



Eye health and sight loss in Suffolk

A SUMMARY PROFILE

AUGUST 2015



Contents

Introduction	2
PANSI Data.....	3
Health and Social Care Information Centre Data.....	4
Public Health Outcomes Framework Data	7
Hospital Episode Statistics	9
Costs	9
Sight tests.....	10
Socio Economic Considerations.....	10
Ethnicity and sight loss.....	11
Children and young people.....	12
Older people	12
Learning Disabilities.....	13
Eye Conditions	14
Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)	14
Glaucoma.....	15
Cataracts.....	16
Diabetic Retinopathy	17
Other health conditions	18
Smoking.....	18
Obesity and hypertension	18
Stroke	20
Dementia	20
Falls.....	21
Depression.....	21
Current Activities, Service Provision and Assets:	21
Summary notes.....	22
References (not in footnotes):	22

Introduction

This document has been produced by the Public Health team as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to collate key information around eye health and sight loss in Suffolk.

This aims to support the Public Health team, Suffolk County Council, commissioners and stakeholders when looking at current services and future services. Please note this is not a full health needs assessment.

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) (2015) information:

How many people have sight loss in the UK?

Almost two million people in the UK are living with sight loss. That's approximately **one person in 30**.



Who has sight loss?

Sight loss affects people of all ages, but as we get older we are increasingly likely to experience sight loss.

- **One in five** people aged 75 and over are living with sight loss.



- **One in two** people aged 90 and over are living with sight loss.



- **Nearly two-thirds** of people living with sight loss are women.



- People from black and minority ethnic communities are at greater risk of some of the leading causes of sight loss.
- Adults with learning disabilities are **10 times more likely to be blind or partially sighted** than the general population.

What are the main causes of blindness in adults?

[Age-related macular degeneration](#) is by far the leading cause of blindness in adults. Other significant causes of sight loss are [glaucoma](#), [cataracts](#) and [diabetic retinopathy](#).

PANSI Data

Table 1: Suffolk: Population aged 18-64 predicted to have a serious visual impairment

People predicted to have a serious visual impairment	2014	2015	2020	2025	2030
18-24	36	35	32	32	35
25-34	56	56	58	56	53
35-44	57	56	54	58	59
45-54	68	68	65	58	57
55-64	60	60	66	71	68
Total population aged 18-64	276	276	275	275	273

Source: <http://www.pansi.org.uk/> (downloaded 22/05/15)

Table 2: Suffolk: People predicted to have a moderate or severe visual impairment

predicted to have a moderate or severe visual impairment	2014	2015	2020	2025	2030
People aged 65-74 predicted to have a moderate or severe visual impairment	4,894	5,040	5,331	5,214	5,813
People aged 75 and over predicted to have a moderate or severe visual impairment	9,312	9,511	11,098	13,776	15,438
People aged 75 and over predicted to have registrable eye conditions	4,806	4,909	5,728	7,110	7,968

Source: <http://www.poppi.org.uk/> (downloaded 22/05/15)

Key Points from Projection data:

- The numbers of those aged 18-64 is projected to remain relatively stable in Suffolk.
- The number of people in Suffolk aged 65-74 predicted to have a moderate or severe visual impairment is forecasted to rise by 19% between 2014-2030.
- The number of people aged 75 and over predicted to have moderate or severe visual impairment is forecasted to rise by 66% between 2014-2030.
- The number of people aged 75 and over predicted to have registrable eye conditions is forecasted to rise by 66% between 2014-2030.

Health and Social Care Information Centre Data

Table 3: Number of people registered as blind as at 31 March 2014, by age band

		Number of Blind people registered who are aged:					
		0 to 4	5 to 17	18 to 49	50 to 64	65 to 74	75 or over
Total Number of people registered							
ENGLAND	143,385	735	3,540	19,570	17,580	14,040	87,920
EASTERN	16,190	55	395	1,820	1,755	1,455	10,710
Cambridgeshire	1,760	5	45	205	185	150	1,165
Essex	3,440	0	35	400	365	310	2,325
Hertfordshire	3,115	15	110	315	325	260	2,095
Norfolk	2,585	5	60	270	295	240	1,715
Suffolk	2,780	5	55	225	215	230	2,050

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/o8bmk93> (downloaded 09/07/15)

Table 4: Number of people registered as partially sighted as at 31 March 2014, by age band

		Number of people registered as partially sighted					
		0 to 4	5 to 17	18 to 49	50 to 64	65 to 74	75 or over
Total Number of people registered							
ENGLAND	147,715	630	4,630	18,210	15,400	14,565	94,280
EASTERN	14,655	35	375	1,685	1,455	1,310	9,790
Cambridgeshire	1,360	5	35	165	140	130	885
Essex	3,640	0	35	380	375	295	2,555
Hertfordshire	3,140	5	80	380	290	275	2,110
Norfolk	2,405	5	70	260	240	240	1,595
Suffolk	1,485	10	35	115	110	125	1,095

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/o8bmk93> (downloaded 09/07/15)

Table 5: Number of new blind registrations in the year ending 31 March 2014, by age band

		Number of new blind registrations in the year ending 31 March 2014, by age band					
		0 to 4	5 to 17	18 to 49	50 to 64	65 to 74	75 or over
Total Number of people registered							
ENGLAND	8,875	190	180	890	865	835	5,915
EASTERN	930	20	30	90	95	100	600
Cambridgeshire	105	0	5	10	10	15	65
Essex	135	0	10	15	5	15	95
Hertfordshire	170	5	5	15	20	20	105
Norfolk	165	5	5	10	15	15	115
Suffolk	160	0	5	10	15	15	115

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/o8bmk93> (downloaded 09/07/15)

