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Leisure from Home

This fact sheet has been produced to help you with accessing books, magazines and newspapers in alternative formats. This section also deals with your television licence, the switch over to digital television and the different ways you can access your television.

LEISURE FROM HOME

Books, Magazines, and newspapers in accessible formats

If you are blind or visually impaired you can still enjoy the benefits of books, magazines, and newspapers in many formats. This includes Braille, large print and audio versions.

Talking Books

The Royal National Institution of the Blind (RNIB) has a large selection of talking books but there is a subscription cost and you need to get the application form signed by your local doctor or ophthalmologist. This is needed to confirm your entitlement to use the service. Your local council may be able to supply a machine for talking books.

RNIB Customer Services

Telephone: 0303 123 9999

Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk

Website:

http://www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/readingwriting/Talkingbooksanddaisyplayers/Pages/talking_books_daisy.aspx

Find your local Council

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DI1/Directories/Localcouncils/index.htm>

Braille, Moon and large print books

The RNIB publishes much material in Braille and Moon. This can include television and radio guides, plus many different magazines for all sorts of hobbies and interests.

The National Library of the Blind (NLB) has the largest collection of Braille and Moon books in Europe. Moon is an embossed system of reading which is easier to use than Braille.

Talking Newspapers and Magazines

Talking Newspapers and Magazines (TNAUK) provides a choice of formats for recorded national newspapers and magazines. This includes CD's, emails and audio cassettes.

TNAUK offer over 200 publications of a variety of popular lifestyle magazines. The digital service they offer subscribers includes all the national newspapers on a daily basis.

There are now over 500 local newsagents in Britain that supply talking newspapers, predominately in tape format. Further contact information can be found below.

Telephone: 01435 866 102

NTWUK Website: www.tnauk.org.uk

Talking News Federation Website: www.tnf.org.uk

Access Local Library Services Online

If you have difficulty accessing your local library, one way of managing library loans is through your local authority website. The link below will let you enter details regarding where you live and then take you to your local authority website where you can find out more.

<http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRedirect/index.jsp?LG-SL=440&LGIL=8&ServiceName=Findoutaboutlibraryloans>

Television Licence Discount

If you are registered as blind you can get a 50% discount on your TV licence. It is also possible to get a concessionary TV licence if you live in a residential caring home or sheltered housing depending on your circumstances.

If the blind person is not the registered licence holder you need to transfer the licence to their name. The numbers below provide the contact details for you to do this.

TV Licensing Telephone: 0300 790 6131

Minicom: 0300 790 6050

Website: www.tvlicensing.co.uk

To claim the discount you will need to provide a photocopy of the certificate from your local authority or ophthalmologist showing you are registered blind. This should be posted along with your licence renewal form (if you have one) and a cheque or postal order for the licence to the address below.

Address: TV Licensing, Blind Concession Group, Bristol, BS98 1TL

Remember to include your name, address, phone number and TV Licence number (if you have one).

Backdating your TV licence discount

Refunds are available for previous years should you have only recently found out about the discount. The refund discount will count back to 1 April 2000. You will have to prove that you had a television licence and were registered blind during the period you are claiming for. Contact TV Licensing for more information. The contact details are:

TV Licensing Telephone: 0300 790 6131

Minicom: 0300 790 6050

Website: www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Renewing your discounted TV licence

You will not have to prove you are blind more than once but you do need to make sure you renew your licence each year

You can renew your licence online on the TV Licensing website.
www.tvlicensing.co.uk/buyorrenew/index.jsp

Concessionary TV licence for people living in residential care

You may be entitled to an Accommodation for Residential Care (ARC) Concessionary TV licence for £7.50 a year if you live in a certain type of residential care accommodation and are retired and over 60, or disabled.

Your housing manager will know whether your accommodation is eligible for this licence and will apply for the licence on your behalf.

If you move into residential caring and have a full TV licence you may be able to claim a refund for the remaining months of the year. Again your housing manager should apply for a refund on your behalf.

Digital Television

Digital TV is setup to offer specific services to those viewers with sight or hearing impairments. Only a number of analogue TV's offer just some of the features listed below so it is of massive benefit.

