

What is dyslexia?

It is estimated that 1 in 10 people has dyslexia.

Dyslexia exists in all cultures and across the range of abilities and backgrounds. Dyslexia often runs in the family. There is no 'cure' but lots of practical things can help overcome some of the barriers it presents. Dyslexia is a learning 'difference', which means that the brain can approach things in a different way to other people. Dyslexia can affect the way people communicate, and is different for everyone. It is not just about reading and writing and it has nothing to do with intelligence. Dyslexia is classed as a disability under the Equality Act.

Unidentified, dyslexia can result in low self-esteem, stress, behavioural problems, and underachievement. But with the right support, children and adults with dyslexia can reach their potential. Learners with dyslexia will benefit from early identification, appropriate intervention and targeted effective teaching. Adults with dyslexia will benefit from reasonable adjustments in the workplace such as using assistive technology.

Strengths associated with Dyslexia

Can be very creative and good at practical tasks.



Strong visual thinking skills such as being able to visualise a structure from plans.



Good verbal skills and social interaction.



Good at problem solving, thinking outside the box, seeing 'the whole picture'.



Difficulties associated with Dyslexia

Problems with reading, taking notes, remembering numbers, names and details.



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Difficulty with time keeping, organising work or managing projects.



ABC

Difficulties with spelling and writing.



Short-term memory problems and sequencing difficulties such as following instructions or directions.

It is important to remember that everyone with dyslexia is different and that they will not necessarily experience all of the things above. Everyone has different strengths, difficulties and strategies that work for them.

In 2009, the Scottish Government, Dyslexia Scotland and the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia in the Scottish Parliament agreed a working definition of dyslexia:

“Dyslexia can be described as a continuum of difficulties in learning to read, write and/or spell, which persist despite the provision of appropriate learning opportunities. These difficulties often do not reflect an individual’s cognitive abilities and may not be typical of performance in other areas. The impact of dyslexia as a barrier to learning varies in degree according to the learning and teaching environment, as there are often associated difficulties”.

(The full definition is available on Dyslexia Scotland’s website).

What is the right support?

Support should take account of the learning styles and individual needs of the child or adult. Sometimes asking the person with dyslexia to suggest solutions to problems can produce simple but effective results. Things that can help are:

- Early identification and provision of appropriate support as soon as possible
- Peer support for help with reading/writing activities
- Use of mind-mapping or flow charts for project management
- Regular tasks and instructions broken down into graphics
- Use of coloured overlays and coloured paper
- Assistive Technology for reading, writing and recording of information

Dyslexia Scotland runs a confidential Helpline which can offer advice and information about dyslexia. Anyone can contact the Helpline. Phone 0344 800 8484 or email helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk (Monday – Thursday 10am – 4.30pm, Friday 10am – 4pm)

Further information

- *Dyslexia: A Beginner’s Guide* by Nicola Brunswick
- *Dyslexia and Us: a collection of personal stories* by Dyslexia Scotland
- Dyslexia Scotland has produced a wide range of leaflets on dyslexia which you can see at: www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/leaflets



Dyslexia Scotland

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