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Eye Hospital**
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Improving the hospital experience of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and those that care for them

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On behalf of Moorfields Croydon Orthoptic and Paediatric Team



Special Educational Needs (SEN)

A child or young person with learning difficulties or disabilities that makes it harder for them to learn compared to children of the same age

The 4 main areas are:

communication
and interaction

cognition
and learning

social, emotional
and mental health
difficulties

sensory and/or
physical needs



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Background



Moorfields Croydon had **4710 paediatric** attendances in the 2022/2023 year

20% of these attendances are made by children with SEN

A child with SEN is **28 times more** likely to have a sight problem



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What can we do to ensure hospital experience is the **best** it can be for these children and their parents/carers?

How do we ensure we are treating patients as **individuals**, with **empathy, dignity and respect**?

How do we address concerns of **long waits**, lack of calming hospital **environment**, lack of **information** and therefore inability to prepare for necessary but sometimes difficult appointments?



The Project

Patient Engagement
Audit

Equipment

Access to information
Service Improvement

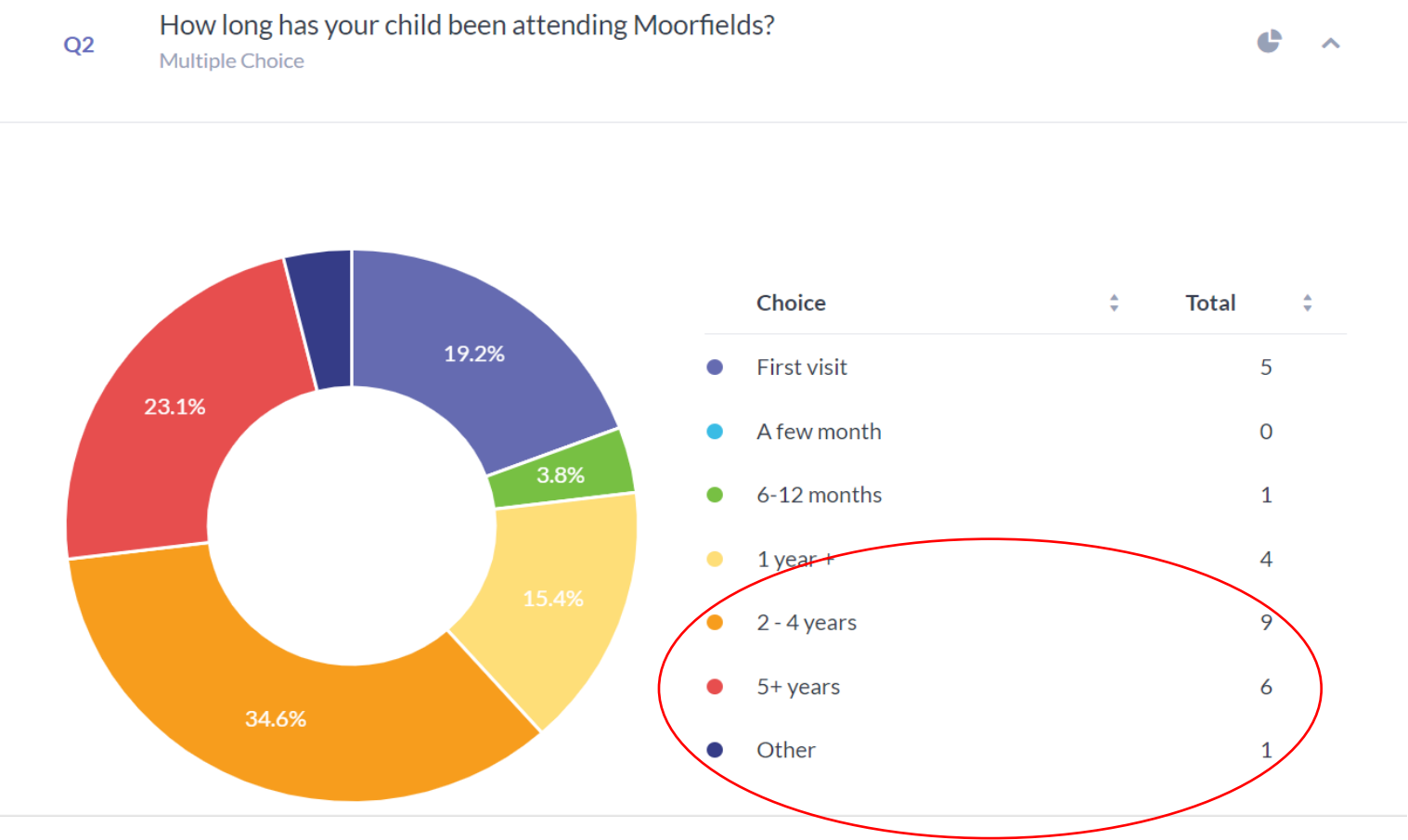


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Patient Engagement Questionnaire

15 question online/paper questionnaire
26 parental/carers responses



>60% had a **diagnosis** of Autistic Spectrum Disorder +/- additional diagnoses

What additional information is important **before** the appointment?

How long will the appointment take?

Will there be dilating eye drops?

How many people will we see?

What will happen on the day?

Where to access this information?

Most important aspect of your visit to the hospital with your child?

A calming environment

That the doctors are good with working with kids with special needs

Being seen on time his SEN needs understood

To be seen on time

Comfortable and peaceful area



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Action Log



What our patients ask for	What we are doing
Dedicated SEN clinic and morning appointments	Launch of Friday morning monthly SEN clinic from June 2025
Access to information prior to the appointment	Pre-appointment telephone clinic Website information access



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Children's orthoptics in Croydon



What to expect at your child's visit

We understand that visiting a hospital for tests can be a very scary experience for children. Not knowing what will happen can cause anxiety for the child, their grown-ups and their wider support network.

