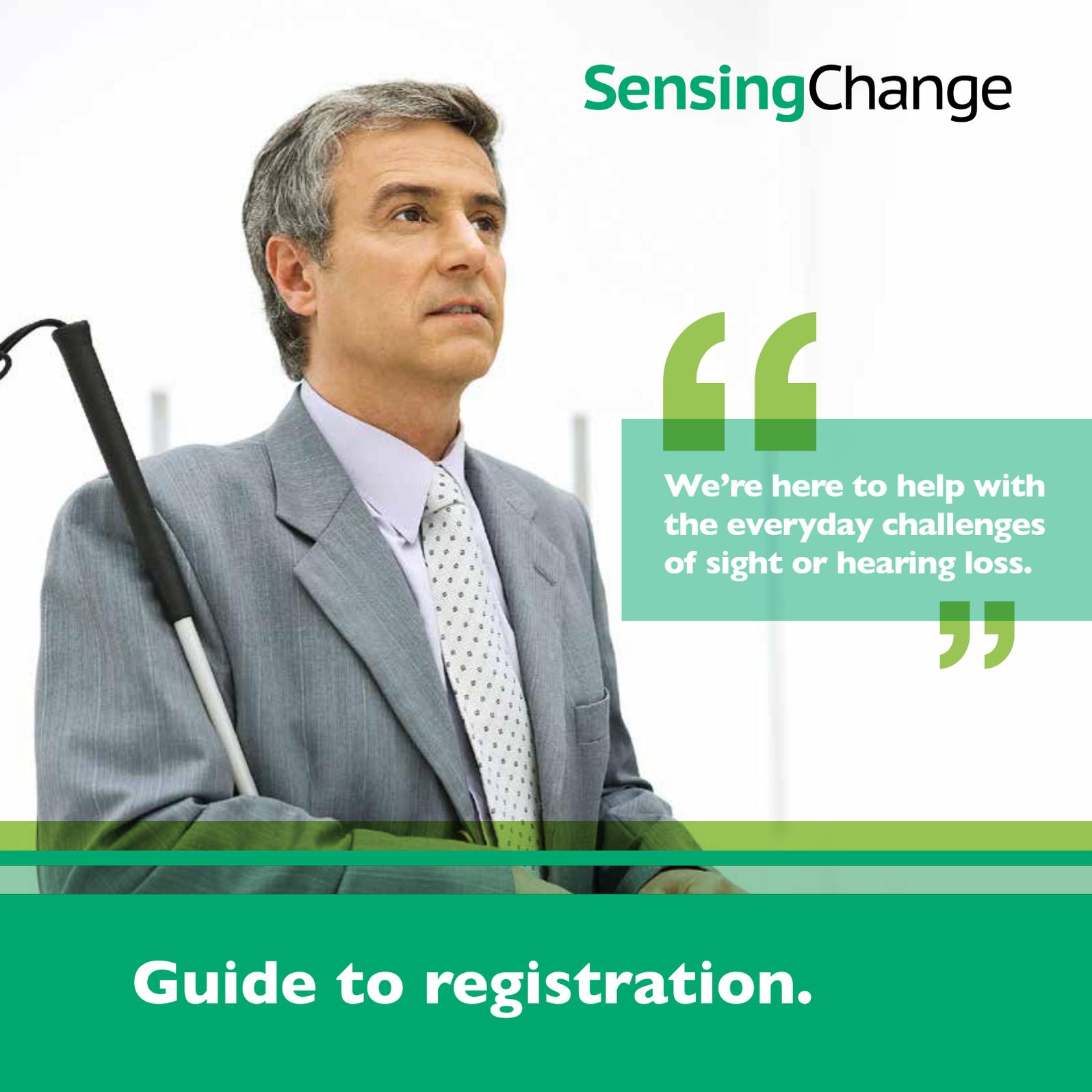


SensingChange



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We're here to help with the everyday challenges of sight or hearing loss.

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Guide to registration.



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If you are losing your sight it may mean that you are finding it difficult to do some of the things you could do previously.

We can help you with the advice and support you need to regain some of the independence you may have lost.

This booklet has been produced to offer information about the assistance that is available to you, and to explain the process that is followed if you are eligible to be registered as Sight Impaired (partially sighted) or Severely Sight Impaired (blind).

