

Who Can be Certified as Sight Impaired/ Severely Sight Impaired?

Below are the official definitions – these are complicated and not well defined (particularly for the sight impaired category), if in doubt please ask a professional involved with VINCYP to advise you.

Severely sight impaired (blind)

This is defined in statute – 'so blind that they cannot do any work for which eyesight is essential' (1948 National Assistance Act). The test is whether a person cannot do any work for which eyesight is essential, not just their normal job or one particular job.

There are three groups defined by visual function within this category:

Group 1: People whose visual acuity is below 3/60 Snellen or equivalent.

Group 2: People whose visual acuity is 3/60 or better but below 6/60 Snellen or equivalent, and who have a contracted field of vision.

Group 3: People whose visual acuity is 6/60 Snellen, or equivalent or above and who have a contracted field of vision especially if the contraction is in the lower part of the field but not those who have a homonymous or bitemporal hemianopia who still have central visual acuity 6/18 Snellen, or equivalent or better.

Sight impaired (partially sighted)

There is no legal definition of sight impairment. The guidelines are that a person can be certified as sight impaired if they are 'substantially and permanently functionally impaired by defective vision caused by congenital defect or illness or injury'.

As a general guide, those included should be people who have visual acuity of:

- 3/60 Snellen to 6/60 Snellen, or equivalent, with full field.
- up to 6/24 Snellen, or equivalent, with a moderate contraction of the field, opacities in the media or aphakia (no lens within the eye).
- 6/18 Snellen, or equivalent, or even better if they have a severe field defect, for example hemianopia, or if there is contraction of the visual field, for example in retinitis pigmentosa or glaucoma.