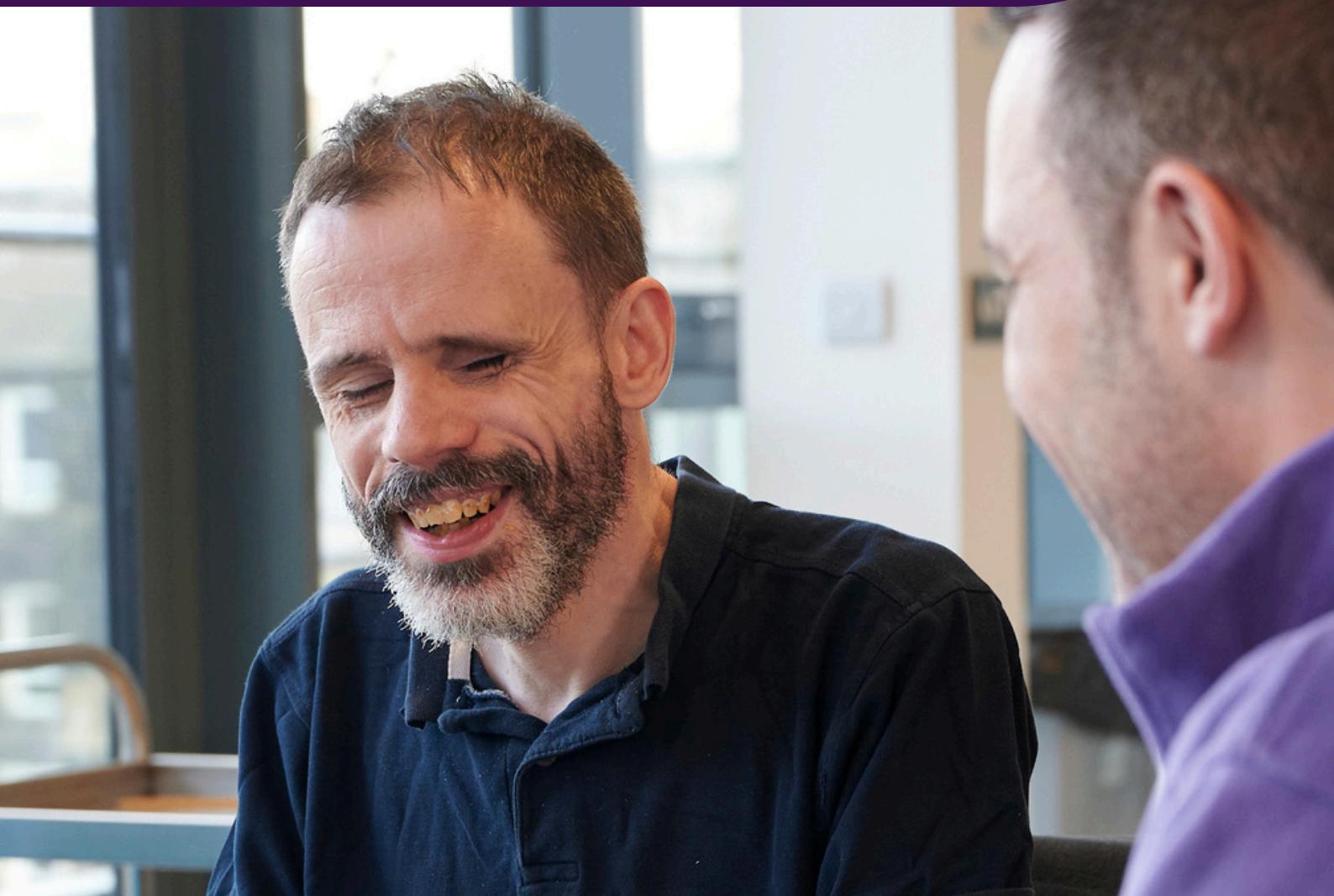




Sight  
Scotland



Sight Scotland  
Veterans



# Time to Focus on Visual Impairment

## 2026 Manifesto

# Introduction

The number of people living with visual impairment in Scotland is predicted to increase by 27% by 2035 – from around 180,000 to nearly 230,000 people. We need an inclusive Scotland where people of all visual abilities have the opportunity to thrive. We want to see every MSP elected to the next Scottish Parliament act to make that a reality.

Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans are sister charities working to deliver equality for everyone in Scotland with visual impairment. Our Scottish Parliament manifesto calls have been developed with people affected by visual impairment across Scotland.

Our overall vision is a Scotland where the impact of visual impairment is recognised by every Scottish Government Department and concerted and coordinated action is taken to deliver change. This manifesto details the specific changes we would like to see as part of that wider recognition.

# Our Asks

## Health: Community eye care and research

Early diagnosis and treatment of eye conditions transform outcomes.

We want the next Scottish Government to:

- Deliver a Welsh-style Community Low Vision Service consistently across all health boards. This will allow people to get the tools and equipment they need to help them live well with low vision at their local opticians rather than going into hospital
- Review and update system for Certificates of Vision Impairment
- Increase investment in eye health research to prevent avoidable visual impairment

We also want government to fund urgent action to repair and upgrade Scotland's crumbling eye health infrastructure. The new government must recommit to cross party promises to build a replacement Eye Hospital in Edinburgh as swiftly as possible.

# Our Asks

## **Veterans: Supporting veterans with visual impairment**

We want the next Scottish Government to:

- Ensure all services for veterans are fully accessible to those with visual impairment

## **Social Care: Support after visual impairment**

Vision rehabilitation gives people the skills to adjust to visual impairment and live independently. But access varies hugely across Scotland. One of the biggest causes of this is the lack of suitably trained professionals who can provide vision rehabilitation.

We want the next Scottish Government to:

- Put in place minimum quality standards for the provision of vision rehabilitation services across Scotland
- Conduct a review the vision rehabilitation workforce in Scotland, so its clear where the gaps are
- Encourage more people to train as vision rehabilitation specialists by increasing access to Vision Rehabilitation courses at Scottish Universities

# Our Asks

## **Education: Supporting children and young people**

Numbers of learners with visual impairment have doubled, yet the specialist teachers numbers are falling.

We want the next Scottish Government to:

- Maintain support for specialist schools for children with visual impairment, including independent residential schools currently funded as Grant Aided Special Schools through a new commissioning mechanism
- Produce a workforce plan to increase number of Qualified Teachers of Children and Young People with Visual Impairment

## **Transport: Accessible travel for all**

Accessible transport is essential for independence.

We want the next Scottish Government to:

- Make the pilot for free companion rail travel of National Entitlement Card holders with visual impairment permanent (eye +1 card)
- Implement a moratorium on floating bus stops (where cycle lanes run between the pavement and the bus stop)
- Remove expiry dates on National Entitlement Cards for people with visual impairment

# Our Asks

## Culture: Accessible venues and events

Scotland's cultural life should be accessible to everyone.

We want the next Scottish Government to:

- Work with venues and agencies to establish a standardised booking system for accessible seats
- Set mandatory accessibility standards for all venues supported with government funding, including visual impairment awareness training for all venue staff
- Encourage venues to make audio description and touch tours standard practice

## Housing: Homes that support independence

We want the next Scottish Government to:

- Ensure accessible homes standards include requirements for visual impairment (minimum 100 lux lighting, tactile surfaces, contrast design)
- Strengthen building standards for accessibility from the outset
- Protect the rights of people who use guide dogs in housing

# Our Asks

## **Social Security: Protecting Scotland's approach**

We want the next Scottish Government to:

- Maintain social security support levels regardless of Westminster changes
- Maintain investment in self-directed support, with adequate funding and accessible information

## **Equalities: Visual impairment must not be overlooked**

We want the next Scottish Government to:

- Include a specific strand on visual impairment in the Disability Equality Plan
- Introduce a Scottish Inclusive Communication Public Sector Equality Duty with clear standards, mandatory training, and real accountability—so everyone, including people with a visual impairment, can access public services without barriers.

**Transform lives, unite communities,  
enable people to thrive. It's time to  
focus on visual impairment.**

Contact: Sight Scotland and Sight  
Scotland Veterans, 2a Robertson  
Avenue, Edinburgh, EH11 1PZ

Phone: 0131 229 1456

Email: [policy@sightscotland.org.uk](mailto:policy@sightscotland.org.uk)

Web: [sightscotland.org.uk](http://sightscotland.org.uk)



**Sight  
Scotland**



**Sight Scotland  
Veterans**

Sight Scotland SC017167 | Sight Scotland Veterans SC047192