

# **Crisis Response Plan**

VI Sector Crisis Response Plan

Version 3

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# Contents

Contents .....	1
About the plan .....	2
Why the plan is needed .....	2
Scope .....	3
Devolved Nations .....	3
Definition of 'crisis' .....	4
Process to follow in the event of a crisis .....	4
Infographic .....	5
Responsibilities .....	6
VI Charity Sector Partnership .....	6
Sector Response Team (SRT) .....	6
Simulation exercises and training.....	8
Keeping the plan updated.....	8
Appendices .....	8
Crisis response plan: Communications .....	10
Crisis response plan: Service continuity and coordination .....	13
Crisis response plan: Access to food, medicines and basic supplies .....	16
Crisis response plan: Access to adults services .....	21
Crisis response plan: Access to children's services .....	26
Crisis response plan: Transport.....	30
Crisis response plan: Mental health, wellbeing and support .....	32
Crisis response plan: Cyber security .....	35
Learning from simulation exercises .....	36
Crisis Response Plan Endorsement.....	37

## About the plan

This plan sets out the sight loss charity sector's planned response to any future crisis that may impact on the lives of people who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss.

The plan aims to ensure that:

1. Blind and partially sighted people and those at risk of sight loss, maintain physical and emotional wellbeing during any future crisis
2. The voice, needs and experiences of people who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss, are heard and understood by government, service providers and policy makers in times of crisis

## Why the plan is needed

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted negatively on the lives of people who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss, particularly in the early days when many found getting food, medicines and basic supplies difficult<sup>1</sup>. The pandemic affected access to health care including appointments and treatments for eye conditions which directly affected those at risk of sight loss.

The needs of people who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss were not considered by governments or service providers such as supermarkets at the outset of the pandemic. In response, sight loss charities were approached by their beneficiaries to provide accessible information and guidance on how the pandemic restrictions applied to them and for advice about specific concerns.

The sight loss sector coronavirus response group have worked together throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to meet needs and address immediate issues. Through this experience they have recognised the need for a plan to ensure they are able to respond quickly in the event of any future crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> Living with sight loss through lockdown, RNIB, 2020

## **Scope**

The Crisis Response Plan applies across all partner organisations of the VI Charity Sector Partnership. Current members are Blind Veterans UK, Glaucoma UK, Guide Dogs, Macular Society, Retina UK, RNIB, Thomas Pocklington Trust and Visionary. The plan sets out a desire to implement a joined up approach which partners will endeavour to abide by.

However, we acknowledge that there may be times and situations where an organisation may need to adopt a separate or unilateral approach, particularly where a conflict of interest may arise.

## **Devolved Nations**

### **Scotland Devolved Response**

Whilst it is clearly critical that close partnership working, and an integrated approach is undertaken across the UK to meet the challenges of crisis, the devolved nature of government in Scotland, as well as separate civic institutions, means that the response to crisis is likely best met in Scotland to ensure effective and relevant support and information is offered to visually impaired people.

To this end, the Scottish VI Sector organisations request that a provision is put in place within the Crisis Response Plan that acknowledges this and recognises that crisis response requires specific Scottish co-ordination to ensure appropriate delivery locally. This would result in a genuinely integrated approach.

Procedurally, when there is an initial Crisis Response meeting convened at a UK Level, this should immediately trigger a Scottish Crisis Co-Ordination Group of VI and relevant external agencies convened in short order (within 48 hours) to set up a response, working in close consultation with the UK Crisis Response Group. A chair of the group would be appointed and act as key liaison with the UK Crisis Response.

It is recognised that there could be occasional circumstances that would self-evidently be better managed by a UK Crisis Response, and in this circumstance the chair of the Scottish Crisis Response group would co-operate appropriately in a supporting role.

### **Wales and Northern Ireland**

In responding to a crisis scenario in other devolved nations, to include Wales and Northern Ireland, a similar approach is to be sought to ensure a localised response is considered in addition to any national UK discussions.

## **Definition of ‘crisis’**

There are many scenarios which can constitute a crisis which could impact the lives of blind and partially sighted people as well as those at risk of sight loss. Crisis may be caused by pandemic, severe weather, terrorist incidents or war among others. Crisis can occur on a UK wide, country, regional or local basis.

For the purposes of this plan, the term crisis is used to describe any large scale, out of the ordinary situation, which may impact on blind and partially sighted people’s ability to access food, medicines, basic supplies, health care, housing or which threatens their physical or emotional wellbeing.

