

For more information or free advice and guidance contact:



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Charity No: 1165690

**Information for Professionals**  
**EDUCATION**



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# What is Dyslexia?

The aim of this leaflet is to provide information to those who work with individuals with dyslexia and how to adapt to enable dyslexics to learn and develop.

The word 'dyslexia' comes from the Greek meaning 'difficulty with words' and is a difference in the way the brain processes language.

Dyslexia varies in different people, but can mean **difficulties** with:

- Reading
- Spelling
- Writing
- Organisational skills
- Short-term memory
- Numeracy Skills

Dyslexia tends to run in families and is NOT related to intelligence or to a person's background.

However, along with the difficulties, real **strengths** can be identified, including:

- Problem solving skills
- Enhanced creativity
- Strong visual thinking
- Intuitive
- Verbally articulate
- Spatially talented

People with dyslexia do not all have the same way of thinking, but there are common patterns.

Dyslexia is sometimes diagnosed in children soon after they start school.

There is no cure for dyslexia but with the right kind of support, dyslexics can overcome their difficulties and achieve great things.



# Getting Help...

At least 10 - 20% of the population are affected by dyslexia; with 4% being severely affected.

Someone with dyslexia may struggle with reading, writing and spelling despite having apparent good understanding. Their written work will not reflect what they are able to say orally. This disparity is often a good indicator.

**Written work** may be messy, with spellings crossed out; or very neat but written very slowly. Spellings may be bizarre or inconsistent and punctuation and grammar may be a problem. Lots may be written, but rambling and no structure; or very little written and to the point.

**Reading** may be accurate, with little or no intonation and no recall or comprehension because it is read on a word level; or inaccurate, but better understanding with missed out words or even lines.

With **Numeracy** there can be a difficulty learning times tables. Questions may be misread, similar signs confused such as + and x or ÷ and -, and difficulty memorising formulae.

If you think one of your students or clients is dyslexic

- Speak to the individual to discuss their needs and difficulties.
- Understand about different learning styles, it will help to know if someone's strength is visual, auditory or kinaesthetic.
- Arrange a dyslexia screening
- Arrange an dyslexia assessment
- Arrange a visual stress test
- Speak to the SENDCO about getting extra time for exams and assessments



# Top Tips...

Here are just a few useful tips to help learning...

## Make the learning environment 'Dyslexia Friendly' this will not disadvantage the other learners

Other practical solutions include...

### Environment

- Reduce distractions
- Close the door
- Schedule regular breaks
- Encourage someone that is easily distracted to use headphones or ensure quiet working in the class when appropriate.
- Ensure everyone can see your face, and you can see theirs.



### Confidence Building

- Praise effort and nurture strengths
- Mark positively on content rather than crossing out errors
- Encourage team work as well as independent learning
- Avoid reading aloud in group settings

### Written Work

- Use coloured paper – speak to the person and see what colour works, but often any colour that is not bright white will be an improvement.
- Use a sans serif font such as Century Gothic Verdana or Tahoma, minimum size 12 or 14 with double line spacing and bold used for important points and any headings.

## Presenting/ giving instructions

- Change the background colour of the whiteboard
- Don't expect work to be copied from the board
- Explain the 'big picture' at the start of the lesson.
- Consider giving handouts the week before so they can read through them in advance.
- Keep instructions simple and limit to no more than 3 and check understanding.
- Use gestures to clarify.
- Have key vocabulary written down and accessible.
- When giving homework, verbal instructions will not be sufficient; check that it is written down correctly; or get them to take a photo of the whiteboard or use a speech to text assistive technology and check it is correct.

## Study Strategies

- Have overlays and eye level rulers for everyone to use.
- Encourage good planning strategies, use coloured pens and highlighters.
- Give alternative methods to record information – mind maps, bullet points, Footnotes, recording verbally or video recording
- Encourage rough drafts with focus on ideas and structure, then give support with spelling, punctuation and grammar.

