

Special Educational Settings Information Sheet for Patients/Parents/Carers/Guardians

Sight Testing and Spectacle Dispensing in Special Educational Settings

Introduction

SeeAbility will be offering a new sight testing and spectacle dispensing service from September 2026. All children and young people will be able to have a free sight test at least once a year.

An eye care team will be delivering the service on the school/college premises. The team will check children and young people's vision and examine their eyes to make sure there are no health issues. They will make a referral to other eye health professionals if needed.

The eye care team will offer optical vouchers for children and young people who need glasses. The vouchers provide financial help towards the cost of the glasses. The team will also be available to carry out repairs, if and when glasses break. If the student loses their glasses the eye care team can provide a replacement pair.

Why is a sight test important?

It is recommended that all children and young people have their eyes checked every year, or more often if needed, to identify the condition of their sight. A sight test does two things, checking if glasses are needed and checking the eye health. The team will also be able to check on how a child or young person is using their vision, whether the eyes work together as a pair, how well eye movements are controlled and whether they have brain based visual impairment.

Some special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) children and young people may not know they have a sight problem or find it difficult to tell people that they have noticed a change in their vision.

It is important to correct people's vision. If things look blurred the person can struggle with daily activities, in the classroom or at home.



Research has shown that children with a learning disability and/or autism are 28 times more likely to experience challenges with sight and eye health.

Despite this greater need, most children and young people have to attend a hospital eye department for routine services and over 40% have no history of eye care provision.

No child or young person is too disabled to have their eyes checked. People do not have to be able to read or speak to have an eye check.

Who will be carrying out the sight tests?

The eye care team is made up of clinicians, usually an optometrist and dispensing optician but other clinicians may also be part of the team:

- **Optometrists** will examine the student's eyes to check they are healthy and see whether glasses would be beneficial.
- **Dispensing Opticians** will take the facial measurements and facial characteristics of the children/young people who need glasses to make sure they fit properly and are comfortable to wear.
- **Orthoptists** diagnose and treat defects in eye movement and problems with how the eyes work together.

What happens before the sight test?

The student or a person with parental responsibility must consent to the sight test. Consenting means giving permission. This can be done in writing through the pre-appointment questionnaire which should have been given out with this information sheet. Consent can also be given verbally over the phone.

The pre-appointment questionnaire has two functions. It gathers written consent. It also collects eye and health information about the student. The answers to the questions help the eye care team to deliver the best possible service.

What happens during the sight test?

The eye care team will deliver the service on the [school or college] premises. You will be told in advance when the appointment is due to take place.

If required, the student will be accompanied by a chaperone from the school the whole time. Parents, carers, or guardians are welcome to attend the appointment if they wish.



The student will be helped to feel safe and comfortable during the sight test.

The eye care team will look at:

- how well the student sees and whether they need to wear glasses.

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- how the eyes focus.
 - how well the eyes work together and move.
 - the health of the eyes.

The different checks can be done using a variety of equipment and techniques. The eye care team will try the most suitable ones for the student's needs.

Using eye drops (cyclopentolate) in the eye check

During the appointment, the **Optometrist** may need to put drops in the student's eyes. The drops are used to check if glasses are needed. Most children or young people do not have any side effects afterwards. Some students may find that bright light is uncomfortable or that their vision is blurry. This is because the drops cause the pupils to get larger (dilate). For most, these side effects will wear off after a few hours, but it can take up to 24 hours.

The pre-appointment questionnaire asks for consent to use the drops. If you have any questions about the drops, you will be able to contact the eye care team prior to the appointment to discuss them.

What happens after the sight test?

If the student needs glasses, the eye care team will issue an optical voucher and have available a range of frames for the student and their parents/carers/guardians to choose from. The eye care team will be able to advise on, and supply, specialist frames and the dispensing optician will take measurements and consider the facial characteristics of the student to make sure they fit properly and are comfortable to wear. The voucher can also be redeemed at a high street optician.

The eye care team may need to refer the student to other eye health professionals for further checks. The student, parent/carer and the [school or college] will be given information about the referral, where it has gone (e.g. hospital, GP) and what the concern is.

The eye care team will write a report in plain English providing details of the outcome of the sight test, including the prescription, whether glasses are needed, a description of any vision issues that has been found, and referral details if applicable. The report will also say if the eye care team needs to see the student again before their annual check.

The report will outline any suggestions for adjustments and modifications to the classroom, school environment or at home that will support the student's vision. The report will be shared with the student, parent/carers and the SES.

Can the student have their eyes checked if they already wear glasses or have an existing eye or sight problem?

It is not necessary for the student to have another sight test if they already go to a hospital or opticians for regular sight testing and if they are content to continue to do so. If this is the case, please let us know through the pre-appointment questionnaire mentioned above. If your child is already under a hospital eye department, you should continue to attend these appointments.

FROM SERVICE START IN SEPTEMBER 2026

How to make a complaint and/or provide feedback to the NHS

You have the right to make a complaint about any aspect of NHS care, treatment or service, and this is written into the NHS Constitution for England published on Gov.UK –

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england

The NHS encourages feedback because it is used to improve services. If you wish to share your views and experiences, positive or negative, please contact one of the following:

Service Provider Contact Details

Service Provider:	SeeAbility Ltd
Name:	Noopur Patel
Telephone Number:	01372 755000
Email address:	Eyeclinics@Seeability.org / Seeability@nhs.net
Registered address:	Wesley House, Bull Hill, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 7AH
Website (if applicable):	Home SeeAbility https://www.seeability.org

Eye care team

Name:

Role:

Contact details:

To be assigned in September 2026

NHS NORTH EAST LONDON

For informal feedback, please contact:

NHS London Optometry Commissioning Hub

Email: England.lon-optom@nhs.net

NHS Commissioner Complaints Department:

For formal complaints to the NHS Commissioner, please contact the local Integrated Care Board Complaints Department:

NHS North East London

Website: [Advice, compliments and complaints. - NHS North East London](#)

Telephone: 020 8221 5750

E-mail: nelondonicb.complaints@nhs.net

Writing to us at: Complaints Department
NHS North East London
9th Floor – 20 Churchill Place
London E14 5HJ