

Guidance on Supporting Employees with Dyslexia

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) is committed to equality and diversity for all its employees and service users and has 'treating people fairly' as one of its core values. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires all public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have protected characteristics and those who do not.
- 1.2 NCC also has a duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 which also covers the protected characteristics including disability. Dyslexia may be considered a disability if it meets the legal definition of 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.
- 1.3 This guidance is designed as a resource for managers to support an employee who has or suspects they may have Dyslexia. It can also be used as a support framework for such employees and to increase employee awareness of Dyslexia.

2.0 Employing and Retaining Employees with Dyslexia

- 2.1 NCC's commitment to employing and retaining employees with a disability is demonstrated through a number of measures as identified in section C9 of the Personnel Handbook ['Disability – Employment'](#) and in respect of recruitment is covered by C10 of the Personnel Handbook ['Guidelines for Managers in Employing Disabled People'](#). The ['Recruitment and Selection – Guidelines on Good Practice'](#) Policy is also compliant in ensuring that candidates with a disability are not disadvantaged in the recruitment process.
- 2.2 Alongside this is NCC's commitment to being a dyslexia-friendly organisation and to hold policies and procedures which ensure both that managers have access to appropriate advice and guidance to implement necessary support or adjustments and that employees know where to access support. This guidance hopes to serve both managers and employees with a framework for such advice and support.

3.0 What is Dyslexia?

- 3.1 Dyslexia is defined in the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) Code of Practice for Employers as

“a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling and writing. It is a persistent condition.

Accompanying weaknesses may be identified in areas of speed of processing, short-term memory, organisation, sequencing, spoken language and motor skills. There may be difficulties with auditory and /or visual perception. It is particularly related to mastering and using written language, which may include alphabetic, numeric and musical notation.

Dyslexia can occur despite normal intellectual ability and teaching. It is constitutional in origin, part of one's make-up and independent of socio-economic or language background.

Some learners have very well developed creative skills and/or interpersonal skills, others have strong oral skills. Some have no outstanding talents. All have strengths.”

Dyslexia is therefore not a medical condition.

4.0 Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia

- 4.1 Dyspraxia, as defined by the Dyspraxia Foundation (<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>) is 'a form of developmental coordination disorder (DCD) [which] is a common disorder affecting fine and/or gross motor coordination in children and adults. It may also affect speech'.
- 4.2 Employees who have or suspect they have Dyspraxia and feel this impacts upon them in their daily life including in work are advised to firstly consult their GP who may refer them to other appropriate medical agencies. Support is also available through the Dyspraxia Foundation.
- 4.3 Further advice may be available through Occupational Health if an employee has or suspects they have Dyspraxia and has sought appropriate medical intervention, in terms of any support or adjustments which may support an employee whilst in work. Further advice is available for employers on supporting an individual with Dyspraxia on the Dyspraxia Foundation website (<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/dyspraxia-adults/workplace-employers/>).
- 4.4 Dyscalculia, as defined by the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), is 'usually perceived of as a specific learning difficulty for mathematics, or, more appropriately, arithmetic'. Further, that 'developmental dyscalculia (DD) is a specific learning disorder that is characterised by impairments in learning basic arithmetic facts, processing numerical magnitude and performing accurate and fluent calculations'. It is reported on the BDA website that Developmental Dyscalculia often occurs in association with other developmental disorders such as dyslexia, typically as a consequence of similar risk factors such as working memory.
- 4.5 Employees who have or suspect they have Dyscalculia and feel this impacts upon them in their daily life including in work are advised to contact their GP who may refer to them appropriate agencies, and further information and references of support is also available through the British Dyslexia Association (<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexic/dyscalculia>). As described on the BDA website, to diagnose Dyspraxia via a single diagnostic test can be difficult given the varied nature of the difficulties. It is also possible, as indicated in paragraph 4.4, that Dyslexia and Dyscalculia are both present. Further avenues to pursue appropriate assessment and diagnosis of such conditions is available through the BDA website.
- 4.6 Where an employee states that they have or suspect they may have Dyscalculia or Dyspraxia which is impacting upon them whilst in work, and it hasn't been possible to identify and locally agree adjustments to remove this difficulty, it is likely that a Workplace Needs Assessment will be required. Please refer to section 8.
- 4.7 Information relating to other associated conditions such as Dysgraphia and Auditory Processing Disorder is available at:
- <http://dysgraphia.org.uk/> (for dysgraphia)
 - <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/auditory-processing-disorder/Pages/Introduction.aspx> (for auditory processing disorder).

