

Statistics Release

Registered Blind and Partially Sighted Persons, Scotland 2003

Introduction

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 31 March 2003 and are provisional, as such, may be subject to change. The final figures will be published in 'Scottish Community Care Statistics 2003'.

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).

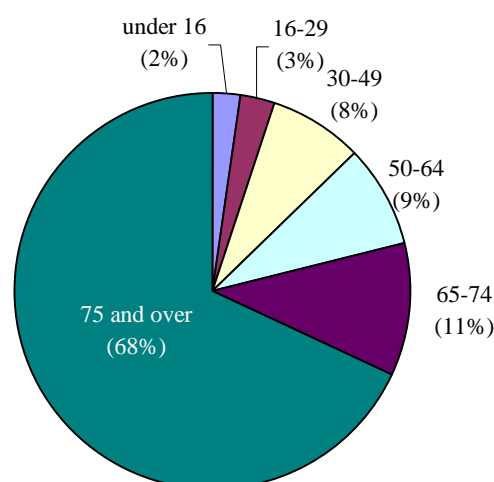
Main points

Information collected on visually impaired persons show that: -

- In 2003, the number of people registered as blind or partially sighted was estimated to be 38,000, up 2 per cent on 2002.
- There were 3,491 new cases registered during the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003. This is down by 7 per cent on 2002.
- The majority, 62 per cent, of those on the register were blind, 38 per cent were partially sighted.
- 36 per cent of those on the register were male and 64 per cent were female.
- Almost 4 out of 5 of those registered were over the age of 65.
- 7,693 persons (20 per cent) of those registered as visually impaired had

additional disabilities. Of these, 35 per cent were deaf.

Chart 1: Registered Visually Impaired Persons by Age Group



Section 1: Blind Persons

There were 23,557 registered blind persons in 2003. The number of registered blind has remained constant over the last year after a drop over the previous two years. This drop followed a period of gradual growth. However, care should be taken in interpreting that change as improvements by local authorities in reporting procedures may in part explain the drop in numbers since 2000 (see background note for more details).

The number of new cases registered during the year was 1,743. This is up 2 per cent on the previous year.

The ratio of registered blind per 1,000 population is 4.6 for 2003. (see table 1a).

Table 1a: Number of Registered Blind Persons and New Registrations during the Year 1998-2003

Year ¹	New Cases	Total	Registered per 1,000 Pop'n
2003	1,743	23,557	4.6
2002	1,713	23,451	4.6
2001	1,766	24,748	4.8
2000	1,903	24,839	4.9
1999	1,714	24,514	4.8
1998	1,796	24,096	4.7

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

Nearly 80 per cent of registered blind persons are over the age of 65, with approximately 70 per cent being over 75. There are significantly more women registered blind (63 per cent) than men (37 per cent). As you can see from Table 1b, almost half of all registered blind people are women aged 75 and over.

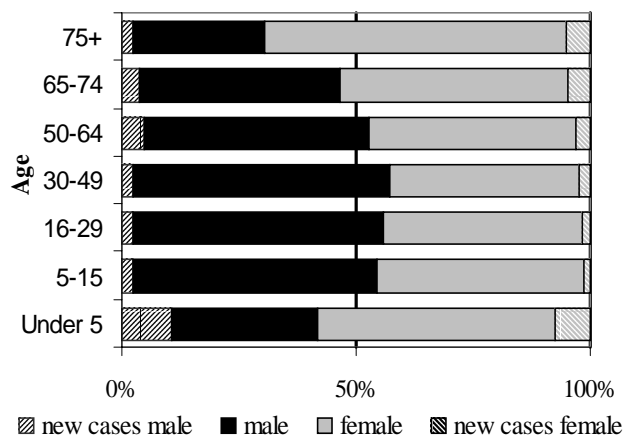
This is also reflected in the new registrations where just under half of the new registered cases are women aged 75 and over. Excluding the '75 and over' age group there is a much more even split between the sexes. (See Table 1b & Chart 1b).

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

AGE	New Cases Gender		Total Gender		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Under 5 years	10	7	39	54	93
5-15	8	5	181	151	332
16-29	14	9	304	242	546
30-49	47	46	1,080	810	1,890
50-64	97	58	1,051	938	1,989
65-74	90	113	1,099	1,265	2,364
75 and over	407	832	4,987	11,356	16,343
Total	673	1,070	8,741	14,816	23,557

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

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



An estimated 4,878 (21 per cent) of all registered blind persons have additional disabilities, 36 per cent of which are deaf. Nearly three-quarters 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

Additional Disabilities	AGE				Total
	Under 5	5-15	16-64	65 and over	
Deaf	3	5	262	1,494	1,764
Physically Disabled	11	22	348	1,188	1,569
Learning Difficulties	2	13	244	146	405
Mental Health Problems	0	1	188	420	609
Multiple Disabilities	6	51	163	311	531
Total	22	92	1,205	3,559	4,878

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

The ratio of registered blind per 1,000 population is 4.6 for the whole of Scotland. This varies from 1.5 in the Shetland Islands to 9.7 in the City of Glasgow. The breakdown of this ratio and over 65/under 65 by sex is shown at a local authority level in Annex A on page 6.

