

Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Plan

Key achievements in 2014/15
and priorities for 2015/16



Acknowledgements

With thanks to all members and partners of the Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group who have contributed to the development of the Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Plan for the achievements of 2014/15 and setting the priorities for 2015/16:

Access Design Solutions UK Ltd
Bridgend County Borough Council
BridgeVIS
British and Irish Orthoptic Society
BMA Cymru Wales
Cardiff Institute for the Blind
DeafBlind Cymru
Guide Dogs Cymru
Optometry Wales
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Royal College of General Practitioners Wales
Royal College of Nursing Wales
Royal College of Ophthalmologists
RNIB Cymru
Sight Cymru
South East Wales Transport Alliance
Wales Council of the Blind
Welsh Government
Welsh Local Government Association
Welsh Rehabilitation Officers Forum

Note on the structure of this document

[The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Plan 2014–2018](#) sets out how the UK Vision Strategy's three outcomes will be delivered in Wales. It also includes the objectives from the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care Delivery Plan for Wales that relate to the Wales Vision Strategy Implementation aims.

This publication sets out the key successes that have been achieved in 2014/15 to deliver the aims and objectives set out in the Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Plan 2014-2018, as well as the priority actions that are to be taken forward in 2015/16.

Contents

Foreword	4
Our three outcome areas	5
Outcome one	6
Key achievements for 2014/15	6
Key priority actions for 2015/16	9
Outcome two	13
Key achievements for 2014/15	13
Key priority actions for 2015/16	16
Outcome three	21
Key achievements for 2014/15	21
Key priority actions for 2015/16	24
Glossary of abbreviations	29



Foreword

There are 106,000 people in Wales living with sight loss and this number is expected to double over the next 25 years [1].

Whilst much progress has been made in Wales and across the UK there is an ever increasing need for us to work together to reduce the level of sight loss, improve eye health and to provide timely support to ensure our society is fully inclusive for people who are blind or partially sighted.

The UK Vision Strategy initiative was launched in 2008 in response to a World Health Assembly Resolution of 2003, which urged the development and implementation of plans to tackle sight loss (now known as the VISION 2020 plans). Each of the four UK countries developed their own implementation plans and significant progress has been made since these were launched in 2010.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Plan 2014-18 presents a platform for us to build on the excellent progress that has already been achieved. It also outlines how we can further develop partnerships to ensure we meet the needs of our ageing population and collaborate to make our society more inclusive and provide person centred services.

This document highlights some of the innovative work which has been delivered by partners over the past year. It includes the relevant successes and targets from the Welsh Government Eye Health Delivery Plan and sets out the agreed partnership objectives for 2015/16. Our objectives are ambitious and we know there will be challenges to overcome but as Helen Keller once said “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”.

On behalf of the Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group I would like to thank partners and supporters for their contribution and hard work.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ceri Jackson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Ceri Jackson
Chair, Wales Vision Strategy

[1] Access Economics 2009, Future Sight Loss 1: The economic impact of partial sight and blindness in the UK adult population. RNIB and Office of National Statistics. 2014.

Our three outcome areas

Outcome one – everyone in Wales looks after their eyes and their sight

From 2014–2018, we will work to:

- raise awareness and understanding of eye health, particularly focusing on people most at risk of eye disease and also among health and social care practitioners.
- ensure the early detection of sight loss and prevention where possible.

Outcome two – everyone with an eye condition receives timely treatment and, if permanent sight loss occurs, early and appropriate services and support are available and accessible to all

From 2014–2018, we will work to:

- improve the coordination, integration, reach and effectiveness of eye health and eyecare services.
- ensure that, where permanent sight loss occurs, emotional support, habilitation or rehabilitation will be provided in a timely fashion, enabling people to retain or regain their independence.

Outcome three – a society in which people with sight loss can fully participate

From 2014–2018, we will work to:

- improve attitudes, awareness and actions within education, employment and other services.
- ensure that children and young people with sight loss can take their place in society.
- achieve improved compliance with equality legislation.

Outcome one

Everyone in Wales looks after their eyes and their sight

From 2014–2018, we will work to:

- raise awareness and understanding of eye health, particularly focusing on people most at risk of eye disease and also among health and social care practitioners.
- ensure the early detection of sight loss and prevention where possible.

Outcome one: key achievements for 2014/15

Eye health campaigns in Wales

Lead Partner: Welsh Government

Aim: That eye health is a recognised public health priority, underpinned by robust research and sound data collection. The impact on eye health and sight should become an integrated feature of major public health and education drives, such as those which tackle smoking, diet or obesity.

Objective: Actively seek opportunities to link eye health issues to other health awareness campaigns such as diabetes, smoking and falls.

