

## BRIEFING NOTE

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### **TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY: ONLINE GUIDANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH VISION IMPAIRMENT**

#### **1. Introduction**

Research carried out as part of the Birmingham University/RNIB longitudinal transitions project has identified a number of challenges for young people with VI in applying for and going to university. In addition to describing the problems they encountered, the research participants told us that they would have benefited from having a single source of detailed guidance on the university process that was tailored to the needs of young people with VI. They also told us that they would prefer to have this guidance available as an online resource.

As a result, with funding from NatSIP through the DfE grant programme, RNIB and the Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research at Birmingham University has produced tailored, online guidance for young people with VI on transition to university.

#### **2. Method**

The guidance has been co-produced with young people with VI. The initial content was structured around the chronological process of transition to university and based on issues that the research participants had identified.

In order to make the guidance more interesting for young people, we have included quotes from Birmingham university research participants, and video clips of young people with VI talking about their experiences of university which had originally been created for a national transitions conference hosted by RNIB/Birmingham university in 2015.

One of the project team was a young person with VI who had recently graduated from university. The young person contributed to the content – including writing guidance based on her own experiences as a guide-dog user at university.

Young people with VI (Birmingham University research participants and members of RNIB Envision community of young people with VI), as well as a small number of professionals, were invited to provide feedback on the draft guidance via an online survey. Changes were made to the materials as a result of the feedback. Further opportunities for young people to give feedback were also provided through a transitions session at New College Worcester.

### **3. The online guidance**

The guidance is on the young people's section of the RNIB website:

<http://www.rnib.org.uk/cy/young-people/starting-university>

It is divided into the following sections:

- a) Choosing a university:  
<http://www.rnib.org.uk/young-people-starting-university/choosing-university>
- b) Clearing – finding a place at university:  
<http://www.rnib.org.uk/young-people-starting-university/clearing-finding-place-university>
- c) Disabled Students' Allowance and other funding:  
<http://www.rnib.org.uk/young-people-starting-university/disabled-students-allowance-dsa-and-other-funding>
- d) Negotiating support at university:  
<http://www.rnib.org.uk/young-people/negotiating-support-university>
- e) Life at university:  
<http://www.rnib.org.uk/young-people-starting-university/life-at-university>
- f) Study Advice:  
<http://www.rnib.org.uk/young-people-starting-university/study-advice>

Within each section are sub-sections and downloadable factsheets. We cover issues that are not necessarily always included in guidance for young people, for example: food shopping, disclosing your VI to friends, and coping with stress.

### **4. Conclusion**

We will bring the guidance to the attention of young people with VI through VI services and voluntary organisations such as Action for Blind People. We will monitor uptake of the online materials and are inviting young people to provide us with feedback, and to share with us their experiences of making the transition to HE.

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