

WILTSHIRE NEWS

**Wishing all our readers a Merry Christmas
and a Happy and Healthy New Year!**

Thank you [Wiltshire Parent Carer Council](#) for organising the recent SEND information event in Devizes for parent carers!



We were delighted to provide an information stand. The WPCCC thanked us for supporting the event and for continuing to support parent carers and their families in Wiltshire.

Gina, Liz and I were able to chat with many parents, hopefully providing the information and advice they need to seek appropriate support for their dyslexic children.

One mother emailed me saying *"Thank you again and truly believe these information meetings really do make a difference for people like me."*



We are grateful to Luke who joined us from Scanning Pens, as he provided attendees with the opportunity to find out about reading pens.

SAVE THE DATE: The first WPCCC SEND Information Event in 2026 will take place on **Friday 6th February 2026** at the Civic Centre, Trowbridge.



Parent Carer Groups

Please see the following Parent Carer Group over the next few months as well as where and when they will be held:

January

- Monday 5th January 2026 at 10:30am to 12:00pm - Cesar's Coffee - 29 The Gateway, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8FZ
- Wednesday 7th January 2026 at 10:30am to 12:00pm - Cosy Club - 49 New Street, Salisbury SP1 2PH
- Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 10:30am to 12:00pm - The Bear Hotel - 2-3 The Market Place, Devizes, SN10 1HS

February

- Monday 2nd February 2026 at 10:30am to 12:00pm - Cesar's Coffee - 29 The Gateway, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8FZ
- Wednesday 4th February 2026 at 10:30am to 12:00pm - Cosy Club - 49 New Street, Salisbury SP1 2PH
- Wednesday 11th February 2026 at 10:30am to 12:00pm - The Bear Hotel - 2-3 The Market Place, Devizes, SN10 1HS

March

- Monday 2nd March 2026 at 10:30am to 12:00pm - Cesar's Coffee - 29 The Gateway, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8FZ
- Wednesday 4th March 2026 at 10:30am to 12:00pm - Cosy Club - 49 New Street, Salisbury SP1 2PH
- Wednesday 18th March 2026 at 10:30am to 12:00pm - The Bear Hotel - 2-3 The Market Place, Devizes, SN10 1HS

Free Note-Taking App for Medical Appointments

The WPCCC has recently been made aware of a new **free note-taking app** called Advoca, designed specifically for recording medical appointments and transcribing conversations into easy to understand summaries.

Advoca is for anyone navigating complex health journeys: e.g. patients feeling overwhelmed by information, and the dedicated carers supporting them, or those feeling in the dark, struggling to find reliable resources to learn more about their health.

Advoca is an AI assistant to help you remember and understand your health, it doesn't make any medical decisions itself. We all forget things, even with the best explanation from a doctor; Advoca is there to remind or explain details to you and your relatives/carers.

Recording medical appointments

You have the right to record your appointments for your personal use, to help you remember and understand your health. Still, when you use Advoca please make your doctor and any other people in the room aware of what you're doing and why. The British Medical Association strongly advises doctors to let patients record their appointments if they wish to.

The Advoca app is currently only available to download via the Apple Store at present, but we understand that it will soon be available to Android users via Google Play too.

For more information about the Advoca app, please visit the [Advoca website](#).

Free Mental Health Parent Toolkit

YoungMinds has collaborated with Mind Forward Alliance, Kings Maudsley Partnership, and Place2Be to create a powerful new resource for parents and carers: the Parent Toolkit.

The Toolkit brings together expert guidance and practical advice to help parents:

- Recognise when a child may be struggling with their mental health
- Respond with confidence and understanding
- Access tools and information to better support their child's wellbeing

The Parent Toolkit is free to download [HERE](#).



SSENS Training Offer

Free for all Wiltshire maintained schools and academies!

Explore our **free online twilight sessions** via Right Choice, covering topics like:

- Sensory Processing Differences
- ADHD
- Dyscalculia
- Writing & Spelling

Book a place for each attendee from your school.

 Recorded sessions also available, with new ones coming soon:


- WESforD: Using Resources Effectively
- Scaffolding Learning
- Working Memory & Processing
- Effects of Trauma on Learning

Face-to-Face Dyslexia Training

Thanks to Wiltshire Dyslexia Association, we're offering another full-day session at Devizes Town Hall on **21 May 2026** - [Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties \(Face to Face\) | Right Choice](#)

Dyscalculia & Maths Difficulties

Join our 2-part course exploring new guidance and assessment approaches.

 Minimum numbers required – we'll confirm 2 weeks before if a session needs to be postponed.

 Questions? Email: SSENSTraining@wiltshire.gov.uk

SSENS changes to the SEND Local Offer

Our move to the council website is a step forward - not the final destination. We're listening, learning, and improving.

Recent feedback shows:

- Fewer than half of our reference group knew what the Local Offer was
- We need to reach more people
- Media use, language, and site navigation all need work

To help us improve:

- Please check and update Local Offer links in school materials and SEND reports: wiltshire.gov.uk/local-offer
- Encourage staff to contact our friendly team with questions or ideas: LocalOffer@wiltshire.gov.uk

Use the new "report a problem" feature to flag issues.

Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC)





Supporting families of children and young people (0–25) with SEND across Wiltshire.

WPCC is an independent organisation and a recognised partner of Wiltshire Council and BSW ICB.

They offer **free services** including:

- Signposting, support & information
- Weekly SEND newsletter
- Free information events and school coffee mornings
- Termly online sessions for professionals to meet the team

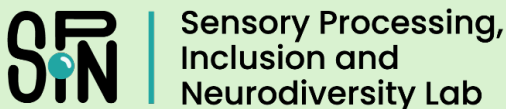
 **Contact:** 01225 764647 (option 1)

 **Email:** reception@wiltspcc.co.uk

 **Website:** www.wiltshireparentcarercouncil.co.uk

Interested in a WPCC team member visiting your school or setting?
They'd love to connect with SENCoS and share more about their work.

NATIONWIDE SURVEY



THRIVE: Neurodivergence at work

Email received from: Dr Cathy Manning, Associate Professor of Psychology, Deputy PGR Lead, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham:

As part of our THRIVE project, we're launching a nationwide survey to hear from neurodivergent people about their experiences at work, helping us build a picture of what's working, what's not, and what needs to change.

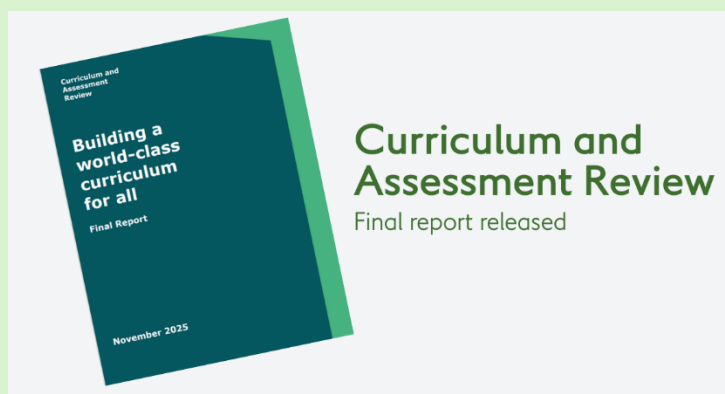
The [UK Young Academy](#) is an interdisciplinary organisation of UK-based early-career researchers, innovators, and professionals from across society who share a passion to improve our world. Led by members, THRIVE aims to improve workplace culture by promoting neuro-inclusivity. Drawing on our members' lived experience and expertise, the project tackles challenges and highlights effective strategies.

The voices of neurodivergent people can directly influence how UK employers, policymakers, and organisations understand and improve workplace culture - making a lasting impact on workplaces nationwide.

We have got around 250 responses to this survey now, which is great, but we feel that the numbers of people with dyslexia are quite low, relative to other neurodivergences (e.g. autism, ADHD).

You don't need a formal diagnosis to participate.

Please help shape more inclusive, supportive work environments by sharing your perspective: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/THRIVEUKYA/>



Curriculum and Assessment Review

Final report released

The Government has published the [findings and recommendations](#) of the independent Curriculum and Assessment Review led by Professor Becky Francis CBE and [its initial response](#).

[Read the full report](#)

The BDA responded to the review to highlight the specific challenges faced by dyslexic learners and to call for changes to qualification and assessment pathways to enable dyslexic learners to demonstrate their true ability.

The review provided a detailed set of recommendations for changes across the curriculum and assessment, including:

- Replacing the current KS2 grammar, punctuation and spelling test (GPS)– with an amended version which focuses on pupils being able to use grammar in context rather than learning theory.
- Developing evidence led guidance for schools on how to adapt the curriculum and pedagogy for learners with SEND.
- Introducing a new diagnostic test in maths and English in Year 8 to help teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge to ensure more pupils successfully progress to KS4.
- Replacing mandatory GCSE resits in maths and English in post 16 education with new Level 1 qualifications for those achieving below a grade 3 in the original exams. This new qualification would be seen as a stepping stone to the Level 2 GCSE.
- Introducing V level qualifications at post 16 to sit alongside T Levels and A Levels. These would be linked to broad occupational standard and recognised and valued by further/higher education providers and employers.

Ellen Broomé, CEO of the British Dyslexia Association, said:

“We welcome the findings of Professor Francis’ review and the positive steps towards a fairer assessment system that recognises the full range of young people’s abilities, not just exam performance.

However, we remain concerned that the recommendations do not go far enough to tackle the disadvantage faced by dyslexic learners in GCSEs. The continued emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar in non-language subjects, and the heavy reliance on written exams, continue to penalise students whose written skills do not reflect their true ability.

We support the introduction of a diagnostic test in maths and English to help more young people achieve a Level 2 pass at 16. But this must start earlier - in primary school - so that difficulties in foundational skills can be identified and addressed as soon as possible.

And crucially, testing alone won't raise standards. Every teacher must be equipped with the training and tools to teach dyslexic learners effectively.”

In its initial response to the review, the Government has accepted many of the recommendations made by Professor Francis and the expert panel but has stopped short of

diagnostic tests in year 8 for maths and English; committing to the introduction of a statutory reading test to look at reading fluency and comprehension and asking schools to test maths and English.

We are disappointed to see the rejection of a new test to replace the current Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation test in Key Stage 2, and hope that the amendments to the existing test by the Standards and Testing Agency will include a move away from a theoretical based test.

