

Factsheet – Dyscalculia.

What is dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a persistent difficulty in the understanding of numbers and maths concepts. It is often described as having 'poor number sense'.

It affects the parts of the brain that deal with numbers and reasoning.

How common is dyscalculia?

It is estimated that between 4-6 per cent of people have dyscalculia. This is likely to be an underestimation due to the lack of recognition and research into it until fairly recently.

There is also a strong overlap with other neurodiverse conditions. For example, the British Dyslexia Association states that 60 per cent of dyslexic people have difficulties with maths.

As with all of the neurodiversity labels, it affects people of all ages and abilities regardless of level of education and intelligence.

Common strengths.

Below are some commonly associated strengths. Nobody will experience them all:

- Big picture thinking
- Strategic thinking
- Problem-solving
- Language-related tasks
- Creativity.

Potential impact on work.

Number skills are seen as an essential life skill and for people who have dyscalculia, the challenges and barriers can have a widespread impact on their life. Below are some commonly associated challenges. Nobody will experience them all:

- Ability to tell the time
- Calculating time – such as for schedules and projects

- Spreadsheets
- Understanding graphs and charts
- Finances – budgeting, working out tips, completing taxes and expense forms
- Basic calculations – adding up total costs, converting minutes into hours or days, fractions, working out medicine doses and times
- Measuring – especially if changing having to work out different amounts, such as doubling or halving a recipe
- Working out alternative ways to solve maths problems
- Understanding and following maths equations and formulae such as algebra.

Workplace adjustments for dyscalculia.

Everyone with dyscalculia experiences their condition differently. The right adjustments will depend on the individual, their role, their team and the wider organisation. Work with the individual, their manager and other experts such as HR and Access to Work to identify and put in place adjustments that work for the individual in their role.

Common adjustments for people with dyscalculia include:

- Providing a calculator.
- Simplifying presentations of numerical information – for example, providing summaries of tables and charts, using visual representations such as graphs and removing unnecessary data.
- Training colleagues about how to communicate numerical information (with the employee's consent).
- Providing a digital clock instead of using analogue clocks.
- Providing time management tools, such as calendars and smartphones with reminders.

Further information.

National Numeracy.

A UK-based charity that provides tools and support for people of all ages with dyscalculia, including in the workplace.

nationalnumeracy.org.uk

Lexxic.

Lexxic is a specialist psychological consultancy that can advise on supporting neurodivergent employees.

lexxic.com

Genius Within.

Genius Within has a team of neurodiversity specialists that can support employers and individuals.

geniuswithin.org

Access to Work.

Access to Work is a UK Government initiative that aims to support people with disabilities get jobs and stay in work. It does this by providing employers with grants for specific support for a named disabled employee or candidate. Access to Work does not arrange or supply the support directly.

Access to Work also conducts workplace assessments as part of this process, to work out what barriers the employee or candidate is facing and what will help address them.

Access to Work also offers a Mental Health Support Service.

gov.uk/access-to-work