



# Walsall Council

## Children's Services

### Walsall Local Offer – Youth Services for children and young people with SEND

#### Who we are – roles, qualifications, specialist skills, areas of SEND expertise

#### Orthoptic Service

##### What we do and what we can offer

The Orthoptic service is based at Walsall Manor Hospital but provides regular screening clinics in Health Centres. Anyone who has a concern about the visual development of a pre-school child can access this service. Referrals are usually received via the Health Visitors who book directly into the clinic. Children who present with an ocular defect are referred by the Orthoptist to the Hospital Eye Service. Children who need reviewing can be reviewed in this clinic at a future date.

Children aged between 3 and 5 years are offered an orthoptic screening test in their nursery or reception class. The Orthoptic team visit 90 schools in the Walsall borough, testing 3500 – 4000 children every school year. Any child found to have an ocular defect is referred to the Hospital Eye Service or their local optometrist depending on the type and severity of the defect found. Approximately 15% of children screened required onward referral.

The Orthoptic team visit Old Hall and Oakwood Special schools every term to offer screening as above and advice to teachers regarding children with previously diagnosed eye conditions..

Children attending schools in the Walsall borough that have been diagnosed with, or are suspected to have, specific learning difficulties can be referred to the Orthoptic service at Walsall Manor Hospital by their community consultant Paediatrician. They undergo a full orthoptic assessment, and if appropriate, a coloured overlay assessment to establish whether there is a preference to read with coloured filters which may help their literary skills.

Children with visual impairment can be assessed by the Orthoptic team for low vision aids. Referral can be made by SENCO teachers, vision impairment team, social services, GPs, community optometrists and the ophthalmology team at Walsall Manor Hospital.

Children may be offered a variety of low vision devices such as hand magnifiers to enable them to cope better with tasks like reading and writing.

### How you can access our services

Referrals to the service can be made by any of the following health care professionals:

- GP or other doctor involved with the child
- Team Around the Child professionals via TAC panel
- Community optometrists
- Health visitors
- School nurses / SENCO
- Social services
- Vision impairment team

Unfortunately the service does not accept self-referrals.

### Eligibility criteria – can everyone do everything?

Orthoptic screening in schools is provided 4 days per week in term time. The children are identified via the Careplus system and school class lists. Any child aged between the age of 3 and 5 years is eligible to be screened.

Any parent or health care professional who has a concern about the visual development of a pre-school child can access the orthoptic screening service at their local health centre. Appointments are available via the Health Visitor.

Children requiring access to the low vision aid clinic need to have (or be in the process of getting) a diagnosis which has an impact on their optimum level of vision. Children requiring access to the specific learning difficulty clinic need to have (or be in the process of getting) a diagnosis of dyslexia.

### What we charge for our activities

There is no charge for any of our services. There may be a cost incurred if parents choose to provide their child with a pair of glasses that fall outside the NHS voucher scheme. Low vision devices are issued free of charge but there are constraints as to how many devices can be issued at any one time.

### How service users are involved in developing the service

We appreciate parent and patient feedback and use this to adjust treatment plans where possible. This may involve a change of coloured overlay or low vision device to find the most appropriate.

#### How service users are involved in deciding what they do

Consent is obtained from parents before the Orthoptist screens their child. Parents are informed of the result and the referral pathway in the event of a fail. Parents may exert a choice as to whether they continue on the referral pathway. The service can be contacted to discuss alternative pathways, further information or advice / onward referral. Parents are always included in the discussion around what would best suit their child in a home or school environment.

#### How to tell us what you think and what you want

Feedback is welcomed and contact details are on the appointment or referral letters.

#### What to do if you want or need more services

In the first instance the Orthoptic service should be contacted at Walsall Manor Hospital; Telephone: 01922 721172 Ext 7244  
The Orthoptist will be able to signpost parents to the appropriate team such as social services, health visitors, vision impairment team, community optometrists etc.

#### How we work with other services

The Orthoptic service is based at Walsall Manor Hospital as part of the ophthalmology team. We work alongside paediatricians and liaise with community optometrists, vision impairment team and the eye clinic liaison officer. We may exchange information with GPs, health visitors, community based health professionals and SENCO teachers.

#### Help with getting there and back (assisted travel)

Unfortunately we do not have a budget to assist with your travel but we will see your child in the most appropriate location for their needs.

However we are unable to provide domiciliary visits

#### What to do if you are not happy with our service (how to complain)

First please contact the Head Of Orthoptic Services: dawn.brazier@walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk to discuss your concerns. She will do her best to come to an agreement with you.

If you are still not satisfied then please contact the PALs department at :

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

Moat Road

Walsall

WS2 9PS

Tel: 01922 656463

Email: [patientrelations@walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk](mailto:patientrelations@walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk)