

Patient Information

Visual Processing

Difficulties (VPD) Clinic

Your appointment for this service will be at
The Guest Outpatient Centre, Tipton Road, DY1 4SE

Prior to attending this clinic, your child will have had an in-depth orthoptic assessment. This is to assess the ability of your child to use their eyes together as a pair and the focussing mechanisms of their eyes. It is very important to get a baseline visual assessment before progressing onto the more specialised areas.

If your child has seen an educational psychologist or the inclusion service team, it would be useful if you could bring any reports you have.

Please take your child to a local optometrist (optician) for an eye test prior to the appointment, and bring the prescription to your first appointment.

The aim of the visual processing difficulties (VPD) clinic is to diagnose and treat visual problems which will interfere with a child's reading. The clinic is not a replacement for the expertise of the teachers, the special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), the inclusion teams or the educational psychologists. We do **not** give any diagnoses of dyslexia or any other educational problems.

Our expertise lies in the area of visual processing difficulties, such as ocular motility problems, visual stress, ineffective eye tracking movements and visual perception difficulties. Your child may have characteristics of dyslexia **and** an underlying visual problem.

However, treating one area of visual difficulty will **not** be a miracle cure for the dyslexia or a specific learning difficulty.

Visual stress

Visual stress (also known as Meares-Irlen Syndrome or Scotopic Sensitivity) is believed to be caused by the stripy effect of writing which overstimulates the visual cortex in the brain and produces symptoms. Like dyslexia, it is not curable but can be treated, and significant improvements can be made. The degree of symptoms varies from person to person, with more marked symptoms creating barriers to successful reading. An overlay is prescribed with a tint unique to each child. The overlay is thought to redistribute the wavelengths of light entering the eye to the brain and dampen down these symptoms of visual stress.

Saccadic eye movements

These are the very small eye movements required for reading. A difficulty with a child's voluntary saccades can lead to tracking eye movement problems. The child may mix words up, reverse letters, lose their place when reading, skip words or read them twice.

Tracking eye movement problems will severely affect a child's reading and comprehension. They may exhibit signs of 'head bobbing' when reading (so the head is making the movements rather than the eyes), rubbing their eyes and feeling uncomfortable/fatigued when reading. We diagnose and treat tracking problems with a series of exercises aimed at improving these eye movements.

Visual perception

Visual perception is the way the brain interprets visual information. A visual processing disorder is an abnormality in the brain's ability to process and interpret what the eyes see. This includes difficulty finding information in busy visual scenes (copying from the board) and understanding the complete picture from fragments of information. We diagnose and provide exercises for children who have visual processing difficulties.

What if I have any problems or questions after reading this leaflet?

Please contact the **Orthoptic Department** at Russells Hall Hospital on **01384 456111 ext. 3636** (9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday).

Eye emergency, out of hours

In case of an eye emergency after the closing hours of the Eye Clinic (including weekends and bank holidays), please contact the eye doctor on call by ringing the switchboard at:

Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre on 0121 507 4440

The doctor on call is usually based at the Eye Centre, City Hospital, Dudley Road, Birmingham. They may need to call you back, and if necessary, they will arrange for you to visit them.

Note: The information in this booklet is provided for information only. The information found is **not** a substitute for professional medical advice or care by a qualified doctor or other healthcare professional. **Always** check with your orthoptist if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment.

This is only indicative and general information for the procedure. Individual experiences may vary and all the points may not apply to all patients at all times. Please discuss your individual circumstances with your orthoptist.

We are always happy to answer any questions regarding your child's treatment. If, after reading this leaflet, you still have concerns or questions, please call the department on **01384 456111 ext. 3636**.

Author

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Specialised orthoptist

For further information visit:

www.orthoptics.org.uk/patients-and-public

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/ophthalmology/>

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji
audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod
numer 0800 073 0510.

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