Offending E-learning and Dyslexia: The Good Practice Guide

by the Adult Dyslexia Organisation

E- Enabling Offender Learning and Skills

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Offending, E-learning and Dyslexia: The Good Practice Guide

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• Although Dyslexia is the main focus of this Guide; there is also information on Dyspraxia / Developmental Co-ordination Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder and Dyscalculia.
• Please note that references to the Offender’s Learning Journey relate to the version produced in 2004
INTRODUCTION TO THE ADULT DYSLEXIA ORGANISATION

The Adult Dyslexia Organisation (ADO) is a national organisation, with wider concerns, run by dyslexics for adults with dyslexia and all those concerned with them. ADO advises, supports and empowers dyslexic adults, taking account of their particular and very different needs. It provides a wide range of services to the public and to professionals, supported by specialist consultants in a variety of disciplines such as education, employment, policy development, e-learning and Information & Communication Technologies (ICT).

Prior to its establishment in 1991, there was no specific voice for the large number of adults with dyslexia – estimated to be 4% of the population severely dyslexic (nearly 3 million adults), with a further 6% who show some signs of dyslexia.

As far as we know, ADO remains the only user-led national dyslexia organisation operating in Europe. It handles numerous inquiries from adult dyslexics, their families, professionals and official bodies. By working with government departments, major organisations, Trade Unions, educators and employers, ADO works to ensure real change that affects the lives of adults with dyslexia. ADO has written definitive guidelines on dyslexia for national organisations and strives to ensure that dyslexia is recognised and individuals supported. The aim of the organisation is to demonstrate that ‘user-friendly for dyslexics can be user-friendly for everyone!’.

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDE

This publication is a practical guide for anyone working with offenders in an e-learning setting. Research indicates that a considerable proportion of the offending population face difficulties due to dyslexia and related conditions, and are unlikely to make progress without appropriate support. An understanding of how these conditions affect adults in education and training and what methodologies are most effective, will enable you to help your learners tackle their difficulties and master ICT skills. Fortunately a dyslexia-friendly approach is also beneficial for other learners.

E-learning has been described as ICT skills + learning content. This Guide will examine the elements of ICT and learning content separately, in addition to the consideration of e-learning in offender settings and appropriate assistive/specialist technologies.

A ‘good practice’ section highlights what can be achieved; there is guidance on meeting your obligations under disability legislation and the requirements of the Offender’s Learning Journey. The Resource Bank includes checklists and information on technological tools, networks and useful organisations.
The Leitch Review has highlighted the skills shortfall that still handicaps our economy:
- over a third of adults in the UK do not have a basic school-leaving qualification – double the proportion of Canada and Germany
- five million people have no qualifications at all
- one in six adults do not have the literacy skills expected of an 11 year old and half do not have these levels of functional numeracy.

Offenders, especially those with dyslexia and related specific learning difficulties, will be over-represented in the above.

At the same time, the new Skills for Life ICT Curriculum has raised the profile of this essential skill, with the aims of:
- Linking to the purposeful use of ICT in everyday life
- Emphasising transferable skills
- Fostering critical judgement
- Preparing learners for the future

Can this approach succeed where others have failed?

This Guide has benefited from a consultation process. It is part of the Adult Dyslexia Organisation’s E-Enabling Offender Learning and Skills (EEOLS) Project. Information on other EEOLS projects can be found on: www.offenderlearning.net

EEOLS Project Manager and Chief Executive of the Adult Dyslexia Organisation Donald Scloss

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Thanks to Julie Sweeting of Medway Dyslexia Association for her help and advice.

Thanks to Tom Pitts for design, typesetting and illustration.

All dyslexic people need a more dyslexia friendly environment in which to operate and this Guide contains a wealth of information and ideas to help any tutor or trainer, no matter what their level of knowledge, to explore and evaluate dyslexia friendly approaches and technology which can really make a difference to a dyslexic person’s life.

The guide is always positive and seeks to show paths to success rather than dwell on difficulties. It’s going to be a useful resource for people working with offenders.

Jenny Lee, National Adult Dyslexia Coordinator, Dyslexia Action
This section explores the nature of dyslexia and the issue of dyslexia and offending behaviour. The challenges and opportunities of ICT in prison and probation settings are introduced.

What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is described as a ‘family of difficulties’ which vary from person to person within a recognisable pattern. It is characterised by inherent inefficiency in processing language-based information. There is usually lateness in learning to read and poor spelling, a weak short-term memory, disorganisation and poor time management. Difficulties sequencing and structuring information are common. Some people with dyslexia confuse left / right and have problems with orientation. Some have word-finding problems or experience a slight delay between hearing what is said and understanding it.

Dyslexia can also affect numeracy; the following are key areas of difficulty:

- acquiring basic numeracy skills, such as division
- working out / retaining multi-part calculations
- remembering mathematical facts
- distinguishing mathematical symbols, e.g. + x
- understanding mathematical language, such as ratios
- conceptual understanding, such as negative numbers
- confidence and motivation.

People with dyslexia are often seen as inconsistent, because their ability to cope can vary significantly on a day to day basis.

Dyslexia is independent of intelligence, race and social background. Although previously thought to affect more males than females, is in fact equally prevalent in both sexes. It is estimated that dyslexia affects 4% of the population severely, a further 6% show some dyslexic characteristics. However, as the next section reveals, the incidence is thought to be far higher amongst the offending population.

The condition has a physical basis, i.e. the brains of people with dyslexia can be different to those of non-dyslexics, both anatomically and in the way they function. In recent years the advantages this can confer have been highlighted - a welcome balance to the ‘deficit model’.

What are these advantages? Skills associated with dyslexia include an enhanced ability to visualise; innovative thinking and creativity; lateral problem solving skills; intuitive understanding of how things work and an ability to see the bigger picture together with an awareness of unexpected links, associations and applications. A range of definitions, theoretical bases approaches to support are outlined in A Framework for Understanding Dyslexia DfES (2004).

It is most important to stress that the areas of ability and disability vary from person to person, for example, some people with dyslexia have excellent oral skills whereas others find spoken self-expression difficult. An assessment of the individual learning profile is therefore a prerequisite to offering targeted support to those who come into education and training.

Specific Learning Difficulties

Although the focus of this Guide is dyslexia, we shall also consider three
other conditions which often co-exist or overlap with it: Dyspraxia – also known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Dyscalculia. The umbrella term - specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) – is often used to refer to these related conditions, although some experts regard this as referring more to children rather than adults who may no longer be engaged in learning. The term ‘hidden disability’ is sometimes used informally.

There is now sufficient research to recognise that these conditions are not compartmentalised and the needs of the individual need to be addressed rather than simply looking at labels alone. Future research specifically in forensic settings needs to identify levels of specific learning difficulties in all sectors of the prison and the implications of these findings. This is essential in order for appropriate rehabilitation packages to be designed and the outcomes of these measured. (Identification and Implication of Specific Learning Difficulties in a Prison Population, Discovery Centre research paper, 2005)

It is important to understand how these conditions affect people in adulthood – both the way in which they operate certain skills and how they can be disadvantaged. Possible implications of SpLDs within the criminal justice system are highlighted on the following page.

It has been argued that people with damaged self-esteem are initially unable to take advantage of learning opportunities because of their expectation of failure. This is very true of many people with dyslexia. Hopefully, a greater understanding of the condition and an increase in ‘dyslexia-friendly’ tools will enable offenders with dyslexia and related difficulties to make better progress and develop useful skills that will open more doors to them on release.

The issue of identification of specific learning difficulties is taken up in the next chapter; Support is the focus of Chapters 3, 4 & 5.

Is there a link between dyslexia and offending behaviour?

It is important to state that dyslexia does not cause offending behaviour. However there does seem to be an indirect link between unaddressed dyslexia and offending. This is explained by Jo Matty, magistrate and dyslexia expert, as follows: “When dyslexics experience lack of appropriate support from the early years of education, this can lead to

• poor literacy and numeracy skills
• lack of confidence and low self esteem
• boredom, disaffection
• frustration, anger
• behavioural problems
• truanting or exclusion from school
• poor employment prospects
all of which play their part in the climate of offending.”

Another consideration is the escalation from ‘getting into trouble’ to a custodial sentence in the context of dyslexia. Children with dyslexia are more likely to find school difficult than their peers and are therefore more likely to truant. Many people who truant tend to get into low level difficulties with police. When police investigate, a key criterion is ‘getting the story straight’ but many of these young people find it difficult to remember the order or date of events, so the information they provide appears inconsistent and unreliable, consequently they are more likely to end up being prosecuted. The chart: Implications of Specific Learning Difficulties within the Criminal Justice System, shows how people with these difficulties can be disadvantaged.
## Implications of Specific Learning Difficulties within the Criminal Justice System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIFFICULTIES</th>
<th>POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor reading skills</td>
<td>Unable to cope with written information such as notices, rules, official letters, checking a statement and personal communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading aggravated by 'visual stress' i.e. print seems to become distorted during reading</td>
<td>Avoidance of training / education options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak / erratic spelling</td>
<td>Cannot respond to written communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awkward handwriting</td>
<td>Illegible writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A weak short-term memory</td>
<td>Forgets information conveyed orally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not retain instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty taking in information</td>
<td>Frustration, anger. Misunderstands or only gets part of the picture (leading to discipline procedures). May need ‘thinking time’ before giving a response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty expressing meaning orally</td>
<td>May appear evasive, uncooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequencing problems</td>
<td>Gets things in the wrong order (procedures or when relating a series of events).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left / right confusion and disorientation</td>
<td>Makes mistakes when referring to left and right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easily becomes lost in unfamiliar surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misinterpreting situations / instructions / body language</td>
<td>Appears uncooperative or cheeky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short attention span</td>
<td>Unable to pay attention for sustained periods so becomes overloaded and “switches off”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High levels of distractibility</td>
<td>Distracted by sounds, sights, thoughts - may distract or annoy others. May be very restless and fidgety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor organisation</td>
<td>Fails to turn up at the right place, at the right time or on the right day with the right papers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor time management</td>
<td>Poor estimation of how long something takes Inability to prioritise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clumsiness</td>
<td>Told off for knocking things over, tripping up or bumping into others. Antagonises people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low self esteem, lack of confidence</td>
<td>Inability to acquire new skills and benefit from new opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A combination of these factors may have led to a failure to comply with probation programmes and procedures, leading to a custodial sentence. Education and training options may well be avoided. Further factors, such as substance misuse, will also affect behaviour and memory.

In 2005, in the same year that the prison population reached 75,000, research funded by the Learning and Skills Council in partnership with Dyslexia Action investigated the incidence of Hidden Disabilities across a wide range of institutions. (See Resource Bank, Section C, Project 15.) Not surprisingly, just over half (52%) were found to have literacy difficulties but 20% were identified as having a hidden disability, affecting learning and employment, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficit disorder. This currently (2007) calculates at roughly sixteen thousand offenders - when offenders on non-custodial sentences are included, the numbers more than double.

A second study, looking at young offenders alone, recorded that almost a third of the sample showed signs of dyslexia. Practical Solutions to Identifying Dyslexia in Juvenile Offenders is Project 13 in the inventory of recent studies and projects included in Section C of the Resource Bank at the end of this Guide.

The implications of thousands of offenders with dyslexia are far reaching for National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and Home Office targets to get ex-offenders into work-based training and employment. The Adult Dyslexia Organisation maintains that, unless dyslexic difficulties and learning differences are taken into account, efforts to reduce offending behaviour and increase employability will be seriously undermined.

Overcrowding adds to the challenges of addressing the dyslexic difficulties of offenders. Training and education are disrupted as prisoners are increasingly moved around; learning documentation still fails to follow the learner systematically. Hopefully this is being addressed by the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) database.

**ICT provision in offender settings**

The Offender’s Learning Journey describes why e-learning is important: *Many offenders are demotivated by traditional learning and are unwilling to participate in traditional classroom environments where learning materials are paper-based.....E-learning has already been successful in engaging offenders who are not willing to take part in traditional learning.* (Section 10 Distance Learning, Resource-based Learning and e-Learning)

Some of the ICT provision in prisons and probation has been via learndirect in European Social Fund (ESF) Pathways projects and in Prison ICT Academies (PICTA). Feedback echoes the motivating effect of these courses on learners with the most severe learning problems (this is likely to include individuals with dyslexia). The European Computer Driving Licence has proved to be particularly popular. Several innovative approaches have been trialled in the Pathways initiative, such as the appointment of certain ‘lifers’ as mentors to fellow prisoners, with the title learndirect orderlies. In addition, learndirect software has been praised for its accuracy in assessing basic skills levels and assisting with record keeping.