Section 2: Partially Sighted Persons

There were an estimated 14,443 registered partially sighted persons in 2003. This is up 3 per cent on last year. The number of people registered as partially sighted has been rising steadily over the last 6 years.

The number of new cases registered during the year was 1,748. This is down 15 per cent on the previous year. This represents the first annual drop in new cases following a steady increase over the previous 5-year period.

The ratio of registered partially sighted per 1,000 population is 2.8 for this year. This has been increasing slightly each year since 1998 (see Table 2a).

Table 2a: Number of Registered Partially Sighted Persons and New Registrations during the Year 1998-2003

Year ¹	New Cases	Total	Registered per 1,000 Pop'n
2003	1,748	14,443	2.8
2002	2,061	13,972	2.8
2001	1,856	13,676	2.7
2000	1,776	13,287	2.6
1999	1,672	12,536	2.4
1998	1,658	11,870	2.3

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 78 per cent of registered partially sighted persons are over the age of 65, with approximately two-thirds being aged 75 or over. There are significantly more women registered as partially sighted (65 per cent) than men (35 per cent). Again, as you can see from Table 2b, just under half of all registered partially sighted people are women aged 75 and over.

This large proportion of partially sighted women aged 75 or over is also mirrored in the new registrations where 46 per cent of the new registered cases are women aged 75 and over. Excluding the '75 and over' age group there is a

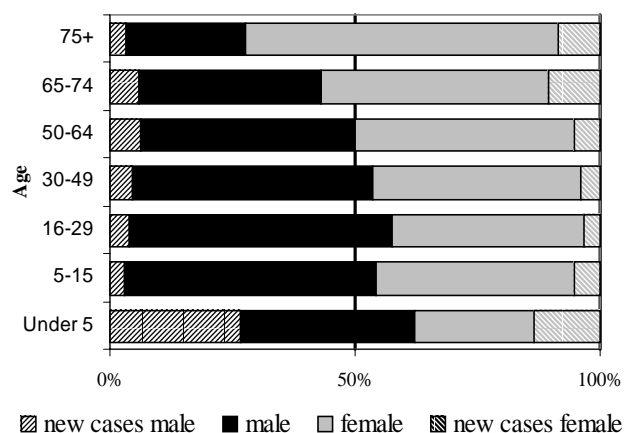
much more even split between the sexes (see Table 2b & Chart 2b).

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

AGE	New Cases Gender		Total Gender		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Under 5 years	12	6	28	17	45
5-15	11	19	198	166	364
16-29	19	15	271	199	470
30-49	50	42	571	492	1,063
50-64	78	69	640	636	1,276
65-74	103	187	754	1,001	1,755
75 and over	326	811	2,626	6,844	9,470
Total	599	1,149	5,088	9,355	14,443

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

Chart 2b: Number of Registered Partially Sighted Persons and New Registrations by Age and Gender



An estimated 2,815 (19 per cent) of all registered partially sighted persons have additional disabilities, over three-quarters of which are aged 65 and over. Physical disabilities account for 41 per cent and 33 per cent are also deaf (see Table 2c).

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

Additional Disability	AGE				Total
	Under 5	5-15	16-64	65 and over	
Deaf	1	9	89	822	921
Physically Disabled	3	14	253	882	1,152
Learning Difficulties	0	9	108	52	169
Mental Health Problems	0	3	63	167	233
Multiple Disabilities	5	30	64	241	340
Total	9	65	577	2,164	2,815

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

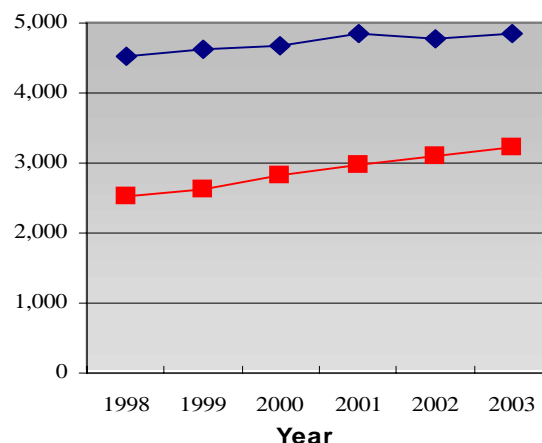
The ratio of registered partially sighted per 1,000 population is 2.8 for the whole of Scotland. This varies from 1.0 in Moray to 5.1 in Inverclyde. The breakdown of this ratio and over 65/under 65 by sex, is shown at a local authority level in Annex A on page 6.

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 6 years is shown below.

It shows a gradual rise in the number of registered blind persons up until 2001 with the number decreasing in 2002 before increasing slightly again this year. Registered partially sighted persons have increased year on year throughout the 6-year period.

