions</th>
<th>Blind/Partially sighted</th>
<th>Deaf</th>
<th>Deafblind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Entitlement Card is available from Local Authorities in Scotland to people who are registered blind or partially sighted. Free travel on buses and trains for those registered blind or partially sighted. Free travel only on buses for deaf.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Person’s Car Badge People who are registered blind are entitled to apply for a disabled person’s car badge, which allows parking in a restricted areas under certain conditions.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Eyesight Tests Everyone in Scotland is entitled to a free NHS eyesight test every 2 years and more often if required due to a sight condition.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Phone Calls to Directory Enquiries are available to people who are registered blind or partially sighted.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV Licence A registered blind person is entitled to a reduction of 50% from the full cost of their TV licence.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postal Concessions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Blind/partially sighted</strong></td>
<td><strong>Deaf</strong></td>
<td><strong>Deafblind</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles specifically designed for the use of visually impaired people can be posted free of charge.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Welfare Rights</strong></th>
<th><strong>Blind/partially sighted, Deaf, Deafblind</strong></th>
<th><strong>Deaf</strong></th>
<th><strong>Deafblind</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who are visually impaired may be eligible for a wide range of benefits</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Free hearing aid batteries</strong></th>
<th><strong>Deaf</strong></th>
<th><strong>Deafblind</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Language Service Professional (LSP)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Deafblind</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>those who are deaf or deafblind may be require the services of a LSP which can include:</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- BSL to English Interpreter
- Lipspeaker
- Speech to Text

LSP is the group term for those who provide communication support or interpreting services.

Deafblind people often have a need for a guide/communicator service. Especially in health settings under MEL(1998)4.

*N.B. It is essential to book LSPs well in advance*
GROUP DISCUSSION 4

If an older person has problems with communication and accessing information what would be the issues to overcome when:

Getting a new home help service?

Visiting a GP?

Having a repair done in their house?
The Two-handed Fingerspelling Alphabet
Introduction to Block*
Signature T101 pre-course study booklet

The Block Alphabet
The broken lines indicate the DIRECTION and SEQUENCE of strokes to be made on the palm

Quick signs - For "YES" 2 taps on the palm of the hand. For "NO" or for erasing an error: a rubbing out movement across the palm.
Environmental impact for sensory impaired people

Think of your working environment where it is accessed by the public, any one of whom could have a sensory impairment. What would work for or against blind/partially sighted people, deaf people and deafblind people?

GROUP DISCUSSION 5
What would be the difficulties they would meet?

To create a communicative environment what would you need to do?

The list of adaptations might include:

Lighting, background, seating/positioning, equipment, loop system, door access, glare, obstacles, communication
Equipment Practical Training

There is a vast range of equipment available for purchase and/or use by those who have a sensory impairment. It is always better to check with the individual as to their needs and preferences. And to allow them to try it for themselves. We have listed some examples. Equipment that needs:

Hearing - Talking equipment - e.g. scales, thermometer
Talking timepieces - e.g. watches, clocks
Loop system - a system that helps deaf people who use a hearing aid or loop listener hear sounds more clearly because it reduces or cuts out background noise. The user can pick up the sound signals if they are sitting within the area of the loop and their hearing aid or loop listening aid is set to 'T'.
Communication - large button phones, amplified phones

Vision - Magnifiers - handheld, tabletop, mains powered
Flashing alerts - alarm clocks, minicomms, Communication

Vibration - Doorbells, smoke alarms, pagers

Linguistic Access for deaf and deafblind people

For some people, particularly those who have a dual sensory loss, there is no substitute for human support, particularly with communication and with guiding. A whole range of professionals exists to support deaf and deafblind people to access the spoken and/or written word and the built environment, some are listed on p23.
Where to go for helpful information?

National Organisations

The Scottish National Federation for the Welfare of the Blind
8 Netherlea
Scone, Perth, PH2 6QA
Tel: 01738 626 969    Email: richard.mazur@virgin.net
Website: www.snfwb.org.uk

Scottish Council on Deafness
Central Chambers Suite 62
93 Hope Street
Glasgow, G2 6LD
Tel: 0141 248 2474    Text: 0141 248 2477
Fax: 0141 248 2479    Email: admin@scod.org.uk
Website: www.scod.org.uk

Signature Scotland Office
TouchBase Community Suite
43 Middlesex Street
Glasgow, G41 1EE
Tel: 0141 418 7191    Text: 0141 418 7193
Fax: 0141 418 7192    Email: glasgow@signature.co.uk
Website: www.signature.org.uk

Deafblind Scotland
21 Alexandra Avenue
Lenzie, Glasgow, G66 5BG
Tel/text: 0141 777 6111    Fax: 0141 775 3311
Email: info@deafblindscotland.org.uk
Website: www.deafblindscotland.org.uk
Where to now? 

Sensory Impairment - Training Pathways 2007

Equalities Training

Sensory Impairment Training (6 hours)

Hearing Loss

Signature Level 1 Dev Awareness with Deaf & Deafblind DAC1 Remaining 14 hours

Signature Level 2 Communication with Deaf People (CDA2)

Signature Level 1 Certificate in British Sign Language (BSL1) (50 hours)

Signature Level 2 Certificate in British Sign Language (BSL2)

Signature Level 3 Facilitating Communication with Deaf People (FLS3,FNT3)

Signature Level 3 Certificate in British Sign Language (BSL3)

Level 4 NVQ British Sign Language (BSN4)

Level 4 NVQ in Interpreting BSL/English (INT4)

Dual Sensory Loss

Signature Level 1 Dev Awareness with Deaf & Deafblind DAC1 Remaining 14 hours

Signature Level 2 Communication with Deafblind People (Manual) (CDC2) (50 hours)

Signature Level 1 Certificate in British Sign Language (BSL1) (50 hours)

Signature Level 2 Certificate in British Sign Language (BSL2)

Signature Level 3 Facilitating Communication with Deafblind People (Manual) (FDB3) (60 Hours)

Signature Level 2 Certificate in British Sign Language (BSL2)

Signature P302 Certificate for LSPs working with Deafblind People (Manual) (LDB3) (20 Hours)

Deafblind Studies Diploma (2 years)

Visual Loss

Basic Visual Impairment Awareness

Basic Introduction to Guiding (In progress)

Advanced Visual Impairment Guiding (In progress)

Eye conditions and their impact (In progress)

Accessible information and communication (In progress)

Visual Impairment and Dementia (In progress)

Visual Impairment and Learning Disability

National Occupational Standards have been developed via Scottish Social Services Council and a qualifications framework will be agreed in the future.

Nationa...