Key achievement: The Welsh Government Eye Health Care Delivery Plan is now in its second year of implementation. One of the key objectives of the plan is to run a series of national, week long, eye health campaigns for the general public and at risk groups. The first campaign was launched in mid April 2015 and focused on acute eyecare.

The eye health message focused on encouraging people to go to their accredited optometrist rather than their GP, pharmacist or emergency services in the event of an acute eye problem. Welsh Government and Public Health Wales led this campaign with RNIB Cymru, eyecare partners and other health professionals across Wales working together to support the dissemination of these key messages. Various activities and events were organised, with some attended by the Health Minister and Chief Medical Officer.

Royal College of General Practitioners' (RCGP) Clinical Priority for Eye Health Project

Lead Partners: UK Vision Strategy and the Royal College of General Practitioners

Aim: That public and professional understanding of eye health is increased through ongoing, cross-sector, evidence-based education campaigns that concentrate specifically on eye health. These should emphasise the role of routine sight tests to identify the need for vision correction, including glasses and contact lenses, and to identify the early signs of disease and ensure appropriate referral. There should also be training and development programmes for health and social care and education practitioners, prioritising those working with groups at higher risk of sight loss.

Objective: Work in partnership with the RCGP, the UK Vision Strategy and other relevant partners, as part of the RCGP's commitment to making eye health a clinical priority, to increase awareness amongst GPs about preventing avoidable sight loss and supporting blind and partially sighted people.

Key achievement: Following a successful proposal by the UK Vision Strategy team supported by UK Vision Strategy partner organisations, the RCGP has selected eye health, with a focus on ageing and sight loss as one of its four UK-wide priorities until March 2016. An essential part of the clinical priority work is to ensure GPs have the knowledge, skills and confidence to effectively diagnose and either treat or refer people with an eye condition or sight loss so that patients receive effective timely treatment and support.

Dr Waqaar Shah, RCGP Clinical Champion for Eye Health is working with the RCGP and UK Vision Strategy team to deliver this priority by driving a programme of work to improve GP's knowledge in identifying eye conditions earlier amongst older people. The programme of work will also aim to increase GP's knowledge of the services available to support patients with sight loss. Significant progress has been made in 2014/15 including the formation of a Wales RCGP Clinical Priority for Eye Health stakeholder group to support delivery of the project in Wales.

The clinical priority programme has worked in collaboration with key stakeholders across the eye health and sight loss sector in the UK and with the kind support of Thomas Pocklington Trust to produce

[Sight loss in older people – the essential guide for general practice.](#)

Accredited by the RCGP, the guide was sent to every GP practice across the UK in October 2014. A follow up survey was sent to GPs and practices in December 2014 to ask for their feedback on the guide. 78 per cent of survey respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the guide improved their knowledge of sight loss in older people and 45 per cent were planning to change their practice as a result of reading the guide.

The guide highlights the need for early diagnosis and appropriate routes of referral, the link between sight loss and other health conditions, and suggests how services provided by general practice can be made more accessible for older people with sight loss.

The project has also established an Eye Health Network of over 400 GPs and practice staff working to raise the profile of eye health within general practice and improve the quality of care for patients with sight loss. The project has also produced a series of clinical factsheets on certain eye conditions and has hosted eye health workshops and presentations at key UK GP and primary care conferences.

For more information about the eye health clinical priority, please visit rcgp.org.uk/eyehealth

Information materials for distribution through the networks of Learning Disability Wales

Lead Partner: Guide Dogs Cymru

Aim: That potential sight loss is identified and addressed for all individuals with health conditions and disabilities where sight loss is a known correlate. That there is increased awareness amongst healthcare practitioners, including eye health practitioners, of that correlation and the services available.

Objective: Work with organisations that support people with learning disabilities and complex needs to ensure better access to eyecare services.

Key achievement: In 2014 Guide Dogs Cymru published an article which encouraged people with a learning disability to have regular eye tests. The article set out why regular sight tests are very important for this group of people, how to spot if someone may have sight loss and what health conditions eye tests may be able to pick up.

The information was published by Learning Disability Wales in the November 2014 edition of their quarterly Llais magazine, which is circulated widely to learning disability networks across Wales. The article was also reproduced in the Wales Council of the Blind's winter 2015 edition of Roundup magazine.

Outcome one: key priority actions for 2015/16

Eye health is a recognised public health priority, underpinned by robust research and sound data collection

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care

Delivery Plan:

- Ensure eye health statistics and demographics are routinely included in NHS Needs Assessments and reports of Directors of Public Health for each Health Board.
- Actively seek opportunities to link eye health issues to other health awareness campaigns such as diabetes, smoking and falls.
- Identify specialised Public Health support to advise on eyecare issues.
- Collect, report and monitor capacity and demand for eyecare services.

