

ABOUT VISUAL STRESS WHEN READING

- Some people find that text bends or blurs when they read; they may get headaches.
- Putting coloured plastic (an overlay) on the text can help some people to read faster and understand more. It may reduce eye-strain and they may need fewer breaks.
- A test* at college may have shown that you will benefit from a coloured overlay.

If you have found a coloured overlay helpful you must see an optometrist to find out why.

- See an optometrist who knows about reading through colour.
- They may say you need glasses or eye exercises.

*Wilkins Overlays Test

HOW TO USE OVERLAYS

- Put the overlay flat on the page.
- Try the matt and glossy sides in different lighting.
- Use the same coloured paper for writing.
- Ask your tutors to print worksheets on this colour.
- Use the overlay as much as you like, whenever you like.
- Reading may only get easier after about 10 minutes when you would normally be getting tired. Much depends on the lights, text, paper and text spacing.

Care of Your Overlay

- Keep your overlay in a strong envelope.
- Take care not to scratch or fold it.
- Use a soft clean cloth and plain water to clean it.

TINTED LENSES

After using overlays for a while, many people find that they would prefer to have tinted lenses. It is best to get tinted lenses from an optometrist who belongs to the Society for Coloured Lens Prescribers (www.s4clp.org).

If you get tinted lenses they will not be the same colour as your overlay because the overlay is further away from your eyes.

Tinted lenses cost about £70.00. You have to add on the cost of the special colour test and the frames. You can shop around for the best price.

If you need glasses anyway and you qualify for help with their cost then it may save you the cost of the frames and the basic eye test. You will still have to pay for the tints and the special tests. There are no government funds for tinted lenses.

Some useful websites:

www.s4clp.org (Society for Coloured Lens Prescribers)

www.crossboweducation.com (for reading rulers)

www.ceriumvistech.co.uk (for tinted lenses)

www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/overlays/ (information about visual stress)

THE COST OF BASIC EYE TESTS

You can get a free basic eye test if you:

- are under 16 or over 60
- are under 19 and in full time education
- have diabetes or glaucoma
- are over 40 and have a close relative with glaucoma
- a hospital ophthalmologist says you are at risk of glaucoma
- are registered blind or partially sighted
- are entitled to vouchers for complex lenses
- or your partner receive income support, family credit income-based job seekers allowance, pension credit guarantee, and are entitled to or are named on a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate or are named on valid HC2 certificate.
- live in Scotland!

Meeting the cost of spectacles

Vouchers are issued to those patients who: -

- are aged under 19 and are in full time education
- receive income support or pension credit
- have an NHS tax credit exemption certificate
- receive income based job-seekers allowance
- have exemption form HC2
- have been prescribed complex lenses (reduced value voucher)

You will need proof of these before you order your spectacles or contact lenses.

The value of the voucher is determined by the strength and type of lenses prescribed and starts at £34.60. If you have form HC3 you may be entitled to a reduced value voucher.

If you cannot afford the cost of spectacles, then you may apply on form HC1 to the Social Security office, who will tell you if you are entitled to help with the costs.

For more information about funds you may want to read booklet HC11:

“Help with Health Care Costs” or ring the help-line: 0845 850 1166