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 There are a number of parties likely to be involved in the provision of support to an employee with dyslexia.

- 5.2 The **employee** themselves have a role in ensuring that they seek appropriate advice and support from their line manager, particularly where they are experiencing difficulties as a result of their dyslexia and this impacts upon their performance within the role.
- 5.3 The **Line Manager** has a primary duty in ensuring that all employees are supported within their role and that employees feel able to approach them for such support. The Line Manager therefore needs to ensure that there is continuous dialogue within a support and supervision framework, and where an employee does have a condition which may impact upon them within work, ensure that this is discussed appropriately with the individual. This is to ensure that the employee has a forum in which to discuss their difficulties, and that support and adjustments are up-to-date and effective. It is also a Line Managers responsibility to ensure that appropriate medical and / or HR advice is sought.
- 5.4 The **HR Service** have a duty to ensure that the policies and procedures of NCC are fit for purpose, legally compliant and provide the relevant advice to managers. The HR Service also have a duty to provide appropriate advice and support to managers in effectively managing staff, including advice around seeking and implementing appropriate advice.
- 5.5 **Occupational Health Advisors** are able to offer advice to managers, HR and employees in relation to Dyslexia however they are unable to undertake assessments. Such specialist interventions would normally be undertaken by organisations such as the Dyslexia Association or British Dyslexia Association. Whilst Occupational Health are unlikely to be able to offer specific advice on adjustments (as these will arrive from a dyslexia assessment and workplace needs assessment), they may be able to offer advice and support to employees and managers of employees who are experiencing any medical related impact of their dyslexia, for example anxiety or stress.
- 5.6 Should employees be members of **Trade Unions**, there is a range of support and advice on offer to support employees who have or suspect they have Dyslexia. Trade Unions are able to support staff to recognise where Dyslexia may be the cause of any workplace difficulties and to support the employee to raise this with their manager.
- 5.7 The [Disabled Employees Support Network](#) is also a source of support for employees who have a disability, including those with Dyslexia. As stated on the intranet page of the Network, 'DESN was formed by and for NCC's disabled employees to be able to meet and provide a "safe and confidential" forum to discuss relevant issues and share information. The network acts to provide mutual support for its members and to discuss issues of common importance as well as exchanging ideas'.

6.0 Diagnosis and Disclosure

- 6.1 There is no legal requirement for an employee or prospective employee to disclose a disability. Indeed it is recognised that many people who have or may have dyslexia have not been diagnosed as such, may not recognise dyslexia as a disability and some may not be aware that any difficulties they are experiencing relate to dyslexia. In some cases, the first sign can be experiencing difficulties in the workplace with particular job-related tasks.
- 6.2 It is hoped that employees of NCC feel able to disclose to their employer any diagnosis or suspected dyslexia in order that appropriate support and adjustments can be considered. Once disclosed, NCC have a duty to consider reasonable adjustments where a condition is or is likely to be covered by the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.3 If you are an employee and suspect you may have dyslexia, there are a number of online tools and screening tests to support you to identify if you may have dyslexia. Further information and screening

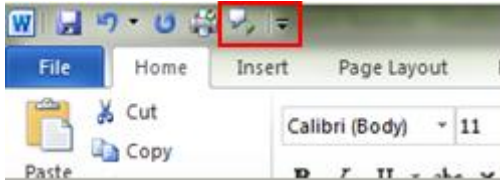
tools are available through the BDA (<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/screening>) or the Dyslexia Association (Nottingham-based) (<http://www.dyslexia.uk.net/services/dyslexia-screening-adults/>). A free 'adult checklist' is available through the BDA website (also attached as Appendix 1). Whilst this will not diagnose dyslexia, the checklist may help identify whether further, fuller assessment is required.

