



solace



# Luce Toolkit

## June 2025

### The Work Ahead:

**Sharing Best Practice for Better Engagement of  
Blind and Partially Sighted Staff and Volunteers  
in Frontline Domestic Abuse Services**

If you would like to receive this toolkit in a specific accessible format please contact Solace at [training@solacewomensaid.org](mailto:training@solacewomensaid.org).

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# **Table of contents**

<b>Part 1</b>	<b>Understanding sight loss and employment</b>
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>Sight loss and domestic abuse</b>
<b>Part 3</b>	<b>Sight loss and the women's sector</b>
<b>Part 4</b>	<b>Recommendations for employers</b>
<b>Part 5</b>	<b>Reflection and call to action</b>
<b>Annex</b>	<b>Additional materials</b>

# Introduction

## The Luce pilot project

Solace is a leading charity that supports women and children affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence, and other forms of gender-based violence. Solace provides essential services such as safe accommodation, advocacy, and emotional support to help survivors rebuild their lives and create a future free from violence and abuse. Between 2023 and 2025, Solace delivered the Luce Project, a pilot initiative funded by Fight for Sight, aimed at addressing the significant employment gap faced by blind and partially sighted women in the women's sector.

Research has highlighted the need for work experience, mentoring, and volunteering opportunities to increase career prospects for blind and partially sighted people.<sup>1</sup> To tackle this gap, Solace recruited a small number of blind and partially sighted women as volunteers for its main advice and support line. The Advice line serves survivors at any stage of their journey, providing advice, support, risk assessments, safety planning, and referrals. In addition to coordinating the volunteers' recruitment, onboarding, training and day-to-day volunteering work, Solace worked to identify and address barriers within the organisation, implementing changes to make the workplace more accessible to blind and partially sighted staff, volunteers, and survivors.

The Luce Project aimed to create a positive impact for three main groups: the Luce volunteers, Solace as a whole, and blind and partially sighted survivors of domestic abuse.

# What is the Luce pilot project?

## Luce volunteers

### Activities

The project team supported volunteers to work on the advice line and support survivors of DA. In addition:

- Volunteers participated in Solace induction and core training
- Volunteers completed a needs assessment to identify training, support, and assistive technology needs, and completed a professional development plan
- Volunteers engaged in a mentorship programme and received support through pre-employment activities

### Goals & outcomes

With the goal of blind and partially sighted women having the career they want to have, the outcomes included:

- The volunteers gained transferable skills
- The volunteers reported feeling more independent and more confident about their professional abilities
- Many of the volunteers reported feeling better able to fulfil their aspirations for volunteering, qualifications and employment

## **Activities**

The project team, in collaboration with the volunteers interested in this work, set out to explore ways to enhance organisational capacity around the inclusion of blind and partially sighted volunteers and staff.

This included:

- Strengthening partnerships with specialist sight loss organisations
- Working across teams to ensure inclusive practice and that blind and partially sighted volunteers feel welcome across the organisation
- Training on blind and partially sighted women's experience of domestic abuse delivered to Solace staff

## **Goals & outcomes**

With the goal of disability inclusion within Solace being seamless and embedded in organisational structures and procedures, the outcomes included:

- Disabled volunteers and staff feel more supported and valued, and choose to stay in their role within Solace
- Solace staff continue to build their knowledge around disability and aim to routinely consider disability inclusion in their work (e.g. fundraising, training, HR)
- Solace staff are more skilled and confident when supporting disabled survivors
- Solace shares knowledge and resources about inclusive practice across Solace and beyond

# **Blind and partially sighted survivors of domestic abuse**

## **Activities**

To expand Solace's outreach and enhance teams' ability to respond to the needs of blind and partially sighted survivors, the project team carried out the following activities:

- Establishing strong relationships with organisations already working with blind and partially sighted women
- Training on the experiences of blind and partially sighted survivors of domestic abuse
- Establishing referral pathways with organisations supporting the visually impaired community

## **Goals & outcomes**

With the goal of Solace being well-known for providing inclusive support to all women regardless of their abilities and needs, the main outcome was that blind and partially sighted women:

- Know about and seek out Solace for support
- Feel supported and respected when accessing Solace services

# The purpose of this toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide organisations, particularly within the women's sector, with practical guidance on how to successfully integrate blind and partially sighted women into their volunteer or employment opportunities. Drawing on insights from the Luce pilot Project, this toolkit hopes to offer best practices, key considerations, and actionable strategies for making workplaces and volunteer programmes more accessible and inclusive.

While the toolkit will touch on key topics like visual impairment and the experiences of visually impaired individuals in employment—subjects that have been explored in greater depth by specialist organisations and authors—it will focus specifically on the intersection of the women's sector, domestic abuse, and the experiences of blind and partially sighted employees and volunteers. It aims to address the unique challenges blind and partially sighted women face, explore ways to overcome barriers, and help organisations in the women's sector create environments where blind and partially sighted women can thrive, contribute, and feel empowered.

We hope that through the shared experiences and lessons learned from this project, organisations can better support diverse abilities and promote equal opportunities for all.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Fight for Sight for funding this pilot project and to Kerry Firth for her invaluable support and guidance.

Solace is not a disability specialist organisation, and we acknowledge our ongoing learning journey in the area of disability inclusion. Our gratitude goes to all the specialist sight loss and disability partners that have helped us learn and grow in this area, and especially the dedicated team at Thomas Pocklington Trust led by Jonathan Ward, whose technical expertise and partnership were crucial to the project's success.

We are grateful to Ludvigsen McMahon Ltd Research and Evaluation for their contributions to the project's evaluation and the development of the theory of change.

We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to our adviser Jennifer Smith, as well as those advisers who preferred to remain anonymous, whose personal and professional insights into the intersection of domestic abuse and visual impairment were instrumental in shaping and informing this work.

Finally, we would like to thank the Luce volunteers, whose dedication and passion for supporting survivors, and willingness to share feedback and ideas with our team, have been key to the success of our work in this project.

## **Section 1: Understanding visual impairment and employment**

### **What is Visual Impairment?**

Visual impairment (VI) refers to a range of conditions in which a person experiences a significant loss of vision that cannot be corrected with standard glasses or contact lenses.



