

COVID-19 guidance: How can health settings support blind or partially sighted people?

This guide has been written by blind and partially sighted people working with Sight Loss Councils.

1. **Be aware:** Not all blind and partially sighted people “look blind” (wear dark glasses, use a cane or a guide dog), so be mindful that it may not always be obvious. They may however be wearing a Sunflower badge or a lanyard so they can be easily recognised as someone requiring assistance. People with visual impairment may need more verbal information than others, so please be clear and accurate when communicating.
2. **Guiding:** If someone usually requires ‘traditional’ guiding in public areas, and there is no safe alternative, they will need to be guided. Therefore, single use face masks and hand-sanitizers should be made available. If the patient is accompanied, ask if the person with them is their usual means of support and advise them of hygiene procedures. You can find more information on guiding on the RNIB website: www.rnib.org.uk/advice/guiding-blind-or-partially-sighted-person
3. **Social distancing:** Many blind and partially sighted patients will find it difficult to maintain social distancing. So, keep this in mind when you’re on duty.
4. **Introduce yourself:** If you think that someone needs help, introduce yourself as patients may not be able to see your uniform - a simple: “Hi I’m Steve, I work at the hospital, is there anything I can do to help today?” can go a long way.
5. **Hygiene:** To keep everyone safe, please highlight to your blind and partially sighted patients where they can sterilise their hands, don’t assume everyone knows where it is.

6. **Changes to the environment:** Make sure your blind and partially sighted patients are aware of changes within the hospital-environments such as: floor indicators, screens and temporary

barriers. Ensure any temporary signage is at least size 48 point font – handwritten notes are often difficult to read, so where you can, verbalise these changes to the patient.

www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk



**Sight Loss
Councils**