

# Visual processing difficulties clinic

## Orthoptic team

Information for patients and carers

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Caring for you

## About this clinic

This clinic looks at how your brain makes sense of what you see.

We can help with:

- eyes not working well together
- finding it hard to follow words on a page
- finding it hard to remember or understand what you have seen
- eyes feeling uncomfortable when reading

Some people may also have learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. This clinic does not diagnose or treat learning conditions.

Helping with vision problems will not cure these conditions, but it may help with:

- eye comfort
- reading accuracy
- making sense of what you / your child sees

We also work with professionals such as:

- teachers
- staff who help children with extra learning needs
- other health teams such as occupational therapists or doctors

## Before your appointment

Before you come to clinic, you need an eye test with an optometrist (optician). This checks if you need glasses or a change to your glasses.

Eye tests are free for children on the NHS.

## At the appointment

When you come to clinic, please:

- wear your glasses if you have them
- bring your glasses prescription

There are 4 parts to the assessment. You may not need every part.

### 1. How your eyes work together

We check how well your eyes:

- work together
- focus on things close up

We may find conditions including:

- trouble focusing
- problems with eye coordination (how your eyes work together)
- a squint (when one eye turns in, out, up or down)

Treatment may include:

- eye exercises
- glasses
- further advice

## **2. Eye tracking when reading**

We check the small eye movements you use when you read.

You may notice you / your child:

- losing their place
- skipping lines or reading the same line again
- mixing up letters, words or numbers
- finding it hard to copy from books, boards or screens

Some people also experience:

- tired eyes
- rubbing their eyes
- moving their head instead of their eyes

Eye exercises may help with these conditions.

## **3. Visual stress and discomfort**

Visual stress means your brain finds it hard to deal with what you see. This can make reading uncomfortable.

If you / your child experiences this, we always check your eyesight first.

Signs can include:

- sore or tired eyes
- words looking blurry or like they move
- patterns or movement in the words
- bright lights or screens feeling uncomfortable

Visual stress:

- is common, but cannot be cured
- can often be successfully managed

Some people find a coloured overlay helps when reading. You should only use one after a full orthoptic assessment.

## **4. Visual perception**

This is how your brain understands what you see.

We may look at how you / your child:

- remembers what they see
- spots different shapes and letters
- understands space

Visual perception difficulties may make it harder to:

- copy work
- remember things
- spot mistakes

We may give you exercises or advice to help.

Visual perception may not always need to be checked. It can depend on what you / your child struggles with at school or home.

## **Who can come to this clinic?**

- children aged 8 and over
- adults

We accept referrals from:

- schools and colleges in Warrington and Halton boroughs
- other areas through school and college referrals and a GP form

We do not usually see children under 8 years of age. This is because the tests are not suitable for younger children.

If you are worried about a child under 8, they should have a normal eye test first.

## **Working with other people**

When you attend the appointment, please bring any reports from:

- school
- educational psychologists
- specialist teachers

We may talk to other professionals if you say this is okay.

## What families tell us

Families tell us this service helps with:

- building confidence when reading
- better learning
- working better at school
- support from teachers

## Contact details

Visual Processing Difficulties (VPD) Clinic  
North Cheshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Orthoptic Department  
Lovely Lane  
Warrington  
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