

What is dyslexia?

With the right support, children and adults with dyslexia can achieve as much as anyone else. Learners with dyslexia will benefit from early identification, appropriate intervention and targeted effective teaching, enabling them to become successful learners, confident individuals and effective contributors. Dyslexia can affect the way people communicate, and it's different for everyone. It is not just about reading and writing and it is not an indication of low intelligence.

It is estimated that 1 in 10 people are dyslexic. Dyslexia exists in all cultures and across the range of abilities and socio-economic backgrounds. It is a hereditary, life-long, neurodevelopmental condition and is classed as a disability under the Equality Act. Unidentified, dyslexia can result in low self esteem, high stress, behavioural problems, and low achievement.

Strengths associated with Dyslexia

Can be very creative and enjoy practical tasks.



Strong visual thinking skills e.g. see/think in 3D, visualise a structure from plans.



Good verbal skills and good social interaction.



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



Weaknesses associated with Dyslexia

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



Difficulty with time keeping, managing time, organising work etc.



Problems with written work e.g. spelling and writing.



Short-term memory problems, sequencing difficulties e.g. following /giving instructions, directions.



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 coloured overlays and coloured paper
- ◆ Information and Computer Technology (ICT) for reading, writing and recording of information

It is important to remember that everyone with dyslexia is different and that they will have different strengths, weaknesses and strategies that work for them.

More 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 range of leaflets on dyslexia. See our website to download free copies. www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk 0844 800 84 84

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