

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

**Autism spectrum disorders in children and young people
Stakeholder Comments**

Please enter the name of your registered stakeholder organisation below.

NICE is unable to accept comments from non-registered organisation or individuals. If you wish your comments to be considered please register via the [NICE website](#) or contact the [registered stakeholder organisation](#) that most closely represents your interests and pass your comments to them.

Stakeholder Organisation:	<p>This is a joint response from the Optical Confederation, and the LOC Support Unit. The LOC Support Unit provides quality, practical support to Local and Regional Optical Committees (LOCs/ROCs) in England and Wales to help them to develop, negotiate and implement local objectives in respect of primary ophthalmic services. It is a key interface between the optical, representative bodies and the LOCs/ROCs, facilitating robust lines of communication between the national organisations and the grass roots of the professions.</p> <p>The Optical Confederation represents the 12,000 optometrists, 6,000 dispensing opticians and 7,000 optical businesses in the UK who provide high quality and accessible eye care services to the whole population. The Confederation is a coalition of five optical bodies; the Association of British Dispensing Opticians, the Association of Contact Lens Manufacturers, the Association of Optometrists, the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians and the Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians.</p>
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Name of commentator:	Ben Cook
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Order number <i>(For internal use only)</i>	Document <small>Indicate if you are referring to the Full version NICE version or the Appendices</small>	Section Number <small>Indicate number or 'general' if your comment relates to the whole document</small>	Page Number <small>Indicate number or 'general' if your comment relates to the whole document</small>	Comments Please insert each new comment in a new row. Please do not paste other tables into this table, as your comments could get lost – type directly into this table.
<i>Example</i>	<i>Full</i>	<i>3.4.6</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>Our comments are as follows</i>

PROFORMAS THAT ARE NOT CORRECTLY SUBMITTED AS DETAILED ABOVE MAY BE RETURNED TO YOU

1	NICE	general	general	<p>The Optical Confederation works closely with charities such as SeeAbility who provide specialist services for people with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy. The vast majority of the people they support also have a visual impairment and, although more prevalent in certain groups e.g. people with learning disabilities, this has often been previously undetected in such people, adding to their sense of isolation and frustration. It is crucial that staff working with people with sight loss and autism, are able to use effective and individualised strategies. SeeAbility also regularly host training and awareness courses to enable staff to have a better understanding about autism and sight loss</p>
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				<p>to equip them with the necessary knowledge and tools to support individuals.</p> <p>The Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU) is currently developing a pathway for a specialist sight testing service for people with autism. This will ensure that people with autism have good vision, do not suffer from refractive error and that any sight-threatening problems are detected and treated early. Many people with autism may require longer appointment times, several visits to the optical practice to become familiar with the environment and may need longer with the optometrist so that the results of the eye examination can be explained. We are willing to work with NICE, the Department of Health and the NHS Commissioning Board to commend to GP commissioning consortia the early adoption of the LOC Support Unit pathway for people with autism.</p> <p>We recognise that people with an ASD face challenges with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication• Invasion of personal space• Disruption of routine• Introduction of strangers• Introduction of equipment <p>All of these challenges will cause difficulties with normal communication and exam routines. However, with time, patience and training, they can all be overcome. At present, there is no provision for any of these examinations in the General Ophthalmic Services contract.</p> <p>People with ASD, or any other disability for that matter, have an equal right to regular and comprehensive eye care as any other (Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Act 2010).</p> <p>As recommended by the National Autistic Society, a person with autism should plan an informal trip prior to their optical practice before the actual examination occurs. The involvement of the health professional at these times is extremely useful, in order that the person with an ASD can get to the optician, become accustomed to the room and any equipment, e.g. special chair, eye glasses.</p> <p>Another option might be to allow a child with an ASD to watch while a sibling is being treated so that subsequent appointments will not be such a shock. The advice of the patient's carer will help to inform this approach.</p> <p>As with injections, a doll could be given 'treatment'</p>
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				<p>e.g. a quick eye test, dental check.</p> <p>It is also a good idea to book a double appointment so that things can be taken at the patient's pace.</p> <p>More information is available here: http://www.autism.org.uk/working-with/health/patients-with-autism-spectrum-disorders-guidance-for-health-professionals.aspx</p>
2	NICE	general	3	<p>Mention is made of "severe visual impairment" in paragraph 1, which is good, but paragraph 2 "After the ASD diagnostic assessment" discusses strengths, skills and impairments as well as communication etc.</p> <p>Difficulties in all of these areas may be caused by undetected visual problems and hence, to avoid diagnostic overshadowing, an assessment of visual function should be made before assuming any of these problems relate to ASD.</p>
3	NICE	1.1.6	11	<p>Section 1.1.6 mentions access to professionals that have skills needed to carry out ASD assessment. There is a need to have access to optometrists skilled in functional vision assessment and assessing patients with limited or no communication and poor cooperation.</p> <p>Second bullet, same section, "blindness" needs to be changed to "severe visual impairment".</p>
4	NICE	Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3	13-15	<p>All mention eye contact, responses to social smiling and other social visual clues. Care should be taken to rule out not only severe visual impairment but reduced visual acuity due to refractive error, cataract or other pathological causes. Optometric, orthoptic or ophthalmological input is required here too.</p>
5	NICE	1.4.4, second bullet	20	<p>The need for a hearing test is mentioned. There is also a need for a vision test.</p>
6	NICE	General	General	<p>Statistics suggest 30% of people with learning disabilities have visual impairment and 40% have hearing impairment. Therefore both vision and hearing should be investigated. Perhaps stating that "there should be tests of sensory function, such as vision and hearing".</p>

Please add extra rows as needed

Please email this form to: Autism@nice.org.uk

Closing date: 5pm on 25 March 2011

PLEASE NOTE: The Institute reserves the right to summarise and edit comments received during consultations, or not to publish them at all, where in the reasonable opinion of the Institute, the comments are voluminous, publication would be unlawful or publication would be otherwise inappropriate.