- 6.4 If after completion of the checklist at Appendix 1 an employee has a score of 45 or over, this is an indicator that the individual is showing signs consistent with dyslexia to varying degrees. This is an indicator therefore that, to diagnose dyslexia, further assessment would be required. Given assessments can be a difficult process and are lengthy (usually a half-day session for adults), employees may not want to go through this process unless this is significantly impacting upon them in their lives. Of course there are a number of measures individuals can take themselves to manage their dyslexia which in a lot of cases are enough to resolve the difficulty. However if dyslexia is impacting upon someone within their role in carrying out their duties and potentially impacting upon their performance, managers should take appropriate steps to encourage staff to obtain an independent assessment through advisors such as the British Dyslexia Association or the Dyslexia Association (based in Nottingham).
- 6.5 Employees and Managers are encouraged to jointly discuss and collate the difficulties an employee faces in their daily life and job role before any diagnostic or workplace needs assessment takes place. This is to ensure that best use is made of the assessment and appropriate strategies considered in light of the job role.
- 6.6 Managers are also encouraged to seek HR advice where the indications are that an employee is in need of a diagnostic assessment, where an employee is struggling to meet the cost of an assessment and / or where an employee is in need of assistance to access an appropriate assessment.
- 6.7 Whilst NCC do not as a matter of course fund assessments for Dyslexia, managers are able to consider without precedent, and with HR advice and appropriate authorisation within their department, funding the cost of an assessment for an employee. The cost for the assessment would need to be met by the relevant departmental budget.
- 6.8 Managers are also able to consider, with appropriate authorisation within their department, loaning the cost of an assessment to an employee to pay for an assessment, and for a repayment plan to be agreed and instigated through payroll.

7.0 Self-help tools

- 7.1 It is likely that anyone who has dyslexia, either diagnosed or undiagnosed, has over time developed their own strategies to manage their dyslexia in a given situation e.g. work. It is also likely that, in a lot of cases, these strategies are enough to remove the difficulty or disadvantage caused. The BDA highlights a number of adjustments which individuals and managers can consider and implement without the need for any external involvement. These can be found on the BDA website via the following link: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/employer/reasonable-adjustments>
- 7.2 It is impossible to list all the possible support or adjustments which can be made to support someone with dyslexia, as each individual is different, as will their needs be. It would also not be correct to assume that the difficulties an employee with Dyslexia faces relate purely to reading and writing, with many multi-faceted difficulties being possible. However, there are some tools, software and apps which can be considered 'quick-wins' if an employee experiences difficulties which can be addressed with technology, including:

- A facility within Microsoft Office 2013 products including Word, Outlook and Excel called 'Speak'. This facility reads out any highlighted text within Office 2013 documents. It is extremely easy to add to the toolbar and use. Whilst it does not read text in other formats (e.g. internet pages or PDF documents), text can be cut and pasted into a word document and can be read from there. This is accessed via the quick access toolbar at the top of the screen:



- Click 'Customize Quick Access Toolbar and select 'More Commands'.
 - Select 'All Commands' in the 'Choose Commands From' column and scroll down to 'Speak'.
 - Select 'Speak' and click 'Add', then click 'OK'.
 - Select the text you want to read out, and click the 'Speak' command at the top of the page (speech bubble).
- Read and Write Gold which includes spell-checkers, word predictors and screen readers.
 - Global Autocorrect which is specifically built to understand how an individual with dyslexia may spell a word and is programmed to correct this as you type.
 - AudioNote – available on PC's, iPad's and iPhones and combines note-taking and voice recording to create notes linked to the recording made.
 - Other useful iPhone and iPad Apps can be found at: <http://bdatech.org/what-technology/small-portable-devices/apps/>
 - Tinted paper, reading rulers and monitor overlays are available via: [www.crossboweducation.com/tinted%20 exercise books.htm](http://www.crossboweducation.com/tinted%20exercise%20books.htm)
 - An employee may also benefit from undertaking a learning style self-assessment to understand how they learn best, further information is available via: <http://www.howtolearn.com/learning-styles-quiz>