Table 6: Number of new partially sighted registrations in the year ending 31 March 2014, by age band

		Number of new partially sighted registrations in the year ending 31 March 2014, by age band					
Total Number of people registered		0 to 4	5 to 17	18 to 49	50 to 64	65 to 74	75 or over
ENGLAND	12,220	230	360	1,215	1,275	1,285	7,855
EASTERN	1,200	20	40	110	115	120	790
Cambridgeshire	130	5	10	10	15	20	70
Essex	185	0	5	15	15	20	130
Hertfordshire	250	5	5	25	15	15	185
Norfolk	235	0	5	20	30	30	150
Suffolk	185	5	5	15	15	15	125

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/o8bmk93> (downloaded 09/07/15)

Table 7: Number of people registered blind with an additional disability by additional disability, as at 31 March 2014

		Number of people registered blind with an additional disability by additional disability, as at 31 March 2014					
Total with additional disabilities		Mental Health Problems	Learning Disability	Physical Disability	Deaf with Speech	Deaf without Speech	Hard of Hearing
ENGLAND	49,925	2,495	4,335	30,105	2,370	1,175	9,440
EASTERN	5,645	285	825	2,660	480	465	930
Cambridgeshire	530	30	65	320	65	5	45
Essex	2,100	130	135	1,385	25	310	120
Hertfordshire	395	10	15	175	20	5	165
Norfolk	760	55	55	255	285	75	35
Suffolk	1,115	5	470	30	55	40	515

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/o8bmk93> (downloaded 09/07/15)

Table 8: Number of people registered partially sighted with an additional disability by additional disability, as at 31 March 2014

		Number of people registered partially sighted with an additional disability by additional disability, as at 31 March 2014					
Total with additional disabilities		Mental Health Problems	Learning Disability	Physical Disability	Deaf with Speech	Deaf without Speech	Hard of Hearing
ENGLAND	51,225	2,865	3,140	33,505	1,425	645	9,645
EASTERN	5,005	315	595	2,690	310	350	745
Cambridgeshire	450	25	40	300	50	0	35
Essex	2,080	150	85	1,395	20	310	125
Hertfordshire	355	25	15	215	5	0	100
Norfolk	595	55	40	240	190	0	75
Suffolk	795	0	355	10	35	10	385

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/o8bmk93> (downloaded 09/07/15)

Table 9: Number of people registered blind with an additional disability by age band, as at 31 March 2014

		Blind people registered with additional disabilities who are aged:			
		0 to 4	5 to 17	18 to 64	65 or over
all ages					
ENGLAND	49,925	195	960	13,100	35,665
EASTERN	5,645	10	75	1,230	4,330
Cambridgeshire	530	0	10	130	390
Essex	2,100	0	5	415	1,685
Hertfordshire	395	0	15	130	245
Norfolk	760	0	25	185	550
Suffolk	1,115	5	10	125	980

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/o8bmk93> (downloaded 09/07/15)

Table 10: Number of people registered partially sighted with an additional disability by age band, as at 31 March 2014

		Blind people registered with additional disabilities who are aged:			
		0 to 4	5 to 17	18 to 64	65 or over
all ages					
ENGLAND	51,225	150	980	10,795	39,295
EASTERN	5,005	0	40	935	4,030
Cambridgeshire	450	0	5	90	355
Essex	2,080	0	0	320	1,760
Hertfordshire	355	0	5	110	240
Norfolk	595	0	10	140	450
Suffolk	795	0	0	90	710

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/o8bmk93> (downloaded 09/07/15)

Key Points from 2014 HSCIC data in Suffolk:

- There were 2,780 people registered as blind, 90% were age 50+.
- There were 1,485 people registered as partially sighted, 90% were age 50+.
- There were 160 new blind registrations, 72% were 75+.
- There were 185 new partially sighted registrations, 68% were 75+.
- There were 1,115 people registered blind with an additional disability by additional disability, 43% were under 18.
- Of the total number of people registered partially sighted with an additional disability (795), 93% had either a learning disability or were hard of hearing.
- 1,115 people were registered blind with an additional disability, 88% were aged 65+.
- 795 people were registered partially sighted with an additional disability, 89% were aged 65+.

Public Health Outcomes Framework Data

All info sourced from: <http://www.phoutcomes.info/> (downloaded 10/07/15)

Definitions:

4.12i - Crude rate of sight loss due to age related macular degeneration (AMD) in those aged 65+ per 100,000 population.

4.12ii - Crude rate of sight loss due to glaucoma in those aged 40+ per 100,000 population.

4.12iii - Crude rate of sight loss due to diabetic eye disease in those aged 12+ per 100,000 population.

4.12iv - Crude rate of sight loss certifications per 100,000 population.

Figure 1: Summary PHOF information on sight loss

Benchmark = England

Compared with benchmark: ● Better ● Similar ● Worse ● Lower ● Similar ● Higher
○ Not Compared

4.12i - Preventable sight loss - age related macular degeneration (AMD) Suffolk

Period		Count	Value	Lower CI	Upper CI	East of England	England
2010/11	●	171	119.8	102.5	139.2	-	131.4
2011/12	●	174	118.9	101.9	137.9	-	129.0
2012/13	●	212	138.6	120.5	158.5	-	123.1

Source: Calculated by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (West Midlands) from data provided by Moorfields Eye Hospital and Office for National Statistics

4.12ii - Preventable sight loss - glaucoma Suffolk

Period		Count	Value	Lower CI	Upper CI	East of England	England
2010/11	●	56	14.4	10.9	18.7	-	11.8
2011/12	●	64	16.2	12.5	20.7	-	12.8
2012/13	●	44	11.0	8.0	14.8	-	12.5

