

LIGHT FOR SIGHT

GOOD PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

The Light for Sight Good Practice Framework was developed by the Light for Sight Strategy Group (LSSG). The LSSG was convened by Thomas Pocklington Trust and made up of representatives from the following key organisations involved in provision of services to people with sight loss, and the design and provision of housing and lighting:

- Association of Directors of Adult Social Services
- Chartered Institute of Housing
- College of Occupational Therapists
- College of Optometrists
- Department of Health
- Foundations (national body for Home Improvement Agencies)
- National Housing Federation
- Royal Institute of British Architects
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Social Care Association
- Society of Light and Lighting
- VISION 2020 UK

For more information contact:

Thomas Pocklington Trust
5 Castle Row
Horticultural Place
Chiswick
London W4 4JQ
Tel: 020 8995 0880
Email: info@pocklington-trust.org.uk
Web: www.pocklington-trust.org.uk



Introduction

Good lighting at home benefits everyone. It allows us to make the best use of our vision. It is a feature of inclusive design, flexible and adaptable, and can enable people of all ages, including those with sight loss, to lead an independent life of their choosing.

Lighting improvements can form part of an early intervention plan, along with other aids and adaptations, to improve safety, prevent accidents and falls and allow people to live more safely and independently in their own homes for longer.

In fact much can be done to improve lighting at home at little or no cost if action is taken at the right time, e.g. at initial design stage or as part of a larger refurbishment or modernisation project.

Improved lighting can also be more energy efficient, less carbon intensive, with lower costs in use.

The sight loss issue

Few people with sight loss are totally blind. Most have some residual vision and appropriate lighting and design can help to maximise their functional vision. However, less serious sight loss can have a significant effect on activities of everyday living. It has been estimated that some 2 million people in the UK, of all ages, have sight loss that affects their everyday life. Lighting and design are often ignored, but when addressed can make a significant improvement to a person's quality of life.

While people can experience sight loss at any point in their lives, from birth to old age, much sight loss is age-related, and hence a particular issue for older people. In addition to this, in order for them to get the best out of their sight, older people need more light to see than younger people do, and so lighting is an issue for all older people. As the population ages it will become more and more important to ensure that they have good lighting, not only for those with sight loss (and the numbers of people with sight loss will rise as the population ages), but also for the large number of older people who simply need more light to see clearly. A Medical Research Council study has estimated that 1 in 8 people over the age of 75 suffer serious sight loss and that this increases to 1 in 3 people over the age of 90. There are currently estimated to be some 13 million people in the UK aged over the age of 60; many of them would benefit from better lighting at home.

The lighting in a person's home, and any improvements that might be carried out to it, can be influenced by many people:

- Health and social care practitioners, including social workers, rehabilitation workers, occupational therapists, general practitioners, optometrists
- Housing practitioners in both social housing and private sheltered housing
- Home improvement agencies and handyperson services
- Electrical installers
- Designers, architects, surveyors
- The home occupier, their family and friends

Thomas Pocklington Trust is developing a range of publications and other resources, giving information and guidance on lighting for people with sight loss, to address some of these audiences.

This Light for Sight Good Practice Framework sets out agreed key elements of good practice for lighting at home for older people and people with sight loss. It includes the aspirations of the Light for Sight Strategy Group for improvements within those elements: outcomes and examples of actions that might be taken to move towards them. A number of these will depend on their inclusion within wider policies relating to housing and social care.

The objective of this Light for Sight Good Practice

Framework is to raise awareness of the benefits of lighting at home in making everyday tasks safer and easier for everyone, not only people with sight loss, and to enable good lighting conditions to be achieved. For this to happen, the following key elements need to be in place.

1. All housing is built or modernised using inclusive design principles to provide homes that are suitable for everyone, including older people and those with sight loss.

Outcome: Sight loss considerations are incorporated into standard specifications for social and private housing, together with information on lighting and design to address issues arising from sight loss.

Action: Seek to incorporate inclusive design principles in standard specifications.

i: appropriate lighting guidance included or referenced in e.g. Code for sustainable homes, Building Regulations, planning guidance, Homes and Communities Agency standards, British Standards including BS8300, BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM).

ii: identify specification developments/revisions and make input.



2. Health and social care assessments, including self-assessments, identify and address vision problems, sight loss and lighting by including an assessment of visual function and lighting needs for activities of everyday living.

