A National Statistics Publication for Scotland

Registered Blind and Partially Sighted Persons, Scotland 2010

Published: 26 October 2010



Introduction and key points

The purpose of this Statistics Release is to present national figures on visually impaired persons registered with Local Authorities in Scotland. All figures relate to the 31st March 2010 and are provisional and, as such, may be subject to change. The final figures will be published in future publications.

Registration with Local Authorities for blind and partially sighted persons is not compulsory. Research studies suggest that between a quarter and a third of visually impaired people are in fact registered with Local Authorities (see background note for more details).

25,000 20,000 15,000 5,000 under 16 16-29 30-49 50-64 65-74 75 and over

Chart 1: Registered Visually Impaired Persons by Age Group, 2010

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

Information collected on visually impaired persons show that: -

- In 2010, the number of people registered as blind or partially sighted was estimated to be 34,492.
- There were 2,985 cases registered during the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010, an increase of 1.7 per cent on 2009.
- The majority, 55 per cent, of those on the register were blind, 45 per cent were partially sighted.
- 39 per cent of those on the register were male and 61 per cent were female.
- Three-quarters (75 per cent) of those registered were over the age of 65.
- 11,158 persons (32 per cent) of those registered as visually impaired had additional disabilities. Of these, nearly a
 quarter were deaf (22 per cent).



Section 1: Blind Persons

There were 18,942 registered blind persons in 2010. The number registered blind has shown a drop of just over three per cent over the last year. This continues the trend of small, but steady falls since 2000. (See background note for more details).

The number of new cases registered during the year was 1,160. This is down by over seven per cent on the previous year.

In 2010, there were 3.6 people registered blind for every 1,000 people in the population of Scotland (see table 1a).

Table 1a: Number of Registered Blind Persons and New Registrations during the Year 2000-2010

Year ¹	New Cases	Total	Registered per 1000 Pop'n
2010	1,160	18,942	3.6
2009	1,254	19,580	3.8
2008	1,375	19,959	3.9
2007	1,418	20,457	4.0
2006	1,537	21,785	4.3
2005	1,682	23,248	4.6
2004	1,566	23,172	4.6
2003	1,743	23,557	4.7
2002	1,713	23,451	4.6
2001	1,766	24,748	4.9
2000	1,903	24,839	4.9

¹ Care should be taken when commenting on trends as the fall in numbers between 2000 and 2002 is explained in part by improvements in reporting procedures by some local authorities.

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

Just under three-quarters of registered blind persons are over the age of 65, with approximately two-thirds being over 75. There are significantly more women registered blind (61 per cent) than men (39 per cent).

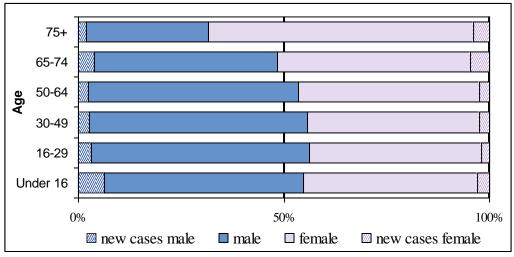
Almost 44 per cent of all registered blind people are women aged 75 and over (see table 1b). This is also reflected in the new registrations where around 42 per cent of the new registered cases are women aged 75 and over.

Excluding the '75 and over' age group there is a much more even split between the sexes. (See Table 1b & Chart 1b).

Table 1b: Number of Registered Blind Persons and New Registrations by Age and Gender, 2010

AGE	New Cases		Total Cases		
AGE	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Under 16	24	11	208	172	380
16-29	19	12	345	270	615
30-49	47	42	974	771	1,745
50-64	52	52	1,121	977	2,098
65-74	77	89	940	999	1,939
75 and over	251	484	3,861	8,304	12,165
All ages-Total	470	690	7,449	11,493	18,942

Chart 1b: Number of Registered Blind Persons and New Registrations by Age and Gender, 2010



The number of registered blind people per 1,000 population is 3.6 for the whole of Scotland. This varies from 1.5 in Aberdeenshire to 6.0 in the City of Glasgow. A more detailed breakdown showing the rate per 1,000 population by age and sex for each Local Authority is available in Annex A on page 9.