We are calling upon the Government to:

- **Make children with dyslexia a priority**
To ensure children and young people with dyslexia become a priority and are no longer overlooked, the Department for Education must develop a National Dyslexia Strategy, appoint a policy lead for dyslexia and improve annual data collection and reporting on children with dyslexia in schools.
- **Ensure early identification and equity in access to support**
To ensure early and consistent identification of children with dyslexia and end inequalities in access to support, the Department for Education must resource and support the development of a universal pathway for assessment, develop a simple, in-classroom screening tool and review the use of the Year 1 Phonics Check to ensure it is fit-for-purpose.
- **Create 'dyslexia-friendly' classrooms**
To ensure all classrooms are 'dyslexia-friendly' learning environments and school staff are supported and resourced to support children with dyslexia, the Department for Education must establish a national standard of SEN support on a statutory footing and set out clear expectations for initial and ongoing CPD training for teachers and school staff in relation to dyslexia.
- **Widen the scope of the curriculum and assessment**
To ensure that the national curriculum meets the needs of all learners, the Department for Education must introduce explicit teaching of assistive technology to help reading and spelling from Key Stage 2, provide vocational and functional pathways alongside GCSEs and ensure GCSE assessment techniques better reflect the skills of all learners, including removal of SPaG marks in exams not testing English language skills, or enable learners to use assistive technology to gain these marks.

[Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report: government response - GOV.UK](#)

Recommendations:

To ensure every child with dyslexia can reach their full potential, the British Dyslexia Association calls on the Government to:

- **Make children with dyslexia a national priority:** By developing a dedicated National Dyslexia Strategy that ensures no pupil is left unidentified or unsupported in education.
- **Guarantee early identification for all:** Through a universal screening and/or assessment pathway so that every child, regardless of background or postcode, can access timely support.
- **Build truly dyslexia-friendly classrooms:** By introducing mandatory teacher training and clear national standards for SEND support, ensuring that every teacher has the knowledge and tools to help dyslexic learners thrive.
- **Modernise the curriculum and assessment system:** By embedding assistive technology, creating flexible learning pathways, and recognising the diverse strengths and talents of all learners.



View the [Backbench debate: On support for dyslexic pupils at school. 11 November 2025](#)



[Lia Castiglione - Specialist Consultant, Trainer and Assessor for Exam Access Arrangements and Dyslexia](#)

Ofqual has published new official statistics on Access Arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level, including the first release of data for 2024/25 and revised figures going back to 2015/16. These are published alongside a detailed regulatory report and three new research studies exploring time in assessments and the use of extra time.

This provides an important reset. It confirms that previously published statistics overstated approval rates and have now been withdrawn, with revised figures showing 25% extra time levels much closer to national SEN rates. The review also identifies opportunities to continue strengthening clarity across the system, enhance the evidence base, and ensure assessment design avoids unintended time pressure in qualifications that are not intended to measure speed.

It's also worth noting that Ofqual now reports access arrangements data as ranges rather than single values. The AAO system was never designed as a statistical dataset, so earlier figures included duplicates and approvals for students who didn't actually sit exams. The new "official statistics in development" give a more realistic picture and remind us that some of the narratives about rapid growth in the provision of 25% extra time were based on data that could not reliably support those conclusions.

Full publications and supporting materials:

 Regulatory report: <https://lnkd.in/esSpTe5N>

 Official statistics: https://lnkd.in/eS_tCfpM

 Press notice: <https://lnkd.in/e7ejby-y>

 Ofqual blog: <https://lnkd.in/enEQ43qe>

Research:

Extra time in assessments: https://lnkd.in/e_itWey

Time limits & speed of working: <https://lnkd.in/e6Kd65Jm>

Speededness in GCSEs: <https://lnkd.in/etZTAuRF>

Transforming support for neurodivergent children in school

The partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme is transforming [how primary schools across England support neurodivergent children](#).

Read more about the PINS programme and the difference it's making on the [NNPCF's dedicated PINS page](#).

According to Copilot: There isn't a publicly available full list of Wiltshire schools involved in the PINS programme, but about 40 schools are participating across Swindon, Wiltshire, and Bath & North East Somerset. It involves collaboration between schools, integrated care boards (ICBs), local authorities, and parent carer forums (PCFs).

The programme offers:

- Regular support for schools
- Training packages for staff and parents
- Resources to promote inclusive practices and understanding of neurodiversity

SCHOOLS WEEK

Budget 2025: Everything schools need to know

Absorbing costs of SEND provision to funding for secondary school books - Schools Week breaks down everything you need to know...

[Ruth Lucas](#) 26 November 2025

The government has announced it will [absorb spiralling costs](#) of SEND provision from 2028, scrap the two-child benefit cap and invest millions into secondary school books and playgrounds across England in the budget today.

Here's everything schools need to know about chancellor Rachel Reeves's autumn budget.

1. Government to absorb SEND pressures

The government has confirmed it will absorb the rising cost pressures of SEND provision from 2028 when the statutory override allowing councils to set deficit budgets comes to an end.

The Office for Budgetary Responsibility estimates this will leave the government facing a pressure of £6.3 billion in 2028-29, with no plans set out yet to address it, and no plan for existing and rising council deficits – set to hit £14 billion soon.

You can [read more about that here](#).

2. Two-child benefit cap scrapped

The chancellor [confirmed](#) the government will be scrapping the two-child benefit cap for universal credit from April 2026, which government claims will lift 450,000 children out of poverty.

The OBR said this would cost an estimated £3 billion by 2029-30.

It comes after The National Governance Association, the National Association of Head Teachers, the Association of School and College Leaders, the National Education Union, NASUWT and Unison warned the prime minister in September there was a "critical need" to scrap the policy.

The letter read: “No child deserves to live in poverty, full stop. But the educational impact of the poverty that continues to rip through our communities and schools cannot be overstated.”

3. £5m for secondary library books

Reeves announced £5 million of new funding for state secondary schools to buy new books. This equates to £1,400 per school.

It builds on an earlier pledge of £10 million in funding to provide every primary school in England with a library by 2029.

According to the government, currently 1,700 primaries do not have one.

Both investments coincide with the government’s planned National Year of Reading 2026.

4. £18m for playgrounds

Government will also invest £18 million over two years in up to 200 playgrounds across England.

But budget documents do not detail where these playgrounds will be, and whether they are within school settings or not.

5. Private school VAT boost

The OBR’s report says the government’s introduction of VAT on private school fees will raise £40 million a year more than expected.

This is driven by an updated forecast for average earnings that is used to project school fee growth.

Estimates for the number of children expected to leave the private school system in the long term – around 6 per cent of the private school population – remain unchanged.

6. But no extra school revenue funding

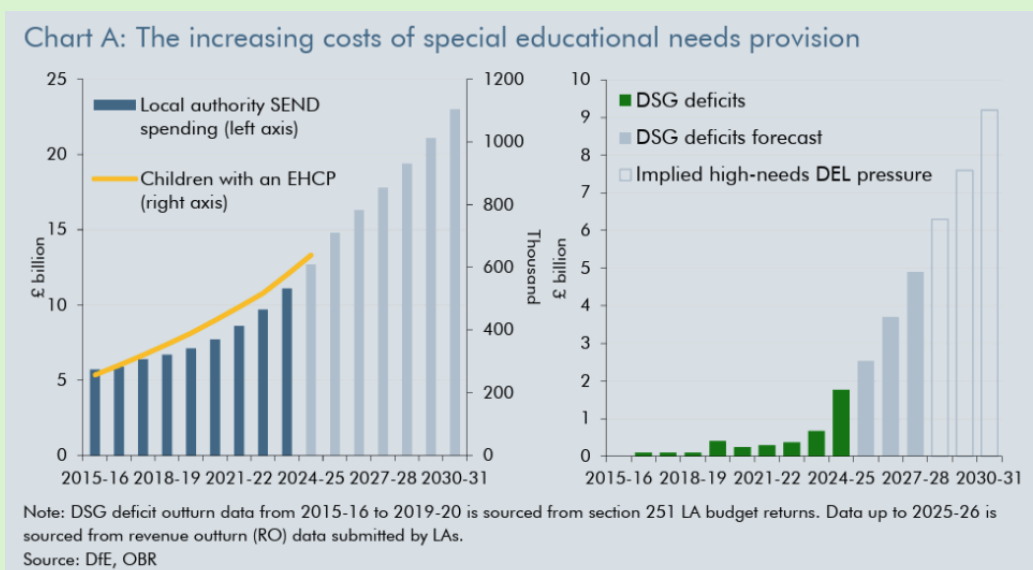
Despite the hopes of unions and other sector leaders, the budget did not contain a further increase in overall school revenue funding.

This year’s spending review set out plans to raise the schools budget from £64.8 billion this year to £69.5 billion in 2028, a cash-terms increase of £4.7 billion by the end of the spending review period.

But sector leaders had hoped for extra cash at the budget to fund rising cost pressures, including under-funded pay rises.

SEND: Government faces £6bn shortfall without savings

Spending watchdog warns 'no savings have been identified' to offset pressure on government coffers of end to council budgeting shield.





The Gift of Confidence - As 2025 ends, we celebrate the [Universal SEND Services](#) Programme, delivered with programme partners the Education and Training Foundation and the Autism Education Trust (until March 2025). Over 300,000 educators trained, 99% reporting increased confidence in supporting SEND learners. Together we're building inclusive classrooms and stronger school communities. Thank you for helping make this possible - here's to another year full of learning, collaboration and impact.

nasen at House of Lords - nasen attended the Investing in Professional Development for SEND & Inclusion event at the House of Lords. The discussions highlighted how high-quality, sustained professional development equips staff, strengthens collaboration, and drives inclusive practice - improving learning, wellbeing, and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

As we look ahead to January 2026, we're pleased to share an important update on nasen membership.

We're bringing together our support, resources and CPD in clearer, more flexible ways - including the launch of nasen Academy, our new learning platform. From January, membership will move to a simple two-tier structure, ensuring everyone can continue to access essential support, with the option to unlock deeper learning and added value.

Core Membership (free)

Still free for all, Core gives you access to essential nasen updates, like the newsletter, as well as our resource repository, Twilight Talks and Whole School SEND's Universal SEND Services.

Plus Membership (paid)

Launching with an introductory price of just **£19.99 for the year**, Plus unlocks our brand-new Learning Management System; *nasen Academy*, alongside exclusive CPD content, enhanced member benefits, and an exclusive Plus member e-badge.