It encompasses various levels of vision and can result from a range of causes, including age-related degeneration, eye diseases, trauma, or congenital conditions. There are different types of visual impairments, ranging from low vision, where individuals may still have some sight but require assistive tools like magnifiers or screen readers to see clearly, to blindness, which refers to the total loss of vision. Prevalence rates vary, but globally, it is estimated that over 2.2 billion people live with some form of visual impairment. In the UK, approximately 2 million people are living with sight loss, with 350,000 of those being registered as blind or partially sighted.<sup>2</sup>

## Terminology

While “visual impairment” (VI) is the more widely accepted and used term in professional and medical contexts, many people use the term ‘partially sighted’, which tends to be used to describe individuals who have some remaining vision but still face significant challenges, for example in performing tasks like reading or driving. Many people prefer the term ‘blind and partially sighted’ to describe visual impairment as a whole, as it encompasses the full spectrum of vision loss, including partial sight and blindness. Another common term is ‘sight loss’, which is considered as a broader and more neutral way of referring to the gradual or sudden loss of vision, which can range from mild to severe. It encompasses all degrees of vision loss, from partial sight to complete blindness. ‘Sight loss’ is often used in a more general or informal context and emphasizes the experience of losing vision, rather than focusing on a specific condition or diagnosis. It is best practice to inquire about the preferred terminology of the individual you are engaging with and to consistently use the term they specify.

“What people don’t really get about VI is both the fluidity and variation of it. Unless you have close to you in your life someone who has sight loss, you might think that it’s a kind of dichotomy – you are either blind or you are not. The truth is it’s a little bit like finger prints, no two conditions, two ways in which people experience the world, or set of capabilities are exactly the same. Not only that, but for some people their vision can change a lot and often, whereas for others it changes over time. It’s really different, so you can’t assume anything when you meet someone with VI.”

(Luce adviser)

## **What are the barriers to employment for blind and partially sighted women?**

Blind and partially sighted women often face significant barriers to finding and retaining employment, including accessibility issues (technological, physical, and informational), discriminatory, stigmatising or unwelcoming organisational workplace cultures, and limited support and awareness.

Despite advancements in accessibility technology and resources, many workplaces remain ill-equipped or lack the necessary information to effectively support blind and partially sighted individuals. The absence of a clear inclusion lens often leads to both overt discrimination and unconscious bias, creating subtle barriers such as inaccessible or unadapted websites, which hinder access to opportunities. Stereotypes surrounding disability in general, and visual impairment in particular, often result in assumptions about a person’s capabilities, further preventing individuals from securing jobs or advancing in their careers.

Research by the Office for National Statistics found that disabled women are much less likely to be employed compared to their non-disabled counterparts, with employment rates for disabled women at 53.3%, compared to 78.1% for non-disabled women, with many disabled women citing a lack of opportunities and workplace inclusivity as major barriers to employment. These compounded factors can create a significant barrier to economic independence and career progression for visually impaired women<sup>3</sup>.

Focusing more specifically on visual impairment, the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) has found that only one in four registered blind or partially sighted individuals of working age are in paid employment<sup>4</sup>. While there is little research available focused specifically on the employment of blind and partially sighted women, there is reason to believe that their employment rates are lower than that of blind and partially sighted men<sup>5</sup>.

Data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) also indicates that blind and partially sighted employees earn, on average, 20% less than their non-disabled counterparts<sup>6</sup>. The wage gap can be even larger for women, as gender pay disparity intersects with disability-related barriers. Some of the main barriers to employment include:

### **Lack of accessibility awareness and support**

Inadequate workplace accommodations and limited support remain significant barriers for employees with disabilities. A report by the disability charity Scope highlighted that nearly half (48%) of disabled people who left work encountered issues with their reasonable adjustments, while an RNIB survey found that although 60% of employers were willing to make adaptations for blind or partially sighted employees, 23% said they would not, despite obligations under the Equality Act.

Research also shows that many employers lack awareness of the Access to Work scheme and their legal obligations. For instance, only 32% of employers in an RNIB survey knew how to access funding for practical support for blind or partially sighted employees<sup>7</sup>. This knowledge gap can hinder employment and career advancement for individuals with disabilities, with many employees also unaware of the adjustments they are entitled to<sup>8</sup>.

## **Societal stigma and discrimination**

Negative assumptions about the capabilities of people with disabilities, including visual impairment, contribute to discrimination in the hiring process. A report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) highlighted that disability discrimination, including for those with visual impairments, remains prevalent in the workplace<sup>9</sup>. However, stereotypes and assumptions about people with disabilities can influence hiring practices and interactions in the workplace in ways that are not always overtly discriminatory. In its 2020 report, “Breaking the Barriers: The employment challenges of blind and partially sighted people”, the RNIB highlighted subtle barriers, including a lack of understanding and negative assumptions about the skills and potential of blind and partially sighted individuals. While biases may not be blatant, they can manifest, for example, in inaccessible communication formats, assumptions about a visually impaired person’s ability to perform tasks, or well-meaning but inadequate or dismissive support. Research by Scope found that because of these attitudes, 90% of disabled people who experienced discrimination at work reported it contributed to them falling out of work<sup>10</sup>.

## **Lack of self confidence**

Several studies by specialist organisations have highlighted lack of work experience and skills development opportunities, compounded by

the psychological impact of negative attitudes towards blind and partially sighted people as contributing factors to low self-esteem and a lack of confidence among blind and partially sighted individuals, which directly affects their job prospects<sup>11</sup>.

“Depending on when you grew up and what your level of vision is, you may not have had the chance to be in a mainstream school. Depending on your age, you may not have had much experience at all with any of the technologies that are used now. For example, before this volunteering I haven’t opened Excel since secondary school. I use my iphone of course, but haven’t used a keyboard in about twenty years. As a blind person, you may not have ever worked, and if you did, it’s likely that you’ve had some bad experiences. So it makes sense that someone who’s blind would feel scared about applying for something new, going for an interview, starting at a new place, even if they know that assistive tech is available and support is there. You don’t know what people think and what the attitude will be, and might not have enough belief in yourself and what you have to offer”. (Luce volunteer)

## **What is access to work?**

Access to Work is a UK Government programme designed to support individuals with disabilities, including visual impairments, to enter or remain in employment, and can be used for a wide range of paid employment types. The programme provides financial assistance to cover the costs of any additional support or adjustments needed in the workplace due to a disability. This can include funding for specialist equipment (such as screen readers or magnification software), support workers, travel assistance, and workplace adaptations to ensure that employees can perform their job effectively. Access to Work aims to reduce barriers faced by disabled people, enabling them to fully

participate in the workforce. The programme is available to both employees and job-seekers, and the level of support provided is based on individual needs and circumstances. For employers, Access to Work offers the opportunity to make their workplaces more inclusive and accessible, helping them to retain and recruit talented individuals with disabilities.