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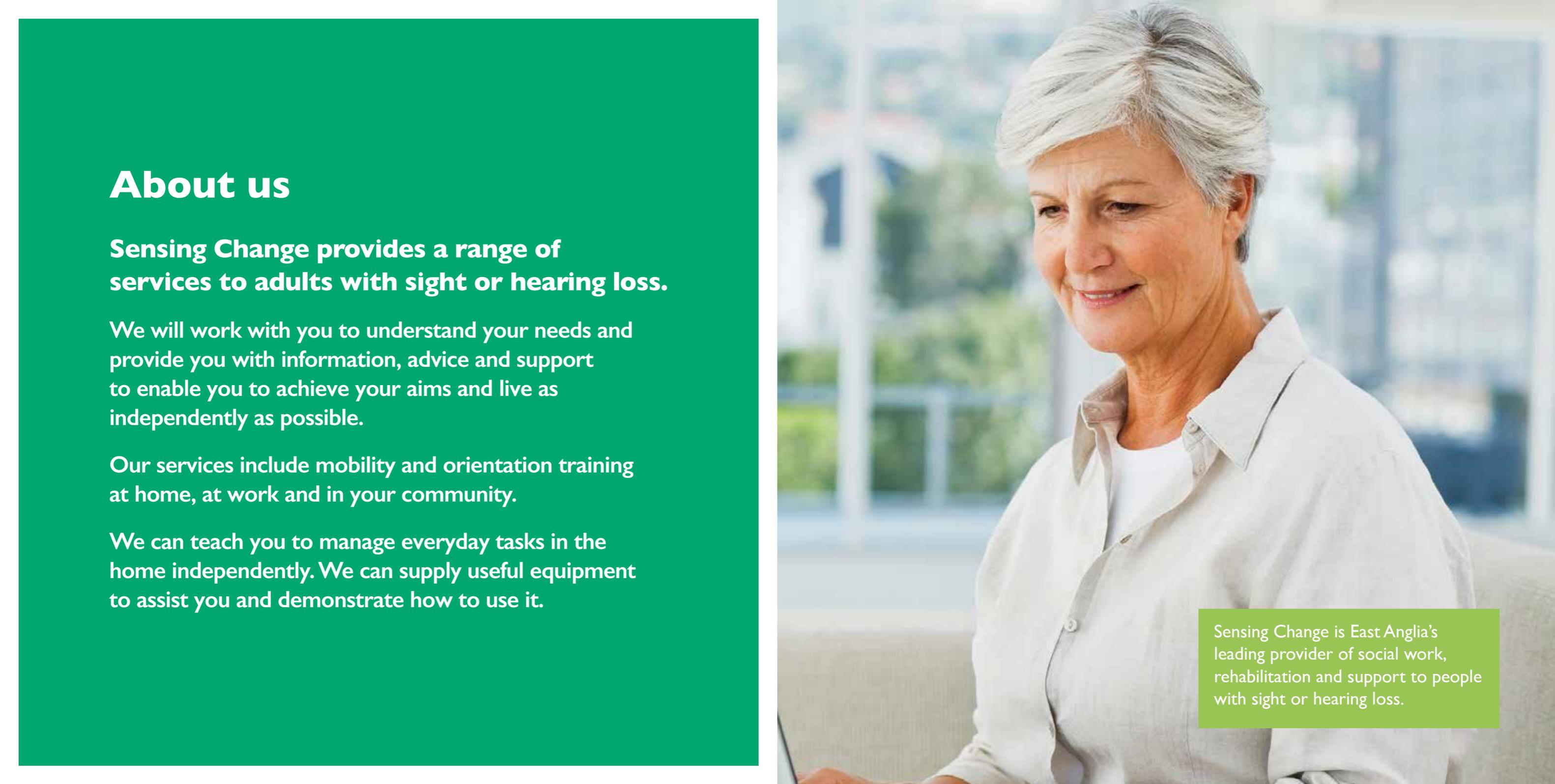
About us

Sensing Change provides a range of services to adults with sight or hearing loss.