Understanding of eye health is increased through evidence, campaigns and training education

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care

Delivery Plan:

- Continue to develop and implement an eye health promotion and public education strategy for the general public, at risk groups and children.
- Implement two national eye health campaigns focussing on specific aspects of eye health and targeting the general public and at risk groups. For example acute eyecare, and one other to be confirmed.
- Work with teachers, school nurses, optometrists and health visitors to educate children and parents about the importance of sight tests.
- Increase awareness of eye health amongst primary and community care professionals.
- Work with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to ensure the importance of good quality eyecare is promoted in residential care.
- Work with the Wales Optometric Postgraduate Education Centre to provide training for GPs, pharmacists and practice nurses on eyecare in Wales.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Monitor and evaluate the delivery of an eye health campaign on acute eyecare in April 2015.
- RNIB Cymru to work with at least four new partner organisations, and to reach at least 30,000 people by delivering annual awareness-raising activities.

- RNIB Cymru to continue to work in partnership with the national and country stakeholder groups to continue to promote the RCGP's clinical priority for eye health project in Wales.
- Continue to run a series of local events with orthoptists to promote paediatric eye health as part of wider public awareness campaigns, for example World Orthoptic Day and National Eye Health Week.

Increased uptake of sight tests and, for those who are eligible, Eye Health Examination Wales (EHEW) and Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Service Wales (DRSSW) services

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care Delivery Plan:

- Develop and implement an eye health promotion and public education strategy for the general public, at risk groups and children.
- Encourage all optometrists that are accredited to provide EHEW.
- Provide training to increase awareness amongst primary and community care professionals of the eligibility and referral pathways for EHEW and DRSSW.
- Audit uptake of EHEW by high risk groups.
- Work with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and other stakeholders to investigate the provision of eyecare in residential care and ensure regular sight tests are included in individual personal care plans for residents.
- Ensure access to NHS optical vouchers for spectacles and/or contact lenses for people on low incomes.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Ensure GPs are aware of eligibility and referral pathways for EHEW by continuing to disseminate information to all GP practices in Wales via the RCGP newsletter, GP sight loss guide and work of the RCGP clinical priority for eye health project.

Potential sight problems amongst children and young people are identified and addressed

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care Delivery Plan:

- Work with teachers, school nurses, optometrists and health visitors to educate children and parents about the importance of sight tests.
- Develop national, external, quality assurance for vision screening in mainstream schools including monitoring of uptake and outcomes and standards of training for nurses and assistants.
- Work to improve the quality of children's screening – including reviewing training, equipment and monitoring in light of national standards.
- Develop a service to ensure children in special schools are offered an annual sight test in school.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Seek the inclusion of eye health information in the Personal Child Health Record ("red book") given to new parents.

Potential sight loss is identified and addressed for all individuals with health conditions and disabilities and to increase awareness among healthcare practitioners

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care Delivery Plan:

- Develop a service to ensure children in special educational needs schools are offered an annual sight test.
- Encourage all optometrists who are accredited to provide EHEW.
- Provide training to increase awareness amongst primary and community care professionals of the eligibility and referral pathways for EHEW and DRSSW.
- Audit uptake of EHEW by high risk groups.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Progress and explore delivery of eye health in annual health checks for those with additional needs.
- Work with health board staff on the implementation of stroke pathways that ensure appropriate access to vision screening.
- Produce information materials for Learning Disability Wales to distribute through their networks.

- Work to increase awareness amongst health and social care professionals about deafblindness, and the services and support available to those who are deafblind; attend team meetings of health and social care professionals to raise awareness of deafblindness.

Potential sight loss is identified and addressed for all individuals of ethnicities where sight loss is a known correlate and that there is increased awareness among healthcare practitioners, including eye health practitioners, of that correlation and the services available

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care Delivery Plan:

- Encourage all optometrists that are accredited to provide EHEW.
- Provide training to increase awareness amongst primary and community care professionals of the eligibility and referral pathways for EHEW and DRSSW.
- Audit uptake of EHEW by high risk groups.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Present the findings of a pilot partnership project on improving the uptake of EHEW in black and minority ethnic communities to the Eye Health Delivery Plan group and develop a dissemination plan.

Investment in further research in interventions for conditions that are currently untreatable, building an evidence base for effective rehabilitation and support services

- Carry out academic research into the effectiveness of rehabilitation for people with sight loss.

Outcome two

Everyone with an eye condition receives timely treatment and, if permanent sight loss occurs, early and appropriate services and support are available and accessible to all

From 2014–2018, we will work to:

- improve the coordination, integration, reach and effectiveness of eye health and eyecare services.
- ensure that, where permanent sight loss occurs, emotional support, habilitation or rehabilitation will be provided in a timely fashion, enabling people to retain or regain their independence.