Source: Calculated by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (West Midlands) from data provided by Moorfields Eye Hospital and Office for National Statistics

4.12iii - Preventable sight loss - diabetic eye disease Suffolk

Period		Count	Value	Lower CI	Upper CI	East of England	England
2010/11	●	26	4.1	2.7	6.1	-	3.6
2011/12	●	24	3.8	2.4	5.7	-	3.8
2012/13	●	17	2.7	1.6	4.3	-	3.5

Source: Calculated by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (West Midlands) from data provided by Moorfields Eye Hospital and Office for National Statistics

4.12iv - Preventable sight loss - sight loss certifications Suffolk

Period		Count	Value	Lower CI	Upper CI	East of England	England
2010/11	○	378	52.2	47.1	57.7	-	42.7
2011/12	○	370	50.7	45.6	56.1	-	44.5
2012/13	○	365	49.8	44.9	55.2	-	42.3

Source: Calculated by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (West Midlands) from data provided by Moorfields Eye Hospital and Office for National Statistics

Figure 2: Summary PHOF charts on sight loss

4.12i - Preventable sight loss - age related macular degeneration (AMD) 2012/13

Crude rate - per 100,000

Area	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	11,145	123.1*	120.8	125.4
East of England region	-	*	-	-
Bedford	43	164.9	119.4	222.2
Cambridgeshire	108	101.7	83.4	122.7
Central Bedfordshire	40	94.2	67.3	128.3
Essex	244	90.3	79.3	102.4
Hertfordshire	198	108.8	94.2	125.1
Luton	23	93.9	59.5	140.9
Norfolk	245	125.8	110.6	142.6
Peterborough	21	80.8	50.0	123.6
Southend-on-Sea	35	109.5	76.3	152.3
Suffolk	212	138.6	120.5	158.5
Thurrock	17	80.6	47.0	129.1

Source: Calculated by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (West Midlands) from data provided by Moorfields Eye Hospital and Office for National Statistics

4.12ii - Preventable sight loss - glaucoma 2012/13

Crude rate - per 100,000

Area	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	3,291	12.5	12.0	12.9
East of England region	-	*	-	-
Bedford	23	29.3	18.6	44.0
Cambridgeshire	45	14.4	10.5	19.3
Central Bedfordshire	10	7.4	3.6	13.7
Essex	91	12.2	9.8	14.9
Hertfordshire	43	7.7	5.6	10.4
Luton	10	12.3	5.9	22.6
Norfolk	32	6.6	4.5	9.4
Peterborough	11	13.3	6.7	23.9
Southend-on-Sea	10	11.2	5.4	20.7
Suffolk	44	11.0	8.0	14.8
Thurrock	5	6.9	2.3	16.2

Source: Calculated by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (West Midlands) from data provided by Moorfields Eye Hospital and Office for National Statistics

4.12iii - Preventable sight loss - diabetic eye disease 2012/13

Crude rate - per 100,000

Area	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	1,592	3.5	3.3	3.6
East of England region	-	*	-	-
Bedford	14	10.3	5.7	17.3
Cambridgeshire	18	3.3	2.0	5.2
Central Bedfordshire	12	5.4	2.8	9.5
Essex	39	3.2	2.3	4.4
Hertfordshire	25	2.6	1.7	3.9
Luton	9	5.3	2.4	10.1
Norfolk	20	2.6	1.6	4.1
Peterborough	7	4.5	1.8	9.3
Southend-on-Sea	5	3.3	1.1	7.8
Suffolk	17	2.7	1.6	4.3
Thurrock	-	*	-	-

Source: Calculated by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (West Midlands) from data provided by Moorfields Eye Hospital and Office for National Statistics

4.12iv - Preventable sight loss - sight loss certifications 2012/13

Crude rate - per 100,000

Area	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	22,647	42.3	41.8	42.9
East of England region	-	*	-	-
Bedford	93	58.4	47.1	71.6
Cambridgeshire	223	35.5	31.0	40.5
Central Bedfordshire	90	34.6	27.8	42.6
Essex	486	34.6	31.5	37.8
Hertfordshire	362	32.1	28.8	35.5
Luton	69	33.5	26.1	42.4
Norfolk	420	48.5	44.0	53.4
Peterborough	76	40.8	32.1	51.0
Southend-on-Sea	70	40.0	31.2	50.6
Suffolk	365	49.8	44.9	55.2
Thurrock	42	26.3	19.0	35.6

Source: Calculated by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (West Midlands) from data provided by Moorfields Eye Hospital and Office for National Statistics

Key Points from PHOF data for Suffolk:

- Sight loss to age related macular degeneration (AMD) in 65+; similar to the England level, but numbers appear to have increased slightly over the past couple of years. Numbers are significantly higher than in Essex.
- Sight loss to Glaucoma in those 40+; similar to the England level, but numbers appear to have decreased slightly over the past couple of years.
- Sight loss due to diabetic eye disease in those age 12+; similar to the England level, but numbers appear to have decreased slightly over the past couple of years.
- Sight loss certifications; higher compared with England, but numbers appear to have decreased slightly over the past couple of years. Numbers are significantly higher than in Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton and Thurrock.

Hospital Episode Statistics

Table 11: Hospital admissions with primary diagnosis of eye disorder [A, B], Financial years 2011/12-2013/14

	All admissions				All ages
	0-14	15-44	45-64	65+	
Registered patients in Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG	420	668	2043	8199	11330
Registered patients in West Suffolk CCG	232	263	1124	5221	6840
Registered patients in Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG	209	427	1635	15041	17312

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics Data Interrogation System

Data indicates that registered patients in Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG had the highest number of admissions related to eye disorders (primary diagnosis). This will include patients living in Norfolk as well, due to the CCG boundaries.