Challenges with Access to Work include the time needed for each stage of the application process, delays in approvals and the lack of support during this time, and the lack of awareness of Access to Work outside of HR teams which can mean managers are not proactive in seeking adjustments and make disabled employees reluctant to make requests.

## **Section 2: The intersection of visual impairment and abuse**

While disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse compared to non-disabled women<sup>12</sup>, there is a critical lack of both knowledge and resources within domestic abuse services to provide support to disabled survivors of abuse in general, and blind and partially sighted survivors in particular.

Research on the intersection of visual impairment and domestic abuse is generally limited. However, a landmark report *The Unseen: Blind and Partially Sighted People's Experiences of Domestic Abuse*<sup>13</sup>, provides invaluable insights into the experiences of blind and partially sighted victims and survivors. In addition to the report, a toolkit focused on responding to victim/survivors of domestic abuse with sight loss was produced, providing in-depth guidance and comprehensive resources for practitioners.

We highly recommend that all professionals in the women's sector engage with both the report and the toolkit, which have been an essential resource for our work on the Luce Project.

Our experience working with blind and partially sighted women, both as volunteers and advisers within the Luce Project highlighted the importance of women's sector organisations having a deep understanding of the experiences of blind and partially sighted survivors and strive to embed this knowledge across policy and practice within the sector.

## **Understanding and assessing risk**

Understanding the role that visual impairment plays in the abuse is crucial to being able to accurately assess risk. In order to do this, the professional needs to be able to ask the right questions, feel confident to discuss sight loss, and ensure that it is integrated into every aspect of the support relationship to whatever degree the survivor would like it to be. In our work in the Luce Project, we heard from blind and partially sighted survivors and professionals how a lack of understanding around the intersection of sight loss and abuse can lead professionals to miss important indicators of risk.

“There can be a minimisation [on part of a blind or partially sighted survivor] because the professional they are working with doesn't really get the role of sight loss in the victim's life. When all the focus is on the safety and the trauma from the abuse, but they miss a big part of your life, which is the sight loss. They might just not understand it or it's up to the survivor to explain it, it's a big part of who you are, your entire life and also plays a big part in the dynamics of the abuse. If you miss the sight loss, you miss the dynamics of the abuse, and if you miss that, you



don't understand the risk the person is in.” (Luce adviser)

This is crucial in risk assessment and specific questions that should be asked include:

- Does the abuser make you feel dependent on them for basic things in life?
- Have they stopped you from accessing information independently?
- Have they stopped you from getting medical or health needs met? Have they stopped you from accessing your assistive tech?
- Does the abuser withhold from you aids and adaptations?
- Do they emotionally or physically manipulate you?

Our Luce adviser highlighted

“My partner has often threatened to leave me stranded in foreign places without my cane. That is a specific way to abuse someone who's blind.”

The disability charity Stay Safe East has developed a supplementary Disability and domestic abuse risk assessment, meant to be used alongside the DASH-RIC, which we recommend as a very useful tool to all frontline professionals.

**For more information see:** [Stay Safe East. \(n.d.\). Domestic abuse risk assessment for disabled survivors.](#)

## Understanding safety planning and options

Conducting safety planning and exploring options with a blind or partially sighted survivor requires a comprehensive approach that incorporates their sight loss into every aspect of the plan. This means that the process may take more time, require greater detail, and involve additional support to ensure the safety plan is effective.

“Imagine that right now, you close your eyes and have to prepare to leave the house for a long time. Find your documents, pack your medications, all of your children's important things.



Imagine if usually your abuser is the one who has access to some of those things and now you have to find them. Yes, people with VI know the layout of their house probably better than other people do, but it still takes us a long time to do things around the house and find things. So when you plan with a person with VI how they will prepare a go bag or the things they will take with them when they leave, remember to take into account what that process is like for them”. (Luce adviser)

“A lot more forward planning is needed, making a plan so that they have the support when they do leave, not waiting until it is desperate. There needs to be a plan not just around their safety and the DA, but also around their needs related to the VI, like a plan for their rehab, a social worker, a plan for their emotional support. If things are not in place in the safety and support plans that take into account all the needs around vision, the person is less likely to leave”. (Luce adviser)

## **Understanding trauma and the experience of abuse**

Understanding the connection between trauma, abuse, and sight loss is essential for professionals to fully grasp how these factors interlink in a survivor’s experience. This is especially important in therapeutic or long-term support settings, where a deeper understanding can help guide the response to the survivor’s needs. Key questions to consider include, but are not limited to:

- Is the visual impairment acquired? If so, how and when?
- Was it a result of the abuse?
- What triggers are associated with the survivor’s sight loss? How does the abuser exploit the visual impairment (physically, sexually, psychologically, emotionally, financially, or practically)?
- How does the survivor experience their sight loss outside of the context of abuse (in family, education, or work)?
- How to prevent re-traumatisation by the engagement with services?

It's important to recognise that not every survivor's sight loss is a result of trauma, and that blind and partially sighted people have a wide range of experiences and relationships with their sight loss. Some may not view their sight loss as traumatic, while for others, it may be deeply interwoven with trauma, that of the abuse or of another kind.

These questions, explored in a trauma-informed and survivor-led way, can help professionals better understand how sight loss might shape the survivor's experience of abuse, and in turn, how best to support them.

“Leaving is hard for anyone, but especially when you have acquired sight loss, that is a trauma in itself. Professionals address trauma but the trauma of sight loss is not on their radar, it's called sight loss because it is a kind of a loss.” (Luce adviser)

“The system can be as abusive as the perpetrator, there are commonalities in the experience for the survivor. The abuser uses your blindness to justify their abuse, and when you are turned away from support because of your blindness (for example a refuge says they can't have you stay there), it feels traumatising in a similar way, it's like an excuse for how you are being treated. Services need to not just take care of your physical safety but also emotional safety.” (Luce adviser)

## **Understanding the intersection with carer abuse**

Not all blind or partially sighted people have care and support needs. However, many will need some kind of help with any number of tasks, from transport to managing daily activities or navigating unfamiliar environments. While some individuals may require formal caregiving, for others, assistance with daily tasks may simply fall within the realm of the mutual support and help typically provided by partners in a healthy relationship.