Outcome two: key achievements for 2014/15

Rehabilitation project

Lead Partner: Sight Cymru

Aim: That there is investment in further research to reduce sight loss through development of interventions for conditions that are currently untreatable and also to build an evidence base for effective rehabilitation and support services.

Objective: Explore the potential for academic research into the effectiveness of rehabilitation for people with sight loss.

Key achievement: This project is led by Cardiff University's School of Optometry and Sight Cymru and involves residents of Cardiff who have been diagnosed with sight loss. The project is on target to finish the baseline interviews by the end of May 2015 and should meet the agreed target number of people to interview. The project has faced some difficulties, which were foreseen, such as people being too frail to take part, very elderly or carers not wanting those they care for to be a part of the research. Language barriers and not being able to make contact has made the project difficult, but a great deal of work has been undertaken to ensure that the research could take place.

There has been interest in taking the project nationwide, which could provide some useful insights into the delivery and impact of rehabilitation services across the UK.

Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs)

Lead Partner: RNIB Cymru

Aim: That emotional support is an integrated part of eyecare and sight loss services, whether it is offered in eye clinics, in the community, or via any other route. Services such as tailored counselling should be standard for people with sight loss and for those supporting them as soon as a potential problem is identified. Links to peer support should also be offered.

Objective: Develop a more robust evidence base for the impact of the Eye Clinic Liaison Service and raise awareness of the importance of the service.

Key achievement: The ECLO service has continued to be a major success over the past year, with a study showing the social return on investment of the service was substantial. This study commissioned by RNIB Cymru found that for every £1 investment in the ECLO service, there is a return of £10.57 to social care budgets.

This clearly demonstrates the value of the service to the individual, the local health board and wider society. Three health boards in Wales are now funding ECLO services.

RNIB Cymru is also funding a pilot community-based ECLO service in Powys, as the health board contracts out many of its services in the vast rural area.

Welfare advice and information service

Lead Partner: RNIB Cymru

Aim: That blind and partially sighted people are able to claim all of the welfare benefits that they are entitled to.

Objective: Provide blind and partially sighted people with advice, information and support on accessing welfare benefits.

Key achievement: All blind and partially sighted people in Wales now have access to advice, information and support on accessing welfare benefits. RNIB Cymru's new Lottery funded service was launched on 12 February 2015 by the Communities and Tackling Poverty Minister, Lesley Griffiths AM at North Wales Society for the Blind. This service complements the existing service provided by Sight Cymru, ensuring services for blind and partially sighted people all over Wales.

RNIB Cymru's Rights, Advice and Information Service has been designed to address the barriers that blind, partially sighted, deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind people face when claiming benefits. The Wales-wide project will support more than 5,000 people who have sight or hearing loss to claim the benefits they are entitled to receive with a target of securing almost £12million in unclaimed income. RNIB Cymru is delivering the service in partnership with Action on

Hearing Loss Cymru, Sense Cymru, Deafblind Cymru, North Wales Society for Blind People, Vision Support and Cardiff Institute for the Blind.

More information is available at:

rnib.org.uk/rights-advice-and-information-service

More information about Sight Cymru's support services can be found at:

sightcymru.org.uk/support-services.html

Develop an online portal to provide information and signposting

Lead Partner: Wales Council of the Blind

Aim: That there is reliable, accessible and relevant information on eye conditions, eyecare, sight loss services, support networks and legal entitlements, which is easily available in a range of formats and languages, to enable people to understand their options, select services and make informed decisions. In the case of children this should be extended to parents and guardians and, where the individual would find it helpful, those who support them.

Objective: Signpost people with sight loss to relevant agencies.

Key achievement: Wales Council of the Blind have been working on "Perspectif", a portal which aims to direct people to sources of information such as organisations' websites to promote the work of the sector, leaving partners in control of the information given. In order to give people with sight loss a full range of choices, the portal has been linked into RNIB's UK-wide Sightline Directory. Members of the Wales Vision Forum (formerly Next Steps) were consulted to ensure the information was as clear and up to date as possible.

The prototype was tested by the sector, and feedback given in order to correct some of the entries on the portal and a customised report was produced, detailing third sector services across Wales. This will be now be followed by a report on statutory services. The initial public version will be launched at the end of May 2015, after which further improvements will be made.

Provide support to deafblind people to use new technology

Lead Partner: Deafblind Cymru

Aim: That training in the use of new technologies for people who are deafblind, blind or partially sighted is available, affordable and ongoing.

Objective: Support deafblind people to get online and use digital technology.

Key achievement: The year one milestone was to provide 20 members of Deafblind Cymru with one-to-one digital inclusion support. Over the course of the year, more than 70 one-to-one support sessions have been delivered.

