

The logo for the SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) features the acronym 'SASC' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are set against a background of vertical teal bars of varying heights. To the right of the text is a large, teal arrow pointing to the right. Below the main logo, the full name 'SpLD Assessment Standards Committee' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

SASC

SpLD Assessment Standards Committee

Visual difficulties and SpLDs: a new look

Jane Warren and Caroline Holden for
SASC AGM: June 2018

Working Party:

Dr Jim Gilchrist, Caroline Holden, Jane Warren

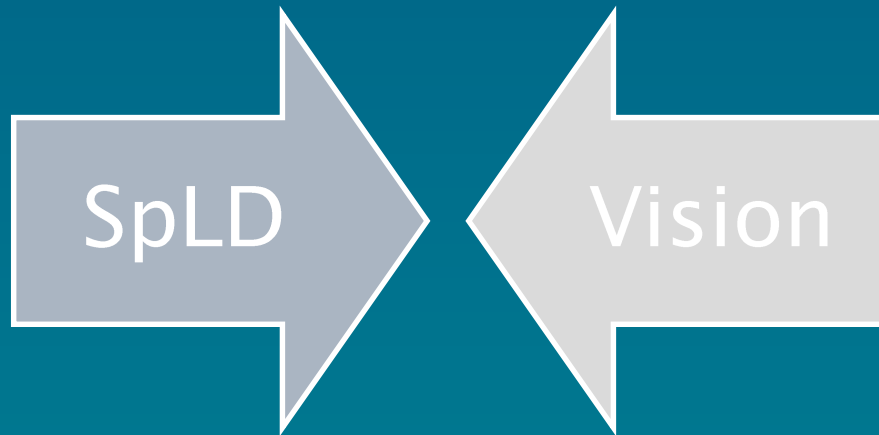
Dr Jim Gilchrist, Senior Lecturer in Optometry and Vision Science, Bradford University



Context (CH)

- September 2017 – Dr Jim Gilchrist, Senior Lecturer in Optometry and Vision Science, Bradford University invited to SASC/STEC.
- Inter-professional working group formed to draw up new SASC visual difficulties guidelines.
- New guidance released June 2018.
- Regular future updates planned.

Rationale for change (JW)



- Some polarisation of views relating to vision and SpLDs
 - (e.g. Henderson, L.M., Tsogka, N. & Snowling, M.J. (2013))
- SpLD professionals should work *with* vision professionals
- Responsibilities and boundaries

What has changed in the guidance? (CH)

- 'Visual stress' – only one of **many possible** visual difficulties affecting reading and study.
- Explanations and definitions of a range of common visual difficulties.
- A new screening protocol.
- Routes to referral.

Assessor responsibilities (JW)

- Assessors should:
 - Check for recent standard eye test (within two years)
 - Use new screening protocol
 - Refer students/clients to an optometrist
 - Be aware of the range of visual difficulties
 - Be aware that coloured filters are not a ‘go-to’ intervention
 - Carefully consider their diagnostic conclusions
- Assessors should not:
 - Refer to Meares–Irlen or scotopic sensitivity syndrome(s)
 - Conduct coloured overlay tests
 - Diagnose visual stress

Strengths

Better understanding of the complex relationship between visual difficulties and SpLDs
Clarity of responsibilities

Weaknesses

Current state of research is not always clear to either profession
Current referral routes for visual assessment, especially in HEIs.

SWOT

Opportunities

Cooperation between two crucial professions
Development of network of interested professionals

Threats

Cost of extended optometric examination
Students may miss out on the right support due to cost

The way forward (CH)

- Collaboration with the DfE.
- Assessors / school, FE, HEI support services more confident about referral routes, special arrangements provision and effective support strategies.
- Collaboration with vision professionals.
- Clearer guidance for needs assessors / DSA eligibility.
- Better assessment and support.
- Better understanding among vision professionals of the complexities of reading difficulties.

Finding the new guidance

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) and Visual Difficulties

A Guide for Assessors and SpLD Practitioners

SASC Working Group June 2018

Dr Jim Gilchrist, Caroline Holden, Jane Warren.

Downloadable from the SASC website
www.sasc.org.uk

Questions?