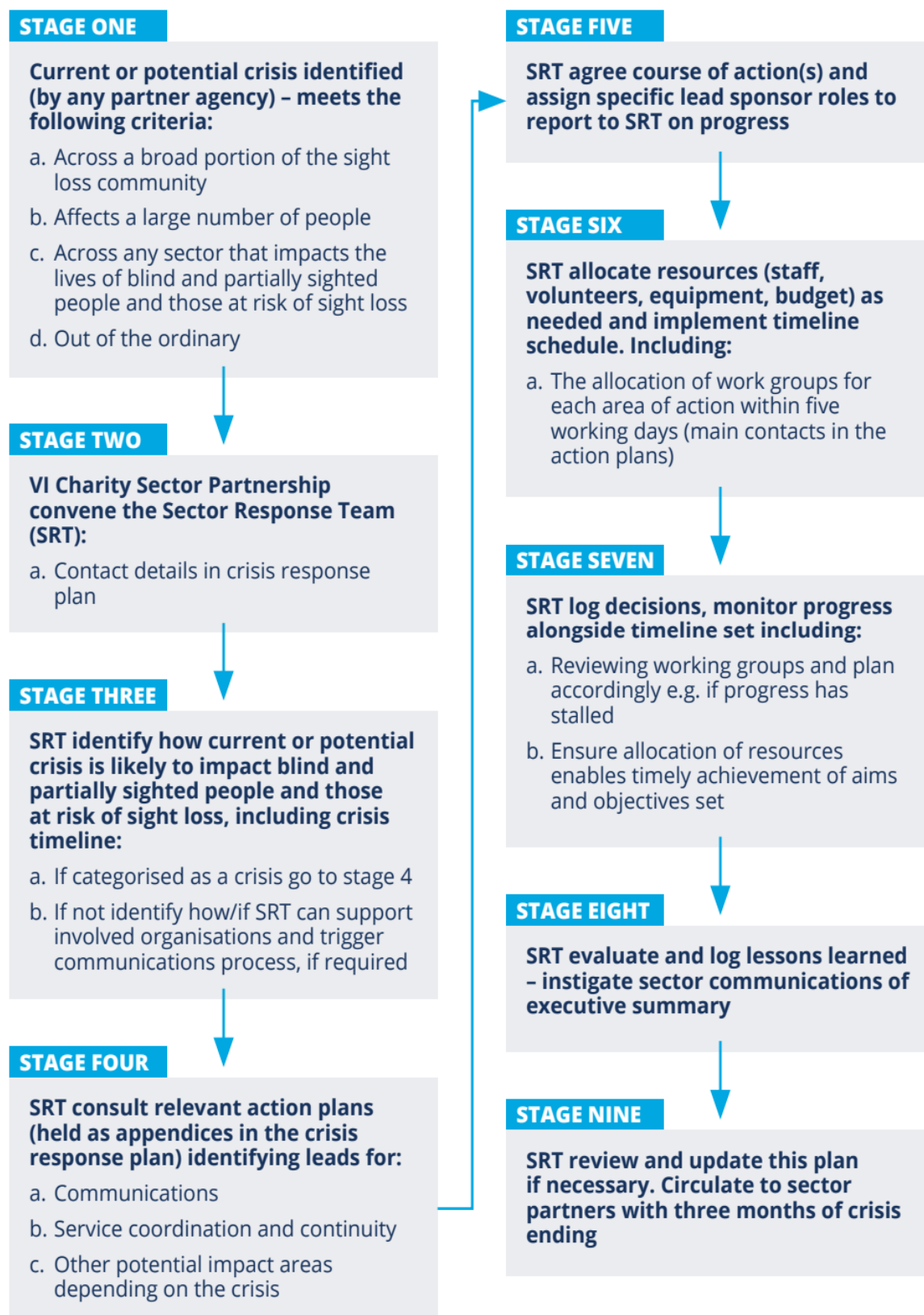
## **Process to follow in the event of a crisis**

Text description of the infographic

1. Current or potential crisis identified (by any partner agency)
2. VI Charity Sector Partnership convene the Sector Response Team (SRT)
3. SRT identify how current or potential crisis is likely to impact blind and partially sighted people
4. SRT consult relevant action plans (held as appendices in this document)
5. SRT agree course of action and assign specific roles and responsibilities
6. SRT allocate resources (staff, volunteers, equipment, budget) as needed and implement
7. SRT log decisions, monitor progress and report to VI sector partnership
8. SRT evaluate and log lessons learned
9. SRT review and update this plan if necessary

# Infographic

## Process to follow in the event of a crisis



# Responsibilities

## VI Charity Sector Partnership

The VI Charity Sector Partnership comprises the CEOs of the member organisations. The partnership has strategic responsibility for ensuring this crisis response plan is established, maintained and delivered for the sector to provide necessary support to blind and partially sighted people and those at risk of sight loss.

