

Statistics Release

Registered Blind and Partially Sighted Persons, Scotland 2005

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 the 31st March 2005 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).

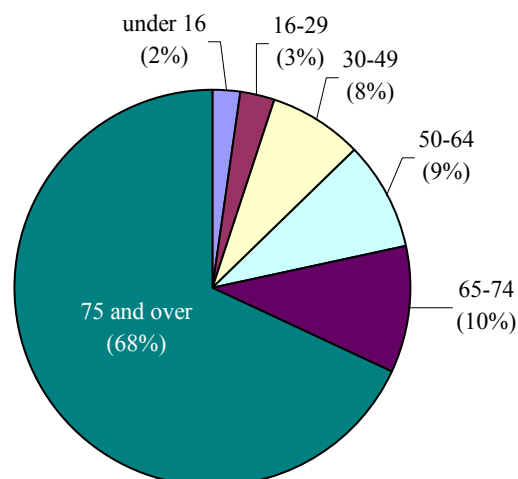
Main points

Information collected on visually impaired persons show that: -

- In 2005, the number of people registered as blind or partially sighted was estimated to be 38,366, this is up by 1 per cent on 2004.
- There were 3,421 new cases registered during the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005, no change on 2004.
- The majority, 60 per cent, of those on the register were blind, 40 per cent were partially sighted.
- 37 per cent of those on the register were male and 63 per cent were female.
- Almost 4 out of 5 (78%) of those registered were over the age of 65.
- 7,811 persons (20 per cent) of those registered as visually impaired had

additional disabilities. Of these, 33 per cent were deaf.

Chart 1: Registered Visually Impaired Persons by Age Group



Section 1: Blind Persons

There were 23,139 registered blind persons in 2005. The number registered blind has shown a small drop over the last year. This continues the trend of small, but steady falls since 2000. 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 1,670. This is up 7 per cent on the previous year.

The ratio of registered blind per 1,000 population is 4.6 for 2005. (see table 1a).

Table 1a: Number of Registered Blind Persons and New Registrations during the Year 1998-2005

Year ¹	New Cases	Total	Registered per 1,000 Pop'n
2005	1,670	23,139	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
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 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

79 per cent of registered blind persons are over the age of 65, with 69 per cent being over 75. There are significantly more women registered blind (62 per cent) than men (38 per cent). Almost half (48%) of all registered blind people are women aged 75 and over (see table 1b).

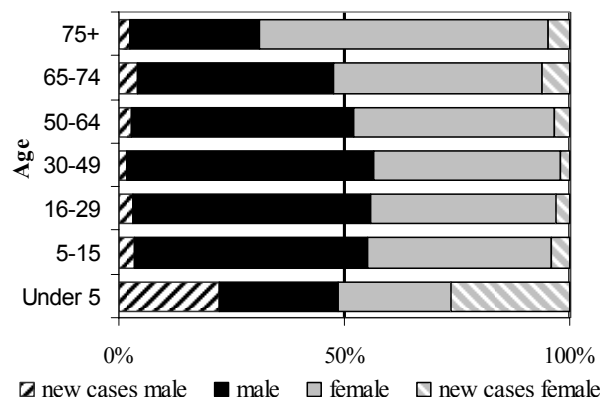
This is also reflected in the new registrations where just under half (47%) of the new registered cases are women aged 75 and over. Excluding the '75 and over' age group there is a much more even split between the sexes. (See Table 1b & Chart 1b).

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

AGE	New Cases		Total		Total
	Gender		Gender		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Under 5 years	17	20	37	39	76
5-15	12	15	201	164	365
16-29	16	17	305	241	546
30-49	34	38	1,048	802	1,850
50-64	56	67	1,062	979	2,041
65-74	91	133	1,052	1,154	2,206
75 and over	361	793	4,997	11,058	16,055
Total	587	1,083	8,702	14,437	23,139

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 4,950 (21 per cent) of all registered blind persons have additional disabilities, 35 per cent of which are deaf. Nearly three-quarters (71%) 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	1	9	265	1,457	1,732
Physically Disabled	9	28	433	1,212	1,682
Learning Difficulties	4	16	262	143	425
Mental Health Problems	2	1	184	406	593
Multiple Disabilities	6	58	178	276	518
Total	22	112	1,322	3,494	4,950

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 1.6 in the Shetland Islands and West Lothian to 10.7 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 15,227 registered partially sighted persons in 2005. This is up 3 per cent on last year. The number of people registered as partially sighted has been steadily rising over the last 8 years.