Initial problems, such as a lack of power points on the wings, have been largely overcome by the use of laptops. The security issue of internet access can be resolved by surf control software (internet explorer linking solely to www.learndirect.com, for
example) and the careful installation of only the required programs into each individual learning account. CD Roms are another solution to coping with the requirements of this unique learning environment (such as the offender National Learning Network materials). Guidance is issued by the ICT Security Team, in line with the Security Assurance Policy. Evaluations of Pathway programmes have stressed the need for a good technical support worker and the importance of enthusiasm amongst prison officers - in order to engage prison staff, they have also been encouraged to enrol on e-learning courses to improve their skills.

The offender learning website, launched October 2006, is a key on-line resource to support the development of e-learning. See www.offenderlearning.net. At the same time, £2 million was allocated to 49 e-learning offender projects which demonstrate innovative approaches to upskilling staff and offenders, described as a progressive programme to support and encourage the use of e-learning in Offender Learning & Skills. Finally, at the time of going to press, a London-wide pilot of POLARIS (Prison Offender Learning and Resettlement Information System) is being launched. E-learning is on the agenda to stay!

Issues raised by education and training staff

These ICT and e-learning initiatives are encouraging but many challenges remain. When canvassed by the Adult Dyslexia Organisation, staff expressed a range of concerns relating to expertise, funding, accessibility of e-learning and prison conditions, namely:

- Learners are encouraged to declare difficulties and disabilities but staff often have no training on how to follow this up
- Even if we screen for dyslexia, there is not the option of an assessment at our prison
- It is difficult and costly to get staff together for training (sessional staff are not paid for extra travel costs nor for attendance)
- Staff turnover is high so we keep needing to put on more sessions (and face the above problem)
- There is not the funding for staff development
- We cannot get hold of appropriate tutor trainers in specific learning difficulties
- Training is needed on how to deal with the emotional issues that can surround a return to education
- Many staff are retired teachers in their late fifties who do not necessarily have good ICT skills
- There is a poor understanding of what assistive technology is all about and how to decide between similar technologies
- Some courses are not dyslexia-friendly in their methodology and their testing
- Not all e-learning courses have accessibility options; in the case of those that have – the options may not suit the learner
- Until the status of education and training is raised, many offenders continue to choose better paid ‘jobs’ such as cleaning or outside contracts.

Case Study
Karen writes: I was rubbish at school so I stopped going. I started bunking off and nicking stuff then me and my mates got into drugs. I seemed to be really thick but I’ve always loved scribbling designs and am into fashion and hair styling and all that. Anyway probation sent me to a learndirect centre where I did some literacy and ICT courses. Once I got going, I found they were really good and now I can scan in my designs and mess around with them till I’ve got them right. At least I know I’m not stupid and I’m hoping to do a Fashion Design course one day.
Despite the challenges, the Government is committed to extending e-learning in custodial and community settings as a key component of establishing an integrated service for offenders. E-learning can help ensure continuity of learning between different parts of the sentence and after release from custody into the community, so helping to create a seamless and coherent service.

(Offender’s Learning Journey, Introduction to Section 10)

One useful initiative is NIACE E-Guides training, which is designed to enable staff involved in adult learning to develop their use of e-learning across the curriculum and increase their ICT skills. The following definition of e-learning is used: learning supported or enhanced through the application of Information and Communications Technology (E-learning Standards Lifelong Learning UK).

- given their negative experiences of schooling, offenders with dyslexia may well avoid anything reminiscent of mainstream education
- e-learning pilots have been met with great enthusiasm
- the government is committed to expanding e-learning, integrating custodial and non-custodial provision
THE IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN OFFENDER SETTINGS

Identifying a specific learning difficulty is the first step to providing appropriate support. Assessments of areas of strength and difficulty will inform support for education, training and e-learning.

Potential dyslexia indicators should be identified and formal dyslexia assessments should be carried out if required. An effective system for identifying potential dyslexia should be in place and in use. (Service requirements of the Offender’s Learning Journey, Section 2: Assessing the Learner’s Needs.)

Given the likely numbers of offenders with dyslexia and related conditions, it is clearly advantageous to identify them as early as possible in the sentence. This process could be integrated into literacy and numeracy induction programmes, or – better still – take place at the pre-sentence report stage. Identification of learning needs generally begins with screening; this can be paper-based or computerised. However a number of challenges arise, not least are lack of expertise, under-staffing and inadequate funding.

The concept of ‘screening’ implies that those who show a certain number of indicators are regarded as ‘screening positive’ and in need of a full assessment to confirm or rule out the condition. In the case of dyslexia, many of the basic skills screening materials piloted in prisons in the early days of Skills for Life did not have a dyslexia screening component. Dyslexia diagnostic assessment materials were later commissioned but these relate solely to the Skills for Life remit of basic skills. To further complicate matters, the term ‘diagnostic assessment’ as used within Skills for Life, does not equate with the accepted meaning of the term i.e. an exploration of all aspects of cognitive functioning in order to obtain a picture of the individual’s areas of strength and weakness.

At the time of going to press (Spring 2007) new tools have been developed by the Skills for Life Strategy Unit; these are described as screening tools (skills check) and initial assessment tools for literacy and numeracy, covering all levels up to and including level 2. They have been trialled in prisons. However there is no systematic provision of assessments for offenders who come on to education screening positive for dyslexia, let alone for the far greater numbers that one would expect, statistically, to show up as positive but who choose to steer well clear of classes. The range of specific learning difficulties which overlap with dyslexia have received even less attention, even though they may actually have a greater impact on anti-social behaviour. Research suggests that individuals with difficulties in social and communication skills may be more disadvantaged because they fail to pick up social cues and misinterpret instructions. Maladaptive behaviour can develop; when they get into trouble (for reasons they do not understand) responses of frustration, anger or violence are common. In terms of education and employment, this behaviour becomes more problematic than literacy and numeracy shortcomings.

Part of the response of the (former) Prisoners’ Learning and Skills Unit to issues of disability and learning difficulty was to provide a handbook for prison tutors: Reaching All (2003). It contains a few pages on each disability group and generic sections on disabilities and learning styles. The final section The Way Ahead, recommended the establishment of an inclusive learning policy, now adopted by OLASS. It was suggested that prisoners arriving without an evaluation
of learning needs should be interviewed during the induction process, prior to basic skills testing. In this way, those unable to undertake the test could be identified and directed to help. Unfortunately the logistics of ‘processing’ increasing numbers in an overcrowded system has tended to undermine these aims.

**Why screen for dyslexia?**

The reasons why individuals fail to acquire new skills are often complex and vary from person to person. Screening for dyslexia is particularly important in order to discount or consider a widespread condition that has a profound impact on the ability to benefit from learning or training. If this is ignored, frustration may be experienced by both learner and tutor/trainer, leading to lack of progress and impaired chances of success.

Adults with dyslexia and related specific learning difficulties are very aware of their difficulties and approach training and learning opportunities warily. Some are adept at concealing their difficulties, most, if not all, lack confidence in their abilities. Others feel that technology may be the way forward for them and do not expect dyslexic difficulties to impact in this setting. However, as this Guide explains, problems may still arise in e-learning.

A trainer or tutor may need to handle the sensitive issue of suggesting that someone could be dyslexic. One way of approaching this is by asking if s/he has considered dyslexia as a possibility and offering to go through a checklist, such as the Adult Dyslexia Organisation tool. High rates of truancy amongst offenders in general will make it harder for a trainer / tutor without training in dyslexia to distinguish between the effects of missed schooling and those of dyslexia. Substance abuse can also complicate identification, effects of drugs on the brain mimicking some dyslexic indicators.

**Screening approaches for dyslexia (Identification of other specific learning difficulties comes later in this chapter)**

Methods of screening adults for possible dyslexia aim to identify those ‘who show signs of dyslexia’ or are described as being ‘at risk’ of dyslexia. They can be self-administered checklists or used by untrained people who are not necessarily specialist tutors or psychologists. Screening may offer an explanation for a range of difficulties but does not count as a conclusive diagnosis. The next stage - assessment or diagnosis - is a specialised area; dyslexia may overlap with other specific learning difficulties such as dyspraxia and attention deficit disorder both of which have implications for any learning/training programme.

There has long been concern about screening for dyslexia in those prison and probation settings where there is no option of a follow-on assessment. To get round this issue, an ‘unobtrusive’ dyslexia screening checklist (Jameson, 1998) was designed which offers the possibility of screening for dyslexia without it being mentioned (the approach is one of *Help us to help you*). In this way, the establishment obtains information on the likely prevalence of dyslexia and the needs of those coming on to educational or training programmes are highlighted. Education managers are provided with data in order to advance their case for a providing a comprehensive service.

Another approach, for those with internet access, is the Learning Styles and Dyslexia online tool (see [www.outsider.co.uk.com](http://www.outsider.co.uk.com)). This web-based screening uses a combination of the questionnaire developed for the Adult Dyslexia Organisation checklist and interactive learning styles screening to provide feedback in visual or written
form without dyslexia being openly flagged up. Tutors can use this to inform learning support.

The following tools overtly screen for dyslexia:
The revised Adult Dyslexia Organisation Screening tool is an easily administered tick list. The more ticks someone has, the more likely it is that s/he is dyslexic but only an assessment can confirm this. This checklist is the first item in the Resource Bank.

Another useful screening tool is the two page checklist included in the publication: Making the (Skills for Life) Curriculum Work for Dyslexic Learners. The Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST) claims to be ‘accurate at discriminating between dyslexics and others with literacy difficulties, easy-to-use even by untrained non-professionals, fast, fun and non-patronising.’ Careful study of the instructions, test administration and marking schemes is necessary. DAST and the following three programs each take about half an hour to administer.

The screening tools below are all computer-based
Instines covers a wide range of dyslexic problem areas and strengths together with a tutorial and test for the screening supervisor; the component subtests have been deemed ‘highly relevant in the detection of dyslexia’. It can be used by specialist and non-specialist trained staff alike.

Quickscan is a computerised checklist with printout which indicates learning styles and also takes about half an hour to run through. The resulting printout has been described as being ‘in tutors’ language’ and suggests the extent to which the individual is dyslexic. It was designed to lead to Studyscan – a much longer program, developed for university students.

Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening (LADS) and LADS Plus take several key dyslexic indicators – word recognition, word construction and short-term memory - and presents them on screen. Individual results are printed out. Testing by some adult dyslexia groups have found some areas fail to distinguish between dyslexic and literacy problems.

Assessment of dyslexia

Assessment is usually undertaken by a specialist tutor, engaged by the education contractor. Other options are an educational psychologist or specially qualified speech and language therapists – experience of adults is essential. The Adult Dyslexia Organisation is able to make recommendations and provide guidance and information.

Testing usually covers both verbal and non-verbal tasks in a range of areas; psychologists generally use standardised ‘IQ’ tests, which produce scores for a number of ‘verbal’ and ‘performance’ skills. Following the recommendations of a number of expert bodies, the emphasis is on establishing the individual’s strengths and weaknesses rather than producing an IQ score. Assessment results have often been described as a ‘spiky profile’ with unexpected peaks and troughs which highlight the discrepancy between performance in areas of strength and specific areas of weakness. The weaknesses usually fall within the realms of short-term memory and processing speed. A report should include individual recommendations for specific support strategies.

Assessment of dyslexia can be more difficult if the individual has poor literacy, missed schooling, experience of substance misuse, has some physical or psychological impairment, or if English is not his/her first
Identification of Other Related Specific Learning Difficulties

Features of Dyspraxia / Developmental Co-ordination Disorder

The information below is provided by the Developmental Adults Neuro-Diversity Association (DANDA).

Dyspraxia has been described as an impairment of the organisation of movement, often accompanied by problems with language, perception and thought. The pattern of difficulties in dyspraxia (or Developmental Co-ordination Disorder) may vary from person to person, as with dyslexia.

Key areas of difficulty, experienced by people with dyspraxia, are listed below:

Planning movement and being aware of the space around them: They frequently bump into things and trip over objects. They may have a clumsy posture and poor muscle tone.

Perception: They find it difficult to judge heights and distances, making them appear to be more clumsy.

Co-ordinating different parts of the body: They may find it hard to catch, throw and balance as well as moving the different parts of their body without looking.