An estimated 6,572 (35 per cent) of all registered blind persons have additional disabilities, nearly a quarter of which are deaf (22 per cent). Over 71 per cent of those with additional disabilities were over the age of 65 (see Table 1c).

Table 1c: Number of Registered Blind Persons with Additional Disabilities by Age, 2010

Additional		Total		
Disability	Under 16 16-64 6		65 and over	Total
Deaf	8	256	1,209	1,473
Physically Disabled	49	661	2,516	3,226
Learning Difficulties	11	338	74	423
Mental Health Problems	6	207	462	675
Multiple Disabilities	75	276	424	775
Total	149	1,738	4,685	6,572

Section 2: Partially Sighted Persons

There were an estimated 15,550 registered partially sighted persons in 2010. This is very slightly up on last year (0.1 per cent). The number of people registered as partially sighted has been steadily rising over the last 11 years to 2006 with a slight dip in numbers in 2007, increasing again in 2008. The number of new cases registered during the year was 1,825. This is up nine per cent on the previous year. The number of people registered partially sighted per 1,000 population is 3.0 for this year. This has remained at around the same level since 2003. (see Table 2a).

Table 2a: Number of Registered Partially Sighted Persons and New Registrations during the years 2000-2010

Year ¹	New Cases	Total	Registered per 1000 Pop'n
2010	1,825	15,550	3.0
2009	1,680	15,537	3.0
2008	1,738	15,957	3.1
2007	1,845	15,181	3.0
2006	1,953	15,569	3.0
2005	1,759	15,339	3.0
2004	1,855	14,770	2.9
2003	1,748	14,443	2.9
2002	2,061	13,972	2.8
2001	1,856	13,676	2.7
2000	1,839	13,636	2.7

¹ Care should be taken when commenting on trends as the fall in numbers since 2000 is explained in part by improvements in reporting procedures by some local authorities.

Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons

Return Form SWB

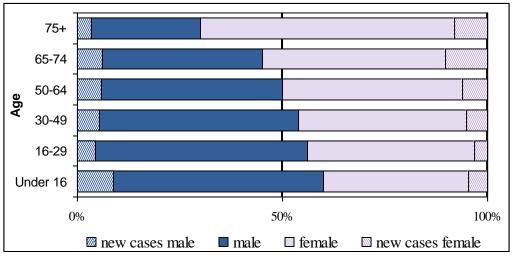
Data on registered partially sighted individuals shows a similar picture to that of registered blind individuals. Approximately three-quarters (74 per cent) of registered partially sighted persons are over the age of 65, with approximately two-thirds (63 per cent) being aged 75 or over. There are significantly more women registered as partially sighted (62 per cent) than men (38 per cent). Again, just under half (44 per cent) of all registered partially sighted people are women aged 75 and over (see table 2b).

This large proportion of partially sighted women aged 75 or over is also mirrored in the new registrations where 42 per cent of the new registered cases are women aged 75 and over. Excluding the '75 and over' age group there is a much more even split between the sexes (see Table 2b & Chart 2b).

Table 2b: Number of Registered Partially Sighted Persons and New Registrations by Age and Gender, 2010

AGE	New C	Cases	Total Cases		
AGL	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Under 16	39	21	265	177	442
16-29	31	22	392	306	698
30-49	68	67	695	592	1,287
50-64	95	99	809	809	1,618
65-74	109	179	794	963	1,757
75 and over	322	773	2,913	6,835	9,748
All ages-Total	664	1,161	5,868	9,682	15,550

Chart 2b: Percentage of Registered Partially Sighted Persons and New Registrations by Age and Gender, 2010



The number of people registered partially sighted per 1,000 population is 3.0 for the whole of Scotland. This varies from 1.6 in Moray to 4.6 in Argyll and Bute. A more detailed breakdown showing the rate per 1,000 population by age and sex for each Local Authority is available in Annex B on page 10.