Costs

- The associated costs and demands on NHS outpatient services are high with ophthalmology having the second highest attendances in 2012-2013¹.
- In 2008 the direct and indirect costs of sight loss was £6.5 billion and by 2013 these costs had risen to £7 billion².

¹ Hospital Episode Statistics: Outpatient, treatment speciality by attendance type: England 2012/2013, Health & Social Care Information Centre
<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/article/2021/WebsiteSearch?productid=13684&q=hospital+outpatients+2012-13&sort=Relevance&size=10&page=1&area=both#top>

² RNIB, Sight Loss UK 2013, indicator 11 and 16 http://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/Sight_loss_UK_2013.pdf

RNIB (RNIB 2014) Data indicates:

There are a number of different costs associated with the provision of eye health services, such as inpatient procedures, outpatient appointments and the ongoing treatment of eye conditions. There are also indirect costs caused by sight loss, including the provision of informal care by family and friends to those with sight loss.

- The total NHS programme budget spend on problems of vision in 2011/12 was £41,291,809.
- This NHS programme budget spend on problems of vision equates to £55.12 per person in Suffolk.
- The total estimated indirect cost of sight loss in 2011 was £72,641,000 This includes the cost of family and friends providing informal care to someone living with sight loss.
- The estimated indirect cost of sight loss equates to £99.75 per person.

Sight tests

RNIB (2014) data indicates that:

- There were a total of 197,354 NHS sight tests in Suffolk.
- The rate of NHS sight tests per 100,000 people was 27,103, higher than the East of England (25,142) and England (23,276) rates.

People are eligible for an NHS sight test under a number of different criteria, for example aged 60+, aged 16 and under, in receipt of certain benefits, and in Scotland they are universally available to everyone. Published data on sight tests only highlights those paid by the NHS. Some eye tests are privately funded, and these are not included in this data.

Socio Economic Considerations

People on reduced or low incomes may be less likely to access optician services, or get regular eye health checks. This means that they will be at higher risk of undiagnosed eye conditions. These individuals may also find it harder to manage any identified conditions once identified, due to limited resources. The map below indicates some of the areas of higher deprivation in Suffolk. Further mapping work could identify any correlations between sight loss and areas of high deprivation.

Figure 3: Map of areas of deprivation in Suffolk, 2010



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government (2011)

Ethnicity and sight loss

- The black population aged under sixty has a greater risk of developing age-related macular degeneration (AMD) compared to the white population of the same age, whereas the white population has a greater risk of developing AMD in the later years of life³.
- Black and Asian populations have a greater risk of developing diabetic eye disease compared to the white population⁴.
- The risk of glaucoma is much higher for the black population compared to the white population⁵.

There were 34,968 residents in Suffolk in 2011 from ethnic groups other than white, an increase of 16,520 since 2001. Ipswich is more multicultural with 11.1% of its residents from an ethnic group other than white, the percentage in the remainder of the county is much lower, Babergh and Mid Suffolk have the lowest proportions at 2.2%.

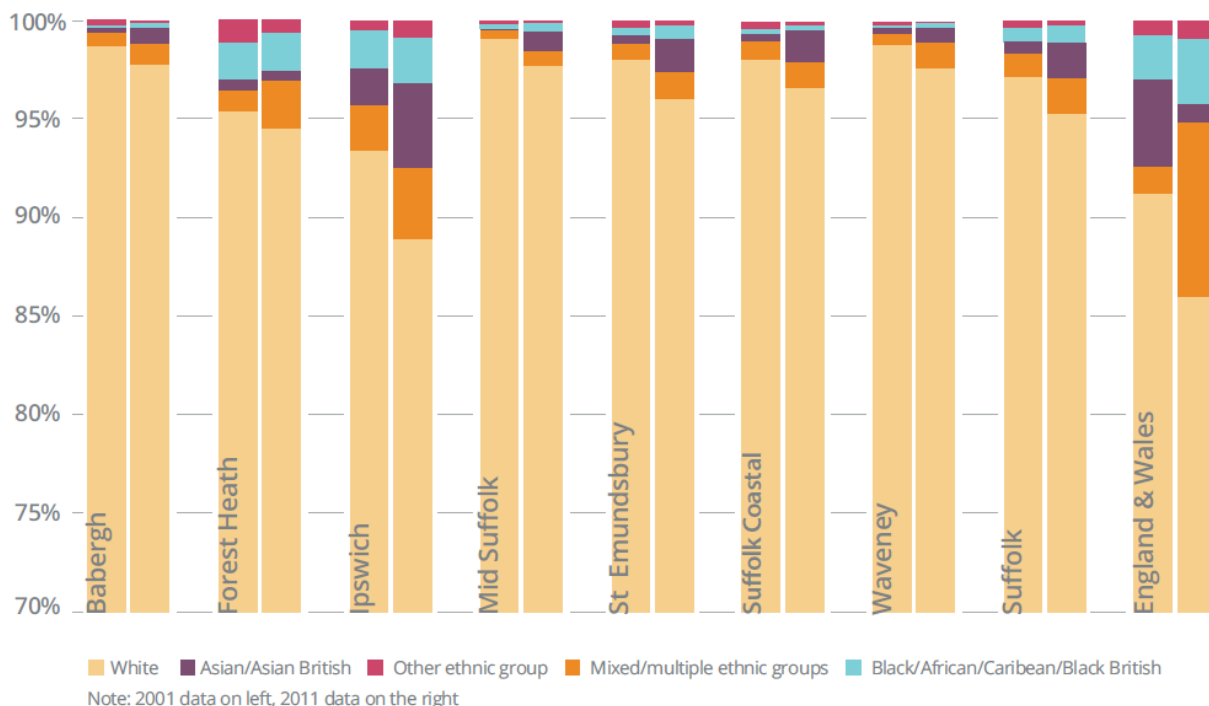
Suffolk has also seen an increase in the arrival of migrant workers. A major new analysis of increases to the migrant populations of local areas in England's regions has been undertaken by the Migration Observatory, find the link [here](#).

