Dear Colleague,

Following an announcement from the IOO – Institute of Optometry, and the subsequent advice from our Accreditation board, SASC ( SpLD Assessment Standards Committee) Orrets Outreach and Senaat have now updated our procedures and will no longer be able to offer Visual Stress screenings, which is commonly referred to as ‘Irlens’. The guidance is as follows:

**Key messages:**

•  SpLD professionals and vision specialists have much to learn from each other.

•  Symptoms that previously may have been seen as associated with ‘visual stress’ could be caused by uncorrected refractive error and/or oculomotor issues. **Specialist assessors/practitioner psychologists cannot assess for these.**

•  Visual stress should not be used as a catch-all term for visual difficulties.

**Assessors should:**

•  Check that there has been a standard eye test within the past two years.

•  Ask detailed questions about visual difficulties (use new screening protocol).

•  **Refer students / clients to an optometrist** before a full diagnostic assessment if screening questionnaire reveals a need for further visual assessment.

•  Be aware of, **but not attempt to diagnose**, the range of visual difficulties which may

impact reading.

•  Be aware that there is **no strong evidence of a particular association between visual stress and**

**dyslexia / SpLD.**

•  Carefully consider diagnostic conclusions; where there is evidence of visual difficulties but no substantive evidence of SpLD, refer for further visual assessment rather than conclude dyslexia.

**Assessors should not:**

•  Refer to Irlen or Meares-Irlen syndrome or scotopic sensitivity syndrome.

•  Conduct coloured overlay tests.

•  Diagnose visual stress.

As we follow our professional guidelines and to ensure that we do not unintentionally mislead parents or schools,  we have decided as a team that we will not offer Irlens diagnostic assessments.

I am happy to answer any more questions if you require.

Yours,

Cathy Cotgrave,

Head of Orrets Meadow Outreach Teams

SASC – SpLD Assessment Standards Committee http://www.sasc.org.uk/

IOO – Institute of Optometry http://www.ioo.org.uk/dsa-briefing.pdf/