Carer abuse involves the misuse of power by a person over someone they care for, often exploiting their vulnerability or dependence. This misuse of power may be a significant barrier to leaving the relationship, as the individual may feel trapped due to their reliance on the carer. Professionals working with a blind or partially sighted survivor should remember that an abusive relationship may have elements of carer abuse even when it doesn't involve an official carer role. In addition, it is important to remember that a carer does not have to be an intimate partner; they can also be a family member or a paid professional.

Some of the most important aspects of understanding and supporting a blind or partially sighted survivor are being able to recognise and accurately assess the care dynamics. Professionals in all fields may show unconscious bias towards a carer-perpetrator or even perceive them in such a positive light that they might miss signs of abuse altogether, fail to recognise the elements of power and control in the relationship, or attribute abusive behaviours to 'carer stress.'

"The disability is exacerbated by the abuse, and they are tied together. People don't understand the ways in which the disability makes someone vulnerable to abuse and the different aspects of their daily functioning. For example, I worked with someone who asked her partner to make her a sandwich, and he wouldn't or didn't do it. But, she could make herself a cup of tea. So someone from the outside would put all of that under 'food preparation', but there is a range of levels of independence and tasks that can or can't be accomplished, and all the different ways that someone is dependent on an abuser. People might think, 'oh, she can make herself a cup of tea, she's fine', or 'she can write her own emails', but each task is different. This is why you'd rather go back to what you know." (Luce adviser)

“People who work a lot with this group [blind and partially sighted people] and have experience know that they need to ask the “carer”, perpetrator, to step out during an appointment. The police are learning this slowly, I think it depends on intuition and professional experience. Many abusers appear really calm, speak very well, whereas the victim is stressed out.” (Luce adviser)

“Another thing that is missed is that the abuser can fool services. For example, my abuser would prevent services from coming in, and they didn’t challenge him. A rehabilitation professional came to assess the house and recommended safety measures like rails in the stairs, but when the service came to fit it, my abuser told them that he would do it himself. Services take the carer’s word for the type of care and support they provide. I felt at that point that I had no voice.” (Luce adviser)

## **Mapping a survivor’s journey**

Organisations could greatly benefit from mapping out the different stages of engagement with services for a blind or partially sighted survivor. For example, several survivors fed back to Solace their insights about a survivor’s first point of contact with services:

“I think that the main thing Solace can improve about working with survivors with VI (and maybe all domestic abuse organisations) is that I don’t know how someone with VI would even be able to hear about you or make the initial contact.

If outreach is just visual then many victims can’t know about it. Outreach needs to be more creative and active for people with VI to get help, for example Braille doesn’t work for all people with VI but it can have a big advantage in that the perpetrator can’t read it so it’s one thing where the survivor might actually have the privacy to communicate. Another

example, I don't think I've ever heard an ad about a domestic abuse service on the radio, but that's where a lot of people with VI would listen". (Luce volunteer)

Specific considerations in the survivor's journey should be given to the survivor's experience of accommodation. With only 23% of accommodation-based services having provision for disabled survivors, the manner in which disabled survivors interact with refuge and their experience of accessing it, should be explored by services as an area of special concern<sup>14</sup>.

"The experience around refuge can feel hostile. The lack of adjustment is what makes engaging with it so difficult. There is a big fear of refuge services [among blind and partially sighted survivors] and that in itself is a big barrier to disclosures." (Luce adviser)

## **Multiagency working**

Working in partnership with other professionals is essential to effectively supporting the survivor, gathering relevant information, and managing risk. It's important to invite all relevant professionals involved in the survivor's care to case conferences or Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and ensure that they are included in needs and risk assessments. Professionals who may be supporting the survivor in relation to their sight loss can include specialists from the local authority sensory team, the NHS, or sight loss charities and a blind or partially sighted person might use their services at different points in their life, depending on the nature, onset, and progression of their sight loss. We have included in Annex A a non-exhaustive list of key professionals who may play a role in the survivor's support network.

“No one [within domestic abuse services] knew about rehab officers and what services are available, they didn’t know how visually impaired people function on a daily basis, so no one plans to include these people in your safety or support plan”. (Luce adviser)

“When I finally left the relationship, it was because I was able to be supported and contacted through my personal assistant (PA). PAs are hired independently by the person who has the disability, but are paid through the local authority. They unfortunately don’t go through training around safeguarding, domestic abuse etc, as home help staff do. They can, however, be a really useful link and should be trained to support survivors because they are often the one link to the outside world and should be included in the safety and support planning.” (Luce adviser)

“There needs to be a plan not just around their safety and the DA, but also around their needs related to the VI, like a plan for their rehab, a social worker, a plan for their emotional support. People with sight loss might use a lot more services, and they really depend on them, so if they leave you have to plan for the continuity of everything or else the fear of losing them will be a big barrier to leaving. On the other hand, having a lot of contact people around the survivor, that they trust and want to help them, is an asset for you as the IDVA or case worker, you just need to be the glue and get them all involved and helping.” (Luce adviser)

## **Building rapport**

Research shows that building strong rapport with service users is crucial to enhancing outcomes such as longer engagement with services, increased trust towards services, improved mental health and well-being, greater willingness to engage, more informed decision-making, and enhanced long-term safety<sup>15</sup>.

This is especially true for blind and partially sighted survivors. An in-depth understanding of their experiences is essential to establishing that rapport, as it enables workers to engage with survivors in a way that is empathetic, informed, and respectful of their unique needs.

Building this understanding can be achieved in various ways explored in this toolkit, but it is worth noting that research also indicates that beyond training, policy changes and other workplace inclusion and awareness-raising strategies, the presence of disabled people in the workplace, not only improves workplace culture but also enhances the ability of all team members—both disabled and non-disabled alike—to build better rapport with service users<sup>16</sup>.

While blind and partially sighted staff, like their sighted colleagues, may not have lived experience of domestic abuse, our project has highlighted the valuable insights they can offer into the experiences of blind and partially sighted survivors. It's important, however, that blind and partially sighted staff members are not expected or asked to educate others about visual impairment, nor should they be responsible for expanding the organisation's knowledge in this area. Instead, it is crucial for women's sector organisations to actively enhance their understanding of the unique experiences of blind and partially sighted survivors through targeted training, consultancy, partnerships, and the adoption of a disability-aware perspective to embed best practices in service provision. That said, in our experience many blind and partially sighted colleagues were passionate about sharing their knowledge, and for them, providing such education has also served as an opportunity for professional development and growth.

