

Factsheet – Dyslexia.

What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a condition that affects a person's ability to read and write. It can also affect working memory and organisational skills. It does not affect a person's intelligence.

There is no universally accepted definition of dyslexia. However, it is generally understood to cause:

- Difficulty reading quickly and accurately
- Difficulty writing and spelling words correctly
- Difficulties with organisation and time management.

There are other strengths and challenges associated with dyslexia – see below for more information.

How common is dyslexia?

It is estimated that 10-15 per cent of the global population is dyslexic. The percentage differs with some countries stating 20 per cent and others less than 10 per cent. This is due to the ways data is collected, culture, access to assessments and other factors.

It is believed that about 40 per cent of the prison population are dyslexic and 35 per cent of entrepreneurs.

It often runs in families and some research has suggested a genetic link.

Dyslexia is present in all ages, genders, social classes, race, and intelligence levels.

Common strengths

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

- Big picture thinking
- seeing links and similarities
- problem-solving and gap analysis
- visual processing and thinking styles – some people are able to visualise in 3-D, impossible figures

- empathy
- communication skills
- creativity
- resilience and tenacity
- spotting ambiguities

Potential impact on work.

Someone with dyslexia may also experience difficulties at work, such as:

- Slower reading speed.
- Poorer reading accuracy.
- Poorer writing accuracy – for example spelling, grammar.
- Difficulty with organisation, prioritisation, and planning – written work and general.
- Difficulty sequencing tasks – what needs to happen first before something else can be done.
- Difficulty with auditory processing – understanding and remembering multiple requests, for example.
- Poorer short-term working memory – for example, remembering that they were asked to do something in a meeting earlier.
- Difficulty learning and remembering new information if not in preferred learning style.
- Lower self-esteem and self-confidence. This may mean that they do not speak up when they see or identify a problem or other way of doing things.

Workplace adjustments for dyslexia.

Everyone with dyslexia 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 dyslexia include:

- Providing speech-to-text and/or text-to-speech software
- Providing documents in alternative formats – for example on coloured paper or in different fonts
- Assistive equipment – such as ergonomic pens, ergonomic keyboards and screen readers
- Allowing the individual to change their computer screen colour configuration
- Recording meetings so they don't have to rely on taking notes

- Providing a quiet working space or allowing them to work from home.

Further information.

British Dyslexia Association.

The British Dyslexia Association is a national charity that provides a range of services including assessments, training and a support helpline.

bdadyslexia.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