The above adjustments could also be identified as a result of an assessment. **It is essential that you contact the ICT department before ordering any software or hardware packages to ensure you comply with procurement and compatibility protocols.**

7.3 Further simple tips which may assist an employee with dyslexia with text include:

- Using size 12 / 14 font, in a clear font style e.g. Arial, Calibri, including changing text size settings on computer menus and webpages
- Using 1.5 or double spacing to create space between text, use space between phone numbers e.g. 0115 977 4433
- Use spell check and thesaurus within Microsoft packages. If there is a word you continually miss-spell, add it to the Autocorrect screen: File > options > Proofing > Autocorrect Options
- Using **bold** to accentuate text rather than underlining or *italics* which make text appear to run together
- Use bullet points, lists, and glossaries to keep text simple and uncluttered
- Avoid use of jargon and keep sentences succinct. Use shorter sentences rather than over-simplifying
- Try out different screen background colours – a paler colour may help.
- Consider the use of checklists or template documents as a reminder in visits or phone calls
- Consider use of diagrams or flowcharts to demonstrate processes, including screen-shots e.g. if entering information onto a database, demonstrating what the data should look like

8.0 Reasonable Adjustments and Workplace Needs Assessment

- 8.1 It is recognised by NCC that appropriate support and, where necessary, reasonable adjustments, can enable an employee experiencing difficulties in their role due to dyslexia to fulfil their role satisfactorily. Such difficulties could represent concerns about the individuals' performance. Managers therefore need to be mindful of any disclosed condition or the possibility of there being a condition behind apparent performance concerns, and seek to identify and support employees to remove such difficulties with reasonable adjustments.
- 8.2 It is impossible to define what would be a 'reasonable' adjustment, as this is very much dependent on the individuals needs and ultimately it is for an Employment Tribunal to determine the reasonableness of an adjustment. However, in the context of dyslexia, a reasonable adjustment may fit into the category of particular equipment or software, an adjustment to the duties of the role itself, or in some cases, an assessment as to whether dyslexia is present. As discussed under 6.7, NCC will not as a matter of course fund assessments to diagnose dyslexia. This is because it is recognised that there are a number of alternative avenues an individual can pursue to access such an assessment. However, managers may consider funding assessments on an individual case by case basis, with appropriate HR advice, where for example the employees' performance is being considered within a performance management framework.
- 8.3 Managers are reminded of the requirement under Section 4 of the Performance Management Policy to 'consider whether poor performance could be related to a disability and, if so, whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to an employee's working arrangements, including changing duties or providing additional equipment or training',
- 8.4 Should a diagnosis of dyslexia be made as a result of an assessment or disclosed by an employee, and the employee is in need of particular adjustments, it is likely that a further assessment will need to be made. This assessment would consider how the dyslexia may affect the employee within their role and what support and / or reasonable adjustments will support the employee.
- 8.5 Such a Workplace Needs Assessment can either be undertaken by Access to Work or a Dyslexia specialist such as the BDA or The Dyslexia Association. This process should involve the employee, the manager and the assessor, and conclude with a written report of the difficulties in relation to the role itself and any support or reasonable adjustments recommended.
- 8.6 Managers are advised to seek the support and advice of the [HR Team](#) in considering reasonable adjustments.

9.0 Access to Work

- 9.1 [Access to Work](#) are a Government-run service who provide grants to pay for practical support for individuals who have a disability, health or mental health condition where such support will enable the individual to obtain or remain in work. Any grant awarded would be used to fund or part-fund any specialist equipment required, physical adaptations to the workplace and / or training for the employee and / or colleagues.
- 9.2 An eligible employee can make a claim to Access to Work directly; employers are not able to contact Access to Work on behalf of an employee. More information and contact details are available via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview>
- 9.3 Access to Work provide funding for either support or technology, however their allocation of funding for such purposes takes into account the means of the employer to fund such support or technology themselves. It is imperative that potentially eligible employees are encouraged to contact Access to

Work as soon as possible to ensure that adjustments are in place quickly, and Access to Work funding is maximised.