Manual and practical work: They may find it difficult to handle keyboards, tools, cooking equipment etc. safely and easily. They tend to knock over and spill things.

Writing: They tend to write laboriously slowly and/or untidily and illegibly. Accurate copying can be difficult and word-processing slow and laborious.

Language: They may find it difficult to pronounce some words and some may stutter. There may also be general difficulties with self-expression.

Concentration: They may take a long time to complete a task and find it difficult to do more than one thing at a time.

Short-term memory and sequencing tasks: They may find it hard to make sense of information when listening or reading instructions and dealing with maps and charts.

Organisation and thought: They may operate in a muddled way, having little sense of direction or time. They may constantly miss appointments and keep forgetting and misplacing things.

Response to external stimulation: They may be over or under sensitive to noise, touch, light and taste.

Relationships: They can find it difficult to relate to others, especially in groups and may misread social cues.

All the above can lead to Emotional Problems, causing feelings of depression, anger, frustration and anxiety. These difficulties will become more apparent in times of stress. People with dyspraxia also tend to be erratic and have ‘good and bad days’ without apparent cause.

Features of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

The following information is provided by two ADD charities: ADDISS and ADDdept.

Attention deficit disorder is thought to affect up to 10% of the adult population, on a continuum of mild to severe. An ‘attention deficit’ means an inability to focus attention rather than ‘attention seeking’. Whilst many
people with ADD seem not to pay attention; they are, in fact, becoming distracted by paying attention to everything going on around them.

Three core symptoms are associated with attention deficit disorder: **Hyperactivity, Impulsivity and Attentional problems**

In adults with this condition, signs of hyperactivity tend to diminish but the following difficulties remain:

- Difficulties staying on task and switching tasks
- Poor listening skills
- Daydreaming, appearing ‘spaced out’
- Very easily distracted
- Poor short-term memory; difficulty in following instructions
- Poor inhibition / Impulsivity - no sense of danger
- Failure to take account of the consequences of actions and to benefit from feedback
- Restlessness, being on the go at all times, difficulty remaining seated
- Tapping feet / fingers; fidgety
- Disorganisation
- Difficulty seeing a project through to completion
- Self regulation difficulty e.g. blurtting out inappropriate remarks, interrupting others
- Poor control of tone and volume of voice
- May tend to do things to excess e.g. driving fast, drinking excess alcohol

Although some people develop coping strategies, many continue to live in total confusion and frustration. Some people with ADD are perfectionists with obsessive tendencies. They tend to repeat certain actions because they cannot remember if they have done a task or not.

### Features of Dyscalculia

Many dyslexic people have difficulties with numeracy (60% is the figure often quoted) but there are a small number of learners who do not manifest dyslexic difficulties in other areas but find it particularly challenging to make progress in number skills. This may be due to dyscalculia, defined by the DfES as: **a condition that affects the ability to acquire mathematical skills**. It has also been referred to as ‘dyslexia with numbers’.

Three key challenges have been identified:

- difficulty in processing numerical/mathematical information
- an inability to internalise mathematical concepts
- no grasp of 'numerosity' i.e. recognising the relative size and value of numbers.

Dyscalculia effects many areas of everyday life, these include:

- time telling
- handling money and using pin numbers
- remembering personal dates (such as date of birth, date of marriage)
- recalling personal numbers such as phone numbers, postal code
- travel - mistakes with bus, platform or road numbers
- following a recipe
- dialling phone numbers
- weighing and measuring
- writing down appointment times and dates correctly
- games involving dice or counting.

Research on children indicates that 1.3% have specific difficulties with numeracy. We can only assume that at least equal numbers of adults have the same specific difficulties. Studies in the US indicate approximately...
4% of students with classical symptoms of dyscalculia. The following websites are informative:
www.dyscalculia.me/uk (includes a 25 point checklist)
www.dyscalculia.org
www.crme/soton.ac.uk/dyscalculia

Assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties

The Dyscovery Centre, Cardiff has developed a screening / profiling tool that identifies barriers to learning across the spread of specific learning difficulties rather than screening for a particular condition. The Dyscovery Profiler is available in a computerised version with tailored feedback for individuals relevant to their specific environments (including prison). A range of support materials has also been produced.

At present, assessments of dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder or dyscalculia are rarely carried out in prisons. Even in the community, this service is very patchy due to the lack of multidisciplinary teams with expertise across the range of specific learning difficulties. In the case of dyspraxia, for example, there should be some Occupational Therapy involvement to assess motor skills. One way forward is developing in Wales: the Unified and Fair System for Assessing and Managing Care (UACM).

The impact of diagnosis

Although many people are relieved to have an explanation for their difficulties, a diagnosis of dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder or dyscalculia can come as a shock, leading to a range of reactions such as anger, distress or feelings of bewilderment. For this reason, counselling may be helpful and/or the support of an adult dyslexia group. The Adult Dyslexia Organisation has produced several information sheets to help people at this difficult time, in recognition of the fact that little or no support is generally provided.

Due to lack of counsellors, tutors / trainers may need to take on some aspects of the counselling role. They will need good listening and communication skills to enable offenders with specific learning difficulties to feel ‘safe’ enough to identify and articulate their needs. Tutors will probably have to help combat the individual’s negative self-concepts and help overcome learning blocks. A crucial aspect of an effective diagnostic process is discussing with the individual their strengths and weaknesses and ensuring that they ‘own the process’, rather than feel that it has been done to them.

Realistic aims should be set, based on a supportive but honest appraisal of the learner’s strengths and weaknesses. Respect must be shown for the individual’s culture and preferred ways of learning.

The identification of foreign nationals with dyslexia is considered in Chapter 4.

- although screening is now more widespread, many offenders with dyslexia do not have the opportunity of an assessment
- a range of paper-based and computerised tools is available
- other specific learning difficulties are not well catered for
- counselling may be required for those who are newly diagnosed
This chapter explores a range of barriers to learning and how they might be overcome; the focus is on approaches to supporting offenders with dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADD in education & training and raising confidence levels.

**Barriers to learning**

As staff working with offenders are all too aware, the offending population often has multiple disadvantages; these can include:

- lack of educational opportunities
- mental health problems
- emotional and behavioural problems
- the effects of substance misuse
- chaotic and disorganised lives

If dyslexia and/or other learning difficulties are also present, it compounds these difficulties. Despite bravado, there is often the issue of low self esteem which must be addressed before successful learning can take place. However once an individual has settled into learning, he or she could well demonstrate some of the positive abilities associated with dyslexia.

Given negative experiences of schooling, these individuals may well avoid class-based learning but be attracted to workshop training and technology. *One of the attractions of ICT is that it can be an enabling technology; it can remove barriers and allow learners, who might otherwise be excluded to access the Skills for Life (ICT Skills for Life Curriculum).*

Some may prefer to work on their wing rather than attend classes; flexible learning opportunities, often technology-based, are now making this possible in some institutions. Support will therefore be necessary in all these spheres. Increasing numbers are engaged in preparation for work programmes such as *Entry to Employment (E2E)*. ICT has an important part to play in upskilling and increasing employability.

Freddy’s story illustrates how one individual was helped to overcome his barriers to learning through ICT while serving a term in an open prison. He had always wondered if he was dyslexic.

*A blow to my self respect was that when I was in school I could never write a story down although I had them in my head. It was something about pen and paper and spelling and handwriting. But I learned to use computers while I was inside. This has changed my life. Now I can get my stories down and get them tidied up. I’ve even started writing poems.*

**Effects of stress**

We all experience stress to some extent but the effects are more debilitating to people with dyslexia. One explanation for this is that most people with dyslexia are already using their coping strategies to their fullest extent just to manage the challenges of everyday life, so have no reserves left to draw on in demanding situations.

One expert who had experience of dyslexic people in the courts, put it like this: *A dyslexic can appear completely incompetent in situations of stress.* In prisons, anxiety is often related to problems at home or tension concerning on-going legal procedures. In these situations, absorbing information or carrying out mental work becomes almost impossible.
A Prison Officer describes an offender under stress:

I’d known Tom for a bit. He was a clumsy lad, big and all over the place somehow. When he sat down his head would hang forward and he was quite mumbly. Anyway he’d got quite wound up about the adjudication. When the governor asked him some questions to clarify the situation Tom didn’t seem able to answer without striding about the room (despite requests to stay still) with wild arm movements as though he had to use his whole body to help the words out. And I don’t know what happened to his volume control. His voice came out too loud and he rambled on and on as though he was trying to avoid the question. He kept staring at these scruffy notes he’d brought in with him but didn’t seem to be able to make sense of them. By the end he was weeping with frustration. I really felt quite sorry for him.

I wondered if he was dyslexic or something but I know he could read, in fact he was often getting stuff from the library.

(Features of Tom’s behaviour indicate that he is likely to be dyspraxic)

Suggestions for lowering stress levels include yoga, breathing and relaxation exercises (the Phoenix Trust supplies free booklets on yoga, relaxation and meditation to people in prison: www.prisonphoenixtrust.org.uk). Another option is a support group (such as the Prison Fellowship - a Christian group, contactable through the Chaplaincy). If there is a Quaker chaplain s/he might organise activities that provide spiritual rather than Christian support, such as (non-judgemental) Active Listening sessions.

Support strategies

The focus of this chapter is a range of support strategies for learners with dyslexia. Issues relating specifically to numeracy and foreign nationals are covered in the next chapter whereas a discussion of specialist technologies can be found in Chapter 5. A range of useful techniques and strategies are presented in two Skills for Life publications: Access for All and A Framework for Understanding Dyslexia

In keeping with the Adult Dyslexia Organisation’s message ‘dyslexia-friendly, user-friendly’, these approaches will also benefit other learners. Foremost of these techniques is a ‘structured multisensory approach’, a term often quoted in relation to dyslexia support. The two components can be described separately:

a) ‘A structured approach’ i.e.
• teaching one thing at a time, then combining the steps in a cumulative way
• being aware of the skills and subskills involved
• fostering motivation by achievable ‘bite size’ targets which are clearly defined

b) ‘A multisensory approach’
This entails introducing the same item(s) in different ways, using different senses, thus reinforcing the learning. Ideally auditory, visual and hands-on approaches should all be used.

Visual techniques include colour coding, diagrams.

Auditory strategies include CDs, voice recorders, oral work.

Hands-on learning could include role play, handling or sorting cards/objects or using a computer.

The Touch-type, Read and Spell package is an innovative multisensory approach to learning spelling, reading, touchtyping and computing skills. First tried in Pentonville Prison, it was found to raise skills levels and
self-esteem so has been recommended to other institutions. Daily practice is necessary to make progress and initial training on the system is needed.

Support for reading

Reading is a difficult activity for many people with dyslexia and part of the reason for poor literacy rates in offenders. Some will not have mastered the subskills necessary to read effectively. Others will have no strategies for working out unfamiliar words so will rely on context to make predictions. There may be difficulties tracking along a line of text and keeping the place. It is always beneficial to have some discussion before and after tackling reading matter.

If a whiteboard or overhead projector is used, it is essential to ensure that all students are able to see the board or screen properly and that text is sufficiently enlarged (font size 20 at least). Learners may lack the confidence to draw attention to themselves if this is a problem.

Some learners may find it difficult to read handouts and prefer auditory back-up. In well equipped centres there should be the option of accessing information on a computer via a screen reader. Key points of good practice, relating to features of written materials and minimising visual stress, are given at the end of Chapter 6, A Dyslexia-friendly learning environment.

Support for spelling

Unlike poor maths, which seems almost acceptable, poor spelling causes great embarrassment. The issue should therefore be approached with sensitivity.

When teaching a course which contains an element of spelling tuition, it is counterproductive to use one system with all learners because this may not match preferred ways of learning and actually exacerbate weaknesses. Again, a multisensory approach is recommended, together with some demystification of aspects of the English spelling system. Learning is more likely to be retained if it is made relevant to the learner.

Memory techniques need to be taught and then applied according to the individual’s specific strengths and the word which is being tackled. The ‘Look-Cover-Write-Check method’ may be helpful for words the individual commonly needs (the process is fully described in Unscrambling Spelling by Millar & Klein).

Spellcheckers are useful tools. Hand-held spellcheckers should be phonetic such as those produced by Franklin, rather than non phonetic (as some electronic dictionaries / thesaurus are). Computer spellcheckers must be set to UK English. Be aware that distinguishing between similar options presented by a spellchecker may be problematic. Fortunately weak spelling is less of a barrier in e-learning.