³ <https://actionforblindpeople.org.uk/about-us/press-centre/key-statistics/>

⁴ As above

⁵ As above

Figure 4: Proportion in each main ethnic group in 2001 and 2011



Source: ONS (2012) and Suffolk Observatory (2013). Note: For visual clarity the axis starts at 70%

Children and young people

RNIB (2014) data indicates:

There are around 25,000 blind and partially sighted children and young people aged 0-16 in the UK, and 15,000 aged 17-25. Around half of these will have additional disabilities and/or special educational needs. Many of these children and young people will need help and support in order to maximise their potential in education and in other activities.

- There are an estimated 284 blind and partially sighted children aged 0-16.
- There are an estimated 284 blind and partially sighted children aged 0-16.
- There are 129 pupils with a statement of special education needs (SEN) or at School Action Plus with visual impairment as their primary SEN.

Older people

RNIB (2014) data indicates:

The older you are, the most likely your chances to be living with sight loss. One in five people aged 75 and over are living with sight loss; compared to one in two aged 90 and over. Older people with sight loss are also much more likely to have additional health conditions or disabilities.

- There are an estimated 4,852 people aged 65 to 74; 7,117 people aged 75 to 84; and 8,557 people aged 85 and over living with sight loss in the local authority.
- In the general population, there are 4,831 people living in care homes, both with and without nursing. This represents 6.9% of people aged over 85.

Learning Disabilities

Research indicates that adults with learning disabilities are 10 times more likely to be blind or partially sighted compared with the general population (Emerson and Robertson 2011).

For various reasons, including better survival rates, improved diagnosis and changing trends in age of conception, rates of learning disabilities (LD) in children and adults in the UK are predicted to increase by 14% between 2001 and 2021. People with learning disabilities have higher and more complex health needs with significantly different patterns of health and social care usage and higher rates of mortality and morbidity than the general population.

There are an estimated 13,700 people in Suffolk with a mild, moderate or severe learning disability and this is projected to rise by 5% to around 15,000 by 2030 (Suffolk County Council 2015). There are an estimated 2,800 people with complex or severe learning disabilities (Suffolk County Council 2015).

As highlighted in tables 7 and 8, as at March 2014, there were:

- 470 people registered blind with an additional learning disability in Suffolk.
- 355 people registered as partially sighted with an additional learning disability in Suffolk.

Eye Conditions

Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a painless eye condition that generally leads to the gradual loss of central vision but can sometimes cause a rapid reduction in vision.

Central vision is used to see what is directly in front of you. In AMD, your central vision becomes increasingly blurred, leading to symptoms such as:

- difficulty reading because the text appears blurry
- colours appearing less vibrant
- difficulty recognising people's faces

Dry AMD

Dry AMD develops when the cells of the macula become damaged as a result of a build-up of waste products called drusen. It is the most common and least serious type of AMD, accounting for around nine out of 10 cases.

The loss of vision is gradual, occurring over many years. However, an estimated one in 10 people with dry AMD will then go on to develop wet AMD.

Wet AMD

Wet AMD develops when abnormal blood vessels form underneath the macula and damage its cells (doctors sometimes refer to wet AMD as neovascular AMD).

Wet AMD is more serious and without treatment, vision can deteriorate within days.

Read more about the [causes of age-related macular degeneration](#).

Sourced from: NHS Choices (2015)

In Suffolk the data on the previous pages indicates:

- 212 Suffolk residents had AMD related sight loss in those aged 65+ in 2012/13, a rate of 136.8 per 100,000 population aged 65+ (Figures 1 and 2).
- Estimates from the RNIB data tool (Table 12) indicate that there are approximately 41,000 Suffolk residents living with AMD (early and late stage). These numbers are predicted to increase over time.

Table 12: AMD Estimates, 2014

1. Local Authority	105. Estimated number of people living with Drusen, an early stage age-related macular degeneration	106. Estimated number of people living with late stage age-related macular degeneration	107. Estimated number of people living with late stage wet age-related macular degeneration	108. Estimated number of people living with late stage dry age-related macular degeneration
ENGLAND	2,045,881	452,118	320,286	156,436
EAST	240,799	53,788	38,128	18,587
Cambridgeshire	23,773	5,226	3,704	1,804
Essex	59,972	13,364	9,472	4,619
Norfolk	42,219	9,643	6,833	3,334
Suffolk	33,559	7,607	5,395	2,625

Source: RNIB (2014)

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a condition which can affect sight, usually due to build up of pressure within the eye.

Glaucoma often affects both eyes, usually to varying degrees. One eye may develop glaucoma quicker than the other.

The eyeball contains a fluid called aqueous humour which is constantly produced by the eye, with any excess drained through tubes.

Glaucoma develops when the fluid cannot drain properly and pressure builds up, known as the intraocular pressure.

This can damage the optic nerve (which connects the eye to the brain) and the nerve fibres from the retina (the light-sensitive nerve tissue that lines the back of the eye).

Read more information about the [causes of glaucoma](#).

Sourced from: NHS Choices (2015a)

In Suffolk the data on the previous pages indicates:

- 44 Suffolk residents had Glaucoma related sight loss in those aged 40+ in 2012/13, a rate of 11.0 per 100,000 population aged 65+ (Figures 1 and 2).
- Estimates from the RNIB data tool (Table 13) indicate that there are approximately 7,000 Suffolk residents living with Glaucoma. These numbers are predicted to increase over time.