Outcome: Initial social care assessment identifies sight loss as an issue and leads to detailed/specialist assessment by occupational therapist and/or rehabilitation worker.

Action: Raise awareness of sight loss issues, including e.g. date of last sight test. Develop assessment procedures, including self-assessment, and appropriate tools. Seek to incorporate into standard practice through endorsement by professional bodies.

i: input to development of assessment procedures by local government bodies, e.g. local authority social care services

ii: input to best practice guidance from professional bodies in social care, occupational therapy etc.

iii: identify best practice and promote it



3. Information on lighting at home for older people and those with sight loss is readily available to professionals in an appropriate form for health and social care practitioners (rehabilitation workers, occupational therapists, etc.), housing professionals (Home Improvement Agencies, Housing Associations, etc.) and other allied professionals.

Outcome: Information on lighting for the homes of older people and those with sight loss is readily available in an appropriate form.

Action: Develop information sources, documents, webpages etc. and promote their use.

i: develop information for rehabilitation workers, occupational therapists and social workers

ii: develop information for housing designers

iii: develop information for home improvement agencies and handypersons

iv: develop information for optometrists

v: develop information for housing managers, managers of extra care sheltered housing and home care managers

4. Information on lighting at home is readily available to people with sight loss, older people and their families.

Outcome: Information on lighting for the homes of people with sight loss is readily available in an appropriate form.

Action: Develop information sources, documents, webpages etc. and promote their use.

i: develop suitable information for people with sight loss and their families

ii: make available and promote through lighting retailers, high street optometrists, family doctor surgeries, charities and voluntary sector agencies, private care agencies, day centres etc.

5. Advice on lighting at home is readily available for older people and those with sight loss and their families to assist them in identifying appropriate lighting solutions to meet their specific needs.

Outcome: Advice on lighting at home and how to achieve appropriate solutions for people with sight loss and their families, matched to their specific needs, is readily available from skilled advisors.

Action: Develop lighting advice services. Develop consultancy services.

i: work with other bodies giving advice in related areas e.g. care agencies, home improvement agencies, First Stop, Age UK

ii: work with voluntary sector agencies and charities providing advice in general areas e.g. Macular Disease Society, Diabetes UK, Stroke Association

iii: empower professionals to provide advice



6. Skilled electrical installers are able to provide appropriate lighting solutions for people with sight loss and are accessible and readily available.

Outcome: Network of electricians/electrical contractors skilled in lighting at home for people with sight loss.

Action: Work with trade bodies to develop information and accredited training for electricians on lighting at home for older people and those with sight loss and appropriate lighting equipment and controls.

i: work with electrician registration bodies – Electrical Contractors Association (ECA), NICEIC, Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)

ii: work with local bodies, local authorities, societies for people with visual impairments etc.

iii: develop links with manufacturers through trade bodies e.g. Lighting Association, to encourage development of lighting equipment appropriate for people with sight loss

iv: consider development of standard prescriptive solutions



7. Health and social care professionals receive lighting training and training on low vision awareness and the lighting needs of people with sight loss as part of their initial professional education/ training and regular continuing professional development.

Outcome: Health and social care professionals are skilled in assessing lighting needs and providing appropriate solutions.

Action: Determine skills already possessed and additional skills needed. Develop appropriate validated training courses and resources, in collaboration with academic institutions, endorsed by professional bodies.

i: develop appropriate lighting training for rehabilitation workers, occupational therapists and social workers

ii: develop appropriate lighting training for optometrists (including domiciliary opticians) and low vision specialists

iii: develop appropriate lighting training for housing professionals including extra care sheltered housing and care home managers, home improvement agency and handypersons staff



8. Lighting issues influence future policies and are included in existing policies so that the importance of appropriate lighting in the home is incorporated in policies relating to all older people and those with sight loss.

Outcome: Policies relating to older people and people with sight loss recognise lighting as a quality of life issue.

Action: Identify relevant existing policies and policy developments and seek to input information on lighting.

i: government initiatives on health and social care – Department of Health, Department of Work and Pensions

ii: government initiatives on housing, planning, Building Regulations – Department for Communities and Local Government

iii: social housing – Homes and Communities Agency, Tenant Services Authority and Audit Commission

iv: standards – British Standards Institute