“They might just not understand it [sight loss] or it's up to the survivor to explain it, it's a big part of who you are, your entire life and also plays



a big part in the dynamics of the abuse. When an IDVA for example misses this big of a part in someone's experience, it means you won't open up to them and the support relationship suffers. Sight loss is not seen as a priority, when really, it's the main thing.” (Luce adviser)

“I had a service user with a disability on the phone. Even though she wasn't visually impaired, I felt like I understood her better. I asked her some questions to understand how her disability and the abuse impact each other, I asked a bit more about what she needed for communication. I tried to make her feel like when she took more time it wasn't at all a problem, no need to apologise. When she called again she asked to speak to me again, she told my manager that I understood her.” (Luce volunteer)

“We can have training on disabilities, but nothing makes you aware as well as having a colleague with different needs to become more mindful and sensitive to it. It's the difference between learning something in a training and between making sure that an organisation actually reflects everyone in society.” (Luce Project mentor)

## Section 3: The women's sector

The women's sector stands to benefit significantly from increased representation of blind and partially sighted women, fostering a dynamic and inclusive workforce that better reflects the diversity of the service users it supports. Research shows that people with disabilities experience a notably high prevalence of domestic abuse, with studies also indicating that disabled individuals, particularly disabled women, are at greater risk compared to the general population, and even compared to other groups with protected characteristics.

Despite this, there is a notable lack of representation of people with disabilities within the women's sector.



By hiring blind and partially sighted staff and volunteers, the sector can tap into a broader range of diverse skills, talents, and perspectives, enriching its overall capability and enhancing its organisational culture, all while better reflecting the diversity of the service users it supports.

Blind and partially sighted staff and volunteers may find the women's sector an appealing field for several reasons, as highlighted by feedback from Luce Project volunteers:

- The sector offers intellectually stimulating work with opportunities for professional development, training and qualifications, and problem-solving.
- The field provides the chance to engage in meaningful, purpose-driven work. For some, this includes the opportunity to give back, while for others, it offers a platform to advocate for and work toward improving the issues they are passionate about and stand by other women.
- Staff and volunteers fed back that they felt they are a part of a supportive, collaborative team, and that colleagues were eager to foster an inclusive and collaborative environment.
- Volunteers expressed a strong desire to apply their skills and lived experiences, with many excited to have their personal experiences, whether related to domestic abuse or sight loss, acknowledged and respected as valuable forms of knowledge.
- Although the sector is often overstretched, it places value on work-life balance, with many managers enabling flexible schedules and remote working options, which is especially beneficial for those with medical needs, appointments, or other care needs or responsibilities.

“One of the main things volunteering has given me is just me time! Time to myself to do something that I care about, away from the kids, to think about what I want to accomplish and the good feeling you get from

helping, to feel like I have something to give to others. I know there are lots of challenges in this kind of work, but I would like to be an IDVA or a counsellor, because I love learning about trauma and I feel like I can help women believe in themselves again” (Luce volunteer)

Blind and partially sighted staff and volunteers bring a valuable lived understanding of intersectionality, a concept that sits at the heart of the work in the women’s sector, alongside a diverse skill set that includes problem-solving, resilience, adaptability, and creativity—skills developed through navigating a world that is not always designed with accessibility in mind.

In addition to the broader benefits to the workplace that would come from the simple act of broadening the pool of talented prospective staff, irrespective of disability, increasing the representation of blind and partially sighted staff and volunteers will not only strengthen the sector’s alignment with its core values, but also enhance the integration of a disability-informed perspective across all service levels.

“In the women’s sector specifically, even more than other fields, there needs to be a wider variety of people on the books. How can someone expect orgs to be supporting and thinking about the needs of marginalised people if the workforce does not reflect them at all?”

(Luce Project adviser)

## Section 4:

# Recommendations for employers

Through the Luce Project, Solace has been able to examine different aspects of working with blind and partially sighted volunteers and take away valuable lessons. While the project only worked with volunteers, we hope that our experience can serve any women's sector organisations looking to improve their knowledge and capacity to work with both volunteers and staff with sight loss. We've distilled key lessons learned into four main areas, which highlight the impact of this experience and its potential for broader application.

### Social vs medical model of disability

The social model of disability sees disability as a result of societal barriers and attitudes that limit people's participation, focusing on changing the environment to accommodate individuals. In contrast, the medical model sees disability as a defect or impairment within the individual that needs to be treated or cured.

An employer who upholds the social model of disability focuses on removing barriers in the workplace and creating an inclusive environment for all employees. They recognise that disability is not an inherent limitation of the individual, but rather a result of inaccessible structures or attitudes.

This approach involves providing reasonable accommodations, fostering a culture of inclusion, and promoting equal opportunities for employees with disabilities to thrive and contribute fully.

## **Recommendation 1:**

### **Improving organisational capacity**

#### **Organisational culture**

Building a workplace culture that values diversity and inclusivity requires commitment from all levels of the organisation, with a focus on making this work a priority, even in a sector that faces competing priorities and limited resources. This approach should be grounded in a strengths-based perspective, recognising and utilising the unique skills and experiences that individuals with all different abilities bring to the table.

“Generally, there needs to be a can-do attitude, the word ‘no’ (“we don’t do it that way, it’s not possible”) can’t be the default and you have to work with teams and identify people who may need support in this area. Essentially, it’s about having the same mindset that you would have when working with service users or anyone else really, and applying this across the whole organisation – just being adaptable, flexible and coming to a new situation with goodwill to make things easier for the other person based on what they need.” (Solace staff member).

#### **Accessibility**

Organisations should prioritise the implementation of accessible systems, platforms, and technologies that are compatible with various assistive tools, such as screen readers and speech recognition software, ensuring all employees can navigate them easily, regardless of disability. Many organisations in the sector use case management systems to capture essential details about service users, but these systems can present significant barriers to blind or partially sighted staff and volunteers. Navigating through, and inputting information into long forms, multiple fields, or busy screens while speaking with a survivor or under time pressure to retrieve information, can be a challenge.

Therefore, organisations should assess and test their existing software for accessibility and compatibility with assistive technology. When renewing licenses or purchasing new case management systems, compatibility with assistive technology should be a key criterion in the decision-making process. This applies not only to organisations purchasing systems, but also to those developing sector-specific case management solutions, who should consider how their design choices support, or hinder, accessibility. Engaging with specialist organisations in the disability sector can support both buyers and developers in evaluating and improving system accessibility.

