

Colour Vision Advisory Clinic

Information for patients



**Orthoptic Department
Oxford Eye Hospital**

Colour Vision Advisory Clinic

If your child has been found to have reduced colour vision function (often called a colour vision defect), you may be referred to the Colour Vision Advisory Clinic.

Colour vision defects are usually inherited and you may be aware of some other members of your family who have been diagnosed with colour vision problems.

The level of colour vision defect can vary considerably from person to person. Mild colour vision defects may hardly be noticed, whilst more marked defects may cause colours to be confused frequently.

At the Oxford Eye Hospital we run a Colour Vision Advisory Clinic specifically for older children with colour vision deficiency. Using a range of tests we can diagnose the specific type of colour vision defect they have, and measure how severe it is.

This helps us to give you important information about how well your child sees colours and how this might affect their future career choices.

Some of the tests are complex and involve careful colour matching tasks. As this will be challenging to younger children we normally start to offer appointments with the clinic **from the age of eleven years.**

Frequently asked questions

Is my child colour blind?

No. Although the term colour blind is commonly used to describe people with colour vision defects it is not very accurate. Your child is capable of seeing colours but can see fewer colours than someone with normal colour vision. They will also confuse some colours. True colour blindness is extremely rare and is usually linked with other eye problems.

What colours will my child confuse?

The most common type of colour vision defect is called a red/green colour vision defect. This refers to the type of colour sensitive cells in the retina that are affected and not necessarily the colours that are confused. People with a red/green colour vision defect are most likely to confuse:

- brown with green
- red or orange with yellow-green
- blue or green with red-purple or green with blue-purple.

Will my child have difficulty at school?

Generally a colour vision defect will not cause problems with schooling.

However colour can often be used in schools as a teaching aid – for example, codes used for highlighting different sounds or words. Teaching methods can be adapted to reduce emphasis on colour. Therefore it is important to tell the teacher about your child's colour vision defect.

Is the colour vision defect likely to get worse?

No. Neither the severity nor type of inherited colour vision defect change throughout life.

What should I do now?

If you would like further information and assessment of your child's colour vision, ask your GP or Optometrist to refer your child to the Colour Vision Advisory Clinic at the Eye Hospital.

Appointments are arranged by the:

Department of Optometry

Oxford Eye Hospital (LG1)

John Radcliffe Hospital

Headley Way

Oxford OX3 9DU

Optometry phone: **01865 234567** (Option 6)

8.30–1.00pm Monday to Friday

or

Email: **optometry.secretary@ouh.nhs.uk**

8.30–4.00pm Monday to Friday

We will be happy to contact you by telephone to arrange a convenient appointment. This will be closer to the time when your child has reached an appropriate age to be able to complete the tests needed for diagnosis.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Head of Optometry

October 2025

Review: October 2028

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



Making a difference across our hospitals

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

OXFORD HOSPITALS CHARITY (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175809)