An estimated 4,586 (29 per cent) of all registered partially sighted persons have additional disabilities, around three-quarters (73 per cent) of which are aged 65 and over. Physical disabilities account for over half (56 per cent) and nearly a quarter (22 per cent) are deaf (see Table 2c).

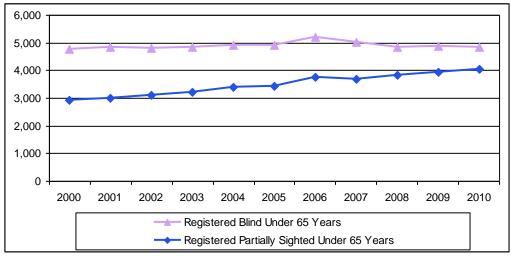
Table 2c: Number of Registered Partially Sighted Persons with Additional Disabilities by Age, 2010

Additional				
Disability	Under 16	16-64	65 and over	Total
Deaf	10	102	891	1,003
Physically Disabled	49	579	1,939	2,567
Learning Difficulties	23	185	43	251
Mental Health Problems	2	99	209	310
Multiple Disabilities	33	146	276	455
Total	117	1,111	3,358	4,586

Section 3: Visually Impaired Under 65-year-olds

Time series data showing the number of visually impaired people under the age of 65 over the last 11 years is shown in the chart below. The overall number of people under 65 who are registered blind has remained fairly level, averaging around 4,900 people each year. The number of partially sighted people increased each year between 2000 and 2006, fell in 2007, before rising again between 2008 and 2010.

Chart 3: Time Series of Registered Blind and Registered Partially Sighted Persons Aged 65 and Under, 2000-2010



Source: Registration of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons Return Form SWB

Overall the number of registered visually impaired under 65-year-olds has increased by around one per cent on last year. The ratio per 1,000 population is at around 2.0. Data on under 65's by local authority and sex is shown in Annex C on page 11.

Table 3a: Number of Registered Visually Impaired Under 65-year-olds, 2000 - 2010

Year	No. of Registered Visually Impaired under 65 year olds ¹	Registered under 65's per 1,000 Pop'n of under 65's
2010	8,883	2.1
2009	8,796	2.0
2008	8,703	2.0
2007	8,724	2.0
2006	8,970	2.1
2005	8,354	2.0
2004	8,285	2.0
2003	8,068	1.9
2002	7,928	1.9
2001	7,836	1.8
2000	7,707	1.8

¹ Data for under 65-year-olds should be more reliable than older age groups due to lower mortality rates.

Section 4 : Background Information:

Data was collected on persons registered with local authorities as at 31st March 2010. New cases are new registrations within the year from 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010.

The information is derived from returns made to the Scottish Government by Scottish Local Authorities. The return asks for the number of blind and partially sighted persons by age, sex and additional disabilities. It does not include persons who may meet the criteria for being blind or partially sighted but have not registered with their Local Authority.

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 gives Local Authorities the power to maintain a register of people who are blind or partially sighted. However registration is voluntary and while registration provides access to a number of benefits and concessions there remain a large number of people who meet the criteria but are not registered. Research in 1991 undertaken at a UK level, indicated that the number of people on registers is some 23 per cent of those eligible. In 2001 they estimated it to be under a third.

Think dual sensory' published in 1997 by the Department of Health suggested that some 2,000 people in Scotland could have some degree of deafblindness. Our latest figures show that there are 1,473 people registered as deafblind in Scotland and a further 1,003 people registered as partially sighted and deaf. This suggests that people are more likely to register if they have multiple disabilities.

Additionally, there are known data problems prior to 2000 where people have not been removed from the register of blind and partially sighted persons. Many Local Authorities have in recent years improved their registers by comparing with the register of deaths and this may in part explain the decrease in the number of registered blind persons since 2000. Therefore, care should be taken when commenting on trends as the fall in numbers since 2000 is explained in part by improvements in reporting procedures by some Local Authorities.

