

VPD – Telephone Consultation Patient Story	
The Story Told by:	Kathryn Whitfield, Orthoptist. Lead of the Orthoptic visual processing difficulties clinic
Patient Story	<p>Sophie was a new patient referred into the Orthoptic visual processing difficulties clinic. She was referred into the service by her secondary school SENCO as she was complaining of blurry vision despite not needing glasses. Although school has been trailing an overlay they wanted us to assess her to rule out any BSV difficulties and ensure a full assessment had taken place. There was a concern that Sophie was showing dyslexic traits such as reversal of words and difficulties spelling but the school screening tests came back as not indicative of dyslexia. She was struggling to reach her age related expectations and was therefore allowed additional time to formulate her ideas in class.</p> <p>The school completed our orthoptic vpd clinic referral tool and so I was able to go through this with mum over the phone. We discussed what the school had said and mum gave her own opinion, for example, school had noticed that she skips words and loses her place frequently. Mum described Sophie as tilting her head when reading. Following this I was able to suggest some strategies to help Sophie keep her place when reading such as reading ruler or simply drawing a horizontal line on the overlay that school had provided. I was able to suggest that mum be mindful of excessive head movements when reading.</p> <p>We discussed the sections on memory and I have sent some exercises to mum to do with her at home to help to improve her visual memory. Sophie herself was on speaker phone so was able to tell me herself what she was experiencing.</p> <p>I asked about Sophie’s general wellbeing as part of the history including sleep and diet. Mum and dad (as dad was also listening on speakerphone as mum had to go to a conference call half way through) told me that Sophie was recently struggling to settle to sleep and was a little anxious about the covid situation. I talked about screen time at night and the importance of a night time routine and to watch that she has a healthy diet and exercises every day.</p>



<p>Feedback</p>	<p>I rang mum back the following day and discussed with her the benefits of the telephone consultation. She told me that she was really impressed with the service and what we had said has made a big impact on Sophie herself helping her to be mindful of the suggestions and the impact of her visual skills on her learning. Mum said that she would also put into place my suggestion about caffeine related chocolate/drinks before 12 noon. Sophie herself was not very happy about this!</p> <p>Mum told me that it was useful to know what was going on behind the scenes and nice to know that we were all still working hard for the benefit of our patients and thanked me.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Despite the current situation regarding the coronavirus we are still able to provide a meaningful assessment of the children referred into our service without a face to face consultation. Following the discussion I was able to help Sophie with her home learning with simple ideas such as ensuring her word documents were in a colour that was comfortable to look at. I was also able to provide strategies for the family to help reduce Sophie's anxiety. Mum said that it had opened up the discussion about school and after I had finished the consultation, mum, dad and Sophie discussed what was happening at school and what to do next.</p>
<p>Challenges overcome</p>	<p>It was a challenge not being able to assess the child's reading and only giving suggested exercises rather than exercises based on clinical evidence.</p>
<p>Lessons Learnt</p>	<p>I was very impressed with the way the telephone consultation worked. It is clearly a useful tool during these unprecedented times and something that we will continue with until we can start clinics back up safely.</p>