Details at: [Nasen](#)

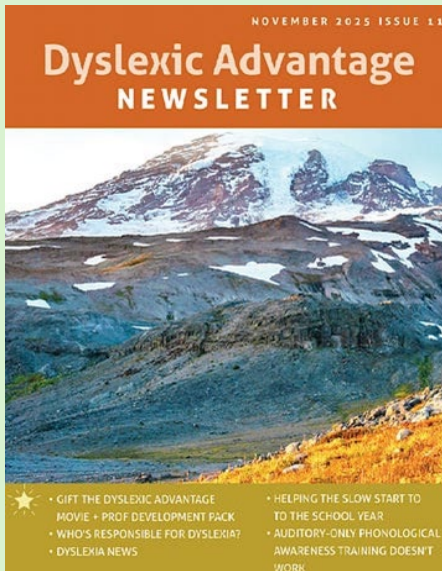


The Final Issue of nasen Connect is here!

[nasen Connect magazine Autumn Term edition 2025](#)

As we publish the **50th** and **final edition** of nasen Connect, we thank every reader, contributor, and partner for supporting our journey. This milestone issue revisits inspiring articles, celebrates inclusive practice, and highlights the nasen Awards 2025. Our mission continues to champion learning, voices, and inclusion in education.

Keep an eye out for news of a brand new format, coming soon!

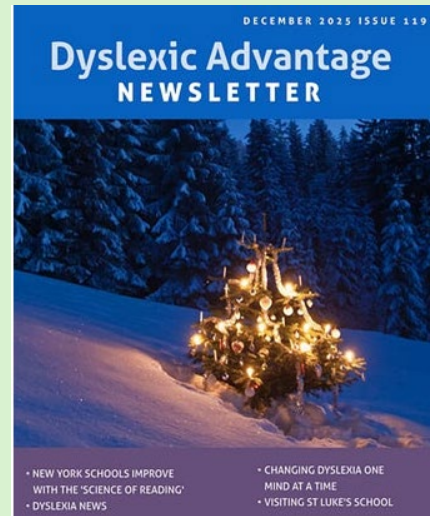


Link to November Newsletter:

<https://joom.ag/onDd>

Link to December Newsletter:

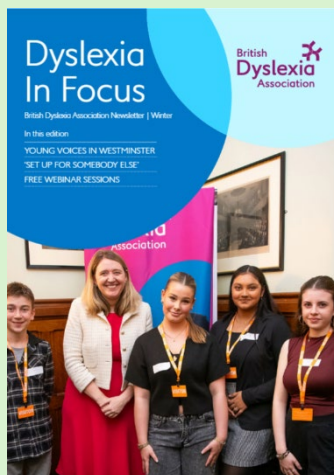
<https://joom.ag/sFDd>



See past issues by signing up for a free registration:

<https://www.dyslexicadvantage.org/newsletter-archives/>

Read and listen to more articles in our [DYSLExIA LIBRARY](#)



[Dyslexia In Focus | Winter 2025](#)

New round of dyslexia assessment bursaries for young people aged 12–21

Every child deserves to understand their dyslexia and access life-changing support, but for too many families on low incomes, a diagnostic assessment is simply out of reach.

Thanks to our partnership with Theo Paphitis and Ryman, we can offer remote assessments to young people who would otherwise miss out. Their fundraising has already changed lives this year, and now even more children will get what they need. Applications are open until 9 January 2026.

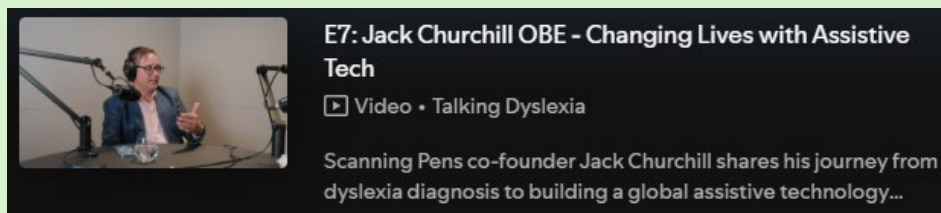
Full details at:

[New dyslexia assessment bursaries available for young People - British Dyslexia Association](#)



Talking Dyslexia is a podcast from Talamo and the British Dyslexia Association. Hosted by Ellen Broome and Jamie Wace, each episode explores what dyslexia really means at school, at work, and in everyday life.

We speak with educators, parents, researchers, and dyslexic individuals to unpack the realities, debunk the myths, and celebrate the strengths of thinking differently. From early intervention to entrepreneurship, assistive tech to allyship, this series offers practical advice, fresh perspectives, and honest conversations.



On this edition of Talking Dyslexia, we're joined by Jack Churchill OBE, co-founder of Scanning Pens and global leader in assistive technology. Diagnosed with dyslexia at 14, Jack turned his challenges into a mission: making reading accessible for everyone. We talk about tech in classrooms, workplaces, and prisons, plus the innovation behind the ReaderPen Secure.

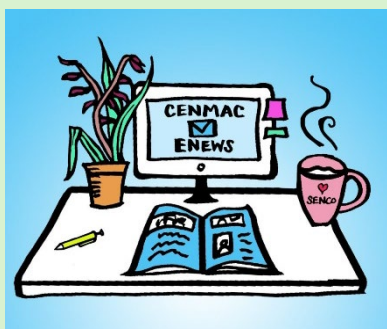
A must-listen for anyone interested in how technology can level the playing field:
<https://loom.ly/17LuirY>

[Podcast: Talking Dyslexia - Supporting children with dyslexia at home and school - Louise Selby Dyslexia Specialist](#)

I finally got round to putting this podcast on my website. And what a treat it was.

In this podcast I had the privilege of chatting with Ellen Broome, CEO of the [British Dyslexia Association](#) and Jamie Wace, CEO of Talamo, about my own experiences and passion. We chatted about everything! What drives my work, my books Morph Mastery, All About Dyslexia, and why understanding learning really matters. I'd say this recording is a guided tour of learning from my perspective – my own learning and the learning of those I work for. I hope you enjoy it.

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In January 2026 BETT UK is launching the EdTech10 list. The annual competition recognises women who have made a significant contribution to education in their community using technology. It is an opportunity to celebrate their individual success stories and encourage other women to get involved.

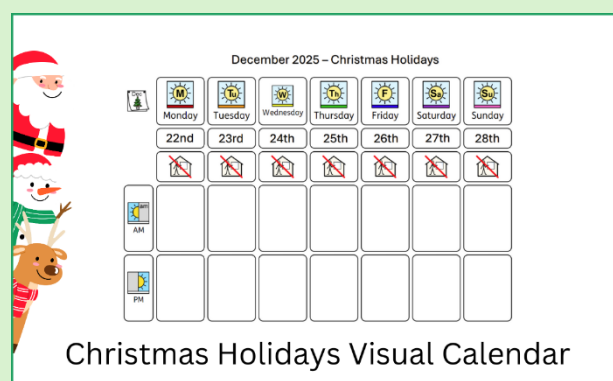
BETT Women in EdTech champions the voices of women driving change in education. The Women in EdTech initiative focuses on innovation, building community and inspiring the next generation of female leaders.

We were absolutely delighted to hear that our own Head of CENMAC (located at Charlton Park Academy) Kathryn Stowell, was nominated and has been selected as one of the 2026 EdTech 10 Finalists.

> Find out more

While Christmas is a fun time of year, it can also be a challenging time for children and young people with special needs when their routines are interrupted.

CENMAC Specialist Teaching Assistant Claire Hennings has put together some visual symbols to help your child know what is happening during the holiday period and reduce some anxieties.



We have compiled some extra resources from Ace Centre, Guide Dogs, HelpKidzLearn, Kids Kindness Club, Nessy, RNIB, RSBC, and Widgit with lots of activities to keep children busy and engaged over the holidays.

> Access the resources



On Wednesday 3rd December, the Alliance for Inclusive Literacy Education was launched. It's a new collaborative network to ensure that every learner, including those with complex communication needs, is supported with evidence-based and accessible literacy opportunities.

We are proud to be a Founder Member, joining organisations across the UK who share a commitment to high-quality, inclusive literacy practice.

The Alliance for Inclusive Education was launched on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we stand with our fellow members in recognising every learner's right to meaningful literacy instruction — and the importance of working together to raise expectations, strengthen practice, and share expertise.

> Learn more about the Alliance and its mission

Online Training – Recordings

Our Thursday Thirty online training sessions provide 30 minute introductions to some of the assistive technologies we use to support students access the curriculum/ and or communicate.

If you missed one of our Thursday Thirty online training sessions, take a look at the recorded sessions here: **Thursday Thirty Recordings - CENMAC**



In this final bulletin of 2025, we're highlighting more of the wonderful AT products, services, and events that are available to support students within learning environments, employees throughout workplaces, and more generally, people in society completing daily tasks.

Our hope for this newsletter is that it will give you some ideas and guidance as you head into 2026, where we have some exciting things happening within the British Assistive Technology Association!

Don't forget! We'll be at the [2026 Bett Show](#) from 21st-23rd January as an association partner of the SEND Village! Come and visit us at stand NF84. And stay tuned for the release of our exclusive seminar tickets for Friday 23rd January.

Member case studies of AT in action

Some of our members share case studies on AT supporting students of all ages and skillsets.

CareScribe

Driving inclusion for students at scale with Caption.Ed

CareScribe's captioning and note-taking tool, Caption.Ed, is helping the University of Bristol deliver inclusive learning at scale. The university's Disability Services team shares how Caption.Ed enables students to access learning equitably and independently, without relying on external funding.

[Read the full case study here.](#)

TechEdology

Harnessing the power of Inspiration to design and deliver better healthcare!

Inspiration user Joe Dort is a former head and neck surgeon, an Emeritus professor, and now a clinical researcher at University of Calgary, Alberta. Previously, Joe was responsible for removing cancers from the ear, nose, throat and neck area and has, more recently, been involved with creating and leading a clinical effectiveness research program. And he has relied on *Inspiration* to help him for the past 20 years! [Read the full case study here](#)

ReadSpeaker

Why Vocational Education Needs TTS - Now More Than Ever

Employers are clear: they need job-ready talent with practical skills. But for many learners, traditional education models—and text-heavy materials—create barriers to access and retention. That's where text-to-speech (TTS) technology steps in. ReadSpeaker's TTS solutions help vocational educators create **more inclusive, flexible, and effective learning environments**, empowering every student to hear, process, and retain content—on any device, at any literacy level.

