

For more information or free advice and guidance contact:



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Information for Employers



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What is Dyslexia?

The aim of this leaflet is to provide useful information and suggestions if you suspect an employee is dyslexic.

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.

Businesses and organisations can benefit greatly from employing dyslexics due to their positive strengths or attributes:

- Problem solving skills
- Enhanced creativity
- Strong visual thinking
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- 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 but quite often it is not recognised until much later in life.



Getting Help...

It is estimated that at least 10 - 20% of the British workforce will be affected by dyslexia; with 4% being severely affected.

Employers will get the best results from their workforce if they develop an awareness of dyslexia. By implementing a range of strategies to support individuals with dyslexia better working relations can be developed. This will lead to increased productivity, less work related stress and reduced sick leave.

Employers should be aware that:

- Adults with dyslexia may find it difficult when it comes to getting and retaining a job.
- Bad experiences at school can lead to lack of confidence and low self esteem. Especially if their learning difficulties were not identified.
- Problems with literacy skills can impact on employees success in examinations and ongoing professional development.



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

Top Tips...

Just a few useful tips for helping employees...

Dyslexia Awareness

Develop specialist knowledge of dyslexia and an awareness of the range of strategies that are available to support your dyslexic workforce.

Assess the working environment

Assess the workplace and identify situations which may disadvantage or limit the potential of your dyslexic employees.

Access to Information

Use a variety of communication tools to disseminate information to your workforce (for example, audio files or large print)

Provide Access to Assistive Technology

Assistive technologies can help with everyday literacy and organisation tasks from reading or writing to planning or making calculations.

Build a culture of confidence

Make sure that everyone knows what provision is available for dyslexic employees. Provide mechanisms so that dyslexics can be open about their dyslexia.



Offer Workplace Mentoring

Mentoring supports and encourages people to manage their own learning. Effective mentoring can maximise an employee's potential, develop their skills and improve their performance in everyday activities.

Offer a Dyslexia Screening

Offer a Dyslexia Screening which gives an indication or 'likelihood' of an employee being dyslexic. It is only a basic test and is a 'snapshot' of their performance on the day of the test.

This is not a diagnosis.

Offer a Dyslexia Assessment

For some employees a full diagnostic assessment may be required. It involves a series of diagnostic tests to determine whether they are dyslexic or have other specific learning difficulties. It provides an in-depth report specifying strengths and weaknesses. ***This is a diagnosis.***

Offer a Visual Stress Assessment

Coloured lenses, overlays and reading rulers can help an employee's ease and speed of reading. They reduce the impact of visual stress which presents as movement and distortion of text. This can cause headaches and sore eyes. Evidence for the use of coloured lenses and overlays is not conclusive but certainly some do benefit from their use. Dyslexia Cornwall offers a free signposting service to opticians who can provide visual stress assessments.



Reasonable Adjustments

Employers need to make 'reasonable adjustments' in the workplace to ensure that employees with Dyslexia are not placed at a disadvantage

Employers, under the duty of the Equality Act (2010), need to make 'reasonable adjustments' if an employee discloses that they are dyslexic.

This may include:

- Making reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process.
Allowing extra time, taking notes into the interview, having a list of questions and assessments in advance, avoiding multi-layered question and presenting questions in a chronological order.
- Doing things another way
Examine other ways of giving information to avoid reading, provide opportunities to discuss written materials, use diagrams, allow frequent breaks, demonstrate and supervise tasks and projects.
- Letting a dyslexic person work somewhere else
Providing a quiet working environment away from distractions with the occasional opportunity to work from home.
- Changing their equipment
Providing assistive technology to help with reading, writing, memory and originations skills.



For further advice contact Dyslexia Cornwall 01872 222 911

Access to Work

The Government's Access to Work scheme may help pay for practical support to help employees with dyslexia.

Access to Work gives practical advice and support to disabled people in the workplace. It is provided where someone needs support or adaptations beyond the reasonable adjustments which an employer is legally obliged to provide under the Equality Act (2010). Dyslexia is recognised as a disability under The Equalities Act 2010.



You may have to share the cost of the reasonable adjustments with Access to Work. The sharing of costs applies if the person has been working for you for more than six weeks and if you have over 49 employees.

A dyslexia screening or assessment can be used as evidence for a claim to Access to Work.

For more information **telephone: 0800 121 7479** or **www.gov.uk/access-to-work**

Useful Resources and Contacts

Business Disability Forum

Business Disability Forum provides pragmatic support by sharing expertise, giving advice, providing training and facilitating networking opportunities. This helps organisations become fully accessible to disabled customers and employees.

For more information telephone **020 7403 3020** or <http://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/>

Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)

The EASS advises and assists individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights, across England, Scotland and Wales.

For more information telephone **0808 800 0082** or <http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/app/home>



ACAS

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) provides free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law.

For more information telephone **0300 123 1100** or www.acas.org.uk

Access to Work

Access to Work gives practical advice and support to disabled people in the workplace.

For more information telephone **0800 121 7479** or www.gov.uk/access-to-work



Assistive Technology

Assistive technologies can help with everyday literacy and organisation tasks. They include software you install on an electronic device or a specialised hardware device. Many software companies will provide free trials online, so you can try out a program before you buy it.

For more information www.bdatech.org

British Dyslexia Association

Many useful information sheets and the website has the facility to read out text.

National Helpline: 0333 405 4567

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

www.bdatech.org

Dyslexia Action

Information about Dyslexia, teaching qualifications and courses, resources and other useful information.

For more information telephone **01784 22 23 04** or www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

For a full list useful resources and contacts visit www.dyslexiacornwall.org.uk

How we can help...



Dyslexia Cornwall can help employers develop work based strategies by offering access to a range of services to support your staff.

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

Mentoring Support

We can signpost to specialist one to one mentoring services that are tailored to the needs of the individual. Mentoring is carried out by experienced dyslexia specialists registered with Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS)



Dyslexia Awareness Workshops

We offer dyslexia awareness workshops to employers, educational and training establishments and other support organisations requiring a professional understanding of dyslexia.

For a full list of services and charges visit
www.dyslexiacornwall.org.uk