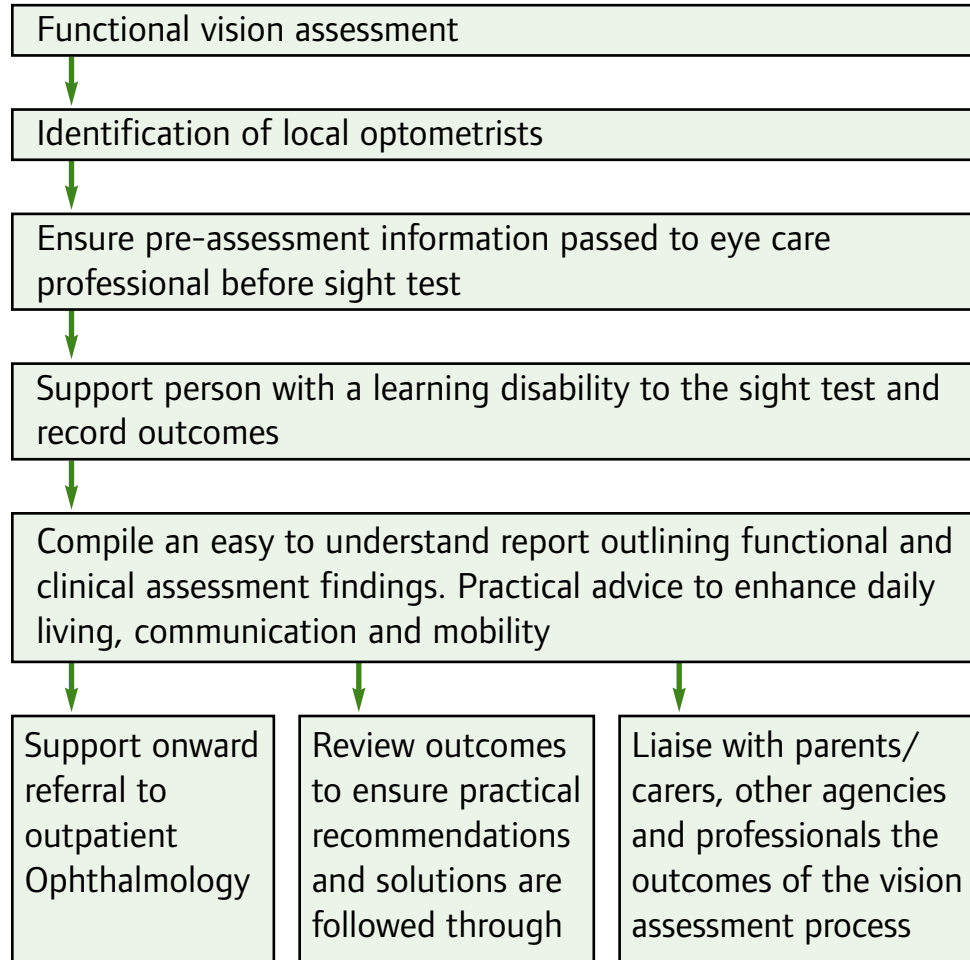


Vision Assessment Pathway



Contact Details

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RNIB supporting blind and partially sighted people

Project Assessment Worker



At least 30 per cent of people with a learning disability have a significant impairment of sight. Many conditions often go undetected and are frequently unidentified, resulting in treatable conditions that worsen unnecessarily.

Identifying sight loss – creating opportunity

RNIB's project assessment workers (PAWs) are part of the National Visual Impairment and Learning Disability Team. The PAW works in partnership with health services, local authorities and the voluntary sector to provide a systematic approach to the assessment of vision for people who have a learning disability.

Visual impairment is used to describe a range of sight difficulties such as significant long sight or short sight, cataract, strabismus (squint), kerataconus, glaucoma, nystagmus etc. In people with a learning disability these conditions often go undetected, and many individuals may not have the capacity to recognise or communicate problems with their sight. Sight difficulties are therefore frequently unidentified, and treatable conditions may worsen unnecessarily.

The role of the project assessment worker is integral to providing accessible eye care for those who have traditionally found accessing local optometric services difficult. Prior to an optometric assessment the project assessment worker will carry out a functional assessment of vision. The information gathered will be used to provide support and practical advice to clients and carers before, during and after assessment by an optometrist.

For example:

- advice on the visual difficulties the person experiences and how they are currently using vision
- aids and adaptations that would make life easier for the person
- advice on mobility
- advice around communication
- support in the development of life skills.

The project assessment worker plays a key role in looking after the interests of the person with a learning disability and bringing together the work of the optometrists, social services and health authorities.

To support their role RNIB can also provide a range of services, including environmental assessments or training to staff and carers.

The fundamental aim of all these services is to create opportunities for people with a learning disability and contribute to the development of more inclusive eye care services at a community level.