- 9.4 Workplace training and / or assistance in coping strategies may be fully funded by Access to Work, and Access to Work can fund a proportion of other costs related to assistive technology, software / hardware and other training.

10.0 Further Information

Access to Work - <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview>

Email: atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Phone: 0345 268 8489

British Dyslexia Association - <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

Disabled Employees Support Network - <http://intranet.nottsc.gov.uk/workingfornc/wfncc-supportforstaff/wfncc-supportgroups/corporatedisabledworkersgroup/>

Email: disabled.workers@nottsc.gov.uk

The Dyspraxia Foundation - <https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>

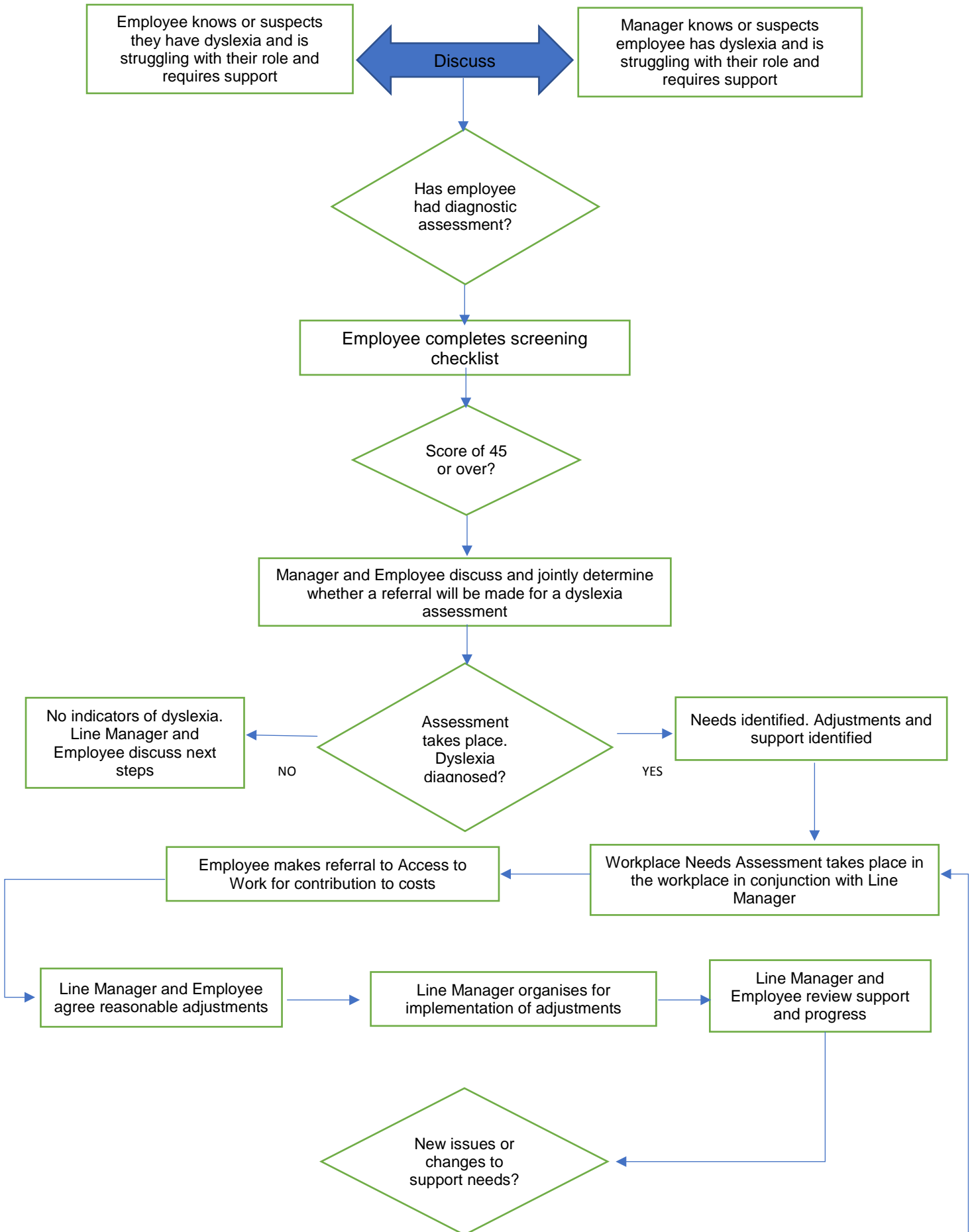
The Dyslexia Association - <http://www.dyslexia.uk.net/>