Employers should also ensure that internal resources are available in accessible formats for staff with sight loss. For example, while not all blind and partially sighted people read or work with Braille, a blind or partially sighted staff member might benefit from having the DASH-RIC (or other relevant documents) in Braille to hand while they are also speaking on the phone with a survivor and having to record information digitally. Whenever possible, organisations should archive key documents such as risk and needs assessments, directories for signposting, and other essential information in Braille or other accessible formats. Additionally, organisations should set aside a budget to adapt these resources as needed. However, it is important to acknowledge that while many organisations would like to be able to make accessibility a higher priority, tight financial margins in the sector can make this challenging. Therefore, funders should be encouraged to support and incentivise accessibility such as through the inclusion of budget lines for accessible resource development in funding bids and applications.

## Tech solutions policy and procedures

As the availability of technological solutions for disabled people continues to expand, there are increasingly innovative tools emerging to help overcome challenges faced by blind and partially sighted people at work. Examples such as smart pens converting written text to typed text, and other smart recording solutions highlight just a few of the current possibilities, and the rapid pace of tech innovation, including the integration of AI, promises even more sophisticated solutions in the future. For women's sector organisations, embracing and facilitating access to these tools is essential to empowering blind and partially sighted staff and volunteers to take on any role in the organisation. However, as these technologies are adopted, organisations must establish clear policies and procedures to ensure they are selected and used appropriately, safeguarding service users' personal and sensitive data when utilizing external tech products, software, and applications.

## Training

Comprehensive training is key to creating an inclusive and supportive work environment. It should address working with survivors of domestic abuse with disabilities and cover diverse abilities in the workplace as part of an EDI curriculum. Training should focus on understanding the experiences of people with diverse abilities, including the use of assistive technologies, inclusive language, and providing effective support. Whenever possible, organisations should also collaborate with 'by and for' partners who can offer training, consultancy, and expertise to enhance their internal capacity. As part of the Luce Project, volunteers who identified developing training skills as a goal in their professional development plans also delivered training internally to Solace staff, further demonstrating the importance of ongoing learning and development within the sector.

## Diversity of roles

Organisations should ensure that a variety of roles and work arrangements are available, including flexible working hours, part-time options, and a mix of remote, hybrid, and in-office opportunities. During the Luce Project, some volunteers expressed that they would be unable to commit to full-time roles due to visual impairment-related needs, medical care, or considerations around benefits. Additionally, we identified that many roles in the women's sector require a high level of proficiency with technology, which can be a barrier for some candidates. HR teams should assess the diversity of roles available within their organisation, as uniformity in job types may lead to a limited pool of candidates. By offering roles with different levels of technological interfacing and varied work environments (e.g., refuges, head offices, or community-based services), organisations can ensure greater inclusivity and better meet the needs of a wider range of potential staff and volunteers.

## Practical knowledge for colleagues

For a workplace to be inclusive and welcoming, colleagues need to learn about, and understand, the practical aspects of supporting a person with sight loss. For example, this might include learning how to physically guide someone in a new office environment in a respectful and helpful way, or how to write emails that are easy to follow using screen readers, for example placing key information at the beginning and making sure attachments are easy to find. It's important that colleagues learn, and feel comfortable discussing the practical aspects of working with a colleague with sight loss, because if they don't, or if they're too afraid of making a mistake, this can lead to avoidance, leaving staff members with sight loss feeling isolated in the workplace.

## Policy and advocacy

Internal policies should prioritise disability inclusion, ensuring that the needs of blind and partially sighted employees and volunteers are embedded within organisational frameworks. Externally, advocating for the rights and needs of survivors with disabilities, as well as staff and volunteers, is critical. For example, one key advocacy action is the need to extend the government's Access to Work scheme to include volunteers with disabilities, in addition to the paid roles it currently covers. This policy change would help remove barriers and enable greater participation for disabled volunteers in the workplace, as well as better support those who would like to use volunteering as a stepping stone to paid employment.

## Whole-organisation approach

In order to make deep and long-lasting improvements around disability inclusion it is important to take a whole-organisation approach that would allow cross-team assessment and change. One way of approaching this would be by taking on the process of getting accredited as a Disability Confident (DC) employer. The Disability Confident accreditation is a government-led initiative designed to help employers create inclusive workplaces for disabled people. It is structured into three levels and encourages companies to address the accessibility of their workplace, improve recruitment processes, ensure compliance with disability legislation, and foster a culture of inclusion.

## 'Getting it'

It's essential to ensure that every step of the engagement with the organisation communicates a clear message of inclusivity. This can be achieved by displaying posters, providing information on the website, and showcasing relevant accreditations that encourage people, especially those with disabilities, to apply. Highlighting the flexibility in



roles and the support available to employees and volunteers can help potential candidates feel that their needs will be respected and accommodated. These outward-facing efforts should be paired with robust internal processes to ensure that the organisation is truly prepared to welcome and support diverse individuals at all levels, from recruitment to day-to-day operations.

“Information and communication are key. Organisations need to get the training, learn about how sight loss is a spectrum, not put people in a box. Before you meet the candidate even for an interview, know a little about the situation, and find a way to communicate it, so that they feel that you ‘get it’.” (Luce volunteer)

## **Acknowledging what we don't know we don't know**

It is crucial for organisations to recognise that there are gaps in their understanding of the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities, including those with sight loss, and that they may not even know what those gaps are. Embracing a disability lens across all aspects of the organisation requires an ongoing commitment to identifying and addressing these unknowns. Organisations should prioritise mapping out these gaps, actively seeking to understand areas where improvement is needed, and where investments in knowledge, systems, and policies can make a meaningful impact.

## **Recommendation 2:**

### **Looking at recruitment and onboarding**

When recruiting blind and partially sighted staff and volunteers, the following lessons from our experience can provide helpful insights:

#### **Ensuring the recruitment process is accessible**

The *Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives* report highlights that 48% of employers do not have accessible recruitment processes, creating a significant barrier to employment for blind and partially sighted individuals<sup>17</sup>. To address this, engaging with potential candidates through inclusive outreach and information sessions, both group and individual, can help ensure a wider pool of applicants. Reaching out to a variety of stakeholders beyond traditional recruitment channels, such as sensory teams at local authorities, eye hospitals, and organisations within the visual impairment sector, is also important.

