Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Visual Inattention-Neglect Following Stroke v8

Version number: **1.0**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Visual Inattention/Neglect Following a Stroke

Patient Information

Orthoptic Services

- Author ID: AJM
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- Version: 8
- Leaflet title: Visual Inattention/Neglect Following a Stroke
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What is visual inattention?

This is a common occurrence following a stroke in which the patient ignores everything on one side. Even when the patient's attention is drawn towards that side, their attention quickly reverts to forgetting that the side exists.

This condition may occur with or without a visual field defect (sight loss to one side).

A person with visual inattention will not be aware of anything or anyone on the **affected side**. So they may hear you, but they will not be able to look at you until you move to their **non-affected side**. This can also result in a patient only eating one half of the food on their plate, or missing half of a page when reading. Because the brain is unaware that the **affected side** exists the patient is unaware that something is wrong, so they may deny that they have a problem.

Visual inattention/neglect can vary in intensity from being mild to very severe. Visual inattention can affect a person's ability to walk, drive or read and all aspects of self-care.

Advice and treatment

The aim of treatment is to encourage the person to be aware of the **affected side** as much as possible.

The Orthoptist will try scanning and reading exercises with the patient. The other therapists and nurses on the rehabilitation ward will also try to make the patient more aware of their **affected side.**

Carers or relatives can also help by approaching the patient from their **affected side** and sit on this side to encourage the patient to turn to the **affected side**. If the patient becomes agitated or upset because they are unable to see people, then carers or relatives should sit on their **non-affected side** so they can be seen.

Objects should be placed on the **affected side** and the patient should be told of this so that they can try to locate the object on this side. However, if the condition is severe, you may be advised to put all objects on the **non-affected side,** to prevent any accidents.

When reading, it is worthwhile putting a **red mark** down each side of the page so that the patient is aware that they have to read from one red line to another.

It is important to try to keep up with the treatment and advice after the patient has been discharged.

If you wish to speak to someone by phone, please contact:

Orthoptic Department

Boston House - Entrance B

Second Floor

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Frog Lane

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Telephone Number: 01942 264095



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