

Understanding Colour Vision Deficiency



Your screening result today suggests you may have difficulty distinguishing certain colours used in some work activities.

This leaflet explains what colour vision deficiency means, how it may relate to your work and whether any further assessment may be required.

What is colour vision deficiency?

Colour vision deficiency means seeing some colours differently or finding them difficult to tell apart. The most common type affects shades of red and green; difficulty distinguishing blue and yellow is less common.

It is usually inherited, does not normally worsen and causes few difficulties in everyday life.

Understanding your result

The assessment is a screening test and may not identify the precise type or severity of a colour vision deficiency.

A result outside the expected range does not automatically mean that you are medically unfit for work. Its significance depends on the colour-related tasks and safety requirements of your role, together with any applicable occupational standard.

Further testing may sometimes be required before a decision can be made.

How could it affect work?

Many people with colour vision deficiency can work without restriction. However, accurate colour recognition may be important when identifying:

- warning lights, signals or safety information
- electrical wiring, equipment or controls
- test results, samples, maps, diagrams or materials

Your result should therefore be considered against the specific requirements of your role.

When should I seek further advice?

Consider arranging an assessment with an optometrist if you were unaware of any colour vision difficulty or would like a fuller assessment.

Seek professional advice if your colour vision has changed recently, as this can occasionally be caused by an eye or medical condition, injury or certain medicines. Do not stop prescribed medication without medical advice.

This leaflet provides general guidance following your workplace medical assessment and does not replace advice from your GP or another qualified healthcare professional. Information based on current NHS and HSE guidance.. Review date: July 2026.