[Access the Case Study on ReadSpeaker's website](#)

ANND have presented monthly webinars on neurodiversity topics for over 2 years. All previous ones can be viewed on our YouTube channel: [Click here to view](#)

The most recent session:

[ANND My Journey with Neurodiversity with Darren Clark 20251127 190317 Meeting Recording](#)

Darren is an international keynote speaker, entrepreneur, and dyslexia advocate, he has been an inspirational voice within the neurodiversity community for many years and is passionate about making a difference! The creator of Neurodiversity Stories and many other initiatives, he is at the heart of our community. This is an informative and inspiring session!



CALLScotland

A Communication and Assistive Technology Newsletter

Boost Your Practice: Free CLPL for Supporting ASN Learners

Did you know that we host **free weekly webinars** sharing a variety of Assistive and Communication Technologies?

CALL Scotland is delighted to share our new #FreeWebinarWednesday programme, running from **January to June 2026**.

Example: **Inclusion in Action: Tools to Support Learning, Revising and Exams** - 14th January

These short, practical sessions are designed to give educators, support staff, and parents accessible professional learning opportunities that focus on inclusive digital technologies and strategies to empower learners with Additional Support Needs.

Bookbug P1 Family Bag Clicker Resources 2025

Discover our Clicker writing resources to go along with the Scottish Booktrust Bookbug Primary One Family Bag 2025 books.

Accessible Christmas Resources 2025

Looking for some accessible Christmas activities to add to your festive fun and celebrations? Check out the following activity ideas and resources!

Technology That Can Make a Difference: Supporting your ASN Learners at Home

If you're a parent or carer of a child with Additional Support Needs, you might be wondering: Where can I find support to help my child thrive?

Communication Passports - 23rd February

Free 30-minute online workshop for parent carers.

Widgit wrapped up: ready-made festive resources

As the festive period approaches, we have gathered a set of seasonal symbol-supported resources to help you through the busy weeks ahead. Children can write to Santa, explore new Christmas vocabulary or enjoy a calmer task when the days feel a bit lively. With so many resources ready to explore, you will always have something to keep



Nessy

Read our new blog!

Supporting Struggling Readers Over the Winter Break

Winter break offers a much-needed pause for children, families, and teachers. For new and striving readers, including those with dyslexia, long breaks from routine can make literacy skills harder to maintain. The good news? Gentle, low-pressure support can help keep skills strong while still letting everyone enjoy the holiday season.

Click the link to read!

<https://www.nessy.com/.../supporting-struggling-readers...>

[Dr Martin Bloomfield](#)

I find this fascinating.

A recent study on the potential visual causes of dyslexia focused on within-category object discrimination (such as telling one house from another). The results showed that both dyslexics and non-dyslexics performed similarly well. Adults with dyslexia were generally as accurate and fast as typical readers when determining if two houses (or faces) were identical.



But, despite this comparable performance, EEG data revealed a distinct neural difference: amplitude was consistently reduced in the dyslexic group compared to the typical readers, indicating less neural activation during the process of identifying individual specifics.

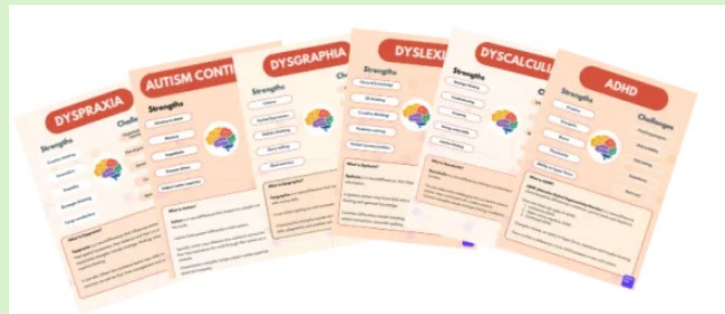
The findings possibly indicate that neural activity used to tell one object from another functions differently for people with dyslexia.

<https://share.google/3d5QmVPahK4EAQoPF>

See responses at [Post](#) | [Feed](#) | [LinkedIn](#)



We've created some handy posters for your workplace. Below you'll find neurodifferences infographics showing some of the strengths and challenges for Dyslexia, ADHD, Autism and more.



[Download Dyslexia Infographic](#)
[Download Dyspraxia Infographic](#)
[Download Dysgraphia Infographic](#)

[Download Dyscalculia Infographic](#)
[Download ADHD Infographic](#)
[Download Autism Infographic](#)

Download all neurodifferences infographics at [Infographics - neurodifferences - neurobox](#)

See also:

Guides / toolkits [See all](#)
Blogs & Articles [See all](#)
Podcast & Webinars [See all](#)

Explore Our Latest Blog – 'Thinking Inside The Box' Mark Woodward, Head of Workplace Adjustments

In this personal and insightful blog, Mark Woodward shares his journey with dyslexia - offering a candid look at how it shapes his experiences both inside and outside the workplace.

👉 [Read the blog](#) to gain a deeper understanding of dyslexia and how it can impact daily life in ways that often go unseen.



Kate Griggs
Founder of the Dyslexic Thinking Movement
& Made By Dyslexia



Making our voice heard

I was delighted to join Jamie Oliver at the Houses of Parliament earlier this year.

We fully supported Jamie's call for change to help every dyslexic learner reach their full potential.

At Made By Dyslexia, we've long championed the unique strengths of Dyslexic Thinking, skills that the World Economic Forum has identified as the most in demand in the workforce. Yet despite this, teachers still lack the training and support needed to adapt their teaching, leaving many dyslexic children struggling in school.

We united with Jamie, the British Dyslexia Association, the Driver Youth Trust and many others, to call on the government to ensure that every child is screened for dyslexia and every teacher is trained to support dyslexic learners. With these two simple steps, most dyslexic children can thrive in mainstream, adaptive classrooms, where their strengths are recognised and supported and not overlooked.

Made By Dyslexia offers free online training for teachers, giving them the tools and knowledge they need to support dyslexic learners.

[You can share these with your school here](#)

Also . . .

NEW! Sports course now available on DyslexicU


What gives a Sports Champion their edge?

Talent? Skill? Grit? A will to win?

How about... Dyslexic Thinking

From Muhammad Ali to Lewis Hamilton, Joleon Lescott to Alex Scott, A'ja Wilson to Rashan Gary - in whichever sport you look at, Dyslexic Thinkers push boundaries, smash records and inspire us with new ways to achieve our greatness.

Find out the 5 reasons dyslexics make unstoppable sports champions and discover how to unlock your own peak performance with our free course: Sports & Peak Performance on DyslexicU, powered by The Open University.

 www.dyslexicu.org

Are Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) cuts going to impact dyslexic folks' careers?

There are disability funding changes afoot in the university sector...

The government are rethinking a core funding allocation that allows students with disabilities to access things like notetaking, sign language support, personal laptop provision, support workers, and assistance with additional travel costs incurred as a result of their having a disability. We call this allocation Disabled Students' Allowance, or DSA.

The new plan proposes that universities will instead step in to absorb a significant portion of those costs, transferring the responsibility for a large segment of DSA in England. It's not *all* DSA... but it's enough to make the parents of students with disabilities like dyslexia worry.

Can't imagine that's been a popular take in my local university's budget team.

It *really* hasn't. EdTech and disability experts are anxious too: universities are already notably cash-strapped, with many finding they've had to make lecturing and support staff redundant over the past two years to try to balance the books. Resources aren't getting refreshed, and some courses aren't running altogether.

This is likely to add stress to the system in two places: on universities trying to resource all the support they're responsible for from extant budgets, and on students—who will likely have a harder time on their hands advocating for and receiving the support they need to thrive as their university's available funding margins contract.

But why are hiring managers so worried about this?

Because it has the potential to impact the amount of students with disabilities that go to university, finish university, and the grades they achieve. University doesn't feel like a welcoming environment for a student with disabilities if they know that they'll face a support gap or a long, arduous administrative road to get the support they need, even if it's something as simple as a reading pen. And then the absence of that support impacts their work, confidence, and their matriculation grades at the end of the process.

[Keep reading on LinkedIn . . .](#)

More articles . . .

[Dyslexia and work: It's officially burnout season!](#)

[How to support kids dyslexia during exam season \(without mentioning revision once\)](#)

[Ho, Ho, No! 5 dyslexic challenges we'd consign to Christmas past...](#)

[The Big Dyslexia Digest: All our advice in one handy place!](#)



Prof. Amanda Kirby MBBS MRCGP PhD FCGI

Neurodiversity 101: Who is typical or normal?

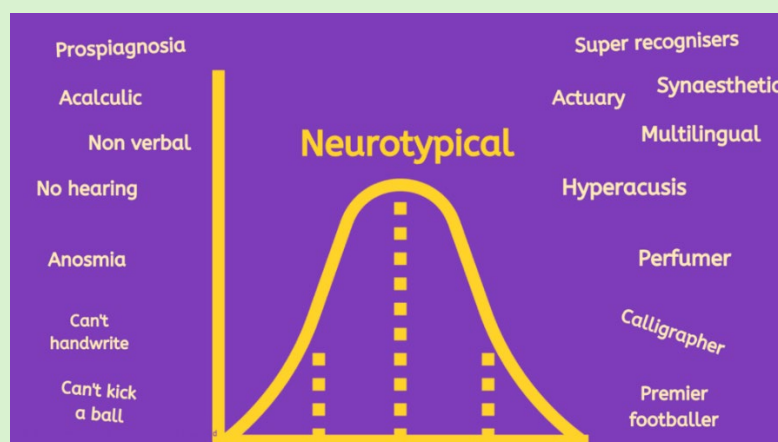
The more and more I work in the field of neurodiversity and I have been doing so for nearly 40 years I just wonder about the words and terms we often end up using.

Who is normal? Who is 'typical'? and what do we really mean...

These are social constructs and determined so much by the society we are in and the way it is organised.