Within this they recognise the role of the sector in holding statutory agencies to account and ensuring that their responses explicitly address the needs of people with sight loss.

The partnership will ensure that:

- Crisis Response Plans are reviewed at least annually.
- Emergency simulation/planning exercises are undertaken periodically to ensure their effectiveness and that staff are practised in their use.
- Contact information within the Crisis Response Plan is kept up to date as part of the regular reviews.
- Establish a sector response team in the event of a crisis

## Sector Response Team (SRT)

Led by a nominated CEO or Senior Leader from the VI Charity Sector Partnership, the SRT is made up of staff from member organisations who will take a strategic and operational sector wide approach to dealing with critical incidents. It will be in overall control of the sector's decision-making process when addressing a critical incident and consider the measures necessary to provide support to blind and partially sighted people and those at risk of sight loss. SRT will lead the sector's response and provide clear direction to colleagues on actions needing to be taken.

### Core roles

**Sponsor** – nominated CEO or Senior Leader who will take strategic responsibility for the sector's response

**Project manager** – tactical responsibility, drawing up detailed action plans relevant to the crisis, allocating roles/responsibilities, monitoring and reporting progress

**Communications lead** – convenes and coordinates an operational communications group. In the event of a sector crisis, Communications Leads to draft a joint statement to be used on their websites and social media sites, informing beneficiaries of how to access immediate support and information

### **Administrative support**

### **Operational roles**

The following roles to be brought into the SRT as necessary depending on the crisis, to take operational responsibility for coordinating the response:

**Service delivery** – coordinates provision of services, support and the development of information resources

**Policy/campaigns** – coordinates the sector's engagement with governments, health authorities and service providers such as supermarkets

**Fundraising** – coordinates sector wide funding bids and the gathering and dissemination of information about available funding to the sector.

**HR** – advises on HR implications and leads on the development of standard HR policies and procedures that can be adopted by the sector as necessary

### **Specialist support functions**

The following roles to be brought into SRT as necessary depending on the nature and impact of the crisis to provide advice and guidance:

- Health and safety
- Legal
- Safeguarding
- Evidence and knowledge
- Information Systems



## Simulation exercises and training

The Sector Response Team will ensure that a simulation exercise is undertaken at least annually with partner organisations. This may be carried out remotely through MS Teams or Zoom. Following these exercises, this Crisis Response Plan will be updated if necessary. Feedback from the simulation exercises to be included as an appendix to the plan to enable future use of the plan to be supported by this learning.

## Keeping the plan updated

The Crisis Response Plan is due for review annually or following any major changes that could impact on its content. In addition, quarterly reviews will take place to ensure the plan remains up to date and fit for purpose. This plan is due for renewal by 31.03.2022. The Crisis Response Plan will be held electronically in Sharepoint with a physical copy, in case of computer system failures held by:

Rebecca Masters, Blind Veterans UK, 07393 019871  
[rebecca.masters@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:rebecca.masters@blindveterans.org.uk) and Helen Wheatley, Blind Veterans UK, 07710 847830 [helen.wheatley@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:helen.wheatley@blindveterans.org.uk)

Alternatively please contact:

Campbell Chalmers, Strategic Engagement Lead – Third Sector, RNIB: 07725 611748 [Campbell.Chalmers@rnib.org.uk](mailto:Campbell.Chalmers@rnib.org.uk)

Carl Freeman, Senior Collaboration Manager, Guide Dogs: 07766 465384 [Carl.Freeman@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:Carl.Freeman@guidedogs.org.uk)

Alex Pepper, Head of Partnerships, Thomas Pocklington Trust: 07970 725620 [Alex.Pepper@pocklington-trust.org.uk](mailto:Alex.Pepper@pocklington-trust.org.uk)

## Appendices

Crisis response point of contact in each partner organisation

Crisis response plans

- Communications
- Service continuity and coordination
- Access to food, medicines and basic supplies
- Access to health and social care services (adults)
- Children and young people

- Access to transport
- Mental health, wellbeing and support networks
- Cyber security

