

## **Improving Access (De Sensitisation Sessions) for Adults with Learning Disabilities**

Since 2007 “Improving Access to Eye Care for Adults with Learning Disabilities” is a service that has been operating in South Devon.

This service is coordinated by Orthoptist Kathy Diplock based at Torbay Hospital and our 3 main aims are:

1. Raising awareness of the importance of regular eye tests for people with learning disabilities.
2. Providing de sensitisation sessions where necessary to help people access the eye care they need
3. Providing an Orthoptic home eye check for those people with severe learning disabilities currently not able to access primary or secondary eye care

### **De-sensitisation**

A process led by a Primary Care Liaison Nurse, who may visit the person with learning disabilities at home and explain more about the test. This may also include an informal visit to the Opticians premises.

### **Access to Primary Care Optometry Services**

It has become clear that the vast majority of people with learning disabilities could access their local high street optometrist for routine eye checks but sometimes a course of desensitisation maybe needed to make this possible.

At our recent service review meeting, it was confirmed that in situations where an optometrist is not able to carry out an assessment due to a person’s anxiety around attending the practice / using the equipment optometrists can make a referral to the local Primary Care Liaison Nursing Teams.

Primary Care Liaison Nursing Teams will work with a person to provide a personalised action plan to help them access eye care but also to highlight to the optometrist any reasonable adjustments that might be necessary.

## How to refer

Attached is the referral form for the Torbay, Teignbridge and West Devon areas. Please include a brief outline of the specific problems that prevent the eye test being carried out and a request for some desensitisation sessions.

Please send it to the contacts below, depending upon where the patient lives:

<b>Torbay</b> (Torquay Paignton Brixham)	<b>Teignbridge</b> (Newton Abbot, Teignmouth Dawlish and Buckfastleigh)
The Customer Service Centre 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Union House Union Street Torquay TQ1 3YA	Katy Welsh Primary Care Liaison Nurse, Teignbridge CLDT, Estuary House, Collett Way, Brunel Industrial Estate, Newton Abbot, TQ12 4PH
01803 219700	01392 384769
<a href="mailto:dpn-tr.HealthReferral@nhs.net">dpn-tr.HealthReferral@nhs.net</a>	<a href="mailto:dpn-tr.HealthReferral@nhs.net">dpn-tr.HealthReferral@nhs.net</a>
<b>West Devon</b> (Totnes, Dartmouth)	
Becca Douglas Primary Care Liaison Nurse Learning Disability Team Follaton House PO Box 253 Totnes TQ9 9FA	
01392 385103	
<a href="mailto:dpn-tr.iattwest@nhs.net">dpn-tr.iattwest@nhs.net</a>	

## Access to Secondary Care

If you are referring someone to the hospital eye clinic and feel they will require desensitisation sessions to access their appointment, please mention it in your Devon Referral Support Services (DRSS) referral letter so that the necessary arrangements by the HES desensitisation team can be made prior to any appointment being sent out.

## Access to Diabetic Screening

Finally if you see someone who is diabetic but not attending their annual diabetic eye screening appointments please contact Melissa Finch, Deputy Manager and Failsafe Coordinator ([Melissa.finch@nhs.net](mailto:Melissa.finch@nhs.net)). Melissa can then arrange desensitisation sessions for the diabetic screening service.

If you have any concerns about an adult with learning disabilities not accessing the eye care they need please feel free to contact me: [Kathy.diplock@nhs.net](mailto:Kathy.diplock@nhs.net)