The number of new cases registered during the year was 1,751. This is down 6 per cent on the previous year.

The ratio of registered partially sighted per 1,000 population is 3.0 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 1998-2005

Year ¹	New Cases	Total	Registered per 1,000 Pop'n
2005	1,751	15,227	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	1,776	13,287	2.6
1999	1,672	12,536	2.5
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 (66%) being aged 75 or over. There are significantly more women registered as partially sighted (64 per cent) than men (36 per cent). Again, just under half (47%) of all registered partially sighted people are women aged 75 and over (see table 2b).

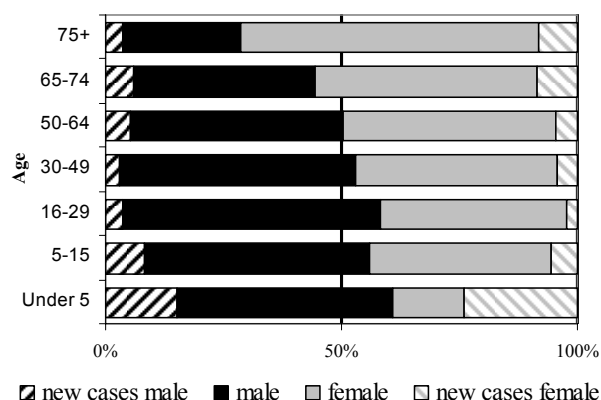
This large proportion of partially sighted women aged 75 or over is also mirrored in the new registrations where 47 per cent of the new registered cases are women aged 75 and over. Excluding the '75 and over' age group there is a much more even split between the sexes (see Table 2b & Chart 2b).

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	7	11	28	18	46
5-15	33	22	223	176	399
16-29	19	12	294	211	505
30-49	34	49	593	529	1,122
50-64	70	59	663	656	1,319
65-74	107	155	792	997	1,789
75 and over	353	820	2,881	7,166	10,047
Total	623	1,128	5,474	9,753	15,227

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

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



An estimated 2,861 (19 per cent) of all registered partially sighted persons have additional disabilities, almost three-quarters (72%) of which are aged 65 and over. Physical disabilities account for 41 per cent and 31 per cent are 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	3	7	96	774	880
Physically Disabled	2	27	306	833	1,168
Learning Difficulties	0	15	121	37	173
Mental Health Problems	0	4	98	187	289
Multiple Disabilities	6	22	99	224	351
Total	11	75	720	2,055	2,861

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

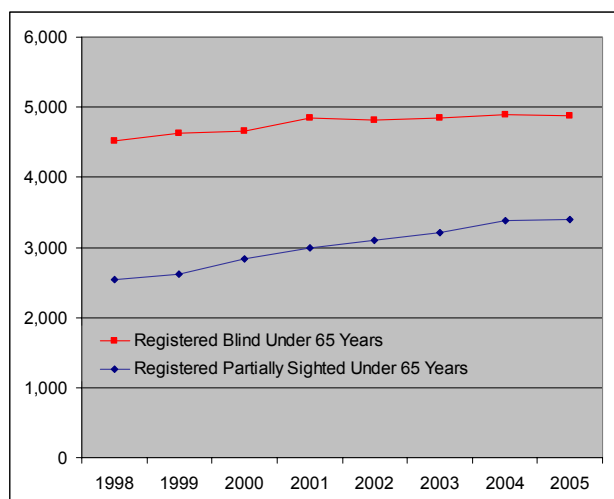
The ratio of registered partially sighted per 1,000 population is 3.0 for the whole of Scotland. This varies from 1.1 in Moray to 5.3 in Inverclyde. The breakdown of this ratio and over 65/under 65 by sex, is shown at a local authority level in Annex A on page 6.

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 8 years is shown below.