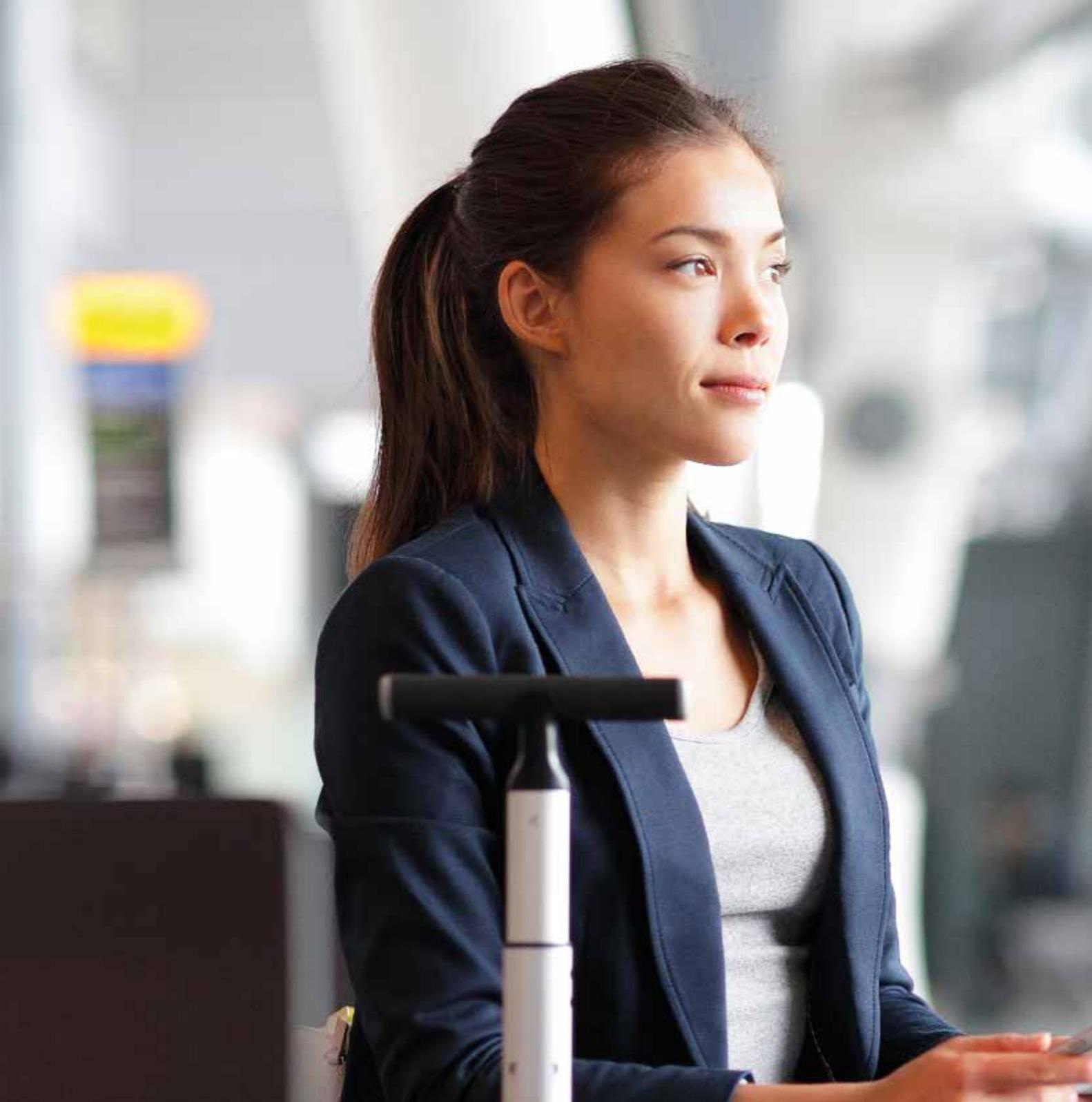
We will work with you to understand your needs and provide you with information, advice and support to enable you to achieve your aims and live as independently as possible.

Our services include mobility and orientation training at home, at work and in your community.

We can teach you to manage everyday tasks in the home independently. We can supply useful equipment to assist you and demonstrate how to use it.



Sensing Change is East Anglia's leading provider of social work, rehabilitation and support to people with sight or hearing loss.



What is registration?

If you have sight loss, you can register your visual impairment to more easily gain access to the support, concessions and benefits that can help you to regain some independence.

There are two categories of registration. If you are partially sighted you will be registered as Sight Impaired and if you are blind you will be registered as Severely Sight Impaired.

Registration is not compulsory, and it is not necessary to be registered to receive assistance from Sensing Change.

