



**URBAN
SAINTS**

RESOURCE

Blind or partially sighted

Effective support for young
people with additional needs

Blind or Partially Sighted

Young people who are blind or who are partially sighted are not uncommon. The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) report that there are over 2 million people in the UK with sight problems.

Many of these will be older, however thousands of young people are born blind or partially sighted, while some will lose their sight due another illness or condition, or through accident or injury.

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Thousands of young people

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Key issues

- Difficulties gaining access to and moving around the building.
- Problems reading printed resources, books, Bibles.
- Problems reading projection screens.
- Problems understanding who is speaking.
- These difficulties exasperated by poor or low lighting.

Support strategies for your group

- **Ensure that all approaches and entrances to the building are free from obstructions**, protruding signs, overhanging branches etc.
- **Make sure that all glass doors have contrasting, boldly coloured panels** to prevent a partially sighted young person from walking into them.
- **Introduce yourself to a blind or partially sighted young person when they arrive**, make it clear when you are addressing them or someone else in a group, and let them know when you leave.
- **Be aware of the reading needs of the young person.** Provide printed materials in large print on contrasting matt colour paper (black on pastel colours is best) if appropriate but also see if Braille versions of materials are available if the young person uses it. Also consider the use of audio cassette, CD, or MP3 material if this is suitable.
- **If using a projector, use large font sizes (30 point or bigger), with contrasting colour schemes.** Try not to use background images if possible. Make sure that a summary of what is written on the screen is spoken so that young people with no sight can follow it.

- **If a young person uses a guide dog** (older teens may do so) make sure there is space provided next to them for the guide dog to sit, and provide water for the dog if required.
- **Good lighting is important**, particularly the use of natural light and 'natural light' light-bulbs, which make colours and detail appear much clearer.
- **Use the international symbol at the entrance and on all information, notice boards etc.** to show that you provide facilities for blind and partially sighted people.



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Further Information: Torch Trust torchtrust.org

Research shows that young people with additional needs are more likely to be abused than their peers (NSPCC) This increased vulnerability is due to a number of factors including communication differences, increased dependence on caregivers, social isolation and a higher likelihood that warning signs would be missed or misinterpreted. As a youth leader it's therefore important to be especially alert to changes in behaviour and wellbeing and discuss any concerns with a safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity.



This resource is just one of the many ways we're here to walk with you!

Discover more free tools, training and resources to equip you in discipling young people.

urbansaints.org

This resource has been adapted from our Invited to Belong Team Training Kit.



If you're interested in helping your team become more aware and welcoming of young people with additional needs, you can explore our Invited to Belong Team Training Kit at urbansaints.org/resources

The original content of this resource was created in partnership with **Youthscape** as part of the Invited to Belong resource.