Improved access to eye health care and treatment

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care

Delivery Plan:

- Work to develop electronic referrals and electronic patient records for eyecare.
- Work to increase the provision of services in the primary and community setting, where clinically appropriate.
- Review and develop Eye Health Examination Wales (EHEW) annually and develop a dry eye pathway.
- Review EHEW and primary care Focus on Ophthalmology (FOO) pathways in light of referral audit findings to develop an agreed list of appropriate and inappropriate referrals.
- Revise targets for ophthalmology to incorporate measures for all patients (new and follow-up) that are based on clinical need and risk of irreversible sight loss.
- Develop systems to improve routine data collection for demand, capacity, activity and backlog in Hospital Eye Service (HES).
- Audit referrals from primary care to secondary care.
- Collect, report and monitor capacity and demand for eyecare services.
- Establish Ophthalmic Diagnostic and Treatment Centres (ODTCs) for glaucoma.
- Ensure there is a transparent process for considering and implementing the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance that involves ophthalmologists and patients.
- Ensure all referrals to secondary care receive a response.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Continue to explore and develop the potential for direct referral pathways from optometry to secondary care.
- Support the Wales Ophthalmic Board to review current capacity issues within ophthalmology.
- Sign off the findings of the Cwm Taf Community Engagement Project, which evaluated the effectiveness of the Ophthalmic Diagnostic and Treatment Centre.
- Produce a summary report and disseminate findings to key stakeholders in Wales and the UK.

Improved access to sight loss services, including low vision services, and more integrated services are developed which provide seamless pathways through health, social care, private and voluntary sectors

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care Delivery Plan:

- Ensure that everyone entitled to certification as sight impaired is certified.
- Work with pharmacists to review adherence with glaucoma medication including in a care home setting.
- Ensure effective referrals to social services from the hospital eye service where the individual would benefit from an assessment by a rehabilitation officer and where appropriate a rehabilitation programme.
- Ensure effective referrals to Low Vision Service Wales (LVSW) and the third sector from the hospital eye service.
- Promote LVSW and improve uptake.
- Provide multi-disciplinary training for LVSW practitioners, rehabilitation workers, social workers and voluntary sector staff on referral pathways.
- Work with LVSW to ensure effective referrals to social services and the third sector.
- Improving referrals between the LVSW, social services and the third sector.
- Work with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to ensure those with sensory impairment living in residential care are identified and supported.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Work in partnership with the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, VISION 2020 UK and relevant eyecare partners in Wales to deliver a series of peer-led workshops to ophthalmologists and eye clinic staff, highlighting the benefits of certification and registration.
- RNIB Cymru to produce an information pack with the Wales Vision Forum of third sector services to improve referrals from optometry to the third sector.

That there is reliable, accessible and relevant information on eye conditions, eyecare, sight loss services, support networks and legal entitlements, which are accessible

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Continue to support the production of materials on specific eye conditions in formats for people with learning disabilities.
- Cardiff Institute for the Blind (CIB) and RNIB Cymru to support 5,478 people through their advice, information and signposting service.
- Feed into health board implementation groups and collect patient experiences of the All Wales Standards for Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss in the NHS.
- Produce and promote bilingual parent information leaflet for families with blind and partially sighted children, to maximise their confidence and independence and assist them to access the range of statutory and other services that may be required.
- Produce parent information on proposed Special Educational Needs legislation changes.
- Contribute to the development of the second year Action on Hearing Loss Cymru project on their pan-Wales sensory loss inclusion project engaging with health, housing and social services, creating a virtual sensory toolkit which will be accessible to all service-providing organisations across Wales.
- Contribute to the development of good practice accessibility guidance of local authority information.

That emotional support is an integrated part of eyecare and sight loss services

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Ensure all health boards in Wales have ECLO coverage provided through RNIB, CIB, Sight Support and health boards.
- Following the commencement of a community ECLO service in Powys from April 2015, monitor the set up and establishment of the project.
- Work with the Low Vision Services Wales Group to produce a sensory loss services booklet.
- Write a report on the benefits of telephone support services for Roundup. Encourage volunteers to support these services.

That evidence-based treatments and support services are developed based on robust research to improve outcomes and provide better value

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care Delivery Plan:

- Ensure there is a transparent process for considering and implementing NICE guidance that involves ophthalmologists and patients.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Collect data for academic research into the effectiveness of rehabilitation for people with sight loss.
- RNIB to continue to collate quarterly evidence reports for RNIB Cymru ECLO services for provision to health boards and other key stakeholders.
- Commencement of RNIB's evaluation of Online Today and evidence gathering on the impact of digital inclusion/exclusion on blind and partially sighted people.

That habilitation or rehabilitation is available as soon as necessary and reflects the needs of the individual, builds confidence and skills and is agreed by the person (and/or their carer)

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care Delivery Plan:

- Ensure effective referrals to social services from the hospital eye service where the individual would benefit from an assessment by a rehabilitation officer and where appropriate a rehabilitation programme.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Continue to influence the development of eligibility regulations, under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act producing briefings for meeting with Assembly Members (AMs) as required during the super-affirmative procedure.
- Provide independent living skills and confidence building training to 300 people.

That timely assessments are provided, which consider all aspects of a person's life and communication needs, including those related to education and employment

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care Delivery Plan:

- Ensure effective referrals to social services from the hospital eye service where the individual would benefit from an assessment by a rehabilitation officer and where appropriate a rehabilitation programme.

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Monitor outcome of public consultation of regulations under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act for further priorities and opportunities to influence.

That there is increased understanding of the impact of sight loss among health and social care and education and employment practitioners through training and development programmes

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Provide sight loss awareness training for specialist workers and professionals.
- Provide deafblind awareness training to local authority social services team of 35 professionals.
- Continue to contribute to the RCGP clinical priority for eye health project in Wales.
- Meet with heads of Job Centre Plus across Wales to promote equality of opportunity for people with sight loss to raise awareness of the needs of people with sight loss and the support services available to them.

That people with sight loss and their family and carers are involved in the development, design and delivery of services to ensure that these meet the needs of people with sight loss

Relevant objectives in the Welsh Government's Eye Health Care Delivery Plan:

- Develop and systemise the use of patient outcome and experience measures in primary care, secondary care and social services.
- Ensure there is a transparent process for considering and implementing NICE guidance that involves ophthalmologists and patients.
- Support and inform the implementation and delivery of Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) and Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) in eyecare services in Wales.

Outcome three

A society in which people with sight loss can fully participate

From 2014–2018, we will work to:

- Improve attitudes, awareness and actions within education, employment and other services.
- Ensure that children and young people with sight loss can take their place in society.
- Achieve improved compliance with equality legislation.

Outcome three: key achievements for 2014/15

Public services are aware of accessibility for people with sight loss

Lead Partner: RNIB Cymru

Aim: Public services, such as health, housing and council services, are fully accessible to people with sight loss.

Objective: Work with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales to ensure accessibility for people with sight loss is included in their review of care home provision.

Key achievement:

[The Older People's Commissioner's review on residential care](#) was published in November 2014. The publication made extensive reference to sight loss throughout the document which will ensure that care homes across Wales are aware of the impact of sight loss on their residents and how care homes should be made fully accessible.

Accessibility of bus services

Lead Partner: Guide Dogs Cymru

Aim: That public transport is fully accessible to people with sight loss, including booking and ticketing facilities and transport interchanges as well as the provision of real time information technology such as audio/visual information systems on buses.

Objective: Campaign for the introduction of more buses with on board audio visual announcements across Wales.

Key achievement: The 2014/15 target was to work with the Welsh Government on the development of a new toolkit for local authorities, to improve the accessibility of public transport. The toolkit and a film have now been produced.

RNIB Cymru and Guide Dogs Cymru were commissioned by the Welsh Government to write “Get on board”, which contains guidance for service commissioners and bus companies on how to meet the needs of blind and partially sighted people when they travel on buses.

On 15 January 2015, Welsh Transport Minister Edwina Hart launched the new guide, to improve bus travel in Wales for people with sight loss.

The Minister was keen that the toolkit and the principles should be part of new and existing transport policy and RNIB Cymru has ensured that they are included within their National Transport Plan consultation response. There is now more work to be done to ensure that public transport is truly accessible to those with sight loss.

For more information visit

rnib.org.uk/wales-cymru/news/get-board

Wales Vision Strategy Conference

Lead Partner: Guide Dogs Cymru

Aim: That people with sight loss are able to move around freely, safely and independently, through the implementation of inclusive design principles and by involving people with sight loss and sight loss organisations from the beginning of new developments.

Objective: Engage with architects and urban designers to raise awareness of the access requirements of blind and partially sighted people.

Key achievement: The Wales Vision Strategy annual conference has now been arranged for June 2015 and will be dedicated to the issue of the built environment and inclusive design. The conference will bring together selected local authority officers who lead on equalities, environment and regeneration, as well as professionals in transport and planning.

To find out more about the conference visit:

ukvisionstrategy.org.uk/get-involved-ways-get-involved-across-uk/wales

Future InSight Programme

Lead Partners: RNIB Cymru and Guide Dogs Cymru

Aim: That all blind and partially sighted people can access services to support them into work, or to retain their employment following sight loss. This should include support for employers and the promotion of Access to Work and equivalent schemes which help supply assistive technology and support mechanisms.

Objective: Secure supported work experience opportunities for young blind and partially sighted people.