Terms used and the meanings we may ascribe:



What does neurotypical mean

- The term **average** is the sum of all the numbers divided by the total number of values in the set but we can use average to mean different things to us all.
- **Mean** can 'mean' the average of a sample of data but means other things to some people!
- **Typical development** - is the *average* progress of a child compared to peers of the same age for a range of different developments such as motor and language skills. It can be a range e.g. age first walking. This will vary considerably in different communities and countries. (In cultures where babies are actively exercised or encouraged to move (e.g., standing/walking practice in parts of Africa, Caribbean, or among the Kipsigis in Kenya), walking often occurs earlier than average. In cultures where infants spend more time being carried, swaddled, or placed in restricted spaces (e.g., traditional practices in parts of South America or some Arctic communities), walking may occur later.)
- **Atypical development** is said to occur when a child appears to lag behind or is way ahead of same-age peers in any of the different development.
- **Normal:** the usual, typical, or expected state or condition. However who defines what 'normal' is. Over time what is perceived to be normal or abnormal changes. We have seen this in terms of health conditions.. such as 'hysteria' (The concept of hysteria dates back to ancient Egypt and Greece, where it was linked to the uterus (Greek word "hystera") and believed to cause various physical and psychological symptoms).

Maya Angelou said:

"If you're always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be".

- **Abnormal:** deviating from the normal or average.
- **Bell curve:** A bell curve is a graph depicting the *normal* distribution, which has a shape reminiscent of a bell.

The top of the curve shows the mean, mode, and median of the data collected. Its standard deviation depicts the bell curve's relative width around the mean.

[Keep reading on LinkedIn](#) – a long article continuing under the following headings:

Why do we love to define people in groups or categories?
 Stereotypes can grow from each grouping.
 We are all messy and we change also across our life span.
 Why did we ever think that 'average was the way to go?
 Who is 'normal'?
 Is anyone average?
 Where did it start? Taylorism changed everything.
 Norma and Normman
 Challenging the average . . . faulty thinking has negative consequences.
 Guess what? Not one pilot met ALL the criteria!
 No one is average in school or employment
 Equal does not = equitable!
 On average we are right-handed!
 Moving the measure around to create new averages

More Neurodiversity 101 newsletters:

[Neurodiversity 101: the strengths behind spiky profiles and why mismatches matter](#)

[Neurodiversity 101: Disability History Month- lost heroes and heroines](#)

[Neurodiversity 101: Exam adjustments - how fair are they and effective?](#)

[Neurodiversity 101: Reasonable adjustments: it all starts with a conversation](#)

[Neurodiversity 101: The Fusion of Brains and Machines — What Next for Neuro-Inclusion?](#)

[Neurodiversity 101: Tuning in and speaking up \(or not\): The meeting conundrum](#)

[Neurodiversity 101: Getting Onboarding Right: What Neurodivergent Voices Are Telling Us](#)

[Neurodiversity 101: looking beyond the overdiagnosis debate: why needs-led, person-centred profiling is the real solution](#)

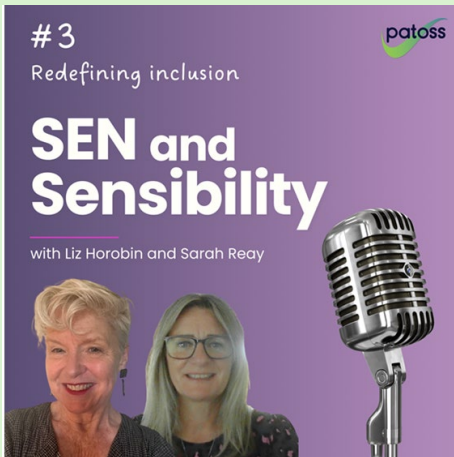


[How Assistive Technology Reduces Reading Anxiety in Today's Classrooms](#)

[How Reading Brings Joy, Calm, and Connection to Young Readers this Christmas](#)

[Make poetry accessible for Young Poets Week](#)

[Wait. Are Disabled Students' Allowance cuts going to impact uni students in my family?](#)



In this episode of *SEN and Sensibility*, Liz Horobin and Sarah Reay are joined by Helen Benstead and Dom Griffiths to discuss one of the most pressing issues in education today: inclusion.

Together, they explore what good inclusive practice really means, why attitudes and relationships matter as much as policy, and how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can transform classroom strategies.

The conversation tackles:

- The urgent need for systemic reform in SEND and EHCP processes.
- Why pupil voice must be at the heart of decision-making.
- The evolving role of teaching assistants and multi-agency collaboration.
- Funding challenges, academisation, and the impact of Ofsted's new remit.
- The promise and pitfalls of AI and assistive technology in inclusive education.
- Practical strategies schools can use to maximize resources and foster belonging.

Packed with insights from research, policy, and practice, this episode is essential listening for educators, leaders, and anyone passionate about creating truly inclusive learning environments.

Find us on the [website](#) or on [Spotify](#)

Tutor Insight: Cognitive Load – The Invisible Barrier Behind “I Don’t Know” (for Neurodivergent Learners)



One of the most misunderstood challenges our neurodivergent learners face is not decoding, spelling, number sense or remembering steps.

It is cognitive load: the mental juggling act that becomes overwhelming long before a child has the language to explain it.

You have seen it.

A student starts confidently, manages the first step, maybe the second...

And then suddenly:

A blank stare.

A freeze.

A quiet: “I don’t get it.”

What looks like avoidance is often overload.

Why neurodivergent learners reach overload faster

Dyslexic learners

Their mental energy is swallowed up by tasks many peers do automatically:

- Holding sounds in working memory
- Tracking letter–sound patterns
- Decoding while trying to make meaning
- Managing the emotional residue of repeated literacy struggle

Even before the main task begins, a huge portion of their cognitive capacity is already spent.

Dyscalculic learners

Their load comes from a different but equally demanding set of processes:

- Retaining number facts
- Understanding quantities and magnitude
- Keeping track of multi-step calculations
- Holding numbers in mind while moving to the next step

Many dyscalculic students are working incredibly hard behind the scenes just to keep up.

How overload appears

Children rarely say,

“My working memory is overwhelmed.”

Instead, they say:

- “I don’t get it.”
- “I forgot.”
- “This is too hard.”
- “Can we do something else?”

Or they suddenly need:

- A pencil sharpened
- A drink
- The toilet

(All classic escape behaviours that signal mental fatigue rather than disinterest.)

Dyscalculic learners may also:

- Lose their place mid-calculation
- Forget a step seconds after using it
- Mix up numbers they know
- Freeze when faced with anything that feels “too much”

This is not defiance.

It is simply a nervous system signalling overload.

Your role as a tutor

The goal is not to lower expectations. It is to lower the load.

Lightening cognitive load can include:

- Breaking tasks into micro-steps
- Using visuals and manipulatives (especially for dyscalculia)
- Reducing the number of items on a page
- Pre-teaching tricky patterns
- Allowing children to verbalise before writing
- Building in short, natural pause points

When the load is right, something powerful happens.

Confidence returns.

Stamina strengthens.

“I don’t know” becomes “Let me try”.

AWARENESS & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

NEW COURSE

Understanding Dyslexia & Dyscalculia

Empowering parents, teachers and carers

Adult Dyslexia Centre

Register Now

courses@adc.org.uk www.adc.org.uk

ADVISING
DEVELOPING
CONNECTING

7.30pm - 9pm online
3 sessions in January 2026

Wednesday 7 January
Understanding your child with dyslexia
Katrina Cochrane

Wednesday 14 January
Reading and Spelling strategies
Donna Stevenson

Wednesday 21 January
Maths and Dyscalculia
Amanda Keen

£60 for the 3 sessions

To register your interest, simply email courses@adc.org.uk or call our helpline - 07774 846657

Places are limited on a first come first served basis so don't miss out.

To find out more go to our website: [Click here](#)



New webinar: Annual reviews - the process and your rights

We've added a new, free webinar to our online library:

Annual reviews - the process and your rights.

If your child has an EHC plan, your local authority must review it at least once a year. This statutory process, known as the annual review, ensures your child's EHC plan stays up-to-date and continues to provide the support needed. The webinar covers when annual reviews and phase transfer reviews should take place, the rights that parents, carers and young people have, and what you can do if the process isn't followed correctly.

Watch the full webinar on our website.

Watch webinar

NEW - Bitesize SEND law e-learning

We've launched a new series of bitesize e-learning courses - short, self-paced modules that take around 40 minutes to complete. They're ideal for parents, carers and SEND professionals who want to build their knowledge step by step.

Find out more

[Obtaining an EHC plan](#)
[What an EHC plan should contain](#)
[Addressing non-implementation of special educational provision](#)
[Ceasing to maintain an EHC plan](#)
[Exclusion from school](#)
[Understanding home to early years setting, school or college transport](#)

Explore our bitesize and in-depth e-learning today:

[E-learning for parents and carers](#)

[E-learning for local authorities](#)

[E-learning for SEN professionals and private organisations](#)

[E-learning for parents groups, schools and charities](#)

[Liz Horobin & Sarah Reay introduce the Patoss 2026 conference](#)



Morning Session: Shaping the Future of Inclusive Education

Keynote Speaker: Professor Joel Talcott - *The Universal Classroom – First-Year Findings*. Professor Talcott will share early findings from the rollout of the Universal Classroom project in Wiltshire primary schools - insights that matter to teachers, assessors, and policy makers alike.

Follow-up presentations:

- Jenny Rodeck & Sarah Pearce – SENCos from Christ Church Primary and Zouch Academy
- Alison Szalay – Specialist Advisory Teacher for SEND (Cognition and Learning), Wiltshire Specialist SEN Service

Afternoon Session: Tackling Literacy and Numeracy Challenges

Keynote Speaker: Dr Tim Mills - *Is Writing Just Too Difficult?*

Dr Tim Mills, chair of the Department for Education's Writing Framework, will unpack why writing is so challenging and share strategies to make teaching this essential skill more effective.

Additional Presentations:

- Professor Julia Carroll - *Reading Skills: Where Are We Now?*
- Professor Jo van Herdegens - *Designing Effective Interventions for Maths*

Saturday, 25 April 2025, 9.00am-4.30pm

Early Bird Discount Price until 28 February 2025

Members: £150, Non-Members £190

For more information and/or to book your place, [click here](#)



Starting this December, we will be releasing a **Monthly CPD Training & Events Brochure**, designed to help you easily plan your professional development throughout the year.

Each edition will include upcoming sessions, dates, speakers, themes, and key information to help you choose the right training for your needs.

Our first edition, January 2026 CPD Training & Events Brochure, is now available to [view and download](#).