Using accessible platforms for writing applications and conducting interviews makes it easier for candidates with different tech skill levels to participate. Offering a wide variety of application formats (i.e. typing on a Word document instead of the application platform, handwritten applications, dictating the application questions on the phone, or even a voice memo) shows the organisation's commitment to inclusivity. It's also important to ensure that the team managing the recruitment process, whether from HR or a specific department or team, is well-trained on accessible recruitment practices.

#### **Assessing training needs**

Assessing previous experience and familiarity with technology is key to identifying any training needs. Offering introductory sessions on assistive tech tools, such as JAWS or NVDA, could be valuable for volunteers who may not have had the chance to learn these programmes

but feel they would be helpful in their roles. Collaborating with sight loss organisations who provide classes can ensure that volunteers are well-prepared and supported in their roles from the start.

## **Flexibility**

While every organisation has its own set of recruitment and onboarding processes, introducing adjustments into these procedures can help meet the unique needs of applicants. Even small adjustments can have a significant impact. For example, Solace's process for conducting DBS checks for applicants was adapted by facilitating ID checks via video call instead of requiring volunteers to scan and email in their documents, which some prospective volunteers found to be challenging.

## **Recommendation 3: Delivering effective training**

Training provided to new staff and volunteers before they begin their roles covers a variety of skills and areas of practice, from learning internal policies to understanding the tasks required for their day-to-day responsibilities. Blind and partially sighted staff and volunteers may face unique challenges during training and the following key lessons can help address them:

### **Tailored training approach**

Conducting a training needs assessment was very helpful in our work on the Luce Project in customizing the training programme to each learner's needs. The needs assessment should cover the use of tech, scheduling and availability, and any additional support needed.

The needs assessment should involve the trainer or training coordinator and the volunteer and any adaptations needed should be managed in collaboration between the relevant teams (for example, internal training team or volunteering team).

## **Clear communication**

In many organisations, training new volunteers or staff members is a multi-team task and may involve HR, training, volunteering teams as well as the teams that the volunteers or staff are going to be part of in their role. Clear and open lines of communication between different teams and staff members involved in training ensure that trainers are aware of the needs of blind and partially sighted learners and can adjust training methods accordingly.

## **Collaborative effort**

Creating a shared document of accessible training best practices can allow the teams involved in training coordination and delivery to continuously learn and improve the process. Feedback from learners and staff should be incorporated into best practice guidance to ensure ongoing improvement.

## **Accessible and adaptable training materials**

Blind and partially sighted learners may have different preferences regarding training materials. Referencing accessibility guidelines, such as those from the RNIB website, can help ensure that training materials are inclusive. Whenever possible, training teams should aim to keep several versions of their materials in order to meet various learning needs.

## **In person and online**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, online training has become the more prevalent form of delivering staff and volunteer training. However, it's important to anticipate the challenges that various online platforms may present, and discuss these challenges in advance with new volunteers or staff members. Additionally, consider which training sessions would be more effective if conducted in person.

For example, one of the most significant challenges during the Luce Project was training volunteers to use the case management system through online training, presenting significant challenges that are easier to tackle easier to tackle through face-to-face training sessions.

**Further tips on delivering effective training for blind and partially sighted staff and volunteers can be found in the Appendix B**

## **Recommendation 4: Create pathways for professional support and development**

In the Luce Project, we focused on creating a pathway to employment within the women's sector for volunteers. However, we hope that the insights gained could also be applied to professional development and growth across a range of roles within women's sector organisations. Some of the key lessons include:

### **Ensure genuine employment pathways**

With a high percentage of blind and partially sighted people not in employment, and a lack of work experience often cited as a barrier, volunteering can be a valuable entry point into the workplace. These opportunities should be designed and resourced to act as genuine stepping stones into paid roles for those who are interested, rather than being treated as stand-alone activities or box-ticking exercises. Creating meaningful, accessible employment pathways is not always straightforward, especially within the constraints many women's sector organisations are working under, but it's an area where progress is both possible and needed. It requires joined-up thinking and commitment across teams, from frontline staff and volunteer coordinators to HR and leadership. Funders and other stakeholders also have an important role to play in enabling organisations to invest in the infrastructure

and support needed to make employment genuinely accessible to blind and partially sighted people. “Many volunteer roles are a tick box exercise, can feel like tokenism or like something a disabled person should be excited about even though it doesn’t lead to anything more than volunteering. It’s very important that organisations that have a genuine interest in having staff with disabilities create a strong pathway from volunteering to employment. This applies to organisations that don’t work with volunteers as well. Make sure that your frontline positions, or your part time positions, could also lead to more senior roles for those who would like that.” (Disability charity partner)

## **Align project support with employment standards**

When working with volunteers, aim to balance the support provided during their volunteering with the level of support they can expect if they transition to a paid role. For example, if an organisation offers flexible volunteering roles but most paid positions are full-time and inflexible, this could create a barrier for volunteers seeking employment. Employers should be mindful of these differences and ensure that the transition to employment is smooth, without adding unnecessary obstacles.

## **Address wait times for Access to Work**

Recognise the long wait times for Access to Work and explore alternative ways to support volunteers while they await formal access to the adjustments they need. Consider implementing temporary support solutions to bridge the gap and ensure continued assistance during this period. For example, a blind or partially volunteer or staff member might initially take on responsibilities that they are able to perform with temporary adjustments such as pairing with a buddy, using loaned screen reading equipment, or offering flexible scheduling until formal adjustments through Access to Work are in place.

## **Provide clarity on hours and benefits**

Many disabled people might feel hesitant about taking on work opportunities due to concerns about losing existing benefits. Make sure to offer support in accessing information by specialist organisations so that potential employees, or those looking to increase their hours or progress in the organisation, can make an informed decision. For more information on how to signpost to money and benefits advice consult sight loss specialist charities like the RNIB<sup>18</sup>.

## **Create opportunities for peer support, mentorship, and networking**

The benefits of professional mentoring and peer support are well-documented, especially for marginalized groups in the workplace. Consider implementing a mentorship programme that recruits, trains, and matches mentors with blind and partially sighted volunteers and staff. This can provide valuable support, motivation, and a sense of belonging within both the organisation and the sector. Additionally, consider establishing a professional network focused on disability or diverse abilities. This network can raise awareness, offer training, influence internal and external policies, and facilitate professional development and progression opportunities.

