

# DYSLEXIA AT WORK CHECKLIST

Dyslexia is an underlying inefficiency with processing language and information. Commonly, there are difficulties with short-term memory, organisation and literacy skills. There may be difficulties with the organisation and co-ordination of physical movement.

**Tick the boxes where you feel you have significant difficulty.**

## READING

- Reading instructions
- Reading manuals
- Reading emails / letters / reports
- Reading information on a computer screen
- Absorbing the meaning quickly from written text

## WRITING

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Filling in forms / records
- Writing notes / messages for others to read
- Writing emails / letters / reports / minutes
- Keeping handwriting legible

## MEMORY

- Remembering spoken instructions
- Remembering messages
- Passing on telephone messages correctly
- Remembering codes and numbers
- Remembering appointments and tasks

## ORGANISATION

- Timetabling tasks and prioritising activities
- Completing tasks in a logical and efficient manner
- Managing and organising incoming information
- Keeping control of paperwork
- Keeping on top of work tasks
- Expressing your ideas clearly
- Difficulty with directions and finding your way

**The difficulties with organisation and memory may also extend into everyday life. For example, do you have significant difficulty with any of the following?**

- Managing household tasks
- Managing household finances and money
- Reading instructions / bank statements / letters
- Keeping track of possessions

**Do the above difficulties make you feel any of the following?**

- Lacking in confidence
- Embarrassed
- Anxious
- Frustrated

You may wish to discuss your concerns with your local CWU Representative or Branch Secretary and then contact DAC for a consultation at:

**katherine@workingwithdyslexia.com**

**TEL: 020 7582 6117**



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# DYSLEXIA AT WORK

## INFORMATION SHEET



*The communications union*

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The term 'dyslexic' is generally used to describe people whose poor literacy skills present a marked contrast to their general ability to learn and to reason. However, most people with dyslexia find that their difficulties are not confined to dealing with written English; they may also have weaknesses in, for example, memory, sequencing ability, visual orientation, hand-eye co-ordination and organisational skills. These weaknesses affect efficiency at work in a number of ways, as detailed in the examples below:

### LITERACY SKILLS

A dyslexic person may find it hard to follow written instructions, to read quickly and efficiently, and to write memos, letters and reports in clear accurate English.

### MEMORY

Dyslexic people may have difficulty in correctly remembering telephone numbers, messages and instructions; they may find it hard to take notes or recall what was said at meetings.

### SEQUENCING ABILITY

Poor sequencing ability makes it hard for a dyslexic person to file documents in the correct sequence, to write down numbers correctly, to approach tasks in an orderly and logical way.

### VISUAL ORIENTATION

Dyslexic people may easily get lost in strange surroundings, or lose their bearings even in familiar places. They may have difficulty in dealing with complex visual arrays, such as maps, charts or tables of figures.

### HAND-EYE CO-ORDINATION

Poor hand-eye co-ordination (sometimes termed 'dyspraxia') can result in slow and untidy handwriting, poor presentation of written work or figures, and inaccurate keying on a word processor, calculator or telephone.

### SPEECH

Some dyslexic people struggle to find the right words and to express their ideas clearly, especially if put 'on the spot'. Others are able to find words easily, but may talk in an over-elaborate and disorganised way, especially in meetings or on the telephone.

### ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

Dyslexic employees may be poorly organised: they may miss appointments, get the times and places of meetings wrong, fail to meet deadlines, and generally live and work in a muddled or disorganised way.

### EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

Dyslexic people have to deal not only with their own frustration about their various inefficiencies but also with other people's lack of understanding of their difficulties. As a result they can often feel a mixture of unpleasant emotions – despair, anger, embarrassment, anxiety, lack of confidence – and, as a result, may sometimes behave in an aloof, defensive or aggressive way.

### HELP FOR DYSLEXIC DIFFICULTIES

There is no reason why dyslexic (or dyspraxic) employees should not improve their efficiency in all the areas described above. What is required is a detailed assessment of the difficulties and a comprehensive training and management programme. This should typically include advice on IT support, and help with literacy skills, work-related reading and writing, memory and comprehension, visuo-spatial skills, sequencing, work organisation, efficient work methods for specific tasks, oral interaction and dealing with emotions.

### POSITIVE ASPECTS OF DYSLEXIC DIFFICULTIES

Dyslexic people who try to succeed in their work despite their difficulties know the meaning of hard work, long hours, and determination. They may also be very resourceful in finding ways of dealing with workplace tasks. Many excel, for instance, in lateral thinking: they are creative and innovative, and are aware of links and associations that may escape the more linear thinker; they often have good powers of visualisation, excellent spatial and practical skills, and an untaught intuitive understanding of how systems work.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

#### Information on dyslexia at work

[www.workingwithdyslexia.com/info-sheets.php](http://www.workingwithdyslexia.com/info-sheets.php)

#### The British Dyslexia Association

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

[www.dyslexia-adults.com](http://www.dyslexia-adults.com)

#### Developmental Adult Neuro-Diversity Association

(Dyspraxia)

[www.danda.org.uk](http://www.danda.org.uk)

#### RECOMMENDED BOOK:

'Dyslexia: How to Survive and Succeed at Work', by Sylvia Moody, published by Random House.

*There is an accompanying 'Dyslexia at Work' checklist where there is information on how you can take your concerns forward.*