The registration process

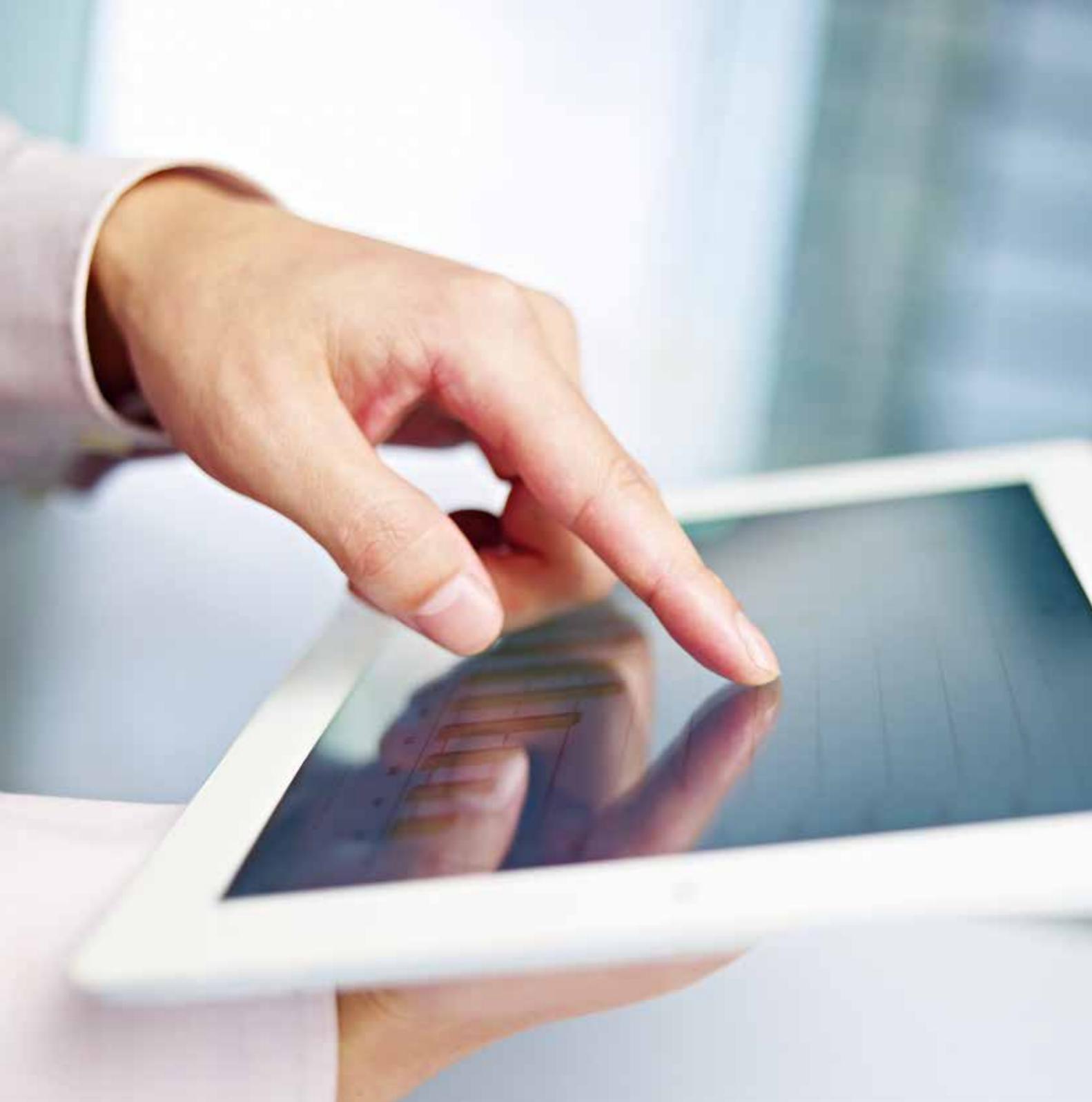
If you have an eye problem, it is advisable to seek treatment from your GP or optician, who may refer you to the eye specialist at your local hospital. After examination and any necessary treatment, the consultant in the eye department may wish to complete a Certificate of Visual Impairment for you. It is on this certificate that the consultant will show whether you are Sight Impaired, or Severely Sight Impaired.

This is the start of the registration process.