Support for writing

If learners have to copy down information, ensure that they are sitting in a comfortable position to write, most rooms containing banks of computers have very little desk space facing the front. Copying poses an additional problem for someone with dyslexia because of the load it places on short term memory. Looking up at the board / screen, copying down the information and then trying to find the place takes time and a great deal of concentration. Alternatives such as handouts or ICT options are preferable.

The use of assistive technology, such as spell checkers, predictive word banks or computer screen-readers must be presented as skill acquisition rather than learning aid.
Dyslexic writers should be encouraged to concentrate on recording their ideas before addressing the format of their text. This could entail writers dictating their ideas to a scribe, on to a recording machine or through a computer voice-input system. It is best to make a quick list of ideas before fleshing them out. The theme of personalising learning arises again here: dyslexic writers should learn and practise writing / word processing skills using their own writing as source material.

Another useful writing tool is the Mindmap. These are similar to spidergrams; they enable learners to organise their ideas using a minimum of key words, supported by a visual layout, using colour and memory pegs. In order for dyslexic learners to get the best out of this technique, it should be thoroughly taught and practised. Mindmapping is one of the many strategies and systems described in detail in Tony Buzan’s books, videos, programmes and training courses, to maximise learning. Mindmapping can be a paper based activity or computerised, using programmes such as Inspiration and MindManager.

Providing feedback

Providing feedback on the work of dyslexic learners must be handled sensitively since self esteem is often fragile. If handled well, it can be a positive source of encouragement and learning. It is important to give feedback for work as quickly as possible after it has been completed. In the case of numeracy, it is necessary to discover why the learner has got it wrong – is it a procedural error or a calculating mistake?

Many e-learning programmes have self-checking exercises which provide instant feedback and protect self-esteem. An example of this is a collation of a set of e-learning materials in the form of CDs taken from the National Learning Network to support the Offender Learning & Skills Programme. Features include bite-sized learning, a wide range of topics, games and

This mindmap, produced by the Chorleton Dyslexia Workshop, illustrates learning tools.
quizzes for reinforcement and built-in tutor guides. Areas covered comprise: Key Skills and Skills for Life, Preparation for Work, Leisure and Advanced Study. Customable options are helpful for learners with dyslexia.

**Support for organisation**

Many people with dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADD find organisational skills challenging and live chaotic lives. This area becomes crucial for those serving community orders where two breaches lead to a court appearance and re-sentencing. The complexity of appointments with a range of agencies on top of attendance at drug rehab centres and probation programmes or unpaid work commitments makes considerable demands on organisation abilities. As a result, many offenders will end up in prison for a crime that has been judged suitable for a community sentence. This trend has increased massively, leading to criticism from the Chief Inspector of Prisons.

For this reason, it is vital that learning support includes training in self organisation. ICT solutions, where available, will work well for some learners and have the advantage of appearing ‘cool’. Teachers and trainers would do well to anticipate the inherent disorganisation of their learners by keeping a supply of spare materials. They should assist learners/trainees to construct a simple timetable of what is needed each time they attend a session. A mindmap, which displays what is needed in visual format, may be another solution.

Do not assume that people with specific learning difficulties have an automatic grasp of days of the week or months of the year, especially when these are referred to *out of sequence*, for example knowing which month it will be in three months time or which was the day before yesterday. A module on promoting competency in this whole area is including in the distance learning part of the tutor training course *Supporting Dyslexic Learners* (Offending Context: Organisation Skills Module), produced by the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) Education Trust. (See their website for further information).

**Supporting learners with Dyspraxia**

The adult dyspraxia network provides the following advice:

- **Learn about dyspraxia and acknowledge the problem**
- **Anticipate difficulties in the following areas:** manual and practical tasks; work that requires spatial skills and good orientation; operating under time constraints and make allowances
- **Be aware that people with dyspraxia might find it difficult to express themselves, interrupt inappropriately and can seem rude, abrupt or demanding**
- **Do not overload them with information**
- **Repeat and summarise the main points of the session**
- **Allow help from other learners**
- **Since producing legible handwriting may be impossible, consider other ways of working (such as using a scribe)**
- **Allow students to use a voice recorder (if possible).**

Advice relating to technology is given in Chapter 5.

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I got so frustrated on the out cos I could only get menial jobs doing physical work which is the hardest for me cos of my dyspraxia. I decided to go on education and get some qualifications so I could get a job that used my brain. The tutor did not know about dyspraxia but she was helpful and could see I wanted to learn.

Gavin
Supporting learners with attentional difficulties / ADD

Progress will be more challenging if learners have attentional difficulties such as poor concentration, high levels of distractibility and/or a short attention span. The outcome is that they cannot remain focused on any activity for very long. The following guidelines help to cater for these offenders:

- Engage with the learners’ experience and interest to gain attention
- Check frequently, but diplomatically, that learners understand the task
- Build in breaks, as necessary, rather than risk losing the focus of the session
- Keep instructions to a minimum and provide a visual copy that can be referred back to
- ‘Chunk’ the information and don’t spend too long on any one item
- Link your points and provide memory pegs
- Use humour, if possible.

Minimising distractions, where possible, will also help, since individuals with severe ADD learn better with the minimum of visual and aural distractions, ideally in a one-to-one situation.

Consider the following:
Can you arrange seating so that learners are facing away from windows?
Is there any way of reducing background or external noise?
Can you vary the pace of the session to help maintain concentration?

Some learners are able to maintain concentration for longer periods on the computer, especially if they have headphones on as well, and find this a more productive way of working. Programs ideally incorporate points made in last four bullet points above.

Issues of confidence and motivation

Confidence and motivation are essential ingredients of progress in all aspects of learning and training. A learner who has tasted success in the past will know that to make mistakes is one of the ways we learn and will not be too disheartened by failure. But learners with specific learning difficulties, especially those in an offender setting, often have little experience of success, feel that they are beyond help and are held back by the fear that they will expose their weaknesses.

Motivation is a very individual aspect of learning. Most learners will have their own ideas of what they want to achieve but not always know how to get there. As mentioned, many dyslexic people find it very hard to be motivated unless there is an element of personal interest and choice in what they study. In addition, learning based on what is meaningful to the learner is more likely to be retained. A selection of topics should therefore be offered where possible.

Sometimes a different approach to teaching/training is needed, one more in tune with the learner’s way of acquiring skills. Some offenders have said that they ‘cannot handle learning in a group’ but will engage with individual e-learning. Others find the support of peer mentors helps them make better progress.

According to the Offender’s Learning Journey, successful approaches can help to improve the physical and mental well-being of offenders, encouraging reflection and increasing self confidence. (Introduction to Section 09)
Confidence and motivation can be promoted in the following ways:

- Listening to the learner
- Encouraging the learner
- Praising effort as well as results
- Offering incentives, if appropriate
- Guiding the learner towards realistic goals
- Keeping the steps small and attainable
- Celebrating success.

One particular course, which ran in a number of prisons, has confidence and motivation at its core. *Learning to Succeed* was developed by the (former) Dyslexia Advice & Resource Centre to encourage dyslexic coping strategies and foster skill development. Components include: Listening Skills and Emotional Development.

Jenny Lee’s *Making the Curriculum Work for Learners with Dyslexia* contains a helpful section on raising self-esteem.

- Offenders often face multiple barriers to learning
- Raising self esteem is a pre-requisite of learning
- Since learners learn in different ways, a range of approaches and options is needed
- Some of the options offered by ICT are particularly appropriate to learners with specific learning difficulties
Everyday aspects of prison life require basic numeracy skills and the ability to retain number sequences: the canteen form has to be completed; financial aspects of Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEPs) need to be worked out; important numbers have to be recalled such as the pin number for phoning and the numbers you wish to call. The combination of digits and letters that make up their prison number must be entered correctly on all forms. Most offenders in the community have to tackle numerous forms to claim benefits and grants, requiring a range of calculations.

Demanding numeracy skills are often required in vocational training. The following example, taken from an Industrial Cleaning course, illustrates a range of numeracy tasks.

The skills you will need for this Activity are:
- designing a data collection sheet
- reading and calculating quantities
- calculations of ratio, fraction or percentage
- drawing a line graph.

Key Skills such as Understanding and measuring dilution ratios, crop up in a number of vocational areas (such as Industrial Cleaning, Construction, Painting & Decorating, Hair & Beauty) and require a combination of arithmetic, manual dexterity and reading skills any (or all) of which may be challenging for learners with dyslexia or dyspraxia. It is therefore necessary for workshop instructors, as well as tutors in educational settings, to be able to support these trainees / students and understand their difficulties.

The DfES Skills for Life Survey (2003) reported that: the connection between numeracy skills and earnings is more significant than the connection between literacy skills and earnings......difficulties with numeracy impact more negatively on job prospects than literacy difficulties. Maths certainly does matter. By supporting dyslexic learners who have maths difficulties we will be improving their life chances, earning potential and career opportunities.

**Key aspects of support for numeracy**

The following areas, the first of which was highlighted in the previous chapter, are crucial to supporting dyslexic learners in numeracy tasks:
- Structured multisensory techniques
- Concrete learning
- Identifying and teaching the subskills
- Exploring the language of maths
- Providing memory support
- Drawing on areas of strength

**Structured multisensory techniques.**

Structured entails breaking mathematical operations down into small steps so that learners are not overwhelmed and demoralised but gain a sense of achievement along the way. There must be a logical progression between these steps. In the numeracy sphere, multisensory techniques include verbalising the activity, encouraging learners to use their voices (making use of rhythm where appropriate). Colour is useful to distinguish between or
to highlight different features: work with learners to highlight key words and important numerical data; this will help them to focus their attention and could be followed by discussion. Provide a hands-on element, using concrete learning (see next item).

Concrete learning

Concrete learning (as opposed to abstract learning) is most likely to benefit dyslexic learners. This entails learning by doing, ideally with visual or auditory support. New concepts should be introduced in a practical way, such as undertaking a survey of eye colours in the group to illustrate ratios. The topic therefore becomes meaningful – an important aspect of adult learning. Real life situations are always preferable. A wide variety of concrete, educational, numeracy materials are available to illustrate basic concepts. The Skills for Life Numeracy Core Curriculum has good examples of concrete approaches in all three Entry level sections. When moving from the concrete to the abstract / symbolic, provide links, turn a ‘worded’ problem into a sum with digits and give sufficient practice through graded exercises. An example of a useful link is colour coding to aid understanding of place value; the same coding can be carried through from concrete materials to abstract sums.

Identifying and teaching the subskills

This can be summarised as follows:

• track back to the most basic area of difficulty
• provide plenty of ‘over-learning’ in each of the relevant subskills
• combine subskills carefully, checking understanding before proceeding

• group alternative names for the same operation together
• start with everyday language then introduce mathematical terminology alongside it
• link visual images/symbols with language terms

Remember to revisit what has been covered in previous sessions. Access For All, p213, provides information on the topic of subskills. Useful tools include the Numbers Disc (available from the Basic Skills Agency).

The language of maths

Numeracy vocabulary is inherently confusing with different words being used for the same operation, for instance, plus, add, the sum of all relate to addition. Discussion is a good way to explore this language. Rephrasing a question will open up meaning to those who have not understood the format or language used. A maths dictionary (such as that by Robson) can be useful for some learners. It is important to check comprehension before the learner attempts a written numeracy task, to lessen the chance of errors. The best way of doing this is to encourage learners to talk through the steps of a task and to urge them to think aloud. This has several benefits, namely:

• revealing if they have understood / read the question correctly
• helping to develop organised thinking
• providing auditory feedback.

Memory support

‘Overlearning’ is necessary to support a weak short-term memory. One way to do this is through games. These can provide a welcome break, while reinforcing aspects of numeracy. There are suggestions in the Skills for Life Learner Materials Pack: Numeracy (Entry 2 Unit 1)
Memory cards are a good support strategy; these consist of small cards or index cards on which to write the numerical information the learner needs to access frequently but has difficulty remembering. The cards can then be used for practice between lessons. Learners will retain information best if they make their own associations and memory aids. Checklists and reference sheets are also helpful as a means of lessening the load on the memory.

Wormwood Scrubs runs Active Learning Sessions in ICT which incorporate practical aspects of everyday life into the training. One example of an activity is using spreadsheets to determine the learners’ canteen for the coming weeks. In this way numeracy is seen as useful skill with practical applications linked to the ability to produce professional looking spreadsheets which help build confidence.