Table 13: Glaucoma Estimates, 2014

1. Local Authority	110. Estimated total number of people living with glaucoma
ENGLAND	485,893
EAST	54,940
Cambridgeshire	5,740
Essex	13,353
Norfolk	8,397
Suffolk	7,027

Source: RNIB (2014)

Cataracts

Cataracts are cloudy patches that develop in the lens of your eye and can cause blurred or misty vision. They are very common.

The lens is the transparent structure that sits just behind your pupil (the black dot in the centre of your eye). It allows light to get to the back of your eye (retina).

In some people, cataracts develop in the lens as they get older, stopping some of the light from reaching the back of the eye.

Over time, the cataracts become worse and start affecting vision. Many people with cataracts will eventually need surgery to remove and replace the affected lens.

Sourced from: NHS Choices (2015b)

In Suffolk:

- Estimates from the RNIB data tool (Table 14) indicate that there are approximately 8,300 Suffolk residents living with cataract(s). These numbers are predicted to increase over time.

Table 14: Cataract Estimates, 2014

1. Local Authority	109. Estimated number of people living with cataract
ENGLAND	491,273
EAST	58,504
Cambridgeshire	5,684
Essex	14,523
Norfolk	10,507
Suffolk	8,288

Source: RNIB (2014)

Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy is a common complication of diabetes. It occurs when high blood sugar levels damage the cells at the back of the eye (known as the retina). If it isn't treated, it can cause blindness.

It's important for people with [diabetes](#) to control their blood sugar levels. Everyone with diabetes who is 12 years old or over should have their eyes examined once a year for signs of damage (see below).

All people with diabetes are at risk of getting diabetic retinopathy, but good control of blood sugar levels, cholesterol and blood pressure minimises this risk.

Early-stage retinopathy may not need treatment, but more advanced retinopathy may require laser treatment or injections of medicine into the eye.

Immediate treatment may not be necessary if you have:

- stage one (background) retinopathy
- stage two (pre-proliferative) retinopathy
- maculopathy with no symptoms

Sourced from: NHS Choices (2015c)

In Suffolk the data on the previous pages indicates:

- 17 Suffolk residents had diabetic eye disease related sight loss (aged 12+) in 2012/13, a rate of 2.7 per 100,000 population aged 65+ (Figures 1 and 2).
- Estimates from the RNIB data tool (Table 15) indicate that there are approximately 13,500 Suffolk residents living with background diabetic retinopathy. These numbers are predicted to increase over time.

Table 15: Diabetic Retinopathy Estimates, 2014

1. Local Authority	112. Estimated number of adults with diabetes	113. Proportion of patients who were invited to and attended a retinal screening appointment	114. Estimated number of people living with background diabetic retinopathy	115. Estimated number of people living with non proliferative and proliferative diabetic retinopathy
ENGLAND	3,233,342	80.9%	905,336	103,467
EAST	368,219	x	103,101	11,783
Cambridgeshire	38,125	79.7%	10,675	1,220
Essex	89,960	78.5%	25,189	2,879
Norfolk	58,478	85.3%	16,374	1,871
Suffolk	48,154	80.4%	13,483	1,541

Source: RNIB (2014)

Other health conditions

There are a range of factors that can influence eye health and sight loss, some of the major factors are summarised below.

Smoking

Smoking doubles your chances of sight loss, causing harm to the tissues of the eye. Research has confirmed the harmful effects of smoking on eyesight, particularly in the development of [age-related macular degeneration \(AMD\)](#) - one of the UK's leading causes of sight loss - and [cataracts](#) (RNIB 2015a).

Smoking remains the single greatest cause of ill health and preventable death. Reducing levels of smoking will lead to improvements in health and contribute significantly to reducing inequalities. Smoking related illness kills 3 people every day in Suffolk.

Overall in Suffolk almost 1 in 5 people smoke (18.5%), in our poorest communities this is almost 1 in 3. Men in the 20% most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to smoke (32.9%) compared with men in the least deprived areas (14.3%) (Suffolk County Council 2015).

Obesity and hypertension

There is evidence to suggest that obesity may put someone more at risk of developing certain eye conditions, which can cause sight loss (RNIB 2015b). Obesity can increase the risk of developing:

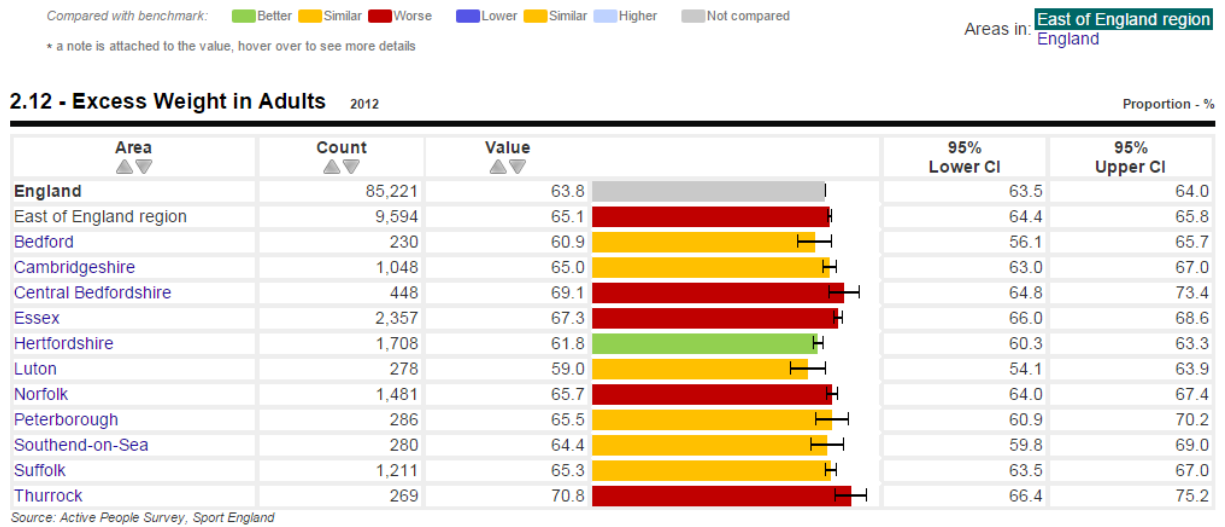
- [diabetic retinopathy](#) - obesity increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Someone with a body mass index (BMI) of over 35 is up to 80 times more likely to develop the condition than someone with a BMI of less than 22.
- [age-related macular degeneration \(AMD\)](#) - obesity may increase the risk of developing dry AMD. Dry AMD is likely to impede the ability to carry out daily activities such as driving, reading a newspaper or watching television. Obesity also increases the speed of progression of AMD.
- [cataracts](#) - overweight people can have double the risk of developing cataracts compared to people who are not overweight. Cataracts usually don't lead to blindness as they are treatable.

