



## UK NSC childhood vision screening recommendation

The UK NSC recommended that there should be no change to the current guidance on screening for vision defects in children aged 4 to 5, but this should remain under review. The current recommendation is that screening for visual impairment between 4 and 5 years of age should be offered by an orthoptic-led service.

This review on screening for visual impairment in children age 4 - 5 years concentrated on a condition called Amblyopia. Amblyopia it is also called lazy eye, it is a condition in children that reduces vision, usually in one eye. This happens because the eye does not develop a strong link with the brain. Treatment is usually with a patch to cover the better eye or eye drops to blur it. The patch or eye drops allow the weaker eye to develop stronger links in the brain. This is more effective if used in the early years. If amblyopia treatment is delayed, the reduced vision may become permanent.

### Key findings supporting the UK NSC recommendation

The review found that amblyopia can have a negative impact on:

- eye movements, resulting in slower reading speed
- hand-eye co-ordination

There was little evidence that screening was effective in improving these outcomes or whether screening was good value for money. Because of this the UK NSC would like to see more research to help judge whether screening should continue.

The UK NSC regularly reviews its recommendations on screening for different conditions in the light of new research evidence becoming available.

To find out more about the UK NSC's childhood vision screening recommendation, please visit:

[legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/vision-child](https://legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/vision-child)

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) advises ministers and the NHS in the 4 UK countries about all aspects of screening and supports implementation of screening programmes.

Find out more about the UK National Screening Committee at [www.gov.uk/uknsc](https://www.gov.uk/uknsc). The UK NSC evidence review process is described at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process) and a list of all UK NSC recommendations can be found at [legacy.screening.nhs.uk/recommendations](https://legacy.screening.nhs.uk/recommendations)

The UK NSC secretariat is hosted by Public Health England ([www.gov.uk/phe](https://www.gov.uk/phe)).