

Construction Industry and Dyslexia

Employment & Workplace

Dyslexia is a difficulty with reading, writing and/or spelling. Individuals may also experience challenges with their short-term and working memory as well as with their communication and organisational skills.

An unidentified dyslexic person may be employed in a job that hides their difficulties with reading, spelling or writing. We estimate that around 20,000 people within the construction industry could be dyslexic – many may be unaware that there is a name for the difficulties that they may be having at work or at home.

Strengths associated with Dyslexia

Can be very creative and enjoy practical tasks.



Strong visual thinking skills – see or think in 3D, visualise a structure from plans.



Good verbal skills and good social interaction.



Good at problem solving, thinking outside the box and 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, managing time, organising work.



ABC

Problems with written work, such as spelling and writing.



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

What is the right support?

Support should take account of individual needs. Some people may be concerned that if they talk about dyslexia at work, they may face discrimination. However, as dyslexia is classed as a disability under the Equality Act, employers have an obligation to support their employees. An employee should think about how dyslexia affects them at work and let their employer know what support or strategies may help them. They may need help to do this.

Case Study

How might dyslexia affect someone working in the construction industry?

A young dyslexic man has an open job offer of construction work, but needs to have the construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) card to start. He has failed the test several times. What he finds difficult, because of his dyslexia, is the reading required in the test. He finds technical words difficult (such as 'respiratory', 'operative'). If a question is too technical or requires specific knowledge, he can get frustrated.

Reasonable Adjustments in place:

- Now uses headphones to help him practise the test.
- Specially prepared worksheets on coloured paper (due to visual stress) help him to break down the information.
- Practises using laminated cards to help him remember fire extinguishers and signs.
- Job Centre Plus support - helping him to investigate how to fund and apply for his CSCS test.
- Recently passed a practice test for the first time - this has boosted his confidence.

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.

Thanks to West Lothian Council for permission to use their case study.

More information

Dyslexia Scotland has produced a range of leaflets on dyslexia. See our website to download free copies. www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

- Useful leaflets include: 'Guide for employees', 'Dyslexia - a guide for employers', 'Assessments for Adults', 'Dyslexia - a guide for students' and 'Guide for lecturing staff in University or College'
- If you would like to discuss how dyslexia could be affecting the way you work or are an employer looking for guidance, please call the Dyslexia Scotland Helpline on 0344 800 8484. Our helpful advisors are available Monday to Thursday 10am to 4:30pm or Friday 10am to 4pm. You can also email helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk
- The STUC Disabled Workers Committee has a useful brief guide to support Union members with dyslexia. The guide can be found in the Useful Links section of our website.



Dyslexia Scotland

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