Source: RNIB (2015b)

There is also evidence that high blood pressure (hypertension), can strain the vessels in the eyes and the optic nerve, and untreated hypertension may result in permanent vision problems (American Heart Association 2014). Additionally, hypertension can lead to a stroke, which may lead to brain damage causing vision loss (American Heart Association 2014).

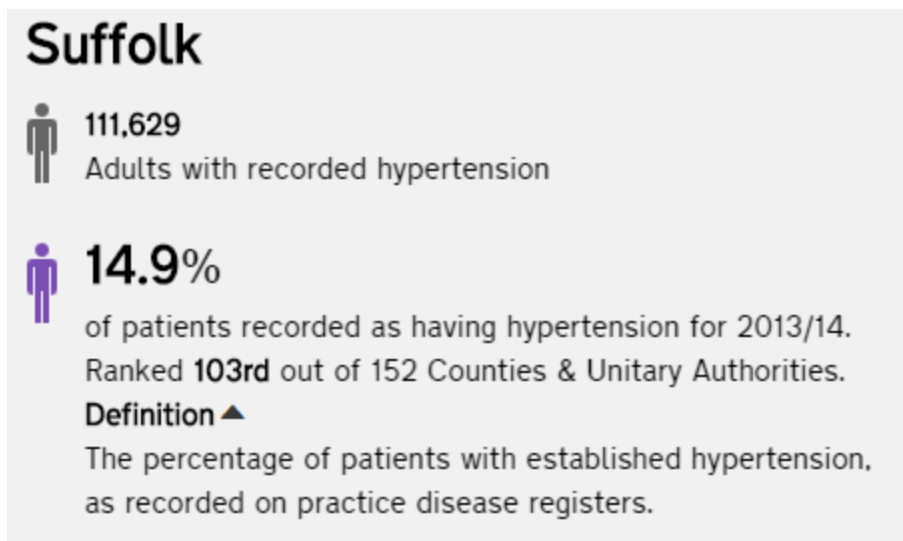
In Suffolk the percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese was 65.3% in 2012. Although similar to the England percentage this is of great concern. Additionally over 111,000 adults were recorded on GP databases as having hypertension in Suffolk in 2012/13 (see figures 5 and 6 below).

Figure 5: Excess weight in adults by area, 2012



Source: PHE (2015)

Figure 6: Hypertension in Suffolk, 2012/13



Source: Fingertips (2015)

Stroke

Information from the RNIB (2015c) states:

- Stroke is the most common cause of adult disability. Every year an estimated 150,000 people in the UK suffer from a stroke. You are more likely to suffer a stroke if you are over the age of 65, but it can occur in all age groups.
- Strokes occur when a part of your brain is starved of oxygen. The two common causes of stroke are blood clots and bleeding.
- Visual problems are more common when you suffer from a stroke affecting the right side of your brain. The damage the stroke does in your brain impacts the visual pathways of your eye which can result in visual field loss, blurry vision, double vision and moving images. When stroke affects the areas of your brain that process information you see, it can cause visual neglect as well as difficulties with judging depth and movement. In a few cases, visual problems caused by stroke can improve on their own with time.

Heart disease and stroke account for about 25% of early deaths in Suffolk. Although premature mortality has fallen in Suffolk by more than 50% in the last fifteen years mirroring the national and regional trend there are indications that the rate of decline is beginning to slow.

Dementia

Information from the Vision 2020 Dementia and Sight Loss Interest Group (RNIB 2015d) indicates that:

- 750,000 people have dementia in the UK, most of whom are over 65 and around 1 in 7 of the over 65s is living with significant sight loss. By the age of 75 at least 2.5% of people will have both conditions. As the population ages, the number of people with both dementia and sight loss will increase. In care homes, studies indicate a higher proportion of residents may have both conditions.
- Because dementia affects the way we perceive and process information from our eyes, some forms of dementia create apparent sight loss. Eye conditions that cause sight loss and normal ageing of the eye may occur alongside dementia. Whatever the cause of sight loss, very few people have no sight and there are approaches that can make the most of sight.

11,771 people age 65+ are predicted to have dementia, based on Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) data (POPPI 2015). This data also indicates that 10,077 of these individuals will be age 75+. Applying the above estimates to this figure indicates that just over 250 of these individuals will have both dementia and sight loss in Suffolk.

Falls

There is increasing evidence regarding the link between sight loss and falls (Boyce, 2011). Certain eye and ear disorders may increase the risk of falling (RNIB 2015e).