## Crisis response plan: Communications

This is a table with four columns and five rows. The first row is a header row

<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making</b>
<p>People who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss, are unable to access information in their preferred format about how the crisis affects them</p>	<p>Offer facility/channels to communicate at scale with blind and partially sighted people to central and local governments, health authorities etc</p> <p>Prepare collateral to communicate key information and get this across member organisations platforms (ie websites, social media etc)</p> <p>Use all communications channels available to quickly get messages out to blind and partially sighted people</p> <p>Promote local/regional mutual aid groups and community support on existing sight loss networks/regional/local social media groups</p>	<p>Operational Communications group (OCG)</p> <p>All partners participate in communicating to their customers/service users.</p> <p>Local agencies provide information to central team on local/regional mutual aid groups and community support</p>	<p>OCG Chair will sign off on mass mailings/mass comms with ratification by SRT.</p> <p>OCG will agree key messages to put out on social media channels, websites and PR channels</p> <p>OCG will agree which organisation will lead on communicating with specific channels – e.g. VI Talk, InfoShare (talking news), Visionary members</p>

<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making</b>
Increase in media enquiries about the impact of the crisis on people who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss	<p>Prepare press releases, key messages and provide media spokespeople</p> <p>Identify and provide point of contact for media enquiries for specific crisis (this could vary depending on the nature of the crisis).</p>	Operational communications group	SRT to sign off on key messages and press releases
Social media posts asking for help or commenting on how sight loss charities are responding – positive and negative	<p>Monitor social media channels for requests for help or mention of partner charities</p> <p>Respond to requests for help by signposting to <a href="#">Sightline</a> directory, <a href="#">Sight Advice FAQs</a>, <a href="#">RNIB Helpline</a> and <a href="#">Guide Line</a></p> <p>Respond to positive and negative messages (and escalate if needed to partner charity)</p> <p>Private messages will have to stay within the receiving organisation. However, partners will share the</p>	Operational communications group	Operational communications group  Individual organisations

Potential impact of crisis	What we will do	Who will lead/be involved	Decision making
	<p>content of new and trending enquiries, alongside the appropriate answer.</p> <p>Prepare social media messages</p>		
Internal comms	We will keep our staff and trustees abreast of the messaging, so they keep to key messages	OCG	OCG

### Key points of agreement reached by the VI sector partnership to support this plan

- We will establish an Operational Communications Group (OCG) to develop press releases and other necessary collateral. We recognise that not all our members will be able to provide staff as a resource into this group and agree that the larger charities (e.g. those with communications teams), will aim to commit greater resource to the operational communications group.
- The OCG will agree a group lead/chair for the duration of the crisis
- As a group we accept that the tone of voice for a press release will not fit all our organisations' tones of voice.
- Press releases will be agreed between the OCG before submission to the respective leadership groups for sign-off.
- A common sticking-point in joint releases is the wording used to describe blind and partially sighted/low vision/vision impaired/people with sight loss, which varies from organisation to organisation. Our boilerplate text will explain our decision to agree a common language that may not reflect how our respective organisations describe our customers/beneficiaries.
- Each partner will keep the group updated on their own communications activity related to the crisis

- Each partner will ensure their UK-GDPR privacy statement enables them to contact their beneficiaries at any time to communicate information or for a purpose that is not specifically identified, but where it will increase or develop the service offered to them. The wording fulfils the partner’s need to process personal data lawfully, fairly and with transparency. Each organisation will also complete a Legitimate Interest Assessment.

## Crisis response plan: Service continuity and coordination

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Potential impact of crisis	What we will do	Who will lead/be involved	Decision making/Notes
People who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss need accessible, up to date and accurate information about how the crisis affects them, where they can get support and how they can access services to meet their emotional and practical needs	Ensure national helplines have up to date information about the services and support available and refer people who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss, to the most appropriate support  Provide information, advice and advocacy to blind and partially sighted people in their preferred format.  Ensure organisation’s websites are linked to the latest information, <a href="#">Sightline</a> directory and <a href="#">Sight Advice FAQs</a>	National organisations lead on providing helplines and information resources (primarily RNIB and Guide dogs)  Local organisations and national organisations with a local presence provide in person, practical and local support	Service delivery leads

Potential impact of crisis	What we will do	Who will lead/be involved	Decision making/Notes
	<p>Collect data on the questions asked by blind and partially sighted people and use these to develop a set of FAQs which is dynamically maintained and publicised via <a href="#">Sight Advice FAQs</a></p>		
<p>People who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss, may be vulnerable/at risk due to lack of access to food, medication, basic supplies and carers support</p>	<p>Link individuals into local mutual aid and community groups providing support e.g. with shopping, volunteer calls, welfare checks etc</p> <p>Where resources allow, provide practical on the ground support e.g. with shopping, obtaining medicines and basic supplies</p> <p>Identify people who are vulnerable or at risk and refer to most appropriate support. Advocate and raise safeguarding concerns as necessary</p>	<p>National helplines and local organisations refer to community groups</p> <p>Organisations that have a local presence and have capacity provide practical support</p> <p>All service delivery organisations provide advocacy and referral if an</p>	<p>National and local service delivery organisations</p>

