

Dyslexia – a guide for employers

Do you have a member of staff who fits some of these descriptions?

- Great problem solver but written reports are not up to standard
- Good with clients but unable to organise their diary/set tasks
- Fails to follow written or oral descriptions properly
- Excellent at practical aspects but paperwork is untidy or is misplaced
- Makes lots of errors copying information
- Makes unexpected spelling mistakes
- Reliable and able team member but reluctant to take up training opportunities
- Becomes stressed due to changes in job, in particular written work or reports

Some of these things might indicate that your employee has dyslexia. They are likely to have developed coping strategies which could break down if extra stress builds up or if their job changes.

4 Simple things you can do to help your employee

Good communication - encourage staff to talk about any workplace difficulties and let them know you want to support them. Ask them if there are things that they think might help them do their job. Very often, small changes can make a big difference.

Assessment - There are simple screening tests available for you and your employee to use. Whilst these might give an indication of dyslexia, further testing by an Educational Psychologist or Occupational Psychologist would give more in-depth information. Funding is not readily available for this but ask your employee if they have been assessed before and if there is a copy of a report.

Access to Work - this programme, arranged through the Job Centre, can provide appropriate aids and equipment for employees with dyslexia. They will carry out a work place assessment of the individual's needs. They might meet the partial, or full, costs of what they recommend depending on the size of your company. Your employee should apply for this through the Disability Employment Adviser at their own local Job Centre Plus. For more information go to: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Some examples of aids an employee with dyslexia may find useful are:

- Voice recognition software to convert speech into text
- Text to speech software to read documents
- A scanner for longer documents to use with text to speech software
- A digital recorder (for meetings)

Reasonable Adjustments - reasonable adjustments are changes that you can make to help your employee do their job. Examples of reasonable adjustments could be:

- Demonstrations of tasks if applicable (hands-on learning and repetition are useful for people with dyslexia)
- Additional assessment arrangements may be permitted if qualifications are being taken

- Low cost/no cost ICT solutions are available to help with reading and writing
- Breaking tasks into smaller chunks
- Use of flow charts or images instead of text
- Supplying laminated instructions where possible to help with memory
- Supplying templates of any documents required, for example taking telephone messages

Remember, your employee might have used some of these solutions in the past and might be the best person to talk to about what could help.

You should also aim to raise general awareness about dyslexia with work colleagues and line managers, for example through training around dyslexia, or by distributing our leaflets in your workplace. Make sure that adjustments are agreed and put in place and check that they are working. Dyslexia Scotland can provide training in the workplace

Benefits of reasonable adjustments:

- Help realise the strengths of your workforce
- Improve efficiency and the service you offer to customers and clients
- Encourage staff to access training
- Improve motivation and maintain loyalty of staff
- Reduce stress, staff turnover and sick leave

Remember, adjustments made for some staff will often benefit all staff.

Should I approach an employee I think might have dyslexia?

That can depend on the relationship between you and your employee. Your employee might not know that they have dyslexia and it could be a sensitive topic. You should only discuss workload and how to manage it in the first instance. You could offer to make changes or provide resources if this would help. Your employee might already have considered these.

Please note that the examples in this leaflet are not exhaustive. Every person is different and will require different approaches.

More information

- **'Dyslexia: A guide for employees'**, Dyslexia Scotland
- **'What is dyslexia?'**, Dyslexia Scotland
- **'Assessments for adults'**, Dyslexia Scotland

See all of our leaflets at www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/our-leaflets

