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Dear Ms Greenwood

**Re: Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) request ref: 6095**

Further to your request dated 07 June 2019, please find our response to your enquiry below.

### Request and Response

The British and Irish Orthoptic Society on behalf of the Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning are writing to make an open request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The purpose of this FOI request is to establish the provision of 'orthoptic-led' and/or 'non-orthoptic-led' vision screening across England.

#### Definition of 'Orthoptic-led':

A service that is led by a designated Orthoptist who is responsible for all aspects of delivery of vision screening to all eligible children. This includes leadership of the personnel delivering the screening, the care pathway and audit and quality assurance mechanisms. The testing of children may be either Orthoptist delivered or delivered by a vision screener trained by an orthoptist.

We would be grateful if you could please answer the following questions and their subsections (where applicable) for the financial year 2019/20 to allow us to establish current provision and support orthoptists in the future to deliver an 'orthoptic led' service.

Many thanks for providing this information, it will be extremely useful to support the objective of delivering equitable orthoptic led vision screening for ALL 4-5 year old children by mapping out current provision. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact [email address]. We look forward to hearing from you.



## Questions

1. How many LA and CCGs are served by your organisation for all acute, community and specialist services? Please list them all.  
*Please refer to CQC Reports where you can find a summary of the areas and services covered by the Trust. <https://www.cqc.org.uk/provider/RF4/reports>*
2. Does your organisation provide the Orthoptic Services for the resident populations of these LAs and CCGs?  
*No, for the primary vision screening for 4-5 year olds.  
Yes, for the primary screen of the < 4 year olds.  
See below for details.*
3. Is a vision screening service currently available in the area (by LA or CCG) served by your organisation for providing Orthoptic Services?  
*No for the primary vision screening for 4-5 year olds – Orthoptists stopped primary vision screening in community clinics at the end of 2009. School nurses (not orthoptic led) were commissioned in 2014, and informally supported by Trust orthoptists with initial training and advice on assessments and vision tests.  
We devised a referral pathway for those failing the school eye test, i.e. either to optometry practices competent to assess children, or the hospital eye service as required. Optometrists then refer the HES for the conditions they are not covered to treat. We discharge back to optometrists ASAP.  
Increasing demand for our paediatric slots meant orthoptists carried out a training update session to the school nurses in November 2018 to ensure they are following the referral pathway – although not orthoptic led we are inevitably linked for a point of contact / advice to support.  
  
Yes for the primary screen of the < 4 year olds – Most optometry practices do not review children in this age group. So, health visitors (HVs) refer to the hospital eye service because of parental concern, family history or the HV feels there is a squint (mostly false negatives) – mean of 250 per year / mainly babies / toddlers.  
Again, because of demand for appointment slots, we in the HES are currently working with our local optometry committee chairperson to develop a community optometry primary screen for <4 year old referrals, create a referral pathway and prevent unnecessary referrals into the HES; and some coaching teaching sessions & guidelines for the optometrists involved.  
The School Nurse Lead liaises with the school nurses for Barking & Dagenham, Redbridge, Havering & Brentwood.*  
  
If YES – For each commissioned screening service please indicate: *Please see Question 6*
  - a. Who commissions it - LA or CCG?
  - b. Its compliance with the PHE service specifications i.e. Orthoptic-led and delivered with Quality Assurance and clinical audit processes (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publicatio...>)
    - i. Compliant
    - ii. Not compliant
4. List the key features of each commissioned screening service : *as per question 3*
  - a. Settings (e.g. school).
  - b. Screening personnel (e.g. orthoptist, school nurse or other health professional).
  - c. The onward care pathway for children who fail the vision screening.

- d. The quality assurance processes (audit) and identified clinical lead for the vision screening service.
5. Tell us how you monitor if every eligible child in the Local Authority or CCG commissioning the service has been tested (including those in private schools, or those who are home schooled).  
*As per question 3 – information held by school nurses*
6. Tell us whether a vision screening programme has been commissioned for the current financial year.  
*BHR CCGs are funding our vision screening programme.*
7. If a vision screening service is not currently available, in a Local Authority or CCG served by your Organisation could you please tell us for each of these LA or CCGs;
- why it has not been commissioned?
  - whether a service is planned for the next financial year (2020/21)?
  - whether an existing service has been recently decommissioned?
- No for the primary screen for 4-5 year olds, which is carried out by school nurses. Please refer to response given in question 3.*  
*We have retained the health visitors in November 2018.*

If you wish to discuss our answer, please contact us, quoting the above reference number. If you are unhappy with the service and wish to make a complaint or to request a decision review, please contact our Information Governance Manager within 2 months from the date of our response:

The Information Governance Manager [bhrut.informationgovernanceig@nhs.net](mailto:bhrut.informationgovernanceig@nhs.net)

You may also apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint or review. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Trust. The Information Commissioner's details: Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF  
T: 08456 30 60 60 or 01625 54 57 45 | W: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

We value feedback from our applicants regarding their satisfaction with the FOI response and the service they receive, as such we would appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete and return the attached questionnaire.

Yours sincerely

T Rasool – Information Officer  
Communications Team

**Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust**

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