<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making/Notes</b>
	to secure safety and ongoing support.	individual is considered at risk	
People who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss may be at increased risk of fraud and financial abuse	<p>Provide up to date information about spotting fraud and financial abuse</p> <p>Raise safeguarding concerns with the relevant authority where appropriate in line with organisation's safeguarding protocols.</p>	<p>National organisations</p> <p>All service delivery organisations</p>	Service delivery leads
People who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss may face a loss of employment and income as a result of the crisis	<p>Provide information, advice and advocacy about employment rights, government compensation schemes and welfare benefits to blind and partially sighted people in their preferred format.</p> <p>Ensure organisation's websites are linked to the latest information, <a href="#">Sightline</a> directory and <a href="#">Sight Advice FAQs</a></p>	National and local organisations	Service delivery leads
Volunteers who are providing support and services to people	Provide timely communication to Volunteers and clarity on service continuity, dependent on the crisis.	All service delivery organisations with a volunteer base	Service delivery leads – Volunteering



<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making/Notes</b>
who are blind or partially sighted	To offer Volunteers alternative ways to provide ongoing support		

### **Key points of agreement reached by the VI sector partnership to support this plan**

- Organisations will maintain up to date entries in the sightline directory about their current services
- Organisations will share information about the issues blind and partially sighted people are raising about the crisis to inform development of FAQs and information resources
- If unable to help, organisations will refer to the most appropriate local or national organisation
- Organisations will ensure their service delivery staff and volunteers have access to the most up to date information.
- Organisations will collect and provide evidence on the types of issues blind and partially sighted people are raising and their experiences to support policy/campaigning and fundraising activity
- Organisations will share best practice, assessment templates and other tools/resources as they are developed in response to the crisis.

### **Crisis response plan: Access to food, medicines and basic supplies**

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<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making/notes</b>
People who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss may not have access to food, medicines	Provide immediate help to individuals to access local mutual aid or community groups	National helplines and local service delivery organisations	Link to Comms plan and local social media networks

<p>and other basic supplies (for example: fresh water, toiletries, etc).</p>	<p>who can support with shopping and provide practical support.</p> <p>Where resources allow, provide practical on the ground support e.g. with shopping, obtaining medicines and basic supplies</p> <p>Where necessary refer blind and partially sighted people to their local social care authority for crisis intervention, including raising safeguarding concerns.</p>		
<p>Supermarkets and service providers may not consider the needs of blind and partially sighted people in a crisis e.g. by giving them priority access to online delivery slots</p>	<p>We will directly engage with our named contacts at the major supermarket chains and at DEFRA to fully explain the risks to blind and partially sighted people and understand from them how those risks are being mitigated.</p> <p>Where mitigation is not in place, we will work with DEFRA and the major supermarkets to</p>	<p>Policy and campaign leads</p>	

	develop solutions. This will include how the Government and the supermarkets communicate the outcomes of discussions (i.e. the solutions)		
There may be difficulty in accessing medicines at a population level, due to supply or logistics issues, and/or difficulty in accessing pharmacies locally, due to restrictions on individual movement. Medicines that prevent deterioration in sight are vital for blind and partially sighted people.	<p>We will directly engage with our named contacts from the pharmaceutical industry and relevant government departments to explain the risks to blind and partially sighted people and those at risk of sight loss and understand from them how those risks are being mitigated.</p> <p>Where mitigation is not in place, we will work with those partners to develop solutions. This will include how the Government and partners communicate the outcomes of discussions (i.e. the solutions).</p>	Policy and campaign leads	

**Key points of agreement reached by the VI sector partnership to support this plan**

- Where possible and practical, we will take a joint approach when communicating with our main contacts in key government, health/social care and service delivery organisations

- We will work with our service delivery and communications teams to gather evidence of the impact and experience of the crisis on blind and partially sighted people
- We will ensure our service delivery staff and volunteers have access to the most up to date information about support with obtaining food, medicine and basic supplies
- We will continue to monitor the situation until it is assessed that the risk is mitigated. This will include regular engagement with blind and partially sighted people, both directly and via representative organisations, to understand the ongoing impact to them
- We will maintain a list of named contacts at a senior level for all major supermarket chains, DEFRA and those involved in the supply of medicines (see below)