Drawing on areas of strength

Providing an overview is an approach which acknowledges the holistic way of learning, common to many people with dyslexia. In this way, learners can see what they are aiming for without getting bogged down in the mechanics of maths. Further techniques which draw on dyslexic areas of strength include encouraging learners to make associations which are meaningful to them and looking for links or patterns. If learners are helped to see how different pieces of information are connected and start to recognise mathematical patterns, they may well find that this is the most natural way into understanding the concepts of maths. Due to the variety within dyslexia, it is worth pointing out that some learners will find it hard to make the links themselves.
Use of calculators

The following issues should be borne in mind:
Calculators that display the calculation that has been input are helpful
Speaking calculators provide audio feedback on which key has been pressed
Learners with poor co-ordination or dyspraxic difficulties will need a calculator with larger keys.
Draw attention to symbols which are visually similar, i.e. + and x, minus sign and divide sign
It may be possible to colour code the 4 operations by using coloured stickers on the operation keys with the symbol written on them
Advise learners to cross each item off the page when transferring it to the calculator.
Learners with visual perceptual or spatial problems will have to take extra care when transferring information from the page or verbal instruction to the calculator.
Learners should initially verbalise the operation they are performing with the calculator and the answer, so that the tutor can check their understanding.

Support for dyscalculia

There is still a lack of information about this specialist area but, in general terms, techniques used for dyslexic learners are helpful. However progress will be slower as the difficulties are more intractable.
Suitable approaches include:
• associating the name of the number with the symbol.
• matching cards with the same numbers.
• counting with adult ‘tools’ e.g. dominoes and objects (such as plastic money)
• developing ‘numerosity’ by simple number sequencing activities, e.g. identifying the fifth item on a till receipt
• linking coins with numbers by looking at the number written on the coin.
• sequencing coins according to value.

Further information
Access For All pp 250 & 255
Mathematical Solutions: an introduction to dyscalculia by Jan Proustie (Next Generation Books)

Summary of Learning and Teaching styles for Numeracy

Clarify the language of maths.
Encourage the learner to talk through numeracy tasks.
Talking aloud helps to develop organised thinking and will reveal any difficulties.
Work at a level where success is likely.
Use concrete materials (such as blocks or coins) when learner is unsure of, or learning, a new numeracy skill.
Work with concrete materials before tackling paper-based tasks.
Use real life situations as much as possible to aid understanding of concepts.

Further information:
Adult Dyslexia: A guide for LearnDirect tutors and support staff, Chapter 6
Dyslexia, Dyspraxia & Mathematics by Dorian Yeo (Whurr publishers)
FOREIGN NATIONALS / ENGLISH for SPEAKERS of OTHER LANGUAGES

Within the criminal justice system, offenders from other countries are generally termed ‘foreign nationals’. By the end of 2006 they represented one in eight of the prison population – a 152% increase compared with ten years previously (British nationals had increased by 55% over the same period). Home Office statistics also recorded that at least one in five women in prison was a foreign national. Where English, Welsh or Jamaican English is not the first language, there is a confusing array of acronyms for anyone who comes on to educational programmes:

- ESL learner (English as a Second Language, now less common)
- EAL learner (English as an Additional Language)
- ESOL learner (English for Speakers of Other Languages).

The final term reflects the fact that English may be the third or even fourth language.

Since Skills for Life refers to ESOL, this Guide will do the same.

The Skills for Life initiative has highlighted the specific needs of this group by devising an ESOL curriculum, laid out like its basic skills counterpart. It may be that some learners are inappropriately working through the literacy curriculum unaware that ESOL programmes are available. Some Skills for Life ESOL courses are available online. For those in community provision, some learndirect centres offer the English Language Learning Information System (ELLIS), a comprehensive course offered at several intermediate levels with multimedia support in a wide range of languages.

Factors for consideration

It is all too easy to attribute the difficulties of ESOL learners to their incomplete grasp of English, plus various cultural, educational and emotional factors, rather than exploring whether there might be complications such as dyslexia.

Lara’s situation illustrates this point.

Lara is from the Ukraine and regards herself as an entrepreneur. Her spoken English is adequate for everyday purposes but she never acquired written English at school and was unsuccessful academically. In the Skills for Life class, she seemed unable to retain the letter symbols and would often produce a mirror image when copying letters – not only ‘b’ and ‘d’ but ‘m’ and ‘w’. This was put down to differences between the Russian and English alphabets but further dyslexic indicators emerged in oral sessions such as confusing left and right and muddling number sequences, including her prison number. A simple checklist showed several key dyslexia indicators.

Identifying the dyslexic ESOL learner

Dyslexia screening and testing materials that refer mainly to the reading and writing of English skills are clearly not appropriate for these learners. Instead, staff need to consider dyslexia indicators that are independent of literacy and performance in the first language.

Progress may be affected by three further factors:
1) the level of literacy in the home language
2) ‘language interference’, i.e. features of the individual’s own language which can contribute to the difficulties mastering another language
3) the nature of the first language; for example there are language skills required in English (such as rhyming) which do not arise in the same way in other languages.

In conclusion, these difficulties may mask dyslexia, compound it or simulate it.
This is clearly a specialist area. A start can be made, however, by using a checklist, but care must be taken because the majority of screening and assessment tools are designed solely for native English speakers. Ideally screening / testing should be carried out both in English and in the home language: if the individual is dyslexic the underlying cognitive difficulties remain the same, though the way they show in reading and writing will depend upon the language (and script) used.

Useful guidance is provided in *Dyslexia and the Bilingual Learner*; this publication includes the following features:

- a checklist, suggesting the questions that tutors should pose
- a ten page diagnostic interview format
- graded reading passages for miscue analysis
- diagnostic spelling dictations and sample assessment reports.

Further sections cover approaches to teaching and strategies for learners.

If learners find that the majority of the dyslexia checklist items relate to them, they are regarded as ‘showing signs of dyslexia’. Only a diagnostic assessment will confirm whether dyslexia is indeed an issue. For those with weak language skills, the assessment should be carried out in the home language. Unfortunately this service is seldom available in offender settings.

One group of foreign nationals that has been growing in Women’s Prisons in recent years are Jamaican women, convicted of bringing in drugs (sometimes referred to as ‘drug mules’). Although they would not seem to fit the ESOL category, their language is clearly differs from Standard English in many respects; the grammar, phonic system, pronunciation and spelling all demonstrate this fact. Difficulties in gaining English literacy skills could be mistakenly attributed to dyslexia rather than the difference between Jamaican and Standard English.

What does ‘Dyslexia’ mean to foreign nationals / ESOL learners?

The terms ‘dyslexia’ or ‘Specific Learning Difficulties’ may have different implications in other languages and cultures. In Russia, for example, ‘dyslexia’ and ‘dysgraphia’ refer to the reading and writing abilities of slow learners – the term ‘secondary dyslexia’ is generally used to convey what we mean by dyslexia. The issue of left-handedness features prominently in some countries and specialised programmes are available. Useful guidance on these differences in approach is given in the following publications:

- *ESOL Access for All*
- *It's Not as Simple as you Think; cultural viewpoints around disability* (Learning for Living Pathfinder)
- *The International Book of Dyslexia.*

See Resource Bank and [www.dfes.gov.uk/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/)

It is important to be aware of the stigma surrounding learning difficulties and disabilities in many cultural contexts. For that reason it may be better to refer to ‘your learner profile’, ‘learning style’ or ‘differences in learning’ when discussing learning problems with individuals who display dyslexic characteristics.

Support for ESOL learners

Many of the principles on supporting learners with dyslexia apply to foreign nationals but some additional points are worth noting. Information on why language is the way it is, sometimes referred to as metacognition, can be helpful.

It is important to correct faulty sound patterns in pronunciation because these can affect spelling. Letter names, sound symbol relationships, common blends, segmentation skills and rhyming skills need to be taught systematically and with the aid...
of visual prompts. Flashcards or other types of visual prompts are also useful, in order to introduce new learning items and recall known vocabulary. Culturally relevant images have a greater impact on learning than non-relevant material.

ESOL learners should be supplied with reference materials of various types, such as charts containing grammatical information and bi-lingual lists of sequences such as months of the year (since they may not be secure with these in their own language). Building up a personal dictionary will help reinforce spellings.

It is important for the dyslexic individual to ‘overlearn’ items of personal difficulty; this can become tiresome if practice is not undertaken in a variety of stimulating contexts. Games are often incorporated into language teaching programs for reinforcement. Computer programs allow for individual progression rates and the option of revisiting difficult language items.

In conclusion, it is clearly more difficult to separate out the underlying causes of difficulties with learning in the multilingual individual. But with the appropriate expertise and assessment tools it is possible to determine key areas of dyslexic difficulty, and provide a suitable learning support programme.

Further information
Adult Dyslexia: A guide for Learndirect tutors and support staff, Chapter 7
NIACE e-guidelines 8: E-learning for teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages

- a Skills for Life ESOL curriculum and associated learning materials have been developed
- it is possible to identify dyslexia in ESOL learners
- screening and assessment materials must be appropriate
- be aware of a possible stigma associated with learning difficulties
This chapter describes the various technological aids which are currently available to assist people with dyslexia when they are working with e-learning or materials that are shared across a network. Specialist technologies are a useful way of compensating for literacy difficulties and accessing learning materials at the level of interest and ability. Procedures for procurement are outlined.

The NIACE e-guidelines booklet: *Supporting adult learners with dyslexia: harnessing the power of technology* lists some of the benefits of e-learning; this approach can:

- attract learners
- create a positive learning environment
- extend the range of teaching and learning methods
- motivate and empower learners
- give learners transferable skills
- offer extra skills for employment.

**Security Issues**

Although there are obviously issues of security when delivering e-learning in secure settings, these have been largely overcome by pioneering project work (see chapter 9). An evaluation of learndirect work in prisons concluded: *A robust, secure internet based e-learning solution for offenders is possible – if managed correctly.*

(Executive Summary of An Evaluation of the learndirect ESF Pathways Project in Prisons & Probation by Prof D Wilson and M Logan, 2007)

Unfortunately the benefits of these innovative approaches are not available throughout the prison and probation service, nor are all the specialist technologies discussed below. The purpose of this chapter is to show how specialist technologies can support the learner with dyslexia, how to choose between different options and how to access them through Additional Learning Support.

Many individuals with dyslexia have found technology, in the form of a computer with word processing facilities, a great help in learning situations. The link between learning and technology is stressed in a NIACE survey which found: *a correlation between access to and use of technology and participation in education.* (Participation in Learning, 2003):

What factors contribute to the success of computer-aided learning for people with dyslexia? Firstly, the computer is ever-patient and allows one to structure and reframe information into an acceptable format. In addition, it can provide a wide range of support mechanisms such as reading text aloud, enabling dictation from speech to text, spell checking, planning and organisational assistance.

Accessing a computer and making the most of e-learning opportunities can necessitate support at both the curriculum and technological levels. Some people find it easier to work with computers than others and dyslexic individuals are no different, but they often have the added complication of requiring access to learning materials through the use of text-to-speech readers, magnification, changes in desktop settings and various methods to help with text input. These added technologies can be liberating, but only if they have been chosen with the specific requirements of that particular individual in mind and he or she has gained adequate skills to make the most of their attributes.
ADVANTAGES OF USING ICT WITH DYSLEXIC LEARNERS

- **ICT can be interactive**
  - this is good for those with a kinaesthetic/hands-on preference
  - it helps to keep the learner actively engaged
  - it can provide instant feedback

- **ICT can be multisensory**
  - multisensory learning is recommended for dyslexia
  - words, sound, graphics, colour can be presented simultaneously
  - auditory, visual and hands-on learning styles are catered for

- **ICT can enable you to work at your own pace / preserve self esteem**
  - it is non-critical and patient
  - you can work at your own pace, taking breaks as necessary
  - you can repeat sections as often as you like

- **ICT can provide compensation for poor literacy skills**
  - via read-back software and/or speech input
  - via text highlighting
  - via automatic spell-checking
  - via predictive software

- **ICT can help with organisation**
  - through use of electronic organisers
  - by drafting and re-drafting facilities such as cut and paste
  - by mind-mapping programmes

- **ICT can accommodate individual learning preferences**
  - by adapting background and foreground colours
  - by changing font size and type
  - via a range of settings and adaptations

Assessing technology needs

ICT is not a ‘one size fits all’ solution for dyslexic learners, more a case of ‘Horses for Courses’. An ICT tool is appropriate only if it can enhance or enable the learning experience and ‘fit’ the learning style of the dyslexic user. Inappropriate technology can actually form a further barrier to learning. The ICT *Skills for Life* curriculum expresses this as follows:

*Judging when and how to use ICT is an essential skill. Learners need to be critical about the ICT tools that they use, to know when to use them and to recognise that there are different ways of doing the same thing.*

At the time of going to press, technology assessments were unlikely within a prison setting but offenders in the community could have the opportunity to visit an Assessment Centre (see Resource Bank for contact details). The evaluation process allows the learner to explore the different types of assistive or specialist technologies. It is always advisable to check costs before proceeding. It is also important to check which specialist technologies work with the proposed e-learning modules.