## Spelling and Handwriting

- Encourage use of varied and new vocabulary rather than correct spellings. Use assistive technology to help with spellings after work is written.
- Keep a personal dictionary
- Ensure there is a variety of pens and pencils with grips
- Encourage touch typing skills



# Tests and Examinations

Learners with dyslexia should not be disadvantaged by tests and examinations as concessions can be given.

## Disabled Students Allowance

Dyslexic students in Higher Education, can apply for a Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).

Full-time and part-time students, studying at least 50% of a full-time degree course and post-graduate students are now eligible for this allowance. (Also students studying a degree through the Open University).

Anyone claiming DSA must have a dyslexia assessment to diagnose their dyslexia.

The DSA may include equipment (eg.IT hardware and appropriate software), an annual non-medical helper's allowance, (including funding for ICT training, proof-reading) and an annual general allowance for books and resources.

For further information contact GOV.UK

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview>

*Note: DSA may be changing and there are proposals to reduce the provision. The government will only fund those whose dyslexia (or other Specific Learning Difficulty) is considered to be more complex.*



## Special Examination Arrangements

Discuss with the exams officer or SENDCO about getting 25% extra time in exams. This should be done as early as possible.

If extra time is granted it is necessary to decide how this will be used most effectively.

- To plan answers
- To read and understand the questions
- To proof read answers

Other concessions may include a reader, the use of a word processor, or the use of a person to take dictation.

These concessions need to be put into practice as normal working conditions during the course. The better prepared a dyslexic student, the less stress will be experienced during exams.

Strategies to deal with stress and anxiety will benefit all students – good planning skills, mindfulness, relaxation and breathing exercises may all help

Check with the school in plenty of time in case an Educational Psychologist needs to do an assessment.

Booklet on examinations regulations available from:

**Joint Council Tel: 0207 638 4225 or <https://www.jcq.org.uk/>**

## National Curriculum Test

Dyslexics are allowed special arrangements in National Curriculum Tests. Schools now have guidelines on what special arrangements they can make.

For more information contact the Standards and Testing Agency <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/standards-and-testing-agency> or Qualification and Curriculum Authority <https://www.qca.org.uk/>





# How we can help...



Dyslexia Cornwall can help professionals to work with individuals by offering access to a range of services...

## Information and Advice Services

We offer a FREE confidential information and advice service.

Our information and advice services are carried out by our highly experienced dyslexia advisers.

## Dyslexia Helpline

We offer a confidential telephone Helpline service which provides information and advice on dyslexia and related subjects.

Our Helpline is run by volunteers who are experienced and qualified dyslexia advisers.

This is a FREE service.

Our Helpline is sometimes very busy. If you get no reply, please leave a message on the answerphone.



Helpline: **01872 27 48 27**

## Dyslexia Screening

Dyslexia screenings give an indication as to whether you are likely to be dyslexic. **Dyslexia screenings cannot diagnose dyslexia.**

We provide a free signposting service to organisations offering dyslexia screenings. They take up to 60 minutes to complete.

## Dyslexia Assessments

Assessments involve a series of tests to determine whether you are dyslexic or have other specific learning difficulties.

**Dyslexia assessments can diagnose dyslexia.**

We provide a free signposting service to organisations offering dyslexia assessments.

The assessments should be carried out by fully qualified assessors registered with the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS) or British Psychological Society. The assessments can take up to 4 hours to complete.



## Dyslexia Awareness Workshops

We offer dyslexia awareness workshops to educational/training establishments and other support organisations requiring a professional understanding of dyslexia or the benefits of Assistive Technology.

## Visual Stress Assessment

Dyslexia Cornwall offers a practical visual stress assessment to identify if coloured overlays can improve ease and speed of reading. The assessments are carried out by an experienced dyslexia adviser and take up to 60 minutes to complete.



**For a full list of services and charges visit  
[www.dyslexiacornwall.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiacornwall.org.uk)**