

Services Funded by Liverpool City Council (LCC) and Central Primary Care Trust (PCT) for Liverpool Voluntary Society for the Blind (LVSB)

Service User Pathway into Services

Introduction

LVSB provides a wide range of voluntary and statutory services to blind and partially sighted people throughout Liverpool. All of the statutory services provided to our partners within LCC and Central PCT are based on full cost recovery principles. We also offer a wide range of social opportunities to blind and partially sighted people, which are seen by all partners as added value.

Eligibility for Service

Residents of Liverpool who have a significant sight loss. This sight loss is identified by Opticians, Family Practitioners, and Ophthalmologists. 90% of referrals to the service are made through the certification / registration process where a person is offered registration on the blind or partially sighted register held by LVSB on behalf of LCC.

If the sight loss is significant e.g. 6/60 or below: registration will be as partially sighted / sight impaired, 3/60 or below registration will be as blind or severely sight impaired.

The remaining 10% of referrals come from Social Services social work teams, Health professionals including home helps, Family Doctors, Opticians and Self-referrals.

The Service

Those service users who are eligible to register or who have an identified degenerative eye condition which is likely to lead to registration in the future, are offered guidance and support through the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) based at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital-St Paul's Eye Unit or Walton Hospital Ophthalmic Unit. Service users are encouraged by the Ophthalmologists to seek advice at the earliest stage possible. At present 60% of service users are using this service but we hope to improve its take up over the next 12 months. At present the ECLO carries out an initial assessment conducted face-to-face within the hospital but in the future we hope that it can also be conducted by the ECLO via telephone with the service users agreement. . The ECLO prepares a referral that is sent to LVSB's Bradbury Centre together with certification documents as necessary.

At the Bradbury Centre service users details are entered into the database under 3 headings 1: Blind / severely sight impaired, 2: Partially sighted / sight impaired, 3. Not registered but experiencing sight loss. The number of service users at present on LVSB's database is 3109.

Each referral is then passed on to the Rehabilitation Services Manager and is allocated appropriately to a member of the Rehab team within one week of the referral being received. There are a number of specialist within LVSB's rehab team including a specialist worker for racial minority communities, for deaf blind and for children.

Each service user is contacted by the rehabilitation worker (RW) to arrange an appointment (generally a home visit) to carry out an assessment leading to the preparation of an individual care plan. It is at this time that the RW and the service user can identify the priorities that exist. Priorities are made for those service users at the greatest risk.

An assessment / care plan is undertaken within 4 weeks of receipt of referral and the care plan takes into account the service users identified needs in order to overcome the effects of visual impairment and to encourage independent living within the community. The service user is encouraged to identify their own needs and expand their expectations of independent living. The areas covered are mobility, daily living skills, communication, employment, benefits advice and social opportunities.

A programme of rehabilitation is agreed with the service user, which is then put into action within one month of the assessment. Referrals can be made to Christopher Grange for those visually impaired people who have identified a range of rehabilitation skills required and who wish to take part in a centre based rehabilitation programme for 1-3 days per week. The average number of service users attending Christopher Grange is 40-50 people per year.

Most service users choose a home-based rehabilitation service. Those service users who require services not provided by LVSB e.g. Social Services, employment services, specialist housing services etc are then referred onto Liverpool Social Services area teams through Careline, Christopher Grange Rehabilitation Centre, Action for Blind People, RNIB, Henshaws, Liverpool Community College etc as appropriate.

Those service users who have identified their need as combating isolation, reliance on carers, need for social interaction, need for on-going health services and healthy lifestyles can be referred on to the LVSB activity group sessions that are funded by LCC. These activity groups are offered 4 days per week, 25 places per day. At present there is a 90% take up of this service with a regular referral pattern.

Within the rehabilitation programme all service users are offered appropriate specialist equipment required to live independent lives. This equipment is funded by Social Services / Health. LVSB receives 10% of the OT budget for the provision of this service. A whole range of equipment is supplied to help people to live independently in their own homes, ranging from a liquid level indicator costing around £8.00 to a speech or magnification packages for computer accessibility. The budget also allows for larger items of equipment, which have been identified as necessary, including CCTV's and voice scanners. As part of the LVSB assessment / care plan, those requiring small

adaptations e.g. grab rails, bathroom support, stair rails etc are referred through to the small adaptations team. At present all small adaptations are fitted within 2 weeks.

Low Vision Assessments are carried out by the Rehabilitation team as part of the assessment / care plan process. Future plans for LVSB include an outreach optometry service within the Bradbury Centre. This will operate alongside the service user and the RW to ensure the best low vision aids for the service user to enable them to undertake a whole range of tasks independently.

All service users are informed of a whole range of social opportunities provided by LVSB under its voluntary services including, art group, tandem riding, weekend walking group, and music group. The whole of the voluntary services programme is supported by LVSB from within its own voluntary funds.

More than 100 volunteers support LVSB within the activity clubs and these other social groups.

All service users are offered a review at 6 / 12 months following the completing of the care plan and the rehabilitation programme. These reviews are generally dealt with by LVSB Rehab Assistants.

Those experiencing a significant sight loss living within residential homes will still be offered an assessment, this is usually undertaken by LVSB rehab assistants who can offer help and guidance to the service user as to the best way to live independently within a care setting. Help and advice is also offered to care home providers to ensure that services are appropriately adjusted to suit the individual needs of those with a significant sight loss.

Information.

All clients who use LVSB's services are offered information in their preferred format, which includes large print as standard, Braille, cassette tape, CD, and electronic. All information from care plans to information leaflets are provided within these formats and where required different languages will be provided. LVSB also provides a twice yearly newsletter sent out in the service users preferred reading medium. The content of the newsletter is to inform all those on the blind and partially sighted register of new products and services provided by LVSB as well as information on other agencies including LCC, PCT, Fire service, Police etc. This newsletter is open to other service providers who wish to get their message to those on the blind and partially sighted register.

Consultation

LVSB has a long established Consultative Group comprised of service users, Carer's and other organisations e.g. Federation for the Blind, Partially Sighted Society. This group represents the views of blind and partially sighted people. This group has been responsible for many changes within the service

provided by LVSB and is also available to LCC and the PCT for consultation purposes. LVSB also receives regular feedback from service users and has an open complaints process, which is communicated to service users through regular correspondence within newsletters.

LVSB Board of Governors comprises 60% visually impaired members.