Dyslexia in the workplace...
a guide for employers

Dyslexia Action
Taking Action • Changing Lives
www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk
Dyslexia primarily affects the ability to learn to read and spell, and sometimes maths is affected too.

It comes from a difficulty in dealing with the sounds of words, which makes it especially hard to learn to read words using phonics (sounding out the letters in a word).

People with dyslexia often find it hard to remember lists of things they have heard, or to remember a name or a fact quickly, although they often have individual strengths in reasoning, visual and creative fields.

It is important to remember dyslexia is not related to general intelligence and is not the same for everyone. It can be mild or severe; and it varies depending on other strengths, or difficulties, that the person may have.

More importantly, it varies depending on the kind of support and encouragement from friends, family, teachers and colleagues.

What is Dyslexia Action?

Dyslexia Action is a national charity with over 40 years’ experience in providing services and support to children, young people and adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties, dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties. We provide assessments and tuition through our national Learning Centres and in schools across the country, alongside supporting teachers and educators through the provision of teaching resources and training. We also undertake research and campaigning to improve the lives of those affected by dyslexia.
Why is it important that your organisation understands dyslexia?

People with dyslexia often have problems with reading and spelling. However, some adults with dyslexia are fluent readers but their dyslexia may show in their writing, short-term memory, organisational skills, maths abilities and the speed and way that they process information. All of these may impact on performance at work and the effect of dyslexia can worsen when an individual is experiencing stress.

- Approximately 10% of the general population is affected by dyslexia to varying degrees, and this will include a significant number of your staff, colleagues, customers and trainees.
- Some people with dyslexia have strengths in particular areas such as creativity and seeing the bigger picture; awareness of these strengths may benefit your organisation.
- Dyslexia may prevent staff from gaining qualifications, accessing training or applying for promotions.
- Making an organisation dyslexia-friendly can reduce stress, staff turnover and sick leave.
- Adjustments made for staff with dyslexia can improve motivation, loyalty and efficiency.
- Your organisation should be able to demonstrate that it is making reasonable adjustments to meet the requirements of disability legislation.
- By making your services dyslexia-friendly, you can benefit staff and customers.
**Workplace Consultancy and Coaching**

We offer workplace consultancy and coaching to help employers and their staff with all the implications of dyslexia in the workplace.

Our focus is on identifying and developing strengths and the supportive management of weaknesses for each individual.

Dyslexia Action provide support to both employer and employee including mentoring which may involve help with organisation, report writing and presentations, alongside strategies for Reasonable Adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010.

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**What happens during a workplace consultation?**

- A picture of personal strengths and weaknesses can help explain why some aspects of a job role may be causing problems, leading to a discussion of possible accommodations or adjustments. This is done through an assessment or screening, the completion of workplace questionnaires by employers and employees and observations carried out in the workplace by one of our consultants.

- Findings will be considered in the context of the job role, the organisation, culture and environment. Strategies and adjustments will then be advised alongside recommendations for supporting the individual employee, which will be communicated both verbally and as a written report.

- Continued support and coping strategies training, coaching or awareness training for staff will be offered if deemed appropriate, or at the employer’s request. Solutions will be varied due to the different skills needed for job roles and individual profiles of dyslexia. Very often, simple adjustments and strategies will be all that is needed to improve an employee’s performance and confidence.
The Hidden Disabilities Questionnaire

The Hidden Disabilities Questionnaire (HDQ) is a screening tool that highlights features of the most common hidden disabilities including Dyslexia, Dyspraxia (DCD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

It is not a diagnostic test, but can be used to identify individuals who may need adaptations or reasonable adjustments to help with work or in education. It can also identify those who need further/more detailed assessment.

The HDQ can be delivered by Dyslexia Action staff, or we can train key people in the workplace to deliver it. An online scoring resource is available which gives an individual report and advice on strategies that can help with the particular difficulties covered in the HDQ.

As an organisation, what is your responsibility?

Dyslexia is recognised under the Disability Discrimination Act

Dyslexia was recognised under the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995 and is still specifically mentioned in the more recent Equality Act (2010). This means that educational and workplace settings have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that those affected by dyslexia are not disadvantaged compared to their peers.
Is there any other support?

Access to Work grants can cover, or go towards, a range of practical solutions to problems faced by disabled people in the workplace. For example:

- Adaptations to equipment
- Special equipment
- Fares to work if the employee cannot use public transport
- A support worker or job coach to help in the workplace
- A support service for any mental health conditions or if the employee is absent from work or finding it difficult to work
- Disability awareness training
- A communicator at a job interview.

For more information on Access to Work; what you’ll get; eligibility and how to claim visit: [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work).

The Dyslexia Action Online Resources Shop

Our online shop sells a number of resources to support people with specific learning difficulties. You can find our range of products at: [www.dyslexiaactionshop.co.uk](http://www.dyslexiaactionshop.co.uk).

For further information about our services, visit [www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)
Fees
Please contact your nearest Dyslexia Action Learning Centre for a free initial discussion and advice about the next steps for support.

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*All our practitioner psychologists are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council and meet their standards.

The information in this leaflet was correct at the time of print (September, 2014) Dyslexia Action is the working name for Dyslexia Institute Limited, a charity registered in England and Wales (No. 268502) and Scotland (No. SC039177) and registered in England and Wales as a company (No. 01179975).