Restrictions, linked to security issues, continue to counter the move towards greater accessibility in prison settings. Which types of equipment are allowed in seems to vary from establishment to establishment, according to accounts from tutors, who relate instances of being able to take far more items of technology into a Category A prison than a Category D.

It must be stressed that there is an obligation on education and training providers to ensure accessibility for learners with disabilities, as far as is reasonably possible. The ADO EEOLS CD provides practical guidance and examples. Funding for assistive technology / learning support and
technology procurement procedures are covered at the end of this chapter.

Preparing for e-learning

Before a learner gets to work on a computer it is important to check that seating and monitor height are appropriate for the user. The keyboard and mouse must be suitable and, if text to speech or speech recognition software is to be used, a headset must be available. Desktop settings may need to be adapted to suit learner preferences such as changing background colours, font types, sizes and line spacing – much of which can be achieved through the Format menu. Accessibility pages on the Microsoft and Apple websites (where internet connections are allowed) guide one through the process.

The following sections explore technological solutions to supporting e-learners in literacy areas

Reading from the screen

The nature of the computer screen gives some learners with dyslexia particular difficulties: the screen may seem too bright and the slight flicker may make it hard to look at for a long period of time. Since it is at a different angle to paper, it may prove difficult for the eyes to track along the text (and adults feel embarrassed if they have to track along the screen with their finger).

One learner describes her problems:

I have some difficulty reading the computer screen. It seems too bright and my eyes get really sore and I have to stop working after a very short length of time. If the letters are too small then I find it difficult to keep the place and have to put my finger on the screen to help. These problems affect my ability to concentrate. The other trouble I have is that once the text has left the screen I can not remember it so I have to print everything out to read it properly and keep my place.

Text-to-speech, with a choice of synthesised computer voices, is the most commonly used software to assist dyslexic individuals with reading from a computer screen. A good assessment will indicate how someone likes to read from the screen, and programs such as TextHelp Read and Write Standard or Gold, Kurzweil 3000 or ClaroRead and ClaroRead Plus can be configured to speak each word, sentence or paragraph. Speech can be used at will in some programs (useful for those who prefer to view text without the distraction of speech unless they encounter difficulties) and the selected text can be highlighted as it is heard. There are free alternatives that can be downloaded from the web such as ReadPlease 2003 but these require text to be pasted into a separate window.

Both the Windows XP and Mac OS systems offer text to speech for their simple text programs but without word highlighting. TextHelp Read and Write Gold, Kurzweil 3000 and ClaroRead Plus can also be used with scanned paper-based text with optical character recognition, not just with items taken from the web.

Some learning materials are presented in Adobe Acrobat PDF format and these can be read with Pdf Aloud in TextHelp Read and Write Gold, ClaroRead Plus and Kurzweil 3000, which uses its virtual printer to present files. It is important to note that PDF files have to be saved in an accessible format and can be adapted for easier reading using PDF accessibility editor.

A useful handheld tool is the Reading Pen. Designed for users with reading or learning disabilities or those learning English as a second language this hand-held devise provides a definition of a scanned word or line of text. Individual words are enlarged on the display and may be spelled out, or broken into syllables. Scanned words and definition can be read aloud with the product’s miniaturised text-to-speech technology.
Writing on to the screen

This can pose problems if typing skills are insufficiently advanced to the extent that they hold up thought processes. For those with memory difficulties it is all too easy to forget what needs to be written whilst searching for the correct letter keys on the keyboard. However, for some individuals, the tactile nature of spelling through the keyboard patterns, rather than through pen strokes, can be very helpful. Good keyboarding programs such as Kas or Typing Instructor Encore can encourage reluctant typists. Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing (available in children’s and adult versions) is also popular. For those who prefer to learn touch typing from a manual, Easy Type is handy and clearly laid out. Another useful programme is the computer-based Touch Type Read and Spell which is well established in a number of offender settings and described in Chapter 9.

Speech recognition is another option if dictating is the preferred method of text input and the learning materials allow the use of external text input programs (such as the DragonPad application used with Dragon NaturallySpeaking or iListen on the Mac), or the forms can take direct dictation. Using speech recognition requires training and an ability to work with continuous flowing sentences plus spoken punctuation. Dictating is a skill in its own right and perfect results may not be achieved overnight. It is often assumed that dictation software will insert correct grammar, punctuation and the layout of the text automatically; unfortunately this is not the case.

Taking breaks becomes an essential part of the process to prevent overload. It is also essential to be able to proofread accurately as the speech recognition package does not make spelling mistakes but may insert words that sound similar to those chosen by the user. These words can cause sentences to become unintelligible and the user may, on re-reading, become confused by the result, and be unable to recall what was originally intended. However, it should be stressed that, for other individuals, this form of text input can be highly successful with excellent accuracy rates.

If there is a requirement to make notes or write answers whilst leaving the learning materials on the screen, it may be helpful to use a digital recording device such as an Olympus, Sony or Philips recorder, which can be used to transcribe the audio file into a speech recognition package later in the day.

E-learning materials are rarely found with programs that offer full spell checking, dictionary or thesaurus facilities. However TextHelp Read and Write Standard or Gold can provide these facilities with most programs. Spellcatcher offers spell checking from the task bar and Write Outloud offers similar facilities within its own program.

Separate CD-based dictionaries are available, that offer support with subject specific items such as business studies. Bloomsbury Publishing has a wide range, and the Oxford Talking Dictionary is available from Oxford University Press. At times it may be useful to have a handheld spell checker and dictionary nearby, such as those produced by the Franklin Division of Seiko UK Ltd. These pocket hand helds can be useful if the e-learning materials take precedence on the screen and there is no access to alternative spell checkers.

A handheld calculator may be more user-friendly than the on-screen version when working with science or numeracy based learning materials. Alternatively tools with speech and colour options may be preferable, such as those found in TextHelp Read and Write Gold or the Big Calculator for Windows with speech and magnification from Sensory Software.

When working at a more advanced level,
outliners and brainstorming software can be used to collect and organise ideas whilst working with on-line materials. *Inspiration, MindManager, Mind Genius*, the linear *Jot notes* or screen based sticky notes are all useful tools to aid memory and the organisation of ideas. These programs allow for the content to be exported into a word processing package and some provide an outline version to form the shape of a project or essay. *Microsoft PowerPoint* can also be used in this way and the slides can be shuffled like cards to help with sorting ideas and prioritising.

However it is important to be aware that the ‘high tech’ options may not suit all dyslexic learners, as Gina explains.

Someone suggested that I tried voice-activated software but I found that far from easy. I found it quite difficult to slow down my thoughts to speak them clearly enough into the computer and it was a further ordeal trying to remember all the commands. In the end I decided that I would persevere with the typing. Although I still get many of the letters jumbled and out of order, I can usually spot my mistakes with the aid of a spell checker and by reading my work out aloud afterwards.

E-learning and Dyspraxia

On the whole, hardware is more important than software when it comes to dyspraxia. Having the correct ergonomic keyboard with large keys, at least a 17inch monitor, the right chair and the right mouse for a particular individual can make a lot of difference. All the equipment needs to be placed in the right position for the individual concerned; feet should be able to touch the ground and the monitor should not be too high or low.

Mice can be slowed down to make them easier to control especially when highlighting a piece of work. Some people may find it easier to control a roller ball mouse and others an anir mouse (shaped like a joy stick).

Software such as *texthelp* can also be beneficial, as well as many strategies that are used for dyslexic learners (people with dyspraxia, like their dyslexic counterparts, tend to have short term memory problems). Organisation of work can be helped with mindmap programs (see previous section on outliners and brainstorming software).

E-learning and Attention Deficit Disorder

The following tools have been found particularly appropriate to learners with ADD: Mind mapping software with pictures helps individuals to structure their thoughts and to remember their ideas. *Microsoft PowerPoint* can be used in a similar way, to organise thoughts and ideas coherently. *Dragon Naturally Speaking* assists individuals who think and speak more quickly than they can write; this also supports the weak short-term memory and chaotic thought processes of people with ADD.

Further Factors

It should be stressed that ambient lighting and comfortable seating can improve comfort and concentration levels. Some individuals find reading from screen difficult because of glare or reflections, and these issues need to be addressed.

Most learners with specific learning difficulties find interruptions or extraneous noises highly distracting, preferring to work with headphones or in their own surroundings.

**ICT issues and solutions**

The table below highlights some of the skills required when working in an e-learning environment. It offers computer based ideas for supporting these skills with the types of equipment available.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How ICT can support dyslexic learners</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>READING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistive technology can bypass the labour of ‘decoding’ text by reading it aloud. ICT can allow the learner to focus on content. Written work can be proofread aloud, enabling the writer to hear mistakes</td>
<td>Readback software / text to speech readers Scanners / optical character recognition that can scan, display and read text aloud. Reading Pens for scanning single words or phrases – often providing meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WRITING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good typing skills are very helpful. Word prediction software is useful. Voice dictation into the computer is possible but learners need the ability to articulate their thoughts, supply punctuation and manage the program.</td>
<td>Speech or Voice recognition software. Digital recorders and dictaphones ideally with a computer link-up. Word prediction software Typing programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPELLING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good visual discrimination is needed for spellcheckers. Learners must be able to recognise the correct word from the alternatives generated.</td>
<td>Hand-held or integral spellcheckers Electronic dictionaries (that read the words aloud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANISATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT can help organise the ideas of visual, holistic thinkers by creating a visual map of the learner’s ideas, incorporating symbols, shapes and pictures. Lends itself to making links / hyperlinks. Dyslexic people need a reminder system due to short-term memory problems. Those who like a logical, systematic approach often take to electronic personal organisers.</td>
<td>Mindmapping programs / creative software such as Inspiration, MindGenius and MindManager. Personal organisers / mobile phones for addresses, reminders etc. Map-reading software (GPS navigation systems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPEAKING &amp; LISTENING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many dyslexics need to practice their skills repeatedly. ICT is ideal as it never gets bored or impatient. Text to speech programmes can sometimes cause difficulty as the learner has to tune in to the robotic voice but these are improving as technology advances. Using a digital recorder or the windows recorder can help learners with their pronunciation.</td>
<td>Earobics for adults – phonological awareness programme. Windows recorder – records a voice from a microphone to a .wav/MP3 file Dragon NaturallySpeaking –speech recognition programme Fast ForWord language programme. <a href="http://www.speegle.co.uk">www.speegle.co.uk</a> (talking search engine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NUMERACY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT is ideal to demonstrate numeracy concepts, which can then be repeated and reviewed.</td>
<td>Calculator, Excel, Numbershark 3, MathTalk for speech recognition and Maths.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information on all the technologies mentioned in this Chapter may be found on the Empowering Technologies Database: [www.emptech.info](http://www.emptech.info) or on the ADO EEOLS CD.
Procurement and Additional Learning Support

Section 14 of the Offender’s Learning Journey outlines the principles of Inclusive Learning and Additional Learning Support and refers to a number of key documents. With the increase of e-learning and the recognised need for assistive technology the situation has become very complex.

At the time of going to press (early 2007) the best chance of acquiring the assistance of enabling technologies was through participation in Prison ICT Academies (PICTA); ICT Pathfinders; ICT projects (such as the learndirect ESF Pathways Project) or trials involving use of ICT (such as the Programme for Offender Learning And Resettlement - POLARIS). Since education and workshop training are technically ‘employment’ (prisoners receive pay in both instances) the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) from Job Centre Plus should become involved. Chapter 8 contains information on the role of the DEA and Access to Work in the workplace. In Probation programmes, provision of assistive technology currently depends on the ETE provider.