Once a Certificate of Visual Impairment has been completed for you, one copy should be sent to you, one to your GP and another to Sensing Change, as we hold the register on behalf of Suffolk County Council.

One of the team at Sensing Change will then contact you to arrange an assessment visit during which we will discuss your needs and agree with you what action needs to be taken.

With your agreement, you will be added to the register of Blind and Partially Sighted people in Suffolk and you will receive a registration card that you can use as evidence of your sight loss.



Help and support

Rehabilitation

Following your assessment visit, we may feel that you would benefit from the services of a Rehabilitation Worker.

Your Rehabilitation Worker may offer you an individual programme of training aimed at improving your independence, from safety and confidence through to self-esteem, and may include mobility, independent living and communication skills training.

They have a wide knowledge of environmental aids and equipment.

Sensing Change Centre - Lowestoft

The Sensing Change Centre is a purpose built facility in Lowestoft that provides an accessible local service for people with sight and hearing loss.

Hearing and Sight Clinics are available for people to come along to trial equipment and to obtain information and guidance on a range of equipment solutions and support organisations that are on hand to help overcome difficulties with sight or hearing loss.

The centre is open from Monday to Friday between 10am and 3pm. Visits to the centre are by appointment only.

Contact details:

Sensing Change Centre
161 Rotterdam Road
Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 2EZ

Email: info@sensingchange.org.uk

Tel: 01502 217079

Fax: 01502 562431

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Once you have registered, the team at Sensing Change can help you to check that you are applying for, and receiving, all of the benefits to which you are entitled.

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The benefits of registration

The financial help, concessions and benefits to which you may be entitled can be subject to a range of individual circumstances, such as other disabilities, or your age.

Financial help

- **Eye tests** – there is no charge if you are registered.
- **Income Tax** – there is an extra allowance if you are registered blind. Simply notify the Tax Office of your date of registration.
- **TV licence** – you will receive a 50% reduction if you are registered blind. No fee is required for just a sound receiver or for those above the age of 75.
- **Radios and audio entertainment** – the British Wireless for the Blind Fund can supply a radio or CD/Radio/Cassette player to people who are registered. Please contact your local Blind Association or Society.
- **Postal vote** – if you are registered blind or partially sighted you are entitled to vote by post in general and local elections.
- **Postal concessions** – embossed literature (Braille or Moon) and any specialist equipment can be sent postage free via Articles for the Blind.
- **BT** – a free directory enquiry service is available if you are registered. You can register with BT for this service by calling 0800 5870 195.

Travel concessions

- **Rail** – if you hold a Disabled Persons Railcard you will be entitled to a reduction on most rail fares. As well as being entitled to a reduction in fares yourself, if you are travelling with a guide or companion, they will also benefit from half price fares. Guide Dogs always travel free. See the 'Rail Travel for Disabled Passengers' leaflet, available at train stations, for more details and an application form.

- **Bus** – free bus travel with a yearly pass is available if you are registered. More details about this service are available from your local district or borough council.
- **Air** – concessions and assistance may be available. To find out more contact individual airlines.
- **Local travel schemes for the disabled and older people** – you should contact your local council to find out what schemes are available in your area.
- **Disabled Persons Car Badge** – all people registered as Severely Sight Impaired (blind) are eligible for a Disabled Persons Car Badge. You may also qualify if you are registered as Sight Impaired (partially sighted) and you have additional disabilities.
- **Equipment** – Sensing Change can give you advice on special equipment for visually impaired people.
- **Free NHS prescriptions** – this service depends on your age and income. Visually impaired people who cannot go out without assistance may also be eligible.
- **Additional Housing or Council Tax Benefit** – contact your local district council office for information about additional premiums.

Welfare benefits

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) – for people who are unemployed and have 'limited capacity to work'.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – a benefit for people aged under 65 who need help with either their mobility, care or both.

Attendance Allowance – this is a benefit for people aged over 65 who need help during the day, at night or both.

Pension Credits – these credits are available to people over the age of 65 who have a limited weekly income or savings.

Application forms are available from the Blue Badge Team at Suffolk County Council on 0808 800 4005 and you can find out more during your assessment visit.

