



Supporting staff with Dyspraxia

What is Dyspraxia?

Dyspraxia is a developmental coordination disorder that affects fine and/or gross motor skills, coordination and balance. It may also affect speech.

Strengths associated with Dyspraxia

- Empathy
- Resilience and determination
- Advanced verbal comprehension
- Good problem solving skills
- Good long term memory

Common challenges associated with Dyspraxia

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

- Difficulties with handwriting, and with tasks that need fine and accurate movements
- Difficulties with skills requiring balance
- Poor short-term working memory
- Slow processing speed, including reading and speech
- Poor organisational skills e.g. prioritising tasks, meeting deadlines
- Sensory sensitivity/altered sensory perception, which can affect concentration

How can staff get assessed?

Adult assessments are usually carried out by an Occupational Therapist. A GP referral is needed for this. If a person is being assessed for dyslexia by a specialist psychologist, initial screening for dyspraxia is often undertaken at the same time.

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:

- 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
- Supporting individuals to organise their desk, and providing footrests to aid balance
- Encouraging the use of spell-checking, proof-reading and text-to-speech software to aid reading and writing
- Arranging brief, regular meetings to check progress on tasks
- Setting up a diary system, task lists and reminders/alarms
- Breaking tasks into parts and being clear about the priority of tasks given
- Providing time to practice tasks, and automating processes where possible

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:

Dyspraxia Foundation - <https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>