

Policy statement:	Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome (Mears-Irlen Syndrome) and Coloured Filters/Tinted Lenses
Status:	Not Funded

M&

SECCGs do not fund provision of colorimetry and coloured filters/tinted lenses for specific reading difficulty (SRD), dyslexia, Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome (SSS), visual stress or Mears Irlen Syndrome. There is insufficient evidence of efficacy on this treatment.

Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome (SSS) is said to cause visual discomfort in a subgroup of people with dyslexia. It consisted of six major categories of symptoms:

- Photophobia: sensitivity to light.
- Background distortion.
- Visual resolution: the inability to see print clearly and free from distortions.
- Scope of focus: the inability to perceive groups of letters, notes, numerals, or words at the same time.
- Sustained focus: the inability to maintain focus except with the employment of inordinate energy and effort.
- Depth perception/gross motor activities: the inability to judge distance accurately.

Sufferers from SSS are diagnosed by a set of questions constituting the Irlen Differential Perceptual Schedule (IDPS) test and treated with coloured lenses specific to each individual.

An update from the Royal College of Ophthalmologists issued in Autumn 2002 stated that “no scientific evidence to support the existence of such a syndrome has been found. The symptoms elicited by the IDPS are vague and medically would have very little diagnostic significance. Although SSS may not exist, interest in coloured filters or overlays as a treatment for dyslexia has persisted. Much of the literature is uncontrolled or poorly planned, but some good studies have supported it”.

There are no proven documented risks to health for the use of individually prescribed coloured overlays or tinted lenses. Pending further high quality research, provision of coloured filters/tinted lenses for specific reading difficulty (SRD) is considered low priority.

Coloured filters for reading disability: A systematic review WMHTAC 2008

This service/procedure has been assessed as a **Low Clinical Priority** by M&SECCGs and will not be funded unless there are **exceptional clinical circumstances**.

Individual funding requests should only be made where the patient demonstrates clinical exceptionality.

Further information on applying for funding in exceptional clinical circumstances can be found on the CCGs’ website.