Useful contacts

In Suffolk there are several voluntary agencies that can offer advice and assistance for people with sight loss. These include:

Ipswich Blind Society

Tel: 01473 219712

www.ipswichblindsociety.org.uk

East Suffolk Association for the Blind

Tel: 01473 611011

www.esab.org.uk

West Suffolk Association for the Blind

Tel: 01284 748800

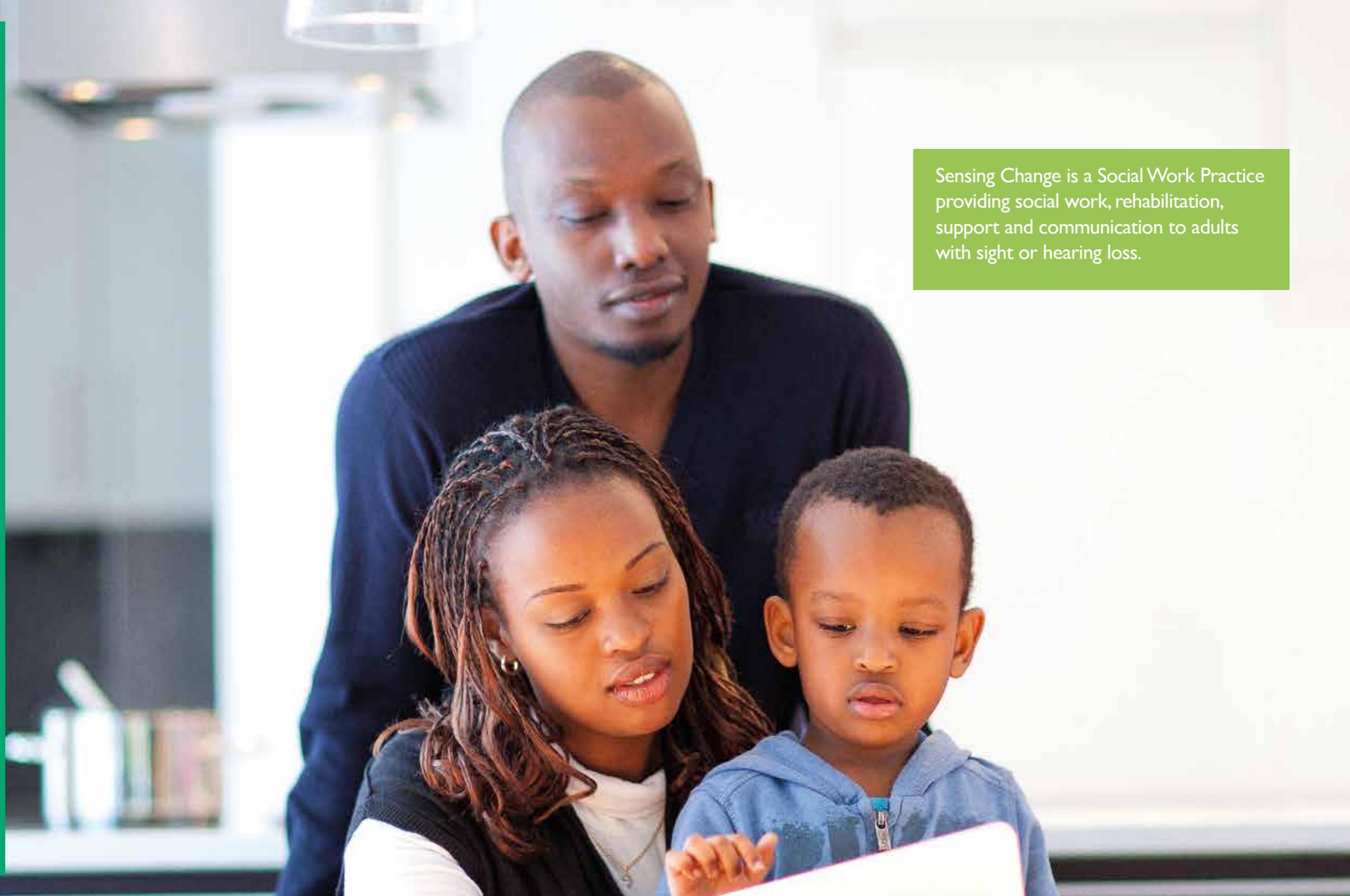
www.wsvab.org.uk

Action for Blind People

Tel: 01603 455767

www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Sensing Change is a Social Work Practice providing social work, rehabilitation, support and communication to adults with sight or hearing loss.



Get in touch
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www.sensingchange.org.uk

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