Key achievement: Future InSight is a Big Lottery funded project under Bright New Futures, aimed at young people aged 14–25 throughout Wales who are blind or partially sighted, to gain work experience to enhance their employability skills.

Large and small employers such as South Wales Police, Airbus UK, Techniquet, DVLA, Digital Accessibility Centre, and Ty Newydd, Laguna Health Spa have taken part in the programme.

A range of partners are working together across Wales, contributing their specialist skills making the work placement worthwhile and successful for both the young person and the employer.

In the 2014/15 period, the project enabled 12 people in Wales to access work experience with three staying with the host employer in paid employment. This has exceeded the original target set by the project, showing the high level of demand for this type of valuable service.

To date, with significant support and an emphasis on ensuring the right placement for the right young person, every placement has reached a successful conclusion. Not one participant has dropped out of the scheme or has requested a change to their placement.

Outcome three: key priority actions for 2015/16

That people with sight loss of all ages have equal access to education and vocational training, including training and other materials in accessible formats

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Produce a parent information leaflet bilingually and promote widely. Produce a parent information leaflet on proposed SEN legislation changes.
- Hold consultation reviewing if the VISION 2020 UK Children and Young People's pathway document can be adopted as the standard pathway for Wales.
- Update the Sight Loss Pathway through reconvening working group and including new strategies, VISION 2020 UK Children and Young People's (CYP) pathway.
- Continued campaigning for inclusion of Sight Loss Pathway in new Special Educational Needs (SEN) Legislation Code of Practice.
- Continue to monitor provision of Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired (QTVI) Support in Wales. Present report to Assistant Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) Inclusion Group.
- Produce campaign report on provision of habilitation in Wales.
- Continue to support Neath Port Talbot College in the Beyond Vision project and in providing quality services for blind and partially sighted learners through the Neath Port Talbot College Group.
- Support Welsh Government task and finish group and influence the development of new SEN legislation in Wales.
- Develop and deliver an added value habilitation service to enhance and support statutory provision for children and young people in Wales. Formal research project commencing in May 2015 with research findings to be reported in September.

That there is a clear and smooth transition pathway from children's and young people's services to adult services

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Provide one-to-one support to 14–25 year olds as required who are making the transition from school to further and higher education and employment.

- Publish an online guide for young people and their families on statutory and non-statutory support available on transition to adult services. Devise a route from the VISION 2020 UK CYP pathway to UK Vision Strategy Adult Sight Loss pathway and publish a Wales specific guide building on the adoption of the CYP pathway in Wales.
- Work with young people and statutory services to ensure that transition planning takes into account the needs and aspirations of the individual. Revise guidance documents and provide ongoing support to individuals as required.

That all blind and partially sighted people can access services to support them into work, or to retain their employment following sight loss

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Continue to maintain a specialist employment service offering both job clubs and one-to-one telephone support.
- Monitor outcomes of telephone supported employment service.
- Run three one-day workshops for children and young people on employment related issues through Future InSight project across Wales.
- Engage with Careers Wales to ensure awareness of the needs of young people with sight loss in relation to transition.
- Continue employer engagement work with companies across Wales.
- Continue to support the delivery of the Future InSight project.
- Provide mobility training and support to enable blind and partially sighted people to get to and from work, through the Future InSight project.
- Hold meeting of Access to Work monitoring group to establish targets to raise standards of assessment and support for people with sight loss in employment.

That blind and partially sighted people are able to claim all of the welfare benefits that they are entitled to

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Provide pan-Wales coverage by RNIB Cymru and Sight Support to blind and partially sighted people with advice, information and support on accessing welfare benefits.
- Continued membership of the Welsh Government's Independent Advice Services Forum, to raise issues relating to sight loss.
- Launch of "Perspectif" online portal to provide information and signposting in May 2015.

That people with sight loss have access to information in the formats of their choice

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Continue to raise awareness amongst people with sight loss of their right to accessible information under the Equalities Act 2010 through Wales Council of the Blind's Roundup magazine, and work with individuals, groups and societies.
- Lobby councils to understand the need for accessible information and ensure that it reaches into all services offered by the councils and their contracted providers. Wales Council of the Blind to collate responses from local authority departments.
- Contact heads of services and highlight good practise examples of sharing accessible information requirements of citizens across all departments, not just within social services.

That training in the use of new technologies is available, affordable and ongoing

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Provide all Wales coverage through RNIB Cymru and Sight Cymru, in order to support blind and partially sighted people to get online and use digital technology.
- Continue to offer all DeafBlind Cymru members the opportunity to learn about new tablet technology; deliver talks on accessible technology at all DeafBlind Cymru peer support and social groups; provide members with one-to-one digital inclusion support; produce a series of blogposts on using new technology.