### **Key external organisations – Food and basic supplies**

DEFRA

British Retail Consortium

Sainsburys

Tesco

Asda

Morrisons

Aldi

Lidl

Waitrose

Marks and Spencer

## **Key external organisations – Pharmaceutical industry and government health ministries**

Department of Health and Social Care

Public Health England

Public Health Wales

Public Health NI

Public Health Scotland

NHS

Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

GlaxoSmithKline

Pfizer UK

## Crisis response plan: Access to adults services

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<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making/notes</b>
<p>People who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss, may not be able to access their GP or health services</p>	<p>We will directly engage with our named contacts within local and national health authorities and request to be involved in any crisis planning.</p> <p>We will communicate the needs of blind and partially sighted people and work with providers to develop adjustments and solutions.</p> <p>Where resources allow, local organisations will be involved in their local resilience forums</p>	<p>National and local organisations – primarily policy and campaign leads</p>	
<p>People at risk of sight loss may be unable to access eye health care services, surgery and treatments.</p>	<p>We will directly engage with our named contacts within local and national eye health services and request to be involved in any crisis planning.</p>	<p>National, condition specific and local organisations</p>	

	<p>We will communicate the needs of blind and partially sighted people and work with providers to develop adjustments and solutions.</p>		
<p>Blind and partially sighted adults may be unable to access social care assessments and support, in particular vision rehabilitation.</p>	<p>We will directly engage with our named contacts within social care and the RWPN to fully explain the risks to blind and partially sighted people and understand how those risks are being mitigated.</p> <p>We will work to be part of any crisis response planning within the social care sector to ensure that blind and partially sighted people's voice is part of discussions and that discussions are joined up between health and social care</p> <p>We will highlight the importance of vision rehabilitation services in preventing isolation, dependency and deterioration in mental health.</p>	<p>National and local organisations – policy and campaign leads and service delivery leads</p>	

	We will take up individual cases and advocate with social care providers where necessary.		
Blind and partially sighted people may not receive health information in an accessible format in times of crisis – increasing their health risk	We will offer advice and support in producing accessible formats to relevant health authorities	National organisations	
A backlog of people waiting for eye health surgery, diagnostic and follow up appointments builds up	<p>We will have regular ongoing discussions with health providers and patient representative groups to expedite clearing the backlog. This will include monitoring the numbers on waiting lists and working with inspectors and patient groups to challenge individual cases. This will include partners in social care as there will be a knock on for vision rehabilitation and habilitation services.</p> <p>We will continue to provide regular communications to blind and partially sighted people and those at risk of sight loss about the importance of</p>	National organisations and condition specific organisations	



	<p>maintaining health appointments and the risks of not doing so.</p> <p>We will continue to campaign publicly if the backlog is not being addressed.</p>		
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**Key points of agreement reached by the VI sector partnership to support this plan**

- Where possible and practical, we will take a joint approach when communicating with our main contacts in key government, health and social care organisations
- We will work with our service delivery and communications teams to gather evidence of the impact and experience of the crisis on blind and partially sighted people
- We will ensure our service delivery staff and volunteers have access to the most up to date information about support with accessing health and social care services
- We will continue to monitor the situation until it is assessed that the risk is mitigated. This will include regular engagement with blind and partially sighted people, both directly and via representative organisations, to understand the ongoing impact to them

**Key external organisations in health and social care**

Department of Health and Social Care

NHS (England, Scotland, Wales)

HSC (Northern Ireland)

Royal College of Ophthalmologists

College of Optometrists

ADASS

Rehabilitation Workers Professional Network

## Crisis response plan: Access to children’s services

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Potential impact of crisis	What we will do	Who will lead/be involved	Decision making/notes
<p>Blind and partially sighted children are excluded from education e.g. by moving to remote teaching on inaccessible systems or schools failing to make adjustments e.g relating to social distancing</p>	<p>We will directly engage with our contacts within the education sector to ensure blind and partially sighted children’s needs are explained and understood.</p> <p>We will provide advice and support to education providers in making educational materials and software systems accessible</p> <p>We will provide advice to parents and carers on their rights and access to education during the crisis.</p> <p>Parents will be signposted to <a href="#">Guide Dogs family support service</a> and <a href="#">RNIB Helpline</a></p>	<p>National, local and condition specific organisations.</p> <p>Guide dogs are able to offer environmental audits of education institutions to enable inclusion.</p>	<p>Policy, campaign and service delivery leads</p>