Free Training! Morph Mastery for Groups Intervention

I'm excited to let you know that the new *Morph Mastery for Groups* intervention training is now available. You can join at any time, as all sessions are recorded and available OnDemand for flexible access.

I'm also working with **Dr Jeremy Law at the University of Glasgow** on a research project to explore how and why the intervention works.

As part of this, I'm offering **free lifetime access to the Morph Mastery training** in exchange for your help with a short research activity. You, or someone in your school, would teach a **small group of around four students in Year 6 or Year 7** using your school's existing **synthetic phonics programme** (not Morph Mastery) for about **1.5 hours per week over ten weeks**, starting in **January 2026**.

This group will act as a **control group**, helping us understand whether progress comes from having an intervention in general, or from *Morph Mastery* specifically. Later, you'll have the option to deliver Morph Mastery to those students as well.

To take part, we'll need to put simple agreements in place covering **privacy, data, and safeguarding**. You'll also need access to an **assessor qualified to use the CTOPP-2** (anyone with a Level 7 qualification, such as for Access Arrangements, would be suitable). If you don't have one in school, I can probably match you with someone.

If you're interested in joining this exciting project, please get in touch - I'd love to have you involved.

If you can't commit to this but want to do the training course, please do visit the links below.

Warm regards,

Louise

[Find out more](#)

[Book your place](#)

12 AT's of CHRISTMAS
2023-2024

Join our guest speakers and explore fantastic solutions with us!

Speakers: Darren Clark, Hector Minto, Fil McIntyre, Mike Adams, Mo Jamil

Partners: Neurodiversity Stories, Microsoft, Tech Ability, Purple, iView Learning, Pro-AT Group, TextAid by ReadSpeaker, Skillbridge, ivvi, NEURONLION, S

Join us Monday to Thursday at 12 PM or 4 PM

Want to catch up on our most recent sessions? [Check out our YouTube playlist here!](#)



We are excited to invite you to our free MindView Assistive Technology training webinars. Whether you're new to MindView or a seasoned pro, these sessions are designed to help you make the most of this powerful tool.

Our training is tailored for everyone with an interest in Assistive Technology, involved in supporting students in both Further and Higher Education.

Please feel free to share this invitation with your colleagues and network.

An Introduction to MindView for Assistive and Academic Purposes: Beginners to Intermediates

In this session, you'll learn the basics of MindView, including how to organise ideas visually, customize Mind Maps, and export to MSWord and PowerPoint. We'll also cover how to add citations and bibliographies.

- Wednesday, 7th January 13:00 to 14:00 [Click here to register](#)
- Wednesday, 21st January 13:00 to 14:00 [Click here to register](#)

Advancing your Knowledge of MindView

This webinar will help you deepen your understanding of MindView. You'll learn to create visual action plans and projects with a complete Gantt Chart, as well as how to create timelines, overview year wheels, build Kanban boards and write project reports with ease.

Note: Please complete the introduction training before attending this session

- Wednesday, 14th January 13:00 to 14:00 [Click here to register](#)
- Wednesday, 28th January 13:00 to 14:00 [Click here to register](#)



Missed a webinar? Catch up anytime!

If you weren't able to join our recent SEND webinars, don't worry, you can still catch up! All of our sessions are available to watch on our YouTube channel, covering a range of topics to support parents and carers of children and young people with SEND: [Watch our webinars](#)

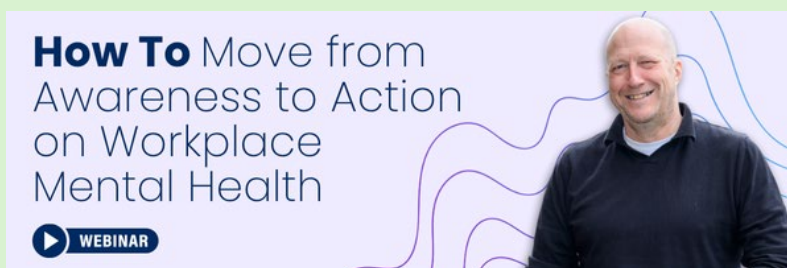
SEND Sanctuary UK

[SEND Sanctuary UK](#) held a number of events across the UK on Monday 3 November as part of a [Every Pair Tells A Story campaign](#). A number of SEND families came to County Hall and placed footwear on the steps as part of that campaign. Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cabinet Member for Children's Services spoke to the families.

You can find [SEND Advice and Information - Wiltshire Council](#) on our Local Offer pages and also find details about contacting the team here [Contacting the Wiltshire SEND team - Wiltshire Council](#)

Discover what's new on Wiltshire's Local Offer!

Exciting updates, fresh resources, and upcoming events are now live on our What's New page. Whether you're a parent, carer, or professional, there's something valuable waiting for you. [Click here to explore the latest](#)



Here are just a few key takeaways:

- **The current state of Mental Health in the Workplace**
We look at **key statistics**, men's mental health and why **awareness alone** isn't enough.
- **Barriers to taking action**
Some common **hurdles**, such as stigma or lack of **training**, cultural and **leadership blindspots** and silence around mental health.
- **The challenges around hybrid or remote working**
How **distributed teams** affect mental health, identifying **silent struggles** in digital environments and **psychological safety**.
- **Actionable initiatives and best practices**
Practical ways to support mental health, a look at **mental health first aiders** and looking at **flexible** work.

Catch up whenever you'd like on [YouTube](#)

Mental Health Foundation's [How to Support Mental Health at Work PDF](#)

Statistics on workplace mental health - [PDF](#)

LET'S TALK

LinkedIn Live Sessions



**Catch up now on
YouTube**

Have you heard about our LinkedIn Live sessions?

LinkedIn Live "Let's Talk"

- Once a month
- Free to attend
- Join expert guests
- Your questions answered

Find us on LinkedIn

Catch up on YouTube

Beacon School Support

Ever given a pupil a tiny piece of feedback... and watched them go from fine to furious in microseconds?

For some children, especially those with ADHD, feedback doesn't land as guidance.

♥ It lands as rejection.

That's because their nervous system can interpret even small corrections as a personal threat.

It's called Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) – and it can turn well-meant feedback into tears, shutdown or a full emotional spiral.

When you have RSD, even well-meaning feedback can feel like an emotional punch.

But here's two small changes that can make a big difference:

Swap "you" language for "we".

"You've done this wrong" becomes "We'll tweak this bit to make it clearer".

Or switch to "me" language when taking the blame for unclear instructions.

"You've not followed the worked example properly" becomes "I didn't explain that bit well - here's what I meant".

★ Same expectation.

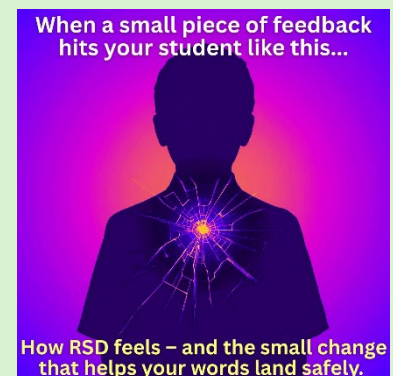
★ Same high standard.

★ None of the threat response.

If you've seen pupils overreact to feedback 'out of nowhere', follow this free link to find out what RSD is, what triggers it, and more feedback land safely for students affected by the condition.

Find out more here: <https://beaconschoolsupport.co.uk/.../rsd-and-adhd-the...>

(In fact, if you've ever seen pupils struggle with constructive feedback, this will be immediately useful - regardless of whether they have the condition!)





Level 5 & Level 7 Diplomas Applications Open

We are excited to let you know that applications have opened for the Level 5 and Level 7 Diplomas, with both courses starting in September 2026 and finishing in June 2027.

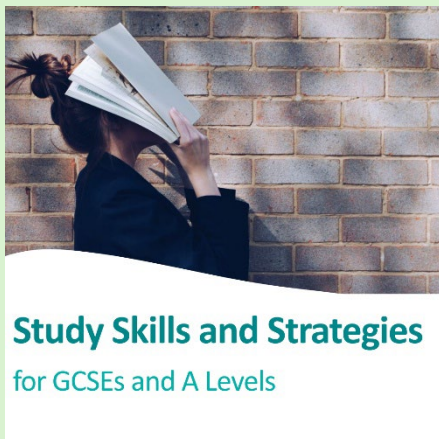
Helen Arkell is a long-standing, fully accredited, externally validated provider of professional training courses.

The course fees are currently frozen at 2024/25 prices until February 2026, at which time they will rise. To take advantage of these 2024/25 prices, don't delay booking your place on these courses.

Please see individual [courses](#) for current prices.

Don't forget this is a limited time offer till the end of the year!

For more information on the courses click [here](#).



Study Skills and Strategies for GCSEs and A Levels

On-Demand Courses - Study Skills!

Revising over the holidays?

This one-hour online video is available on demand. It gives students who are studying for GCSEs or A Levels a chance to find out how they learn best and discover strategies that will work for them.

[Book now](#)

Available on Demand - HELP! Dyslexia Course for Parents

If you are looking to support your child over the holidays our HELP! dyslexia course for parents is the perfect course to help you.

This on-demand course for parents provides strategies, tips and ideas on ways to support children with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties. Across seven sessions, you'll learn how to work effectively with your child's school, boost self-esteem, and provide targeted help with reading, spelling, writing, maths, and study skills.

[Book now](#)

The above details are extracts from this e-newsletter available as a PDF [here](#).



Development Language Disorder: Signs, Support & Strategies

Join us for our free webinar on 21 January 2026 at 10am.

Sarah Booth, our Senior Speech and Language Therapist, joins us to share insights on how to support children's speech and language development. In this webinar, we'll explore:

- ✓ An overview of what Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is and how it can impact communication and learning.
- ✓ Guidance on how DLD is identified, and how families can work with school to secure the right support.
- ✓ Practical strategies that parents can use at home and in everyday routines to build understanding and strengthen communication skills.

[Register now](#)

[Download digital flyer](#)

Upcoming webinars:

Have you registered to any of our recently launched webinars?
It's not too late to get involved.

[Emotionally Dysregulated Behaviour: Strategies To Support Your Child](#)

– 7th January @ 10am

[Neurodiversity: ARFID & PICA Explained](#) - 14th January @ 10am

RESOURCES



Get ready for the festivities ahead

Ease anxiety with our Staying at Home Social Scenario, designed to help neurodivergent children understand what to expect when spending more time at home during the holidays.

