Vision and Reading Clinic

Directorate of Orthoptics & Vision Science
Thomson Yates Building
University of Liverpool

The Vision and Reading Clinic specialises in the detailed visual assessment of adults who are having difficulties with reading.

Difficulties may result from uncorrected refractive error, poor co-ordination and/or focusing of the two eyes, or difficulties when viewing pages of black text printed upon white paper (often termed Pattern Glare, Visual Stress or Meares-Irlen syndrome). Whilst these problems can be found in adults with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, they can also affect individuals without specific learning difficulties.

Visual symptoms associated with difficulties in reading may include some or all of the following:

- Blurred text
- Words appearing to move
- Text appearing to shimmer
- Words fading then reappearing
- Illusions of colour may be seen within the text
- Individuals may also experience sore eyes or headaches
- Individuals may have difficulty following sentences and may lose their place whilst reading

What to expect at your visit

Binocular vision assessment

When an individual comes for an assessment in the Vision and Reading Clinic they will have a full binocular vision assessment to look for any anomalies or dysfunction of the focusing and movement systems of the eyes. If any binocular vision anomalies are found they can usually be managed with eye exercises. You will be advised if you need to see a high street optician for the correction of long/short sight. Follow-up appointments may be needed over a period of a few weeks or months.
Coloured Overlays and Colorimetry

After binocular vision has been assessed and any required treatment prescribed (or if you do not have any of these problems), a coloured overlay assessment may be recommended if the individual is still symptomatic. Coloured overlays are A4 sheets of acetate plastic in ten different colours which can be combined to produce further colours. The overlays are designed to be placed flat on top of reading material to aid reading and they may help alleviate some or all of the symptoms detailed above in some individuals.

If overlays are found to be beneficial and are used successfully by an individual for a period of 3 months or more, a colorimetry assessment may be advised for you - this ascertains the specific lens colour required for spectacles to give the same effect as the overlay. This service is not currently undertaken by the University dept. Some people find tinted spectacles can help when viewing reading material from various sources such as VDU screens and for writing, but they can be quite expensive.

Important Point

Whilst we can help alleviate some or all of the visual symptoms experienced by many individuals with dyslexia, we are not able to assess or treat dyslexia or any other Specific Learning Difficulty. We do see many individuals with these problems and the aim of the Vision and Reading Clinic is to minimize the effects of any visual problems associated with reading. We cannot cure dyslexia but we can help a proportion of individuals overcome some or all of the visual problems that further hinder their reading capability.

What IS provided in the appointment/first visit and the initial fee?

- Full vision, binocular vision, eye movement and focusing assessment
- Prescription of ocular exercises to treat binocular misalignment if required
- If no binocular/visual deficits are present, an overlay/reading assessment will also be undertaken at the first visit
- If treatment is required, the overlay assessment will be undertaken when the treatment has been completed (if symptoms not alleviated)
- The full assessment at the first visit will take approximately one hour

What IS NOT provided in the appointment/first visit and the initial fee?

- You will be advised if you need a refraction (glasses test) but this is not provided at the university. You will have to arrange this yourself at a local high street opticians
- If appropriate, an overlay assessment will be undertaken and you will be provided with an overlay for you to use in your daily life to alleviate symptoms. Some individuals at a later date prefer to also have tinted spectacles – the assessment and prescription of tinted lenses is not provided at the university dept. If you wish to receive this, you will have to arrange this yourself at a local high street opticians.
Visual Stress Clinic Charges

We aim to keep costs as low as possible (returnable deposits may be required for some eye exercise equipment).

The cost of the initial assessment visit including a coloured overlay assessment (if required after any treatment) is £75. All assessments are undertaken by a HCPC Registered Orthoptist from the Academic Department of Orthoptics and Vision Science at the University of Liverpool. We do not use students to undertake any of the examinations (we may occasionally ask if they can watch for their educational training but that is at your discretion).

Any follow-up appointments required to assess treatment for binocular vision anomalies/further overlay assessments are charged at £25 per visit and usually last up to 30 minutes.

Appointment checklist

To provide you with the best possible care, it is helpful if you bring the following with you to your appointment:

- Your last spectacle prescription
- All spectacles and contact lenses you currently use
- A list of your current medication
- Your GP’s details

Making an appointment

Please send an email (state ‘Vision and Reading Clinic’ in the subject header) requesting an appointment at the Vision & Reading Clinic to: Vision and Reading Clinic Appointment Request

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