



# NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

## **Blind charity welcomes NICE u-turn on sight-saving drug**

Action for Blind People welcomes the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE) u-turn over the use of Lucentis on NHS patients in England and Wales. It was ethically unsound to propose that an individual had to lose their sight in one eye before considering them for treatment in the second – especially when people in Scotland are already getting Macugen and Lucentis on the NHS.

Modern treatments can be expensive but saving someone's sight is a good use of NHS resources. Medical intervention saves the patient from numerous possible effects of sight loss; such as a loss of independence, depression, lower mobility or loss of employment. It also makes financial sense. Saving someone's sight can prevent future medical and social costs associated with supporting someone who is blind or partially sighted.

Wet AMD is the leading cause of sight loss in the UK and affects a quarter of a million people. The condition can progress very quickly, so time is of the essence in its treatment. Action believes that both Macugen and Lucentis should be available on the NHS, and that ophthalmologists should be the ones to make the decision about the best course of treatment for their patients.



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For further media information please contact Zoë Patel, press office on 020 7635 4898/ 07739 819954 or email: [zoe.patel@actionforblindpeople.org.uk](mailto:zoe.patel@actionforblindpeople.org.uk)

## Notes to editors:

- Action for Blind People is an expert national organisation, ensuring blind and partially sighted people get practical support in all aspects of their lives. Contact Action for Blind People's National Freephone Helpline on 0800 915 4666 or [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk)
- Action for Blind People is breaking down barriers that prevent visually impaired people from achieving the same opportunities as sighted people.
- 2007 marks Action's 150 years of transforming the lives of blind and partially sighted people.
- If abbreviating "Action for Blind People", please use "Action" rather than AFBP or ABP.