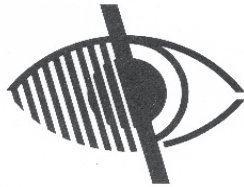


The Partially Sighted Society



Information Sheet

Lamps and Light Fittings

General Lighting

The ordinary incandescent filament lamp is widely available in a range of wattages and may be in clear, frosted (pearl) or diffusing (white) finish. Clear lamps give the most light but can be a source of glare if used in an unsuitable shade. The frosted and the diffusing lamps give softer shadows with only a small loss of light output. While many table lamps are restricted to 60W, most pendant shades are suitable for use with lamps up to 100W but this should be checked when the shade is bought.

Reflector lamps are available in a wide range of wattages and physical sizes. They are very effective at directing light but can become a glare source if not properly aligned. Some modern low voltage versions are very safe electrically but the bulbs reach very high temperatures and, if brought too close to the task, can lead to overheating.

Fluorescent lamps are much more expensive to buy because most need special fittings incorporating control gear. Once purchased, however, they are cheap to use because the lamp lasts up to eight times as long and gives about five times as much light as the same wattage of filament lamps (ie for the same amount of light, a fluorescent lamp is five times cheaper to run).

The most useful sizes are the 1200 mm (36/40W) and 1500mm (53/65W) although others, both longer and shorter, are available. A range of colour of lamp is available and the better colour

rendering types (eg warm white deluxe) are to be preferred, although they may have to be used in twin lamp fittings to obtain enough general illumination.

The most modern fluorescent lamps are much more efficient, and expensive, but may not readily available from high street retailers and may have to be specially ordered. Their technology is, however, used in the compact fluorescent lamps which are sold under names such as SL, PL, 2D etc. Some of these compact lamps come complete with control gear and can be plugged into an existing lampholder, while others have separate gear and require a complete fitting or conversion unit. These lamps are ideal for use in any situation where they will be left on for some time. Wattages range from 5W to 28W and, as an example, a 9W version gives approximately as much light as a 40W filament lamp and could be used all night long as a porch light for security for an electricity cost of around £4 per year.

Choice of light fittings obviously depends upon personal preference but it should be borne in mind that the most decorative is seldom the most functional. The following points are offered as guidance.

Lampshades should have white linings to reflect the maximum amount of light.

Coloured shades can give unwanted colour casts. Big is best; a large shade will not only obstruct less light but also cope better than a small one with the heat from the lamp. In the case of pendant fittings shades which are open, or at least translucent, at the top will allow light to reflect off the ceiling.

Some fluorescent fittings, not to be confused with the compact lamps, are made to plug into an ordinary lamp socket. These are not as economic as other types but still give more light than the same wattage of filament lamp. Check that the flex is not frayed or perished and that the lampholder is not burnt or cracked before attaching any of these plug in fittings.

Cleaning is important. Only by keeping lamps, lampshades and fittings clean can full advantage be taken of the light which is

being produced and paid for. This is especially so in the kitchen, where grease and grime tend to accumulate more quickly.

Task Lighting

Adjustable lamps should be capable of being adjusted without burning the fingers and should be capable of staying where placed without sagging. They should also be stable and this usually means a wide or heavy base, although some are available with a clamp to fix to the table or desk.

Some of these task/hobby lamps are combined with a 1.7 - 2x magnifying lens. These are available using incandescent filament lamps (usually 40 or 60 watts) or 22watt fluorescent tubes.

Reading/Task lamps using 2D, PL or fluorescent lamps are very cool in operation - a real benefit if you are working close to the lamp - and may have the control gear in the base to aid stability.

Although fluorescent tubes are not as bright to look at as filament lamps, they can still benefit from a "shade". A metal reflector will direct a lot of light downwards as will a prismatic controller. An opal diffuser will reduce the brightness of the lamp but also absorb a lot of light

PSS supplies a wide range of Task Lighting

**©The Partially Sighted Society
7/9 Bennetthorpe
Doncaster
DN2 6AA**