All calculate rates per 1000 population in this Statistics Release have been based on the appropriate mid-year population estimate from GRO(S). 2010 rates have been calculated using the 2009 mid-year population estimate for example.

Data issues and changes from Previous Years

West Lothian's 2000 partially sighted data, has been updated following the identification of an error. This means that the figures now differ from those previously published within the statistical releases.

Glasgow have substantially revised their figures in recent years following a move to a new management information system. This has resulted in improvements to data quality for 2006 and 2007 but care should be taken when comparing 2005 and 2006 figures as many of the changes seen are largely due to changes in the Glasgow figures. In 2008, they moved to a new management information system and have been cleaning the data as they transfer it. This has resulted in further changes to Glasgow's data, this work was ongoing in 2009 and has resulted in the 2009 figures being amended in this publication.

East Renfrewshire's figures for 2009 have been revised following the identification of an error within their data extraction query code.

In 2007, East Dunbartonshire undertook quality assurance on their data in 2008 and this led to reductions in their figures compared with 2007.

Fife were unable to provide complete information on additional disabilities. Care should therefore be taken when interpreting figures as a small amount of data has been estimated.

Edinburgh, Orkney, Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders undertook data cleaning in 2009. Also in 2009 Dumfries and Galloway had an Eye Care Review; and Scottish Borders have a new Sensory Perception Unit. This work is ongoing in 2010, and Argyll and Bute, Dundee and South Lanarkshire have also undertaken data cleaning.

¹ Blind and Partially Sighted Adults in Britain: The RNIB Survey, Volume 1, HMSO, 1991

Further Information

Further details and analysis of the data presented in this Statistics Release are available on request from the address given below. The Statistics Release is available in large print and on the Internet by accessing the Scottish Government web site (www.scotland.gov.uk).

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Annex A: Registered Blind by Local Authority, 2010

	Under 6	Under 65 years Over 65 years		Total	Registered per	
Local Authority	Male	Female	Male	Female	iotai	1,000 Pop'n
Aberdeen City	80	58	79	184	401	1.9
Aberdeenshire	64	47	84	167	362	1.5
Angus	39	38	82	170	329	3.0
Argyll & Bute	39	25	132	264	460	5.1
Clackmannanshire	19	15	43	72	149	2.9
Dumfries & Galloway	52	42	127	207	428	2.9
Dundee City	81	58	99	213	451	3.1
East Ayrshire	61	51	105	181	398	3.3
East Dunbartonshire	43	46	53	105	247	2.4
East Lothian	45	39	102	189	375	3.9
East Renfrewshire	33	35	133	276	477	5.3
Edinburgh, City of	241	202	469	901	1,813	3.8
Eilean Siar	14	7	16	46	83	3.2
Falkirk	79	68	130	203	480	3.1
Fife	164	143	235	487	1,029	2.8
Glasgow City	395	350	949	1,852	3,546	6.0
Highland	114	76	154	343	687	3.1
Inverclyde	38	35	46	99	218	2.7
Midlothian	57	31	76	151	315	3.9
Moray	36	21	70	123	250	2.9
North Ayrshire	90	60	168	282	600	4.4
North Lanarkshire	234	213	498	888	1,833	5.6
Orkney Islands	*	*	11	19	42	2.1
Perth & Kinross	32	37	85	224	378	2.6
Renfrewshire	101	70	102	208	481	2.8
Scottish Borders	43	28	81	173	325	2.9
Shetland Islands	*	*	7	21	38	1.7
South Ayrshire	47	40	128	258	473	4.2
South Lanarkshire	217	202	300	558	1,277	4.1
Stirling	47	41	73	148	309	3.5
West Dunbartonshire	64	42	59	125	290	3.2
West Lothian	64	63	105	166	398	2.3
Whole Scotland	2,648	2,190	4,801	9,303	18,942	3.6