Chart 3: Time Series of Registered Blind and Registered Partially Sighted Persons Aged 65 and Under, 1998-2003



Overall the number of registered visually impaired under 65-year-olds has increased by approximately 2 per cent on last year. The ratio per 1,000 population continues to rise gradually as it has done for the past few years (see Table 3a). Data on under 65's by local authority and sex is shown in Annex A on page 6.

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

Year	No. of Registered under 65 year olds ¹	Registered under 65's per 1,000 Pop'n of under 65's
2003	8,068	1.9
2002	7,884	1.8
2001	7,836	1.8
2000	7,496	1.7
1999	7,250	1.7
1998	7,054	1.6

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

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

Background Information:

Data was collected on persons registered with local authorities as at 31 March 2003.

The information is derived from returns made to the Scottish Executive 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. Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) research in 1991¹, 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 1,764 people registered as deafblind in Scotland. This would suggest that people are more likely to register if they have multiple disabilities.

Additionally, there are known problems with previous years' data where people have not been removed from the register of blind and partially sighted persons. Local authorities have recently 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.

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

The Scottish Executive is carrying out a review of the registration and certification process. A working group comprising of interested parties has been set up to take this work forward. This may in time lead to more accurate statistics, therefore enabling providers to plan the provision of services.

Returns were received from all local authorities, with Angus, Fife and West Dunbartonshire unable to provide information on additional disabilities. Care should therefore be taken when interpreting figures as a small amount of data has been estimated for these 3 local authorities. It should also be noted that when comparing the 2002 and 2003 releases, a more up to date set of figures has been used for the 2002 Scottish Population estimates.

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 Executive web site (www.scotland.gov.uk).

Social Work Statistics
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St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Contact: Steven Gillespie
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E-mail: SWStat@scotland.gov.uk

This statistics release was published on 23 October 2003.

Annex A: Registered Visually Impaired by Local Authority

Local Authority	Blind Persons						Partially Sighted Persons					
	Under 65 years		Over 65 years		Total	Registered per 1,000 Pop'n	Under 65 years		Over 65 years		Total	Registered per 1,000 Pop'n
	Male	Female	Male	Female			Male	Female	Male	Female		
Aberdeen City	72	59	125	281	537	2.6	62	54	81	249	446	2.1
Aberdeenshire	59	44	92	228	423	1.8	51	42	91	232	416	1.8
Angus	36	35	79	179	329	3.0	28	26	39	127	220	2.0
Argyll & Bute	42	31	119	236	428	4.8	31	23	88	202	344	3.9
Clackmannanshire	12	9	39	64	124	2.6	10	7	10	51	78	1.6
Dumfries & Galloway	53	48	123	272	496	3.4	65	63	152	255	535	3.7
Dundee City	94	60	135	270	559	4.0	51	46	98	218	413	3.0
East Ayrshire	50	71	139	272	532	4.5	28	21	63	132	244	2.1
East Dunbartonshire	46	44	103	201	394	3.6	28	16	39	89	172	1.6
East Lothian	48	36	80	157	321	3.5	26	38	95	174	333	3.6
East Renfrewshire	36	33	137	246	452	5.0	16	23	70	171	280	3.1
Edinburgh City	209	172	425	892	1,698	3.7	175	146	377	901	1,599	3.5
Eilean Siar	15	10	31	61	117	4.3	4	3	21	27	55	2.0
Falkirk	55	43	116	210	424	2.9	36	45	66	163	310	2.1
Fife	149	126	261	620	1,156	3.3	106	90	197	495	888	2.5
Glasgow City	448	380	1,611	3,447	5,886	9.7	244	195	570	1,343	2,352	3.9
Highland	113	90	216	477	896	4.3	76	88	115	304	583	2.8
Inverclyde	49	45	143	355	592	7.3	51	32	92	240	415	5.1
Midlothian	52	25	67	130	274	3.4	34	27	65	138	264	3.2
Moray	38	23	83	187	331	3.9	18	14	16	40	88	1.0
North Ayrshire	93	67	204	423	787	5.6	45	45	106	191	387	2.8
North Lanarkshire	244	215	624	1,179	2,262	6.9	106	97	209	427	839	2.6
Orkney Islands	8	6	9	26	49	2.5	4	6	4	25	39	2.0
Perth & Kinross	36	39	79	184	338	2.5	48	47	91	193	379	2.8
Renfrewshire	118	88	139	257	602	3.4	67	61	129	269	526	3.0
Scottish Borders	33	27	92	174	326	3.1	36	23	86	196	341	3.2
Shetland Islands	6	3	7	18	34	1.5	6	6	5	16	33	1.4
South Ayrshire	54	38	157	330	579	5.1	30	21	69	156	276	2.4
South Lanarkshire	218	205	416	761	1,600	5.2	90	95	185	420	790	2.6
Stirling	45	31	66	136	278	3.3	25	21	45	101	192	2.3
West Dunbartonshire	63	44	80	189	376	4.1	48	28	51	130	257	2.8
West Lothian	61	48	89	159	357	2.3	63	61	55	170	349	2.2
Scotland	2,655	2,195	6,086	12,621	23,557	4.6	1,708	1,510	3,380	7,845	14,443	2.8

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