	We will provide advocacy in individual cases.		
Children who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss are unable to access eye health appointments	<p>We will directly engage with our named contacts within local and national eye health services and request to be involved in any crisis planning.</p> <p>We will communicate the needs of children and work with providers to develop adjustments and solutions.</p> <p>We will advocate in individual cases where appropriate.</p>	National organisations – primarily Guide dogs and RNIB	
Blind and partially sighted children unable to access habilitation services	<p>We will directly engage with our named contacts within social care and the RWPN to fully explain the risks to blind and partially sighted children and understand how those risks are being mitigated.</p> <p>We will work to be part of any crisis response planning within the social care sector to ensure</p>	National organisations – primarily Guide dogs and RNIB	

	<p>that blind and partially sighted children are part of discussions and that discussions are joined up between health and social care</p> <p>We will highlight the importance of habilitation services in promoting independence, preventing isolation, dependency, deterioration in mental health and carer breakdown.</p>		
<p>Blind and partially sighted students maybe away from home and need additional support at University</p>	<p>We will directly engage with our contacts within the higher education sector to ensure blind and partially sighted student's needs are explained and understood.</p> <p>We will provide advice and support to education providers in making educational materials and software systems accessible</p> <p>We will provide advice to students on their rights and</p>	<p>National organisations – primarily Guide dogs and RNIB</p>	

	<p>provide advocacy in individual cases.</p> <p>We will ensure students have up to date information about VI student and young person support networks</p>		
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**Key points of agreement reached by the VI sector partnership to support this plan**

- Where possible and practical, we will take a joint approach when communicating with our main contacts in education, further education, higher education and social care organisations
- We will work with our service delivery and communications teams to gather evidence of the impact and experience of the crisis on blind and partially sighted children and young people
- We will ensure our service delivery staff and volunteers have access to the most up to date information about education and social care relating to children and young people
- We will continue to monitor the situation until it is assessed that the risk is mitigated. This will include regular engagement with parents and blind and partially sighted young people, both directly and via representative organisations, to understand the ongoing impact to them

**Key external organisations in Education, Higher Education and Habilitation**

Department for Education and Skills (England) and (Wales)

Education Scotland

Department of Education (Northern Ireland)

Office for Students

### Crisis response plan: Transport

This is a table with four columns and three rows. The first row is a header row

<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making/notes</b>
Public transport services may be restricted which will disproportionately impact on blind and partially sighted people.	We will directly engage with our named contacts at the major transport providers and relevant government departments to fully explain the risks to blind and partially sighted people and understand how those risks are being mitigated. Where mitigation is not in place, we will work with major transport providers and the Department of Transport to develop solutions	National and local organisations	Policy/campaign leads
Rules for using public transport may not take account of the needs of blind and partially sighted people.	We will work with our contacts at major transport providers and relevant government departments to ensure they understand how potential rules and regulations may affect blind and partially sighted people and	National and local organisations	Policy/campaign leads

Potential impact of crisis	What we will do	Who will lead/be involved	Decision making/notes
	<p>identify adjustments and solutions.</p> <p>We will campaign publicly to raise the general public's awareness of blind and partially sighted transport users</p>		

**Key points of agreement reached by the VI sector partnership to support this plan**

- Where possible and practical, we will take a joint approach when communicating with our main contacts in transport providers and relevant government departments
- We will work with our service delivery and communications teams to gather evidence of the impact and experience of the crisis on blind and partially sighted people
- We will ensure our service delivery staff and volunteers have access to the most up to date information about transport, including specific adjustments agreed for them
- We will continue to monitor the situation until it is assessed that the risk is mitigated. This will include regular engagement with blind and partially sighted people, both directly and via representative organisations, to understand the ongoing impact to them

**Key external organisations in Transport**

Department for Transport (England)

Transport Scotland

Transport for Wales

Department for Infrastructure (NI)

Public Transport Consortium

Stagecoach



Network Rail  
 Rail Delivery Group  
 Transport for London  
 Transport for Greater Manchester  
 Transport for West Midlands

Mersey Travel  
 Travel South Yorkshire  
 West Yorkshire Metro  
 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

### **Crisis response plan: Mental health, wellbeing and support**

This is a table with four columns and four rows. The first row is a header row

<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making/notes</b>
Negative impact on the mental health and wellbeing of people who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss and the need to make use of mental health support due to an external crisis event	<p>Provide emergency mental health interventions, counselling and emotional support directly to individuals who are blind, partially sighted or at risk of sight loss.</p> <p>Identify people at risk and refer into local counselling and support. Refer to emergency services or GP/Mental health crisis team if there are</p>	<p>National, condition specific and local organisation's counselling services</p> <p>Helplines, National, condition specific and local service provider organisations</p>	Mental health and wellbeing group