The mainstream funding mechanism for providing extra support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is Additional Learning Support (ALS), provided through the Learning and Skills Council; their website contains up-to-date guidance on procedures. The authors of this Guide have been referred to FUNDING GUIDANCE FOR FURTHER EDUCATION IN 2006/07; relevant sections are:

- **Section 8**: ALS Funding Arrangements (paragraphs 431 – 487)
- **Annex K**: Guidance on Completing the ALS costs form for providers (this includes a repetition of paragraphs 475 – 487 from Section 8)
- **Annex L**: ALS Bands

Key extracts are given in Appendix g, at the end of this Guide. The ALS process is outlined on the page opposite. The outcome of the review of ALS is that offenders are treated in the same way as other learners.

- specialist technologies are not an instant solution to dyslexic difficulties
- however they can greatly enhance an individual’s ability to access e-learning
- it is vital to match the technologies with both the user and the tasks to be undertaken
- the use of appropriate technology needs to be taught and practised in order to become a useful tool
- there is an obligation on education providers to ensure accessibility for learners with disabilities, as far as is reasonably possible
Flowchart of ALS Funding Mechanism

LSC

Funding for additional ALS in excess of basic ALS threshold

Block allocation for basic ALS funding up to £18,000

Additional ALS provided by college or provider

Basic ALS provision from LSC block allocation

Initial assessment process identifies needs at level where college can provide ALS within basic ALS provision

Initial assessment process identifies some learners to have ALS needs in excess of basic ALS provision

Detailed assessment of learning support needs informs the development of an ALS plan, provision of which is costed

Colleges or provider

Reclaim costs for additional ALS

‘ALS Costs Form’ detailing itemised ALS needs and costs of provision for each learner with ALS needs

E.g. specialist staffing assessments to identify equipment adaptation/preparation of materials

Learners

A percentage of whom will have learning difficulties and/or disabilities

They are likely to need additional learning support (ALS) in order to achieve their learning aims

These needs may change and should be reviewed regularly during the course of the programme

START HERE
Is ‘user-friendly’ for dyslexics ‘user-friendly’ for everyone?

The Adult Dyslexia Organisation was asked whether support techniques and learning tools which were developed as user-friendly for those with dyslexia would benefit other learners. The answer is ‘Yes’ in general terms, because these approaches increase accessibility and improve chances of success.

However two factors should be borne in mind:
Firstly, given a dyslexia-friendly environment, an able dyslexic learner should make good progress whereas a non-dyslexic slow learner may not move beyond mastering the basics. Secondly, people with a visual impairment need different adaptations from people with dyslexia in order to maximise the visibility of text.

Although this Guide focuses on delivery of ICT and e-learning, many of these recommendations have a general application. We start with the devastating effects of a non-dyslexia-friendly approach, as described by Kathy:

I did some computing inside but was released before I could get very far so I decided to join a CLAIT class. It was the most embarrassing thing in my adult life. I found it quite hard to keep up and remember what to do from one week to the next. I asked the teacher to jot down the list of the keys I needed to press but he did not give me the paper work I needed so I tried to keep up by scribbling everything down but he went far too fast.

When I asked for help he told me it was quite obvious and logical. I could see nothing obvious or logical about which function keys to press or keeping track of when to click on the right or left side of the mouse. Indeed working out which side of the mouse was right or left took me a few seconds, as I had to look at my watch and wedding ring to work out left or right.

By the third session, I was so lost that I asked the tutor if he would go through everything with me so that I could write down the instructions. I thought no-one would notice cos everyone else seemed to be finishing off ready to go for coffee.
“But it’s so obvious,” he said in a loud voice which caused everyone to stop and stare, “all you need is some common sense”...
I walked out of that class and have never returned to college, I felt so embarrassed. All the memories of the times I had struggled in my childhood came flooding back. It took me days to feel more confident and I would not wish a similar experience on anyone.
The main features of a dyslexia-friendly learning environment

(i) Staff awareness
Staff need an awareness of likely problem areas and suitable approaches to learning support if they are to show the necessary understanding and skills. In fact adults with dyslexia have often said that classes / courses which do not show awareness of dyslexic difficulties and strengths are a waste of time and can damage their confidence.

Dyslexia-friendly approaches
Tutors, trainers and support staff require training on adult dyslexia - both the difficulties and the strengths, and how these can affect learning / e-learning.

(ii) Giving instructions
Be aware that people with dyslexia have difficulty retaining long / compound instructions – whether spoken or written. These learners are more likely to forget passwords and user names.

Dyslexia-friendly approaches
When giving spoken instructions, break them down into logical sections rather than giving them all at once. Reassure the learner that it is fine to come back and check as necessary. Give positive not negative instructions,
• "Don't forget to turn the computer off at the wall" becomes: Remember to turn the computer off at the wall.
• "Make sure you don't leave your folder in the workshop" becomes: Remember to bring your folder back here.

Use questions to check that listener has retained key information, rather than asking “Any questions?”

Write down any names, times, addresses. Use a buddy system in class, whereby offenders with more experience of ICT can assist new members of the group.

Record passwords and user names on a card which can be produced as necessary. Written instructions should be clearly displayed, following the guidelines for Minimising Visual Stress (below).

MINIMISING VISUAL STRESS: ISSUES of GOOD PRACTICE and ACCESSIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incorporate, where possible:</th>
<th>Avoid:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adequate spacing</td>
<td>small fonts (below size 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>justify left (leave an unjustified right margin)</td>
<td>‘fancy’ or unusual fonts and italics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>selective use of bold and bullet points</td>
<td>whole words or phrases in capitals this undermines whole word recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diagrams, charts, icons</td>
<td>bright white or shiny paper cream, or pale blue-grey are popular shades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pictograms and graphics for signposting</td>
<td>text in either red or green this is also an issue for colour-blind readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illustrations which enhance meaning</td>
<td>illustrations which distract the reader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(iii) Induction and administrative procedures
Many adults with dyslexia dread having to complete forms - especially in front of others. They may have chosen ICT because they expect to get straight on to a computer and bypass writing. Unfortunately the drive to improve standards has led to an increase in documentation such as learner contracts and induction paperwork which must often be completed before a course can begin.

Dyslexia-friendly approaches
A service requirement of the Offender’s Learning Journey states: *Enrolment processes will fully support equality of opportunity for all learners to enrol on courses appropriate to their needs and preferences.* (0603)
Routinely ask (discreetly) whether help is needed with form-filling.
Have a sample form on show, with the answers completed for a MR/MRS SMITH.
Allow time to talk through options and aspects of the course of study with potential learners.
Encourage them to air any concerns, providing privacy if possible, and come back to you as questions arise.

(iv) Providing support in learning
Support may be needed in a range of learning environments: one-to-one, classes, workshops, open learning (such as learndirect courses) and distance learning. The suggestions in this Guide should promote good practice.

Dyslexia-friendly approaches
Aim to ensure an element of early success to build up confidence.
Be prepared to explain terminology (possibly more than once) - for example distinguishing between databases and spreadsheets.
It may be necessary to break complex tasks into shorter chunks.
Dyslexic learners will probably need more practice than their peers before procedures become automatic.
Check whether their learning program will need customising.
Where possible, build in elements of personal choice.
Where possible, encourage flexibility in ways of working so that learners can take breaks and implement coping strategies.
Where possible, offer headphones for those who wish to listen to text as they read it.

(v) Learning materials
The following recommendations relate to paper-based and on-line learning materials. The issue of learning styles arises here, as learners will vary considerably.

Dyslexia-friendly approaches
Content must be sequential and progress logically from one stage to the next.
Language should be straightforward, concise and non-patronising; children’s materials must be avoided at all cost!
Contextualised materials are generally more interesting, as long as learners can relate to them.
All materials should follow guidelines for reducing Visual Stress and be free from distracting features.
Due to different styles of learning, some people prefer a divergent mindmapping / spidergram format, others find a linear format more helpful with flow charts, bullet points and listed procedures.
Consistent use of graphics / icons provides a useful marker, enabling learners to anticipate what is coming next and find their way round materials more easily.
(vi) Accreditation
Staff must bear in mind that many learners with dyslexia become very anxious about test situations. They may have had past experiences of failure and fear that their dyslexic problems will handicap them, as Ed explains:

I feel I am very disadvantaged if I am given tests or have to complete timed exercises on the computer. I failed my very first exam (about spreadsheets) because I had to copy numbers across and place them in the right column - I kept losing the place and having to start again. Now I realise I can have extra time, I ask for it. It means I can go really slowly and not start to panic and make mistakes.

Dyslexia-friendly approaches
We owe it to those who have failed first time round to do all we can to ensure success. Find out whether there is flexibility in the method of course accreditation. Multiple choice questions, for example, do not generally suit learners with dyslexia who find it tricky to distinguish between similar options and cannot hold the question in their head while considering the alternative solutions. Check whether a learner with dyslexia is permitted ‘access arrangements’ such as extra time or the use of a reader. If so, the issue of providing a separate room may arise so s/he is not disturbed by the comings and goings of other candidates and does not disturb them if a reader is used.

Unfortunately some e-learning courses and qualifications are not dyslexia-friendly. The main complaint from candidates is that they are not tested on what they had expected from the content of the course.

Dyslexia-friendly features of testing include:
- self checking exercises, which protect self esteem.
- tick boxes
- matching exercises (which draw on the skill of word recognition rather than the more demanding skill of recall)

All the above are welcome features of on-line learning.

Web-based materials: issues of accessibility
- Information should be provided about the site’s layout, e.g. site map
- Navigation mechanisms should be consistent
- Large blocks of information should be divided into manageable sections
- The target/destination of each link should be clearly identified by a highlighted label or phrase
- Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element, e.g. images
- Labels and text equivalents of non-text elements should be clearly identified
- Language should be clear and straightforward
- Multimedia presentations should include an audio description of important visual information.
- Interactive content should be compatible with non-standard input devices (e.g. switch access) and specialist technologies (e.g. screen readers)
- Pages should be usable when interactive elements (e.g. scripts) are not supported
- Users should be able to turn off the following: flickering, blinking, moving content, pop-up windows, changing content in open windows
- If you cannot make a page accessible, provide a link to an alternative page that has equivalent information and/or functionality, and is updated as often as the inaccessible (original) page
Making a presentation ‘dyslexia-friendly’

This section is particularly relevant to Induction and Resettlement staff, Information Advice & Guidance (IAG) personnel and trainers.

The following aspects of good practice should be born in mind.

- make the presentation multisensory i.e. spoken information, reinforced by visual input and, if possible, a participatory element
- provide a simple handout, containing outline information and any contact details
- use graphics as well as words on the slides and handout
- use a dyslexia-friendly font such as Comic Sans or Arial in at least 12 point for handouts, as large as possible for slides
- ‘chunk’ the information, i.e. give a bit at a time, then summarise or check with questions before continuing
- make it personal - use a case study they can identify with
- invite queries as you go along rather than at the end
- draw on any experience from within your audience in order to involve them
- don’t rush, give the offenders time to gather their thoughts

Ensure the audience understands where they can go for further help e.g. Personal Officer, SOVA, Jobcentre Plus personal adviser, Probation Officer, Citizens Advice Bureau.

- staff awareness of likely problem areas is essential
- course induction requires particular sensitivity
- always be ready to listen to the learner
- dyslexia-friendly features will benefit other learners
We need to be aware of our obligations to offenders with dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties under mainstream disability legislation. Two principle pieces of legislation are considered here – the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Equality Duty.

The Disability Discrimination Act

In 1995 the duties towards people with disabilities were enshrined in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) which defines someone with a disability as follows:

*a person has a disability if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities.*


The DDA initially dealt with the sphere of employment, outlining areas of potential discrimination and ‘reasonable adjustments’ to help offset the effects of disability; these requirements will be discussed in the following chapter on Resettlement and Employment. The stipulations of the Act have since been extended to include access to goods, facilities, services and property, together with a section on education and training. Part IV of the Act (also known as the Special Educational Needs & Disability Act or SENDA, 2001) puts an obligation on providers of education or training to make an effort to cater for learners with disabilities.

In this arena, the concept of discrimination hinges on treating someone with a disability less favourably than a non-disabled learner. All full-time, part-time and temporary staff must comply. Places of education and training must have identification and support strategies in place and, crucially, anticipate special needs - inspections will assess these areas. ‘Reasonable adjustments’ should be worked out to ensure accessibility for learners with disabilities.

