

What are local authorities required to do?

Local authorities are required to:

- identify the deafblind people in their area
- ensure any assessment is carried out by a suitably qualified person
- ensure that appropriate services are provided that take account of the person's dual sensory loss
- provide one to one support workers to anyone assessed as needing one
- provide information in accessible formats.

Each year Sense carries out a survey of local authorities' deafblind services. The picture is very patchy, but one of the big problems local authorities face is in the first step – identifying people. The majority of deafblind people are older people, and they tend to be hidden, coping by staying at home, losing contact with friends and family, becoming increasingly isolated.

You can help local authorities meet their requirement to identify deafblind people by referring people you think could benefit from an assessment to the local sensory team.

Specialist assessment is important. People who know about single sensory loss may miss the way in which the two interact, or not be aware of the types of support that can help. Getting the right support can make all the difference.