2014 estimates for Suffolk...

- 1,476 falls were directly attributable to sight loss; and 118 required hospital treatment.

Depression

People with sight loss experience inequality across many areas of their lives, and recent research (Flynn and Lord 2015) indicated that 44% of blind and partially sighted people reported feeling more than usually depressed, significantly higher than in the previous wave of the survey (38%).

If this 44% figure is applied to Suffolk individuals:

- Of the 2,780 people registered blind 1,223 are estimated to feel more than usually depressed
- Of the 1,485 people registered partially sighted 653 are estimated to feel more than usually depressed

Current Activities, Service Provision and Assets:

The UK Vision Strategy have produced an on line commissioning resource can assist in building a commissioning strategy for the future www.commissioningforeyecare.org.uk.

Some of the key services in Suffolk are highlighted below:

- [East Suffolk Association for the Blind](#)
- [The West Suffolk Blind Association](#)
- [Ipswich Blind Society](#)

Sensing Change is owned by Suffolk County Council, and is a professionally led social work practice providing social work, rehabilitation and support to people with sight and hearing loss throughout Suffolk.

<http://www.sensingchange.org.uk/>

Sensing Change works with people who have a range of sight loss issues. They provide support and guidance to ensure that the individual, carers and families, understand sight loss and what help is available, including what other services or resources might be able to offer. On referral to Sensing Change, a member of the Social Work team will carry out a full assessment of need.

Sensing Change deliver a range of services to people with sight and hearing loss and work in partnership with organisations:

- [Specialist Social Work Assessment](#)
- [Assessment and Rehabilitation](#)
- [Sensory Support Service](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Access Audit](#)

Summary notes

As highlighted throughout this profile, there are specific health needs and impacts for people with reduced or no vision. There is a need to plan for future health needs for individuals affected by sight loss.

- The ageing population of Suffolk means that more people are likely to be affected by sight loss in the future.
- Eye health and sight loss must be included within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Regular reviews of data and evidence around eye health should occur.

References (not in footnotes):

American Heart Association (2014) *Vision Loss and High Blood Pressure* Online at: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/WhyBloodPressureMatters/Vision-Loss-and-High-Blood-Pressure_UCM_301826_Article.jsp [Accessed: July 2015]

Boyce T (2011a) Falls: costs, numbers and links with visual impairment. RNIB.

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2011) *The English Indices of Deprivation 2010 statistical release* Online at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6871/1871208.pdf [Accessed: December 2014]

Emerson E and Robertson J (2011) Estimated prevalence of visual impairment among people with learning disabilities in the UK. Improving Health and Lives: Learning Disabilities Observatory report for RNIB and SeeAbility.

Fingertips (2015) *Longer Lives* Online at: <http://healthierlives.phe.org.uk/topic/hypertension/comparisons#par/E92000001/ati/102/iid/219/gid/1938132758/pat/102> [Accessed: July 2015]

Flynn K and Lord C (2015) *Living with Sight Loss* Online at: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/knowledge-and-research-hub-research-reports-general-research/living-sight-loss> [Accessed: July 2015]

NHS Choices (2015) *Macular degeneration* Online at: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/macular-degeneration/pages/introduction.aspx> [Accessed: July 2015]

NHS Choices (2015a) *Glaucoma* Online at: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/glaucoma/pages/introduction.aspx> [Accessed: July 2015]

NHS Choices (2015b) *Cataracts* Online at: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cataracts-age-related/pages/introduction.aspx> [Accessed: July 2015]

NHS Choices (2015c) *Diabetic Retinopathy* Online at: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetic-retinopathy/pages/introduction.aspx> [Accessed: July 2015]

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2012) *2011 Census, Key Statistics for Local Authorities in England and Wales* Online at: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/rereference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-286262 [Accessed: October 2014]

Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) (2015) *Forecasts* Online at: www.poppi.org.uk/ [Accessed: July 2015]

Public Health England (PHE) (2015) *Public Health Outcomes Framework* Online at: <http://www.phoutcomes.info/public-health-outcomes-framework#gid/1000042/pat/6/ati/102/page/3/par/E12000006/are/E10000029/iid/90640/age/164/sex/4> [Accessed: July 2015]

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) (2014) *Sight Loss Data Tool* Online at: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/knowledge-and-research-hub-key-information-and-statistics/sight-loss-data-tool> [Accessed: July 2015]

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) (2015) *Key Information and Statistics* Online at: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/knowledge-and-research-hub/key-information-and-statistics> [Accessed: May 2015]

RNIB (2015a) *Smoking and Sight Loss* Online at: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/eye-health-looking-after-your-eyes/smoking-and-sight-loss> [Accessed: July 2015]

RNIB (2015b) *Obesity and Sight Loss* Online at: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/eye-health-looking-after-your-eyes/obesity-and-sight-loss> [Accessed: July 2015]

RNIB (2015c) *Stroke related eye conditions* Online at: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/eye-health-eye-conditions-z-eye-conditions/stroke-related-eye-conditions> [Accessed: July 2015]

RNIB (2015d) *Dementia and Sight Loss* Online at: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/services-we-offer-advice-professionals-social-care-professionals/dementia-and-sight-loss> [Accessed: July 2015]

RNIB (2015e) *Reduce your risk of falls* online at: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/information-everyday-living-home-and-leisure-safety-home/reduce-your-risk-falls> [Accessed: July 2015]

Suffolk Observatory (2013) *2011 Census Briefing Paper Ethnicity* Online at: www.suffolkobservatory.info/IAS/explorer/resources/ [Accessed: January 2015]

Suffolk County Council (2015) *State of Suffolk 2015* Online at: www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/JSNA [Accessed: July 2015]