It shows a gradual rise in the number of registered blind persons up until 2001 before remaining relatively constant at between 4,820 and 4,898 from 2001 to 2005. Registered partially sighted persons have increased year on year throughout the 8-year period, but with only a very small increase between 2004 and 2005.

Chart 3: Time Series of Registered Blind and Registered Partially Sighted Persons Aged 65 and Under, 1998-2005



Overall the number of registered visually impaired under 65-year-olds has decreased by less than 1 per cent on last year. The ratio per 1,000 population remains at 2.0 after rising gradually over 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
2005	8,269	2.0
2004	8,285	2.0
2003	8,068	1.9
2002	7,928	1.9
2001	7,836	1.8
2000	7,496	1.8
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 2005.

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. 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 1,732 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.

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

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

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 Eilean Siar, Fife and The Scottish Borders 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 for these 3 local authorities. It should also be noted that when comparing the 2004 and 2005 releases, a more up to date set of figures has been used for the 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).

Community Care Statistics
Room 3WR
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Contact: Steven Gillespie
Tel: 0131 244 3777
E-mail: SWStat@scotland.gov.uk

This statistics release was published on 5 October 2005.

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	77	60	100	236	473	2.3	66	55	95	251	467	2.3
Aberdeenshire	59	53	93	215	420	1.8	54	45	104	233	436	1.9
Angus	34	37	64	163	298	2.8	35	24	33	127	219	2.1
Argyll & Bute	48	32	135	270	485	5.4	31	34	118	241	424	4.7
Clackmannanshire	11	12	47	81	151	3.2	6	9	25	73	113	2.4
Dumfries & Galloway	56	46	110	235	447	3.1	63	60	130	237	490	3.4
Dundee City	97	63	125	227	512	3.7	60	45	92	236	433	3.1
East Ayrshire	76	48	162	306	592	5.0	37	27	79	157	300	2.5
East Dunbartonshire	51	45	80	160	336	3.2	31	22	42	80	175	1.7
East Lothian	46	35	80	147	308	3.3	33	33	91	180	337	3.6
East Renfrewshire	34	27	127	242	430	4.7	14	22	69	163	268	3.0
Edinburgh City	177	186	409	758	1,530	3.4	190	159	361	842	1,552	3.5
Eilean Siar	13	11	24	56	104	4.1	6	5	7	31	49	1.9
Falkirk	68	51	103	214	436	3.0	35	46	78	189	348	2.4
Fife	159	132	228	517	1,036	2.9	107	94	207	495	903	2.6
Glasgow City	453	403	1,688	3,542	6,086	10.7	264	205	658	1,489	2,616	4.6
Highland	120	104	183	455	862	4.2	83	80	121	317	601	2.9
Inverclyde	49	42	100	211	402	4.9	51	44	107	235	437	5.3
Midlothian	47	21	68	106	242	3.0	34	30	72	130	266	3.3
Moray	42	24	89	168	323	3.8	16	21	15	43	95	1.1
North Ayrshire	102	70	247	481	900	6.7	53	52	130	241	476	3.6
North Lanarkshire	242	229	641	1,246	2,358	7.4	109	102	242	433	886	2.8
Orkney Islands	11	5	16	32	64	3.4	7	5	5	20	37	2.0
Perth & Kinross	34	40	88	211	373	2.7	39	46	92	201	378	2.8
Renfrewshire	99	74	143	252	568	3.4	66	68	138	292	564	3.3
Scottish Borders	33	29	99	188	349	3.2	33	31	95	213	372	3.4
Shetland Islands	7	3	6	18	34	1.6	5	6	4	19	34	1.6
South Ayrshire	54	42	151	330	577	5.2	38	27	78	179	322	2.9
South Lanarkshire	210	195	411	717	1,533	5.1	117	104	211	434	866	2.9
Stirling	47	29	80	146	302	3.5	27	22	60	135	244	2.8
West Dunbartonshire	62	44	79	160	345	3.8	47	26	52	132	257	2.8
West Lothian	35	33	73	122	263	1.6	44	41	62	115	262	1.6
Scotland	2,653	2,225	6,049	12,212	23,139	4.6	1,801	1,590	3,673	8,163	15,227	3.0

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