

A Vision for a Fairer Future: Priorities for the First Minister of Wales

R N I B

Cymru

Golwg gwahanol
See differently



RNIB Cymru is the largest sight loss charity in Wales. We provide support and services to blind and partially sighted people, as well as their families, friends, and carers, to help improve lives and empower people to live well with sight loss.

There are around 112,000 people living with sight loss in Wales, and this number is predicted to double by 2050.

**RNIB Cymru wants to support your vision for a fair and equal Wales.
Here are the priorities we're asking you to focus on.
We need your help to...**

1. End avoidable sight loss in Wales.

Five years ago, as Health Minister, you took the bold step and made Wales the first country in the UK to implement Eye Care Measures. This has given us an insight into the scale of the challenge we face in eye care. Latest statistics show that more than 79,000 people in Wales at the highest risk of losing their sight permanently are waiting too long for sight saving treatment. The numbers of people waiting beyond target has doubled since 2019.

Now is the time for more decisive action, supported by innovation and investment, to ensure positive patient outcomes.

As First Minister, we urge you to:

- Accept the recommendations of the National Clinical Strategy for Ophthalmology and commit the necessary funding to transform Wales' eye care service.
- Develop and implement a National Eye Care Delivery Plan for Wales, in collaboration with key stakeholders to enhance eye care services.
- Effectively hold health boards in Wales to account for their progress towards reducing waiting lists in line with the Eye Care Measure targets.
- Setting out the milestones and timeframes for full implementation of the Electronic Patient Record (EPR).



2. Make Wales' streets and public transport accessible and safe for blind and partially sighted people.

Walking and public transport are key for blind and partially sighted people to maintain independence, get exercise, stay connected with family and community, and access and key services such as healthcare. While people with sight loss should be able to make journeys with ease and confidence, we know they face unacceptable barriers.

As First Minister, we urge you to:

- Prioritise the safety of disabled people as Active Travel schemes are rolled out across Wales, by incorporating [RNIB Cymru's Key Principles of Inclusive Street Design](#) into Welsh Government's Active Travel guidance.
- Fulfil Welsh Government's commitment to ban pavement parking.
- Put accessibility at the forefront of plans to reform and improve bus services, through the provision of accessible information, audio announcements, and inclusively designed bus stop and station infrastructure.
- Strive towards having one of the most accessible rail networks in the UK by ensuring that all stations have tactile paving on platforms.
- Take action against the illegal use of e-scooters on our pavements and pedestrianised areas and continue to not participate in the ongoing e-scooter rental scheme trials that are taking place in other parts of the UK.



3. Ensure timely access to vision rehabilitation for everyone with sight loss.

Vision rehabilitation is a vital service which helps people with sight loss people to rebuild their lives and equips them with the essential skills and support they need to live independently. Guarantee people receive the rehabilitation they need by:

- Developing a new Code of Practice specifically for reablement, rehabilitation and habilitation services.
- Requiring Care Inspectorate Wales to monitor and inspect local authority rehabilitation services, including specialist vision rehabilitation services

to ensure the same levels of quality and consistency to those expected of needs assessed care and support services.

- Requiring Regional Partnership Boards to plan, resource and provide rehabilitation services, including vision rehabilitation that meet local demand to support individuals in maximising their independence.
- Making rehabilitation an enforceable human right through the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRPD) into Welsh law.



4. Make accessible information a reality for blind and partially sighted people.

One in three blind and partially sighted people in Wales have missed an appointment or had their health impacted because they hadn't received information in the format they need. Ensure blind and partially sighted people's right to accessible information is upheld by:

- Working with NHS Wales on a national strategy to review, update and fully implement the All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss.
- Using the upcoming incorporation of the UNCRPD into Welsh law to guarantee the rights of disabled

people to receive information on an equal basis through the format of their choice.

- Ensuring that health service IT systems have the functionality to automatically and routinely record and action a patient's required format, for example sending an email, text, a large print letter or braille.

We have an opportunity to make Wales a place that blind and partially sighted people are proud to call home, that supports their ambitions and allows them to live a full and active life. We look forward to working with you and your cabinet to make this vision a reality.