Phone: 0115 924 6888

Trade Unions

Contact details for Trade Unions can be accessed via individual Trade Union Websites, or a list of the Trade Unions and associated links to their contact details are available via the following:

<http://bigissues.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/bigissues/bigissues-linkstotradeunions/>





Adult Checklist

A checklist for dyslexic adults will not provide enough information for a diagnostic assessment, but it can be very useful in promoting a better self-understanding and a pointer towards future assessment needs.

Below are the questions that were found to be more predictive of dyslexia (as measured by prior diagnosis). In order to provide the most informative checklist, scores for each answer indicate the relative importance of that question. Alongside each line you can keep a tally of your score and at the end find a total.

For each question, circle the number in the box which is closest to your response.

		Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Most of the time
1	Do you confuse visually similar words such as cat and cot?	3	6	9	12
2	Do you lose your place or miss out lines when reading?	2	4	6	8
3	Do you confuse the names of objects, for example table for chair?	1	2	4	4
4	Do you have trouble telling left from right?	1	2	4	4
5	Is map reading or finding your way to a strange place confusing?	1	2	4	4
6	Do you re-read paragraphs to understand them?	1	2	4	4
7	Do you get confused when given several instructions at once?	1	2	4	4
8	Do you make mistakes when taking down telephone messages?	1	2	4	4
9	Do you find it difficult to find the right word to say?	1	2	4	4
10	How often do you think of creative solutions to problems?	1	2	4	4
		Easy	Challenging	Difficult	Very Difficult
11	How easy do you find it to sound out words such as e-le-phant?	3	6	9	12
12	When writing, do you find it difficult to organise thoughts on paper?	2	4	6	8
13	Did you learn your multiplication tables easily?	2	4	6	8
14	How easy do you find it to recite the alphabet?	1	2	3	4
15	How hard do you find it to read aloud?	1	2	3	4

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Results from the Adults Test – what it all means

The research and development of the checklist has provided a valuable insight into the diversity of difficulties and is a clear reminder that every individual is different and should be treated and assessed as such. However, it is also interesting to note that a number of questions, the answers to which are said to be characteristics of dyslexic adults, are commonly found in the answers of non-dyslexics.

It is important to remember that this test does not constitute an assessment of one's difficulties. It is just an indication of some of the areas in which you or the person you are assessing may have difficulties. However this questionnaire may provide a better awareness of the nature of an individual's difficulties and may indicate that further professional assessment would be helpful.

Whilst we do stress that this is not a diagnostic tool, research suggests the following:

Score less than 45 – probably non-dyslexic

Research results: no individual who was diagnosed as dyslexic through a full assessment was found to have scored less than 45 and therefore it is unlikely that if you score under 45 you will be dyslexic.

Score 45 to 60 – showing signs consistent with mild dyslexia

Research results: most of those who were in this category showed signs of being at least moderately dyslexic. However, a number of persons not previously diagnosed as dyslexic (though they could just be unrecognised and undiagnosed) fell into this category.

Score greater than 60 – signs consistent with moderate or severe dyslexia.

Research results: all those who recorded scores of more than 60 were diagnosed as moderately or severely dyslexic. Therefore we would suggest that a score greater than 60 suggests moderate or severe dyslexia. Please note that this should not be regarded as an assessment of one's difficulties. But if you feel that a dyslexia-type problem may exist, further advice should be sought.

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