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## INFORMATION SHEET

### COUNSELLING FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

As a Service, we are often asked about counselling for the young people we support. In the first instance, we liaise with the young person, their parents and school SENCo to ascertain if there are any strategies or groups we can suggest to alleviate the anxiety they may be feeling.

There may be a number of worries in addition to the effects of being visually impaired that are best discussed with a specialist via a referral from the G.P. If this is the case, parents can initiate the request; if in agreement, the G.P. will refer to the Child and Family Consultation Service at CAMHS (Child and Adult Mental Health Service).

There are also organisations to support siblings – if this is of interest, one example is [www.youngsibs.org.uk](http://www.youngsibs.org.uk)

Where the need is directly related to being visually impaired (e.g. the young person's vision deteriorates rapidly; their outward appearance is markedly different; they are reliant on a sighted guide, long cane or guide dog) they may benefit from contacting the ESS (Emotional Support Service). This Service is offered by the RNIB and is conducted by telephone. There is no cost to the young person or their family as the RNIB Counsellor makes the calls to them at the agreed appointment times. For further information please email [ess@rnib.org.uk](mailto:ess@rnib.org.uk) or call the RNIB general helpline on 0303 123 9999 and ask for the ESS.

Action for Blind People are launching a new Talking Therapies Network to offer free to children with sight loss.

Contact Andy Buchan on:

01509 632400 or email [andy.buchan@actionforblindpeople.org.uk](mailto:andy.buchan@actionforblindpeople.org.uk)

The Royal Society for Blind Children (RSBC) have a Family Support Service who can provide emotional support.

Email: [enquiries@rsbc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsbc.org.uk) Tel: 020 3198 0225

Young people who are seen at Moorfields Eye Hospital for their eye care can now request counselling. This is provided by specialist nurses. Contact details are [jasmine.thombs@moorfields.nhs.uk](mailto:jasmine.thombs@moorfields.nhs.uk) and [louise.deboard@moorfields.nhs.uk](mailto:louise.deboard@moorfields.nhs.uk) Tel: 020 7566 2385. Alternatively, ask a member of the Family Support Team to make the referral.

Alternatively, parents can contact the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy on 0870 443 5252 (search [bacp.co.uk](http://bacp.co.uk) online) for a list of local counsellors. There is likely to be a cost implication for private counselling sessions.

If in any doubt about issues raised during discussion, please follow the school's child protection policy regarding the disclosure.

**IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE YOUNG PERSON VOICES THEIR  
CONCERNS AND FEELS LISTENED TO.**