Annex B: Registered Partially Sighted by Local Authority, 2010

	Under 6	Under 65 years		Over 65 years		Registered per
Local Authority	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total	1,000 Pop'n
Aberdeen City	83	66	97	225	471	2.2
Aberdeenshire	69	54	113	247	483	2.0
Angus	30	27	67	164	288	2.6
Argyll & Bute	40	39	111	226	416	4.6
Clackmannanshire	16	18	34	86	154	3.0
Dumfries & Galloway	66	58	144	266	534	3.6
Dundee City	65	42	79	176	362	2.5
East Ayrshire	52	29	62	163	306	2.5
East Dunbartonshire	38	20	48	75	181	1.7
East Lothian	38	48	91	198	375	3.9
East Renfrewshire	21	27	67	163	278	3.1
Edinburgh, City of	210	168	384	909	1,671	3.5
Eilean Siar	6	8	9	30	53	2.0
Falkirk	51	51	90	220	412	2.7
Fife	152	129	197	416	894	2.5
Glasgow City	328	260	539	1,070	2,197	3.7
Highland	94	73	120	266	553	2.5
Inverclyde	47	32	55	127	261	3.3
Midlothian	38	39	86	162	325	4.0
Moray	23	24	32	65	144	1.6
North Ayrshire	60	64	118	221	463	3.4
North Lanarkshire	146	117	280	466	1,009	3.1
Orkney Islands	*	*	9	24	46	2.3
Perth & Kinross	47	49	116	213	425	2.9
Renfrewshire	75	88	139	289	591	3.5
Scottish Borders	41	35	120	234	430	3.8
Shetland Islands	*	*	11	20	40	1.8
South Ayrshire	40	47	96	208	391	3.5
South Lanarkshire	134	127	208	449	918	3.0
Stirling	20	31	66	152	269	3.0
West Dunbartonshire	47	34	49	116	246	2.7
West Lothian	74	68	70	152	364	2.1
Whole Scotland	2,161	1,884	3,707	7,798	15,550	3.0

Annex C: Registered Visually Impaired by Local Authority, 2010

	Under 6	5 years	Over 65 years		Total	Registered per
Local Authority	Male	Female	Male	Female	10(a)	1,000 Pop'n
Aberdeen City	163	124	176	409	872	4.1
Aberdeenshire	133	101	197	414	845	3.5
Angus	69	65	149	334	617	5.6
Argyll & Bute	79	64	243	490	876	9.7
Clackmannanshire	35	33	77	158	303	6.0
Dumfries & Galloway	118	100	271	473	962	6.5
Dundee City	146	100	178	389	813	5.7
East Ayrshire	113	80	167	344	704	5.9
East Dunbartonshire	81	66	101	180	428	4.1
East Lothian	83	87	193	387	750	7.7
East Renfrewshire	54	62	200	439	755	8.5
Edinburgh, City of	451	370	853	1,810	3,484	7.3
Eilean Siar	20	15	25	76	136	5.2
Falkirk	130	119	220	423	892	5.8
Fife	316	272	432	903	1,923	5.3
Glasgow City	723	610	1,488	2,922	5,743	9.8
Highland	208	149	274	609	1,240	5.6
Inverciyde	85	67	101	226	479	6.0
Midlothian	95	70	162	313	640	7.9
Moray	59	45	102	188	394	4.5
North Ayrshire	150	124	286	503	1,063	7.8
North Lanarkshire	380	330	778	1,354	2,842	8.7
Orkney Islands	16	9	20	43	88	4.4
Perth & Kinross	79	86	201	437	803	5.5
Renfrewshire	176	158	241	497	1,072	6.3
Scottish Borders	84	63	201	407	755	6.7
Shetland Islands	9	10	18	41	78	3.5
South Ayrshire	87	87	224	466	864	7.8
South Lanarkshire	351	329	508	1,007	2,195	7.1
Stirling	67	72	139	300	578	6.5
West Dunbartonshire	111	76	108	241	536	5.9
West Lothian	138	131	175	318	762	4.5
Whole Scotland	4,809	4,074	8,508	17,101	34,492	6.6

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