Leisure activities are fully accessible to everyone with sight loss, including sport, exercise, hobbies and the visual and performing arts

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Continue to work with Disability Sports Wales, Visit Wales and Disability Wales to explore scope of project to seek improvements in the accessibility of leisure, sports and arts venues.
- Work with Disability Sport Wales to look at the barriers faced by people with sight loss participating in sport and leisure activities. Milestones will be established at a meeting in April 2015.
- Carry out a follow-up to the 2002 Arts in Wales and Vision Impairment survey, with progress mapped.

Public services, such as health, housing and council services, are fully accessible to people with sight loss

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Ensure sensory loss be included in Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) inspections and inspectors to be trained.
- Support and monitor the implementation of the All Wales Standards for Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss in the NHS through attendance and input at health boards' implementation groups.
- Report on accessible information in local authorities to be published May 2015. This will be used to influence councils of the need for accessible information and ensure that it reaches into all services offered by the councils and their contracted providers.
- Promote best practice of sharing preferred media registers in local authorities of individual citizens across all departments, not just within social services.
- Promote the adoption of the Framework for Action on Independent Living and monitor and influence its implementation. Following submission of the Environment Report from the Wales Vision Forum to Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, monitor impact of the Minister's letter to all local authorities reminding them of their duty to carry out equality impact assessments and engage with disabled people when planning changes to the public realm.

That people with sight loss are able to move around freely, safely and independently

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Contribute to the development of new planning legislation in Wales, to maximise its potential to improve accessibility for blind and partially sighted people.
- Develop case studies of positive engagement between blind and partially sighted people and local authorities and share with the Welsh Government.
- Promote the adoption of RNIB Cymru's Visibly Better standards in Sheltered and Extra Care Housing and within the health care sector.
- Work with the Access Association in Wales to promote sharing of best practice in inclusive design, Guide Dogs to follow up on report given to the Welsh Government.
- Explore initiatives to demystify Equality Impact Assessments and develop mechanisms for involving blind and partially sighted people in local consultations.

- Continue to develop relationships with local authority access and equality officers and elected members who are equality champions to demystify Equality Impact Assessments.
- Continue to deliver supporter network training where requested, supporting blind and partially sighted people to work with local Access Groups. Evaluate the resources and training required by groups going forward. Work on a new programme of training ready to be implemented in 2016/17.
- Engage with architects and urban designers to raise awareness of the access requirements of blind and partially sighted people, through the Wales Vision Strategy conference in June 2015. In order to address this, the theme of the conference is inclusive design.
- Work with local authorities to ensure they involve blind and partially sighted people in new developments and that their consultation mechanisms are accessible.
- Support blind and partially sighted people to challenge design which is not inclusive and develop effective mechanisms to liaise with relevant local authority officers and councillors.

That public transport is fully accessible to people with sight loss, including booking and ticketing facilities and transport interchanges as well as the provision of real time information technology such as audio/visual information systems on buses

The Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group will:

- Continue to promote best practice to bus operators and plan activities to raise public support.
- Develop an action plan to improve training for bus drivers and support national campaigning to enforce EU regulations on bus driver training.
- Continue to influence and seek support from the Welsh Government's Bus Advisory Group.
- Monitor the impact of the Get on Board guide through a mystery passenger survey.
- Support national campaign for the safety risks of silent vehicles to be recognised in the development of hybrid vehicles.

Glossary of abbreviations

CSSIW

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

DRSSW

Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Service Wales

ECLO

Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (staff who support eye clinic patients to access the emotional support and practical help they need following sight loss)

EHEW

Eye Health Examination Wales (an extended eye examination provided by optometrists to those at higher risk of sight loss)

FOO

Focus on Ophthalmology (a workstream commissioned by the Welsh Government which developed new clinical pathways for particular eye conditions)

GOS

General Ophthalmic Services (the contract under which optometrists provide free sight tests to children, older people and those on low incomes)

HES

Hospital Eye Service

LVSW

Low Vision Service Wales (a service provided by optometrists to advise people with sight impairments about how to manage their eye condition and provide suitable daily living aids such as lights and magnifiers)

NICE

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

ODTC

Ophthalmic Diagnostic and Treatment Centre

QTVI

Qualified Teacher of children with Visual Impairment

RCGP

Royal College of General Practitioners

SEN

Special Educational Needs

WECS

Wales Eyecare Service (umbrella term for the Low Vision Service Wales, Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Service Wales, Primary Eyecare Acute Referral Scheme and Eye Health Examination Wales. These examinations and eyecare services are funded by the Welsh Government)

For further information, please contact:

Wales Vision Strategy Implementation Group secretariat

RNIB Cymru

Jones Court

Womanby Street

Cardiff CF10 1BR

Telephone: 029 2082 8500

Email: walesvisionstrategy@rnib.org.uk