[Download our Social Scenario](#)





MetaSENse | Centre for Educational Neuroscience

Free Online SEND Intervention Toolkit

MetaSENse is a free, evidence-based database designed to help schools, families, and local authorities improve outcomes for children and young people (ages 4–25) with SEND.

Simply select a condition (e.g. ADHD), age group, and subject area to access tailored, research-backed intervention strategies. Each recommendation includes clear scientific explanations and practical guidance.

Based on findings from **467 studies** involving **58,721 SEND students**, MetaSENse is regularly updated to reflect the latest research.



Exemplification of ready-to-progress criteria | NCETM

Maths resources and activities to support KS1 and KS2 learners

Explore **79 free PowerPoints** aligned with the DfE's Ready-to-Progress maths criteria for **KS1 and KS2**. Each presentation includes:

- Links to relevant resources
- Pupil-facing activities to review, practise, and consolidate learning
- Interactive tasks designed to spark discussion and support confidence

Use flexibly with small groups. If starting a new year, consider using materials from the previous year group to revisit key concepts.

[Explore the resources here](#)



SEN Books is back under the ownership of Colin Redman

- a specialist bookshop with books and materials for teachers, parents and students
- titles on dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism ADHD, and more
- free delivery on orders over £60

You can e-mail: sales@senbooks.co.uk or phone us (0116 298 5507) for a quote on your order and ask any questions you may have, or for suggestions on what might best suit your needs.

If you are ordering a large quantity of a single title, please contact us first for a competitive price.

Colin Redman
SEN Books
www.senbooks.co.uk

[Dyslexia](#) **[Numeracy and Dyscalculia](#)**



As a Christmas surprise, SNJ asked the amazing people at Twinkl's SEND department if they'd be able to offer something special for our readers. And, because they are dedicated to helping parents—especially those with SEND—the Twinkl team have come up trumps!

Until **Monday 22nd December at 10pm**, Twinkl are offering some fabulous Christmas resource packs to download, just for you!

Read on at [How Twinkl can support you during this festive period—and beyond](#) to access . . .

Top SEND Resources for the Festive Period

We've gathered together the six top resources for SEND parents to support their children during the Christmas holidays, and they're all free for you to access until 10pm, 22nd December, so get downloading!

- Visual Supports for Routine and Structure
- Sensory Activities
- Quiet Time Pack
- Parent Guide
- Christmas Structured Steps Maths Resources
- Christmas Eve Social Situation
- More Activities from Twinkl— including older children
- Digital Activities
- Free Festive Treat

[Sensory Christmas Pack](#)

[SEND Christmas Bundle](#)

JCQ Guidance for parents, carers and students about access arrangements

What are access arrangements?

- Access arrangements allow students with specific needs, such as special educational needs or disabilities, to access an exam.
- They allow students to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the exam.

How will the process start?

- Parents and carers should let the SENCo know as soon as possible if their child has additional needs. Good and open communication is important.
- Students in further education should record their additional needs on the college's enrolment form.
- The SENCo will work with teachers and the student to identify possible arrangements.
- Various access arrangements are available. For example, support for students who have difficulties with reading, writing, speed of working or concentration.
- Not all students with additional needs will require access arrangements. This depends on whether their difficulty affects their access to exams. Additional needs or a diagnosis alone do not entitle a student to access arrangements.

Who will make the assessment?

- If a student has learning difficulties, the school or college's appointed assessor must conduct the assessment to determine the need for access arrangements, such as 25% extra time.
- If an external assessor diagnoses a learning difficulty (for example, dyslexia or dyscalculia), the assessment can only be used as evidence for access arrangements if the assessor has liaised with the school or college and received the necessary access arrangements paperwork in advance of the assessment taking place.
- Specialists (for example, a medical consultant or a psychiatrist) are responsible for providing a formal diagnosis. They are **not** responsible for decisions about access arrangements.
- The school or college must decide which access arrangements a student has for their exams.
- Teachers must give evidence to show that an access arrangement is needed. The school or college will record how effective the arrangement is in the classroom, in internal tests or in mock exams.

What else needs to be done?

- The school or college will have to apply for some arrangements.
- If a student has complex needs, a school or college can discuss their needs with the exam board.

Finally

Schools and colleges **must** follow the rules.

They are inspected and if they are found to be breaking the rules, this will be malpractice.



Workplace accessibility guides

Some of our members share their guides on supporting inclusive employment.

Empowering Tech - How Reading Pens Support Adult Employability and Independence

A 60-min CPD accredited training course, designed for employees of Job Centres, DWP advisors, Work and Employment Advisors, Job Carving and Careers Services advisors, Apprenticeship and Internship managers, Community and Inclusion Coaches, OT's ILA's, Cognitive Care Professionals, Inclusion Engagement Partnership Managers.



Attendees can choose CPD certification or choose certificate of attendance for completing the course.

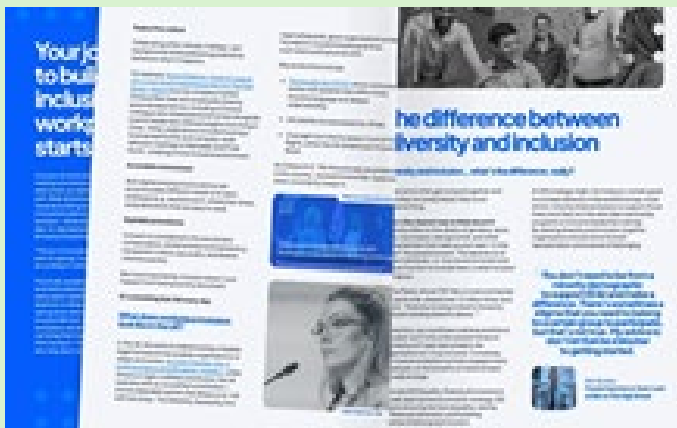
Resources include the following:

Video presentation - available on demand.

A helpful Candidate Consideration Support Form for The Scanning Pens Pathway.

A PDF with links to case studies and impact evidence.

[Training Hub – Your Centre for Scanning Pens Training](#)



CareScribe

[Inclusive Workplaces Playbook](#) - our new guide on workplace inclusion, exploring neuro inclusion and support strategies via case studies from inclusion experts and companies like AXA UK, and Not On The High Street. It's a valuable resource for ED&I leaders, HR professionals, and people professionals.

[Playbook Download - Inclusive Workplaces Playbook - CareScribe](#)

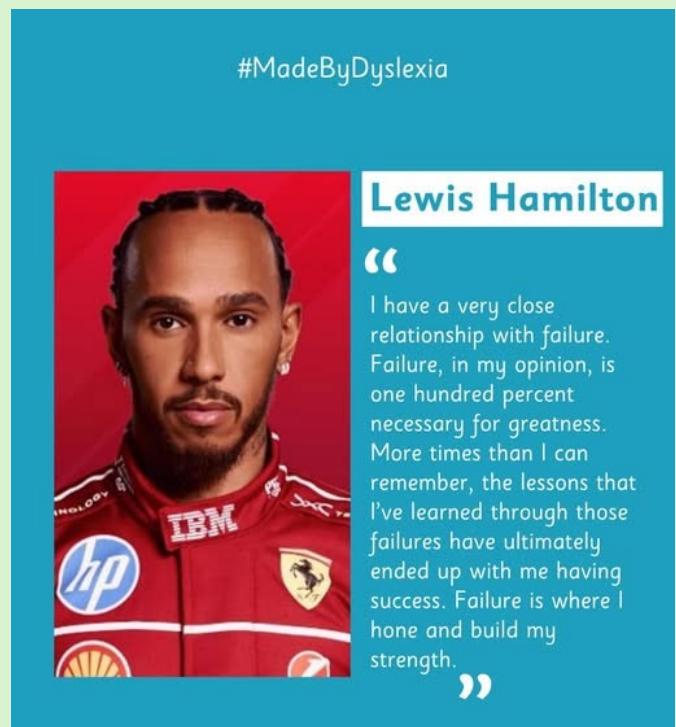
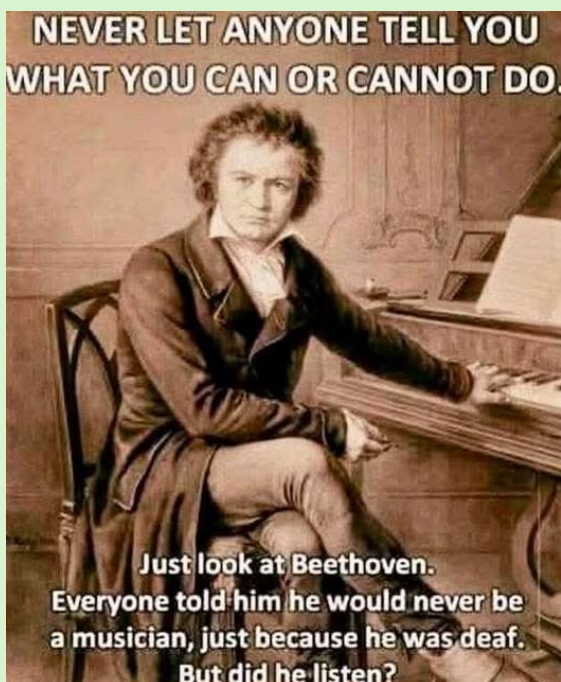
DYSLEXIA STORIES

[Schoolboy Realises Dyslexia is a Superpower and Not a Disability](#) | [Educating](#) | [Our Stories](#)



Year 7 Jacob feels different to everyone else because of his dyslexia.

After talking to headteacher Mr. Povey, he realises that he doesn't have a disability, but a superpower which will help him see the world in a unique way.



BBC News

[Charity calls for strategy to help adults with dyslexia](#)

'I spent 25 years pretending I could read'



Paula Randall knew she had dyslexia but did not learn to read until she was 42.

Jo Palmer
South & South East Investigations Team
10 December 2025

A woman who spent 25 years hiding the fact she could not read has said there should be more support for adults with undiagnosed dyslexia.

Charities have warned hundreds of thousands of adults across England and Wales could be struggling without a clear or free diagnosis pathway. The British Dyslexia Association, based in Bracknell, is calling for a national strategy to stop people slipping through the net.

Paula Randall, from Basingstoke, said she spent two decades feeling embarrassed and making excuses to avoid reading in public.

"When I was at secondary school the teachers just looked at me and put me at the back of the class saying I didn't want to learn," she said. "I was disruptive. They just kind of basically ignored me."