We have made this page to help everyone be prepared for what to expect during your visit, and to know that there is nothing to be scared of.

What is Orthoptics?

Orthoptics is the diagnosis, management and treatment of [strabismus \(squint\)](#), eye movement disorders and visual development problems.

Orthoptists are specially trained health professionals and we work alongside optometrists and doctors (ophthalmologists) as part of the eye team.

We are specialists in assessing eye movements and vision and work with patients of all ages. We can use a variety of tests and methods to assess vision even if your child is very young or has special educational needs.

You can find out more on our [orthoptic department page](#).



Where is the clinic held?



Orthoptic clinics are held in [Moorfields Eye Clinic at Croydon University Hospital](#), located on the second floor, London Wing. There are signs to guide you from the main entrance. Once you reach the Eye Clinic, you will find orthoptics at the far end of the department. Please make sure you check in when you arrive.

We also have children's clinics at our community clinics at [Sanderstead Clinic in South Croydon](#) and [Parkway Health Centre in New Addington](#).

Our new **dedicated website** pages
for Moorfields Croydon Orthoptics
and it's community sites

Action Log Continued

What our patients asked for	What we are doing
Option to separate elements of the appointment to make visits shorter	Appointment types on offer • Orthoptist only (1st visit) • Optometrist only (2nd visit, different day with dilating drops at home) Or • Both (combined visit with drops in clinic)
Email communication	Dedicate email address handed out to parents for easy communicate line
Calming environment and trained staff	Longer appointment slots to avoid delay and an increased awareness of children with SEN being in clinic.
Calming environment 2	Option to attend SEN friendly centres in the community
Calming environment 3	Sensory Equipment

Sensory Equipment

Successful bid for funding with Moorfields Eye Charity and their benefactor (Geoff and Fiona Squire Foundation) for purchase of Sensory Voyager Hurricane Trolley



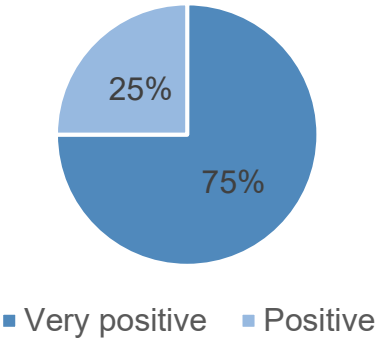
Equipment – patient feedback

Very positive	Positive	Not very positive	Not at all positive	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
😊	↔			☹
				?

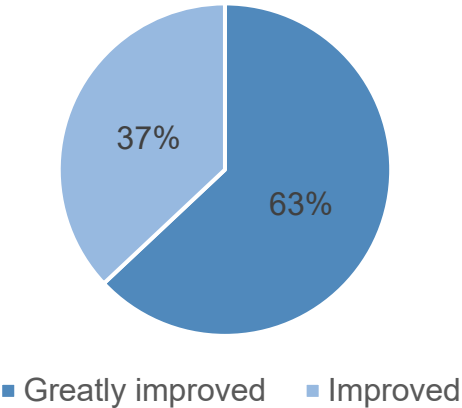
100% positive feedback



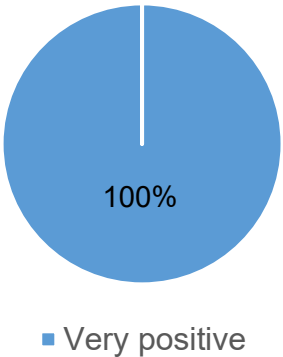
Experience of equipment



Change to hospital experience



Supports good care



Patients Comments:

“Thank you for such an amazing gift. We love it!”

“Excellent start. Let’s make more waves to encourage hospitals to have dedicated spaces for SEN children”

“A calming piece of equipment that helps my child’s sensory needs.”

“Other sites should have this machine. The more sensory items in playrooms the better.”



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Clinician Comments:

“Clinics are difficult environments for children. If they have challenging experiences, it doesn’t help them want to come back for future appointments if they’re scared.

It can provide fun during a long day or distraction during a procedure a patient is finding difficult”



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Retrospective evaluation of assessment completion in patients with special educational needs across our orthoptic, vision and refractive clinics.



Summary:

- Helped us to consider changes
 - to improve the quality & documentation of our assessments
 - Make adjustments to improve enable successful examination such as extra time
 - Leading to improved patient's responses and engagement in our clinical tests.

Patient story



Ahmed* is a 7-year-old boy with **autism and global developmental delay**
Attended Moorfields Croydon since he was 4 years old

Ahmed's mother fed back to us how much she **dreaded** coming to appointments
It was always **too busy, long waiting times**, with multiple clinics running.

He got terribly **anxious**, which made mum anxious & it was becoming more and more of a challenge to get him into the hospital

For the first time, Ahmed was able to come to our **dedicated SEN clinic** in June 2025

Mum received a phone call 2 weeks before
We discussed what would happen on the day and completed Ahmed's hospital passports.

We found out he **like bubbles and small cars** and **dislikes loud noises and busy environments**

We informed mum she could refer to the website or contact us if she any other queries and although mum appreciated the changes, she still had her anxieties



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* Name changed

The results of our project....

“One of her best experiences we’ve had at any hospital appointment!”

Ahmed was calm, the appointment was quick – for first time he wanted to stay and play after!

The sensory equipment, calmer environment and decreased waiting time allowed us to achieve a complete examination of the back of the eye and accurate glasses check!



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THANK YOU!



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