

Coloured Lenses/Overlays and Vision Therapy

Cambridgeshire County Council does not recommend vision therapy or a formal assessment for coloured overlays/lenses to help with reading and writing skills. This guide explains why.

Why does Cambridgeshire County Council not recommend a formal assessment for coloured lenses/overlays (Irlens assessment)?

- Coloured overlays and coloured lenses alone do not improve reading or writing skills.
- Lots of people find it uncomfortable to look at black text on a white background. Some people say that the words can seem to ‘move around on the page’. This does not cause reading or writing difficulties, but it might contribute to them.
- If students do find it more comfortable to have a coloured lens or overlay when they are reading or writing, then schools can provide them. This is part of Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP). ‘OAP’ is the support that mainstream schools or settings should be able to provide for your child or young person through their agreed funding and resource arrangements.
- A formal assessment for coloured lenses or overlays is not needed for children with literacy difficulties.

Why does Cambridgeshire County Council not recommend Vision Therapy?

- Differences in eye movements do not cause difficulties with reading and writing.

- Vision therapy does not improve reading or writing.
- Vision therapy for literacy difficulties or dyslexia is not recommended by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Cambridgeshire County Council has a clear structure for identifying and supporting literacy difficulties in schools. You can find more information in this document:

[CAMBRIDGESHIRE DYSLEXIA GUIDANCE FEBRUARY 2019.](#)

All schools in Cambridgeshire are expected to follow this guidance.

You can find out more about the evidence that we use to make our decisions on the list below.

**The Local Authority will not apply a blanket policy to provision within an Education, Health and Care Plan and would be prepared to depart from local criteria when directed to do so.*

References:

- The American Academy of Paediatrics [Joint Statement: Learning Disabilities, Dyslexia, and Vision - Reaffirmed 2014 - American Academy of Ophthalmology \(aao.org\)](#)
- NHS ([COLOURED FILTERS - TINTED LENSES NOV 2020 V4.pdf](#))
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists ([POSITION-STATEMENT-Learning-Disabilities-Dyslexia-and-Vision.pdf \(ranzco.edu\)](#))
- The Canadian Ophthalmological Society ([Vision-Therapy-Position-Statement-ENGLISH.pdf \(cosprc.ca\)](#))
- Barrett BT. A critical evaluation of the evidence supporting the practice of behavioural vision therapy. *Ophthalmic Physiol Opt.* 2009 Jan;29(1):4-25
- Bowen, C., & Snow, P. (2017). *Making sense of interventions for children with developmental disorders: A guide for parents and professionals.* J & R Press Limited.
- Handler, S. M., Fierson, W. M., & Section on Ophthalmology and Council on Children with Disabilities, American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Association for Pediatric

Ophthalmology and Strabismus, and American Association of Certified Orthoptists. (2011).

Learning disabilities, dyslexia, and vision. *Pediatrics*, 127(3), e818-e856.

- Henderson, L. M., Taylor, R. H., Barrett, B., & Griffiths, P. G. (2014). Treating reading difficulties with colour. *BMJ*, 349.
- Miyasaka, J. D. S., Vieira, R. V. G., Novalo-Goto, E. S., Montagna, E., & Wajnsztein, R. (2019). Irlen syndrome: systematic review and level of evidence analysis. *Arquivos de neuro-psiquiatria*, 77, 194-207.