



Supporting staff with Dyslexia

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a developmental condition that primarily affects reading, writing and spelling. It can also affect short-term or 'working' memory, processing speed, and the ability to organise thoughts and tasks. These difficulties can cause people to struggle to concentrate in an open plan office, forget verbal instructions and lose track easily in meetings.

Strengths associated with Dyslexia

- Creativity, originality and inventiveness
- Strong visual thinking skills
- Good at problem solving and seeing the 'big picture'
- Resilience and determination

Common challenges associated with Dyslexia

No two people with Dyslexia have the same experience or have the same strengths and challenges. The most common core features of Dyslexia include:

- Difficulty reading quickly and accurately
- Making spelling errors or missing out information/key words in written documents
- Slow processing speed
- Poor organisational skills e.g. prioritising tasks, meeting deadlines
- Poor short-term working memory
- Difficulty in structuring writing

How can staff get assessed?

Adult assessments are carried out by specialist psychologists. Your manager may agree to fund this as a reasonable adjustment. Contact Dyslexia Scotland for a list of local assessors.

Reasonable adjustments at work

Effective adjustments will be specific to individuals. Ask the person what they find harder to do and what has helped previously. Adjustments to be considered include:

- Adapting working hours e.g. flexi-time or longer hours with more breaks within the day
- Locating the individual's desk in an area away from the main flow of 'traffic' in the office
- Using dividers between desks or providing noise-cancelling headphones to cut out sounds
- Providing in advance any material to be read for meetings
- Providing templates for written work
- Encouraging the use of spell-checking, proof-reading and text-to-speech software to aid reading and writing
- Providing clear, written instructions and avoiding 'corridor conversations' about work tasks
- Arranging brief, regular meetings to check progress on tasks
- Breaking tasks into parts and being clear about the priority of tasks given

A more extensive list of reasonable adjustments can be found at:

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/adjustments_and_management_strategies_to_support_neurodiverse_staff.pdf

External support:

Dyslexia Scotland – <https://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/>

British Dyslexia Association - <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>