“I think that peer support is really important, if people with sight loss can see someone who’s been through this process and can help them build their confidence. What is important for peer supporters or mentors to understand is the crisis in confidence that takes place when someone loses their vision or when it deteriorates. It can be very daunting to try and find a job in this situation, or think about your career progression. You need people who can inspire you and help you hold on to your professional worth.” (Luce volunteer)

## Section 5:

# Summary and call to action

This toolkit set out to answer some key questions:

- What can women's sector organisations gain from proactively enhancing their engagement with blind and partially sighted staff and volunteers?
- What makes the women's sector a great place for blind and partially sighted women to work in and thrive professionally?
- What creates employment success for blind and partially sighted women?
- Why is better awareness of the experience of blind and partially sighted survivors important to achieve a high standard of practice?
- What are the strategic as well as practical measures that organisations in the women's sector need to consider in order to take the next step in making disability inclusion a priority?
- How can organisations tackle existing barriers and inequalities embedded in the systems we work within?

While these are broad questions that could each fill an entire toolkit, we hope that through our work on the Luce Project, we have shared helpful lessons and provided an overview that outlines a roadmap for engaging with these issues, which each organisation can adapt to fit their unique culture, strategic goals, and values.

Solace is not a disability specialist organisation, and we are learning as we go, acknowledging the areas where we fall short in terms of disability inclusion and actively exploring ways to improve. There are many specialist organisations with deep expertise in the areas covered in this toolkit, and we strongly encourage women's sector organisations to collaborate with them to enhance their work with blind and partially sighted individuals, as well as disabled people in general.



We hope that in this toolkit, we have been able to offer a perspective as an organisation embedded in the women's sector, understanding both its complexities and the opportunities it presents.

“Last thing to say? Keep including people like us, it's really refreshing”

(Luce volunteer)

## Appendix A

Sight loss support professionals could include, but are not limited to, the following role:

- Orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists help blind and partially sighted people navigate their surroundings safely and independently. They teach techniques for independent travel, using a white cane, public transport, and the orientation skills needed to safely move around unfamiliar environments.
- Vision and rehabilitation specialists (VRS), also known as Rehabilitation Workers/Officers for Visually Impaired People (RWVI/ROVI) or Rehab Officers, assess the needs of visually impaired people and create personalised rehabilitation plans. They provide training in practical skills and offer emotional support, helping individuals adjust to life with sight loss.
- Assistive technology specialists help individuals with sight loss access and use specialized technologies that aid in reading, communication, and daily tasks. This includes software like screen readers (e.g., JAWS or NVDA) and braille devices.
- Occupational therapists (OTs) help blind or partially sighted individuals with adapting their homes and workplaces for increased independence. They might advise on making environmental changes, such as installing adaptive devices or rearranging furniture, and assist with mobility aids or other strategies.
- Social workers working with blind and partially sighted people provide support in accessing services and benefits, assisting with personal care, and helping them integrate into the community. They may also advocate for the individual's rights and ensure access to appropriate resources.
- Healthcare providers and eye care professionals (Optometrists, Ophthalmologists) diagnose and manage vision impairments, offer treatments, and provide advice on maintaining eye health.

- Eye Care Liaison Officer (ECLO) provides emotional support, information, and practical advice to people diagnosed with sight loss, helping them navigate their condition and adjust to the challenges of vision impairment.
- Counsellors or therapists working with blind or partially sighted people will focus on coping with the emotional challenges that can accompany sight loss.
- Personal assistant (PA) for a blind or partially sighted person provides practical support to help them with daily activities, such as mobility, managing appointments, accessing information, and performing tasks like shopping or household chores.

## Appendix B: Tips for effective training

### Before the training

- Introduction: Ask if the participant would like to be introduced to the group at the beginning of the session and identify themselves as blind or partially sighted. While some learners would prefer that their needs around accessibility be shared with the group, others might not welcome this.
- Accessible materials: Ensure that slides and materials are provided in advance. Discuss with the learner their preferred formats, such as high-contrast versions, specific background colours, larger text sizes, hard copies posted to the learner in advance, Word documents instead of PDFs, or a preference for the materials to be sent to them via digital formats like WhatsApp or email.
- Platform interaction: Discuss any preferences or challenges related to the online platform, such as the most commonly used features (e.g., unmuting, chat, screen-sharing), to ensure smooth participation and effective communication. In addition, check with the learner whether they would prefer to have their camera on or off – while some blind and visually impaired learners will have no specific preference, others might not want to have their camera on while they are not able to see the rest of the group.

- Health and learning considerations: Ask about any specific needs related to health, assistive technologies, or support from carers that could impact the participant's ability to fully engage, particularly during longer sessions.

## During the training

Consult with the participants about the adjustments below. If they are interested, consider:

- Describing yourself physically: this could include your physical appearance, what you are wearing, or any other specific features such as glasses, to allow blind and partially sighted learners to better understand who is speaking or interacting with them, fostering clearer communication and a sense of connection.
- Who's who: Encourage all participants to identify themselves by name before every time they speak.
- Respect the pace: Allow extra time for participation, and foster an environment where all learners are encouraged to be patient and supportive as everyone engages at their own pace. Understand that a blind or partially sighted participant may not be able to take notes on everything they wish to respond to, so allow extra time for them to process and participate.
- Sensitivity around participation: Prompt responses from the participant in a way that doesn't put them on the spot, ensuring they feel comfortable contributing. If a participant isn't actively participating, check to see if there is an underlying reason (e.g., difficulty unmuting on time or following along with visual content).
- Be aware of assistive tech: Remind other participants that screen readers may be active in the background, which could affect the audio environment.
- Describe visual content: When showing videos, pause at intervals to describe what is happening on screen, and provide verbal descriptions of any pictures or infographics.

- Check in: Regularly monitor the learner's engagement throughout the session to ensure they are following along comfortably. During breaks, check in with the blind or partially sighted participant to ensure they have the support they need and are comfortable.

## After the training

- Support with coursework: Offer assistance with any worksheets or assignments, and check with participants to understand their preferred method of support. For instance, they may prefer to discuss their assignment with you over the phone or dictate answers rather than type them down.
- Make time for classroom support: Inform learners of specific times when you are available for additional support between training sessions. Be sure to confirm your availability and reassure them that asking for help is encouraged, as they may have had negative experiences in this respect or are worried about being seen as a burden.
- Learning and improvement: Actively seek feedback from participants and use it to improve future training sessions, ensuring that the experience continually evolves to meet their needs.

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