



# The Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise

## Introduction

The Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise sets out the experience that people with blindness, sight loss and other print disabilities should have through public library services.

The Promise was written primarily for library practitioners, but should also be made available to library users. It was developed by Share The Vision, a coalition of UK organisations that work together to improve the quality, availability and accessibility of library services for visually impaired and print disabled people (find more information at: [www.readingsight.org.uk](http://www.readingsight.org.uk)).

Since 2010, Share The Vision has worked in partnership to support this Promise (formerly known as the Six Steps Promise). Many library services are providing excellent services, and this Promise is intended to provide the framework charter that every library can support.

There are around two million blind and partially sighted people in the United Kingdom, as well as many others who experience other kinds of print disability. Like everyone else, they need their library and information services, and public libraries have a duty to provide accessible services for every member of their local community.

The Promise offers a cost-effective and significant contribution to making public library services accessible to people with blindness, sight loss and print disability.

## The experience

We think that everyone visiting a public library should be:

- Inspired by an exciting accessible environment which makes reading and seeking information a pleasure.
- Have the opportunity to engage with libraries and reading through imaginative digital opportunities with support to build their skills, knowledge and creativity.
- Have access to a range of inclusive and diverse books and other information resources in accessible formats that allow them to engage with reading both for pleasure and for daily living.
- Able to take part in a wide range of reading and cultural experiences, including book-based and digital activities, which are accessible to all.
- Actively involved in decisions about service developments.
- Supported through library services and activities taking place both in library buildings and in the community to improve their independence, health and wellbeing

## **Six Steps to delivering the Promise:**

Here are six practical steps that you can do to deliver the Promise:

1. Ensure that all blind, partially sighted and print impaired people are connected to the most appropriate service for their reading needs, and that they are able to make full use of an accessible public library service
2. Use Reading Sight ([www.readingsight.org.uk](http://www.readingsight.org.uk)), the free website supporting blind and partially sighted people to access reading and reading services
3. Provide local collections of accessible reading materials and information in physical or digital formats, and be able to signpost customers to wider range of resources
4. Plan your digital and physical service access strategies in consultation with blind and partially sighted people
5. Designate a champion for the reading needs of blind and partially sighted people, who has familiarised themselves with the specialist resources and services available
6. Support and promote Hi VIS (formerly known as Make A Noise In Libraries) fortnight, run annually by Share The Vision.

Further practical guidelines on working with blind or partially sighted people can be found at: <https://readingsight.org.uk/accessible-libraries/>)

## **Our partners**

Share The Vision and libraries work with a range of national partners to deliver this Promise. Partners include: Arts Council England (ACE), Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL), British Library, Calibre Audio Library, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), Clearvision, CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales, Dyslexia Action, Libraries Connected, Libraries NI (i.e. Northern Ireland), RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People), School Libraries Group (a CILIP special interest group), Scottish Library and Information Council, SCONUL (Society of College, National and University Libraries).

Libraries also work locally with relevant voluntary organisations and societies.

## **Links to national policies and priorities**

This Promise works across the Libraries Connected 'Universal Offers' (<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-offers>). Namely:

Reading: Books and reading-focused promotions for people who engage with reading through alternative formats of all kinds, including Braille, large print, tactile, e-books and audio.

Information and Digital: Accessible information and resources, relevant support and guidance, and digital access and activities to meet the needs of people who are visually and/or print impaired.

Health and Wellbeing: Delivering and/or signposting to a range of accessible services, activities and volunteering opportunities that will help to improve the health and wellbeing of blind, partially sighted and print-impaired people within local communities.

Culture and Creativity: Access to quality and diverse cultural and creative experiences and events through libraries, which people with sight loss or print impairment can engage with.

And, additionally, the Children's Promise: Every child and young person who is visually/print impaired being able to be inspired to read for pleasure, to have access to a diverse range of reading in accessible formats, and to take part in library activities.

The Promise and the supporting work of Share The Vision will also develop to reflect national strategies and priorities, including:

- <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate>
- <https://www.librariesni.org.uk/AboutUs/OurOrg/Pages/Business-Plans.aspx>
- <https://scottishlibraries.org/advice-guidance/national-strategies/the-national-strategy-for-public-libraries/>
- <https://gov.wales/libraries-archives> (for note, at time of writing, The Welsh Government are developing a new Libraries strategy)

## **Supporting on the Promise**

From 2020, Share The Vision will:

- Update the Reading Sight website and develop further resources to support practitioners
- Revise, relaunch the Promise and all related materials
- Review and improve relevant training provision (including e-learning)
- Deliver a series of face to face workshops
- Refresh the approach to Make A Noise in Libraries fortnight and provide support for positive engagement in this event
- Update local 'Champions' details and create a stronger contacts network
- Seek a reconfirmation of commitment from library services to the Promise
- Work to lever in additional funding to support work in this area