<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making/notes</b>
	<p>concerns about the person's safety</p> <p>Work with statutory providers to ensure they understand the needs of people with sight loss and that Emergency Mental Health Sessions are available to meet the immediate needs of people in current crisis.</p>	<p>Policy and campaign leads</p>	
<p>Mental health services are restricted and/or they do not understand the needs of blind and partially sighted people in a crisis</p>	<p>Work directly with our contact in relevant governments, health services and mental health charities ensure that they considering the psychological needs of blind and partially sighted people affected by the crisis.</p> <p>Provide advice and training if needed</p>	<p>Mental health and wellbeing group</p>	
<p>Blind and partially sighted people may</p>	<p>Provide alternative means for blind and partially sighted</p>	<p>National and local organisations</p>	

<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making/notes</b>
become isolated because they cannot access their usual support networks.	<p>people to engage in their support networks e.g. remotely or by increasing the number of befriending/volunteer contacts</p> <p>Provide up to date information about what support is available and refer appropriately</p>		

**Key points of agreement reached by the VI sector partnership to support this plan**

- Where possible and practical, we will take a joint approach when communicating with our main contacts in government, health authorities and mental health charities
- We will work with our service delivery and communications teams to gather evidence of the impact and experience of the crisis on the mental health and wellbeing of blind and partially sighted people
- We will ensure our service delivery staff and volunteers have access to the most up to date information about mental health services and support networks
- We will share our experiences of developing new support services so that they can be used more widely within the sight loss sector.

**Key external contacts in Mental health and wellbeing**

Department of Health and Social Care

NHS (for each UK country)

## Crisis response plan: Cyber security

Updated with current information. To be completed by October 2021

This is a table with four columns and four rows. The first row is a header row

<b>Potential impact of crisis</b>	<b>What we will do</b>	<b>Who will lead/be involved</b>	<b>Decision making/notes</b>
Differing cyber security threats (e.g financial, data, reputation)	Education and raising awareness of cyber security threats to staff, volunteers and beneficiaries	National and local leads	Cyber security group leads will meet before quarterly
Data breach could lead to sharing of information about vulnerable groups of people			
Financial threat could impact on service delivery			

### Key points of agreement reached by the VI sector partnership to support this plan

- We will share learning of potential threats and mitigations, where appropriate

### Key external organisations for cyber security

National Cyber Security Centre – GCHQ for advice and guidance for smaller organisations

## **Learning from simulation exercises**

Planned simulation exercise 14.06.21

### **Purpose of the simulation exercise**

To test the Crisis Response Plan against a case study of a crisis situation with a view to generate a discussion around an appropriate sector wide response. To update the plan following the simulation exercise feedback.

#### *Immediate response:*

At the initial meeting of the Sector Response Group following the identification of a crisis, it will be necessary to consider the scale of impact and respond accordingly. This includes establishing the required information and facts arising from a scenario. This may also include at the initial meeting considering which core members are required to support, dependent on the nature and scale of the crisis. Members to convene relevant leads within the appendices.

Members of the Sector Response Group should have the autonomy to offer organisational resource to support the crisis response.

Members of the Sector Response Group should alert VI Partnership CEOs.

#### *Days following initial meeting:*

Members of the Sector Response Group will consider own resources and external services, depending on the nature of the crisis. For example, requesting support from Age UK or British Red Cross. As a collective consortium, the Secretariat members of the Sector Response Group would contact the Charity Commission to offer help and support, if appropriate.

Recovery plan to be initiated.

Each organisation should already have a summary of services included in the Sightline Directory – leads responsibility for ensuring this is kept up to date so that we have access to understanding the scope of the impact.

## Crisis Response Plan Endorsement

Below are the signatures of the VI Partnership CEOs to sign off and endorse the Crisis Response Plan.

### Signed on behalf of Blind Veterans UK



Nick Caplin, CEO

Date 1 April 2021

### Signed on behalf of Glaucoma UK



Karen Osborn, CEO

Date 1 April 2021

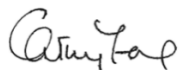
### Signed on behalf of Guide Dogs



Tom Wright, CEO

Date 1 April 2021

### Signed on behalf of Macular Society



Cathy Yelf, CEO

Date 1 April 2021

### Signed on behalf of Retina UK



Tina Houlihan, CEO

Date 1 April 2021

### Signed on behalf of RNIB



Matt Stringer, CEO

Date 1 April 2021

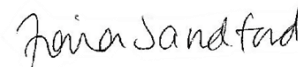
### Signed on behalf of Thomas Pocklington Trust



Charles Colquhoun, CEO

Date 1 April 2021

### Signed on behalf of Visionary



Fiona Sandford, CEO

Date 1 April 2021