- Audio description
- Subtitling
- Signing services

For help with setting up or retuning Digital Televisions

Digital UK supports Freeview viewers and channels providing viewers with information about their options for receiving terrestrial TV and advice on reception and equipment.

Telephone 08456 50 50 50

Opening hours: Mon - Fri 9am - 6pm, Sat 9am - 5pm

Website <http://www.digitaluk.co.uk/>

Hearing Impairments

Most digital products now offer subtitling by simply pressing a button. Signing services are becoming more common also. On digital TV signing can be carried on a separate channel in the same way that subtitles work which you can turn on or off whenever you want to.

Sight impairments

Audio description is an additional soundtrack carried on programmes during gaps in dialogue to describe changes taking place on screen.

You can receive audio descriptions in two ways. Firstly the description can be carried on the same channel as the original programme, or it can be broadcast on a second sound channel which contains the audio description.

The second option is considered the better as one person can listen on headphones whilst others watch the programme without audio description. Another plus is that you can change the volume of the original programme and the audio description separately.

Subtitles, audio description and other formats for TV

Alternative formats are constantly being developed to increase access to television for all people. Some of the formats and services available include subtitles, sign language and audio description.

Subtitles

Most TV programmes now have the option of subtitles which can be switched on or off whenever you like. This is also the case for DVD's and videos.

Law requires 90% of ITV and Channel 4 programmes must be subtitled by the end of 2009 while Channel 5 must have 80% of programmes subtitled by the end of 2007.

Currently the BBC has no legislation in place requiring they meet any subtitle quota but does aim to have 100% subtitling by 2008.

Action on Hearing Loss has a website which contains information on a range of subtitling and how to access subtitles at home, in the cinema and on DVD/Blu-Ray. Please see the link to the website below:

www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/

Audio Description

This is an additional feature to a programmes dialogue whereby some describe, for instance, the action and the actors' body language. The technology now available allows a blind or visually impaired person to enjoy a programme along with someone who doesn't require the service.

Audio description is also available on some DVD's and videos and the Government is working with manufacturers to develop this technology and its availability.

Broadcasters (like the BBC, Channel 4 and Sky) must add AD to 20 per cent of their programmes.

The Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) website contains information about making TV accessible for blind or visually impaired people. The RNIB also has a library of audio description DVDs and videos. Type in the link below to access this information.

<http://www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/tvradiofilm/-film/pages/dvd.aspx>

Sign Language

There is currently a law in place (The Communications Act 2003) which requires broadcasters to meet legal requirements in terms of programmes being translated into sign language and programmes being made by or for deaf people and presented in sign language.

Eventually digital TV will also bring in a separate channel to carry 'dosed' signing in the same way that subtitles work which would also give the viewer the option to turn on or off.

The BBC's website details programmes that are supported by BSL (British Sign Language)

The BBC has a programme dedicated to people who are d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/seehear/>

Action on Hearing Loss produce a fact sheet on subtitles and can be found at: <http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/~media/Files/Fact-sheets/Equipment/pdf/Access%20to%20television%20Jan%202012.a shx>

Improving access to television - Government targets for broadcasters

There are also short and long term targets for commercial and non-commercial TV broadcasters to provide a proportion of their programmes in alternative formats. This is the case for those with sensory impairments also as technology is increasing all the time.

There is a leaflet that details all the targets that broadcasters must reach in providing programmes in alternative formats. 'Television access for people with sensory impairments' can be downloaded from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport website with a link below.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/SensImpairleafletdec06.pdf>

The Law on access to television

All previous legislation in regards to the requirements that are set for broadcasters in terms of providing alternative viewing formats were outdated when the Communications Act 2003 came into place.

Ofcom (Office of Communication) are responsible for applying and monitoring the law of the Communication Act.

This fact sheet is one of a series, providing information and advice on a number of topics.

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HOUSING MATTERS:

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2	Homelessness (Out of Hours) Emergencies
3	10 Rights of Private Tenants
4	Applying as Homelessness (Priority Need)
5	Private Tenants: smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
6	The Right to Rent
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