

Virtual School Sensory Support are delighted to invite you to a Conference to celebrate 20 years of work in assessment, interventions and research into visual problems associated with Visual Stress

Visual Stress, also known as [Meares Irlen Syndrome](#), refers to signs and symptoms of visual stress which do not respond to conventional optometric treatment.

Visual stress may refer to visual discomfort, light sensitivity and headaches which occur as a result of exposure to disturbing visual patterns. The symptoms of Visual Stress are often reduced by the safe and non-invasive remedy of placing coloured filters (overlays or precision tinted lenses) over the text. Research has shown that reading speed and fluency in at least one in five people improves when an overlay is used. Appropriate diagnosis can lead to rapid outcomes in terms of improving reading skills and enjoyment of reading, which have implications for improving progress across the curriculum.

Visual Stress Awareness Conference:

Date: Friday 12th July 2013

Time: 9.30 – 4.00 pm

Venue: Dereham Football Club

Cost: there will be no charge for this conference.
Buffet lunch will be provided.

Who is invited: Your school may send as many delegates as you wish. The conference welcomes SENCOs, class and subject teachers, learning support assistants, governors, interested parents and other professionals from health, optometry, children's services.

One assessment pack (including overlays, assessment materials, learner record book, information sheets and tips for classroom management) produced by [Crossbow Educational Resources](#) will be provided to every school which sends a delegate. The basic Crossbow pack retails at about £47 and the Conference pack includes additional material used in assessments carried out by Virtual School Sensory Support. The Conference will provide workshops to introduce your staff to the assessment pack and Virtual School Sensory Support will undertake to provide bespoke training packages to your school or cluster group at a later date to ensure your staff feel confident to make full use of the pack when working with your own learners.

We are delighted that two of the leading researchers in the field have agreed to speak at the conference.

Keynote Speakers

Professor Arnold Wilkins will speak on Disturbing Vision.

Professor Arnold Wilkins is currently Professor of Visual Perception at the University of Essex. He has carried out extensive research into visual disturbance, migraine and reading difficulty since the late 1970s and, while at the MRC in Cambridge, he invented the intuitive colorimeter, an instrument now widely used by optometrists to select precision tinted lenses. Arnold is the author of two books and many peer reviewed articles which may be found in scientific journals and via his website: www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/departments/people/wilkins

Professor Bruce Evans will speak on Visual factors in specific learning difficulties.

Professor Bruce Evans is Director of Research at the Institute of Optometry and a Visiting Professor to City University and to London South Bank University. He spends most of his working week practising as a community optometrist and for 25 years has specialised in visual factors in dyslexia. Bruce is the author of books about vision and dyslexia for professionals and parents.

To reserve your place(s) and assessment kit please contact Claire Hogston at:

Virtual School Sensory Support
Sensory Support Centre
148 Woodside Road
Norwich
NR7 9QL
01603 704040
claire.hogston@norfolk.gov.uk

Programme:

- 9.30 arrival and coffee
- 9.45 welcome and housekeeping
- 9.50 conference opening
- 10.00 experiences of living with visual stress
- 10.15 Arnold Wilkins "Disturbing Vision"
- 11.10 coffee
- 11.30 Bruce Evans "Visual factors in specific learning difficulties"
- 12.20 images of visual stress
- 12.40 question session with speakers
- 1.00 lunch and exhibition
- 1.50 workshops – either 'Using the pack to assess for visual stress' or 'Managing your classroom to reduce visual stress'
- 2.40 workshops – as above
- 3.30 plenary
- 3.45 close