Ms Randall was eventually diagnosed with dyslexia, but too late to help her during her GCSEs.

"I went into that hall, I felt sick and just thought what's the point," she said. "I just literally wrote my name date of birth on the exam paper. Basically I just didn't do my exams".

'I just wanted to end it'

Ms Randall said afterwards she was so distraught she even contemplated taking her own life.

She said: "I got home and I just wanted to end it. I thought I've got no qualifications. I've got no reason to be here. I'm an embarrassment to my mum and my family. I just thought 'why not'?"

Ms Randall said in later life she came up with creative solutions for everything from eating out to doing the weekly shop.

"I would always make excuses, for why I didn't want to order from the menu, and put on a fake smile," she said. "It's amazing how many times you can put on a fake smile."

Ellen Broomé, chief executive of the British Dyslexia Association, said: "It is shocking that we let adults go through life unsupported and that feels like such a waste. Not just for the economy. It's a big waste for the economy and the taxpayer but a waste of human potential. With autism or ADHD, you might be able to go to your GP and say 'this is my problem' or 'this is what I am struggling with' and there will be a pathway. There might be long wait lists. For adults with dyslexia that pathway does not exist."



Ms Randall (right) said being able to read had transformed her life

A dyslexia diagnosis is not available via the NHS, as it is recognised as a specific learning difficulty. This means it requires an educational assessment, which cost about £700 to pay for privately. When Ms Randall was

42 she reached out to the charity Read Easy, which helps adults learn to read on a 1-2-1 basis. She said learning to read had transformed her life.

"A lot of my friends, my husband and my mum said 'even you just going for those first couple of lessons, we noticed that confidence has come out in you'," she said. "I'm actually proud to say I have it now. I don't need to hide or do anything. It's 'yes, I'm Paula from Basingstoke, I have dyslexia, I'm here to help you'."

Read Easy UK was established in 2011, and provides a volunteer-led reading coaching programme for adults

Amanda Lightowler is a specialist tutor for children and adults at Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity in Surrey. She said the barriers for adults with undiagnosed dyslexia were wide-reaching.

"I think the difficulty for an individual trying to find an answer is the assessments are quite expensive," she said. "They can be up to £800, and although that's because of the time and expertise involved, a lot of people don't have that money. It's the price of a holiday and lots of people aren't even having them at the moment. A lot of the information is online and that is a barrier. Everything is very word based, even internet searches, so trying to access the information is tricky."

The Adult Literacy Trust estimates very poor adult literacy levels costs the UK economy as much as £40bn per year

Also backing the call from the British Dyslexia Association is Robert Glick, founder and CEO of the Adult Literacy Trust. He believes a national strategy is essential to stop more adults like Ms Randall slipping through the net.

"What's really required to achieve both impact and efficiency in adult literacy provision is a truly 'whole government' approach," he said. "We need to address the lack of ownership and dilution of effort around literacy that stems from it being an issue which cuts across a range of policy areas. This should include creating a national task force or cross-departmental working group."

The Adult Literacy Trust estimates very poor adult literacy levels costs the UK economy as much as £40bn per year in lost productivity and reduced earnings.

A spokesperson for the Local Government Association said: "There is no legal responsibility of local authorities for adult dyslexia diagnosis. Adult dyslexia diagnoses should be carried out by a qualified specialist assessor and are typically provided by the private and voluntary sector. If an adult with a formal dyslexia diagnosis has care and support needs, councils have a duty under the Care Act 2014 to undertake a social care needs assessment and to meet those needs if they are deemed eligible."



Nick Jones
Founder,
Soho House

“Whenever anyone tells me they're dyslexic, I always just go, lucky you, because you can look at things differently and I think, in a world which is pretty competitive, I think to be able to look at it differently is a huge advantage.”

Photo credit: @officialspikeley



Jeremy Fleming
Director of GCHQ

“We're only going to be successful if we make the most of those who see things differently. Our dyslexic colleagues are mission critical to GCHQ.”

MADE BY
DYSLEXIA

MY DYSLEXIA STORIES at [Your Stories - British Dyslexia Association](#)



You are more than your dyslexia. Just because you have been diagnosed with dyslexia it doesn't mean that you're "dumb" or "thick".

You are smart and you just need the extra support to manage life.

It was a massive relief

When I was younger, I had no clue why I was struggling with reading, particularly with spelling. My dad who was an English teacher, recognised the signs of dyslexia and told me that's what it probably was. My primary school didn't think I was dyslexic and neither did my secondary school.

Although I eventually got the help for exams in school, I still wasn't officially "diagnosed", so I felt like they just gave me support when my parents wouldn't back down. Eventually, when I was 18, I got the opportunity to have a formal test and it was confirmed I was dyslexic. It was a massive relief as I just wanted something to officially confirm it, because I felt like no one was listening to me and offering proper support outside of exams.

I spent much of my teenage years learning how to study and take in the information.

I realised quite early on in school that the only way I was going to put effort in and get results in my learning was if I worked hard and figured out the best way to learn. That meant from an early age I could problem solve my situation. Plus, my parents introduced me to different ways of learning or taking information in such as audiobooks.

Taking a different approach

I think because I am dyslexic, I have become more resistant. For example, I would always find ways to do things differently. When I faced setbacks in university and was struggling with writing assignments, I would often try and approach writing assignments differently to see which approaches worked best. Over time, I think in conjunction with this, I had to learn to become better at receiving feedback and extra support. I never liked showing my work to anyone but I soon learned, especially in university, that if I was going to pass, I needed as much advice as I could get.

I also learned in life to be disciplined. I soon discovered that I needed to be able to plan and organise my time and often making sure I had enough time to complete tasks, especially in education. Therefore, being dyslexic forced me to become more organised through to-do lists and planning when I would do tasks and where was best to complete them. For example, working out where best to sit in an office that's less distracting so I could focus on planning out my week.

Overall, I think in life if I didn't figure how to do things for myself rather than just accepting I can't do something, I wouldn't be the person I am today. Dyslexia has forced me to look for ways to overcome my struggles from school, to uni and to work life balance.

Receiving the right support

The support of a lecturer in college really helped. The way she taught the lessons was so that everyone could learn. There were often times she would make us use visual learning like mind maps or creating little booklets so that we would remember the information.

Plus, she always made sure I could approach her if I needed to and that I had the correct exam and test supports in place, such as using a computer for spell checking and writing answers with the use of headphones to read back my answers.

Having extra support is key to your success in life so find out what works for you. Ask to try different types of support and don't be afraid to ask others for different support options if they aren't working for you. What might be helpful for one person who's dyslexic might not work for another person. Keep pushing for the right support until you get something that works.

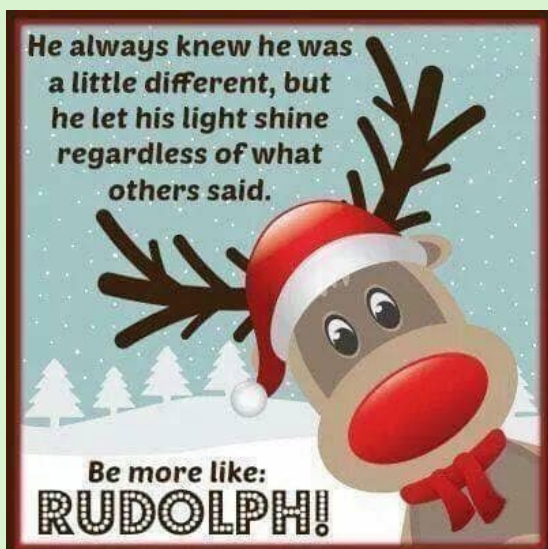
Overcoming my fears

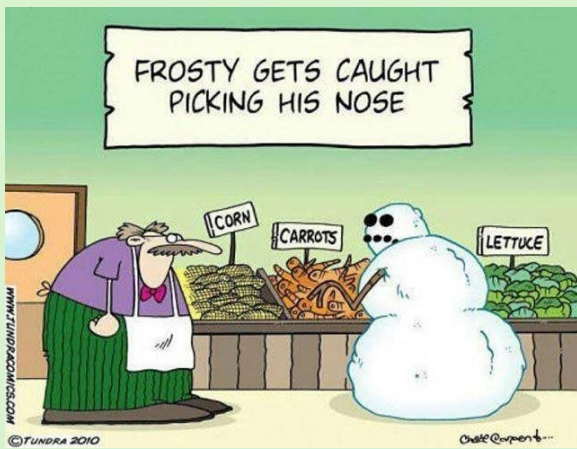
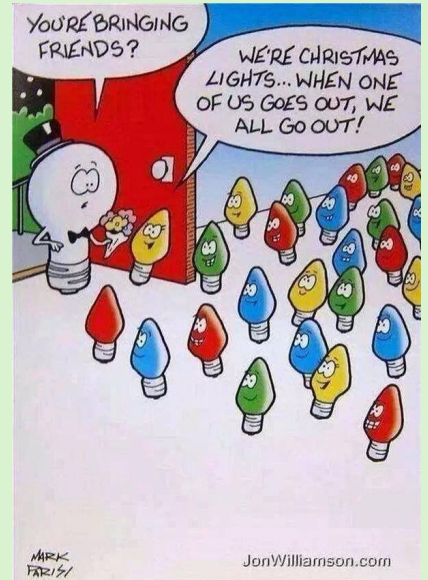
I think a proud moment for me was when I did a presentation in a training course I completed as part of a graduate work program. I struggle with being able to articulate myself when I'm nervous, but I managed to overcome my fear in that moment. What made it go well was the fact that we had to explain a project we were working on. Simply breaking it down and using pictures really helped and the group I was presenting to said they really liked how simplified I made it.

Not letting it define you

For anyone still in school thinking about the future, I would say that exams don't have to define what you do after school. Yes, please try your best, but also know that a bad grade is not the end of life. There's many opportunities to explore in life and even if you decide to go for one option, it doesn't mean you have to stick to it. Also, if it takes you longer to get to where you want to be, so be it. I went to university at 20 because I never got the grades at 18 to go. Always try different things and even if you have to spend longer to reach goals such as taking exams again or going for a foundation course - do it. One day you'll look back and be proud of where you came from.

And finally . . .





Caroline Fowke

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 WDA Instagram: [@wiltshire_dyslexia_association](#)
 Helpline: 07394 617917 wdahelpline@gmail.com

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