

ACTION UPDATE!

Update 8: Eye Health



It's easy not to notice problems with your sight because it usually doesn't hurt and you get used to it. Taking some simple steps to take care of your eyes can make a massive difference in life. You'll feel better about yourself and be more able to do day to day tasks.

"It's when I started to give a shit about myself that I got my eyes sorted out. It's made a massive difference. It's free, it doesn't hurt and it's quick. Get it done!"

Getting an Eye Test

- The NHS recommend getting your eyes tested **every two years**. But if you are over 40 or you have **diabetes or glaucoma** you should get tested more often than this.
- Opticians all offer eye tests.
- An eye test can also show up other health problems you might not know about.
Check out our last Action Update on diabetes which can cause problems with your eyes.
- **If you notice a change in your sight don't wait, go to an optician for a test.**

Help with Costs

- Most opticians are private businesses but **the NHS will help with costs for people on low incomes**.
- **You can get a free eye test on the NHS and a voucher to pay for glasses** if you are on any of these benefits: Income Support, Employment Support Allowance, Job Seekers Allowance, Pension Credit or Universal Credit. **You will need to take a letter proving that you are on one of these benefits.**
- Some people on **Working Tax Credit** are allowed free tests and vouchers for glasses. Call 0345 300 390 to check if this applies to you.
- If you aren't claiming any of these benefits but you're on a low income you can still get help by filling out an **HC1 form**. You can get this from the job centre or go to this website and ask them to send you one:
<https://apps.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/LISWebAppStaticData/begin.do>

"I've got problems with my sight myself. You should value it while you've got it—you'll notice it when it's gone!"

Help at Day Centres

- Lots of people experiencing homelessness struggle to get the help they need from mainstream health services. Day Centres often offer help with services designed for homeless people.
- The charity [Vision Care for Homeless People](#) run eye health clinics at Day Centres. **They can do eye tests and glasses for free even if you are not on benefits.** Over Christmas you can see them at any Crisis at Christmas centre, the rest of the year they are here:

Crisis Skylight Monday's and Wednesdays 2pm-6pm, 66 Commercial Street, London E1 6LT—
call ahead for an appointment on 0207 426 3804.

West London Day Centre Mondays 9am—12:30pm, 134-136 Seymore Place, W1H 1NT.

The Broadway Centre Wednesdays 10am—12:30pm, 13 Market Lane, W12 8EZ.

Help yourself

- **Quit smoking!** It increases the risk of lots of vision problems - talk to your GP about Stop Smoking services.
- **Exercise!** It means you are less likely to get diabetes or high blood pressure which can damage your sight.
- **Less booze!** Heavy drinking damages the muscles around your eyes.
- **Eat right!** Healthy food protects your sight as well as your general health.
- **Careful of the sun!** Looking directly at the sun can cause permanent damage.
- **Get Peer Support!** Groundswell Advocates can support you to attend opticians appointments

"We had a client who went blind so I've got some experience with that. It's to do with drink and diabetes affecting your eyes."



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