The contexts of dyslexia and offending

In the context of dyslexia, the following provisions are appropriate:

- Providers must make an effort to find out about learners’ disabilities and learning difficulties.
- These difficulties should be assessed and outcomes should feed into a learning plan.
- Classes, learning programmes and training should be accessible to dyslexic learners.
- Learning support and ‘reasonable adjustments’ should be available.
- Obligations extend to all staff involved in learning provision.

Examples of reasonable adjustments might include assistive technology such as readback software with headphones; extra time in tests / exams; the availability of test papers in alternative formats.

Prison Service Order (PSO) 2855 Prisoners with Disabilities states that all governors and prison staff must abide by the DDA and provide opportunities for disclosure, assessment and confidential recording of information about an individual’s disability.

The issue of assessment is picked up in the Offender’s Learning Journey: *The learning provider will assess learners’ needs for additional support* (Service Agreement 0403) but this service is not always available for young offenders or adult prisoners. Young people / Juveniles enjoy a good staff-pupil ratio on education may still lack specialised help or assistive technology. It is unfortunate that some of the learners who most need this kind of assistance...
may be denied it by the challenges of fully resourcing offender education and training.

Fortunately there are pockets of good practice as the inserts below illustrate:

**Staff preparations**

Part IV of the DDA requires education managers to plan ahead for learners with additional needs. What can education departments and probation tutors/trainers do to comply? A useful checklist is provided in *Supporting adult learners with dyslexia* (NIACE e-guidelines, 9), pp18,19. The role of differentiated learning is stressed, together with the preparations practitioners and managers can make to support these learners.

Examples of preparation include:

- Look up websites about dyslexia
- Ensure that tutors can change the background colours in Word and Powerpoint.

The two prisons showcased below are getting to grips with the issues.

In the Education Department of HMP Maidstone a full time member of staff has been appointed to ensure appropriate identification of and provision for offenders with specific learning difficulties. All education staff have attended ‘in house’ dyslexia awareness training and some have taken the CfBT *Supporting Dyslexic Learners* course. This training, together with a well stocked bank of dyslexia-friendly resources, is beginning to produce a wealth of good practice.

At HMYOI Rochester, all offenders are routinely screened for dyslexia using the ADO checklist during their induction interview. Those who are considered to be ‘at risk’ are then screened using the computer based LADS Plus screening tool. If they are screened as being at moderate or above risk of being dyslexic, they are offered a place on a Touch Type Read and Spell (TTRS) course which also includes weekly individual tuition with a specialist tutor. This prison also arranged for an OCN accredited course on supporting the dyslexic learner to be run for a group of its staff.

More about TTRS in chapter 9

**The Disability Equality Duty**

From December 2006, the DDA has been amended by the Disability Equality Duty, which places a duty on all public bodies to promote disability equality. Although no specific information was available about offender settings at the time of publication, this Duty is likely to include the education and training services provided by colleges in the drive to mainstream provision for offenders.

The steps taken to bring about disability equality are enshrined in a Disability Equality Scheme; this will lay out how the organisation / institution will arrive at an Action Plan which will better address the needs of this diverse group; how people with disabilities are to be involved in the production of this plan; how information will be gathered and analysed; what the impact of proposed activities will be on people with disabilities; progress and review arrangements.

The prison service has produced an overall Disability Equality Duty which individual prisons can customise.
The Disability Rights Commission is overseeing this process and has the power to issue compliance notices as appropriate.

Further Information
Information is also provided on the SKILL website: [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)
The DDA can be viewed on [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/199550](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/199550)
SENDA can be viewed on [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2001/20010010](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2001/20010010)
NOMS produces a quarterly publication called ‘Inside Disability’ which promotes best practice with regard to disability in offender settings.
The TechDis website contains a wealth of information on accessibility issues. [www.techdis.ac.uk](http://www.techdis.ac.uk)
The Resource Bank in this Guide lists useful organisations and materials.
The Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) Education Trust course Supporting Dyslexic Learners, which is delivered partly or wholly by distance learning, has a suite of modules in the context of Offending. [www.cfbt.com](http://www.cfbt.com)

- people with disabilities have rights in education and training
- preparation should be made in anticipation of learning needs
- ‘accessibility’ is a key issue
- people with disabilities should be involved in discussions on provision
The Social Exclusion Unit report of 2002 (Reducing Re-offending by Ex-Prisoners) estimated that re-offending cost the country £11 billion a year; this figure has increased year by year. It is therefore essential to establish what the risk factors are. Reducing Re-offending through Employability & Skills summarises the government’s key aim in its title alone and stresses the need for greater consistency in work preparation programmes.

The Offender’s Learning Journey quotes some recent studies, concluding: Research has shown that employment can reduce the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half. (Section 06 Introduction). But the challenge is immense when, according to the Prison Reform Trust; half of all prisoners do not have the skills required for 96% of jobs and only one in five is able to complete a job application form (Prison Factfile, Nov 2006).

Resettlement work now comes earlier in the sentence and employer involvement is seen as crucial at every stage. How will dyslexic difficulties impact in a workplace setting? First we must take a step back and consider work preparation and training.

Work preparation and training

The support issues discussed earlier in this Guide are also essential for settings such as workshops and vocational training (which increasingly includes embedded learning components). If the delivery methods and learning materials are not dyslexia-friendly, adaptations may need to be made, as outlined in Chapter 6. Chapter 4 highlighted the impact of key skill requirements on weak numeracy skills; this will affect a considerable proportion of offenders but those with dyslexia or dyscalculia will face more intractable difficulties.

A large range of courses are now available which develop employability skills of learners with basic skills needs. Examples include the Skills and Work materials, which focus on different occupations; CD Roms from the Adult Financial Capacity Framework and a selection of Plus materials developed on behalf of the Youth Justice Board which engage learners’ interests through project work in fashion, digital music, environmental construction etc. All the above are available from the Basic Skills Agency.

Entry to Employment (E2E) is in widespread use for training adolescents. It is described as a flexible, learner-centred course, designed to motivate disaffected learners and improve skills in the following areas: Personal and Social skills; Skills for Life and Key Skills; ‘Employability’. It can be delivered in a dyslexia-friendly way using the teacher guidance and differentiation advice in the DfES Embedded Learning Materials pack, which aim to increase accessibility. Employability resources from Tribal include Working Knowledge: Getting a Job which helps develop ICT skills.

In the Offender’s Learning Journey learning providers are encouraged to: work to raise standards in work-related learning by developing new approaches to meet the needs of offenders (Section 06 Introduction). New approaches are increasingly expected to include ICT and e-learning in order to motivate learners and prepare for a workplace that is largely computer literate. Recent figures suggest that 90% of all jobs now require ICT skills (NIACE figure).
Speaking and Listening Skills

Although the overall focus for this Guide is support in e-learning, skill development in two linked areas must not be neglected if offenders are to be successfully reintegrated into society and the workplace. These skills are Speaking and Listening, also referred to as Communication Skills. Their importance has been flagged up by inclusion in the Skills for Life curriculum and by research undertaken by the Discovery Centre, Cardiff, which compared the population of a certain prison with a control group, in terms of social & communication skills, co-ordination, literacy and attention & concentration difficulties.

The HMP group showed a generally higher score profile across all domains than the control group. The area of social and communication difficulties is the one that stands out and may not have been considered routinely in profiling individuals coming into the prison, which may in fact pose the greatest problem when leaving prison…. Social and communication difficulties, coupled with poor literacy skills, may have a cumulative effect on the outcome in a range of settings socially, educationally and in employment. In the context of this research these difficulties may have a considerable influence on recidivism rates. A lack of social and communication skills affects individuals in all areas of their lives. Individuals may present as angry, reluctant, aggressive or as loners, because a lack of understanding of the nuances of their social setting and what is then expected of them. This may be misconstrued by others and this consequently may lead them into further troubles. (Identification and Implication of Specific Learning Difficulties in a Prison Population, 2005)

Courses by the English Speaking Board have proved popular in prisons as a way of improving self-expression. A further report has highlighted the benefits of speech therapy.

Communication with potential employers is doubly difficult for some offenders who face disclosure of unspent convictions and the issue of disclosing dyslexia. Discussion in a safe environment is a good way of opening up these areas. The potential employee should be guided through what questions to expect, how they might explain their dyslexia - emphasising how they compensate for their difficulties. Learners should have the chance to practise answering these questions, starting in an informal relaxed way by encouragement to think aloud. Once they are enabled to organise their thoughts and formulate responses, interview practice should become more formal. The learner is now seated behind a table. Guidance should be given on conventions such as greetings when entering a room, shaking hands at the end of the interview etc.

Another aspect of interviews is psychometric testing which is increasingly used and often computer-based. A PhD study formulated the hypothesis ‘Dyslexics are disadvantaged if they have to sit psychometric tests as part of the job selection process’ and concluded that this was the case for the obvious reasons of time constraints / lack of breaks but also because tests probed areas of difficulty but seldom touched on areas of strength (such as lateral problem solving or spatial reasoning). Physical factors such as fluorescent lighting and distractions were also problematic. The study found that employers like to think they accommodate employees with disabilities but their lack of knowledge may undermine this aim.

Skills for form filling

Ex-offenders are confronted with a massive amount of form-filling if they are to apply for benefits, grants, accommodation and jobs. This activity impinges on classic areas of difficulty for the dyslexic adult. The chart
below summarises likely problem areas alongside an overview of support strategies. Again, preparation work should begin well before release.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS FOR FORM FILLING</th>
<th>STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Discuss reason for filling in form. Scan form for an overview. Discuss individual questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Read through form with/for learner. Use coloured highlighter for key words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing and spelling</td>
<td>Practise constructing answers on rough paper. Use an electronic spell checker or dictionary. Discuss conventions of form filling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear handwriting in black ink</td>
<td>Photocopy form, learner can practise filling in a draft. Fill in form for learner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Scan form for an overview. Mark any optional or conditional questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequencing</td>
<td>Scan form for an overview. Highlight tricky/optional questions with sticky markers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information processing</td>
<td>Offer a private, supportive environment so the learner is not under pressure and allow plenty of time for thought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual perception</td>
<td>Photocopy form, enlarge and print on pale tinted paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention/concentration</td>
<td>Take frequent breaks. Use coloured highlighter for key words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is worth knowing that employers displaying the Two Ticks symbol should offer an interview to anyone with a disability who has the minimal qualifications for the post.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) has been mentioned in the context of education and training (previous chapter). This legislation gives people with a disability (such as dyslexia) certain rights in employment. An employer must not discriminate against a disabled person for a reason relating to the disability in the following areas: recruitment, work practices, promotion, transfers, training, professional development and the dismissal process. Discrimination includes the undermining of coping strategies.

The following example, taken from Disability Discrimination Act documentation, relates to the interview process.

A man who is disabled by dyslexia applies for a job which involves writing letters within fairly long deadlines. The employer gives all applicants a test of their letter writing ability. The man can generally write letters very well but finds it difficult to do so in stressful situations. The employer's arrangements would mean he had to begin his test immediately on arrival and to do it in a short time. He would be substantially disadvantaged compared to non-disabled people who would not find such arrangements stressful or, if they did, would not be so affected by them. The employer therefore gives him a little time to settle in and longer to write the letter.

The DDA requires an employer to try to accommodate the disabled employee. It is phrased that it is the employer’s duty to do so but only in so far as it is reasonable. These arrangements are referred to as reasonable adjustments. The Disability Rights Commission distinguishes between reasonable and unreasonable adjustments, providing the following instance of an employee with dyslexia:

A small manufacturing company usually hands out written copies of all its policies by way of induction to new employees and gives them half a day to read the documentation and to raise any questions with their line manager. A new employee has dyslexia and the employer arranges for her supervisor to spend a morning with her talking through the relevant policies. This is likely to be a reasonable adjustment.

Other examples of reasonable adjustments could be the supply of a dictaphone for oral notes or read-back software.

In the sphere of psychometric testing during recruitment it would be reasonable to allow extra time (normally fifteen minutes per hour of the test), breaks, questions reproduced on tinted paper and well spaced. In some situations, audio versions of questions may be provided, as in the Theory Driving Test.

Sometimes reasonable adjustments are paid for by Access to Work - a partnership between Jobcentre Plus and the Employer which can pay for technological aids, training in their use and human support (as necessary). Contact should be made with the Disability Employment Advisor at the local Job Centre Plus. Assistance is dependent on an appraisal of workplace needs which is generally carried out at one of the regional Access to Work Business Centres. The Access to Work Advisor is able to provide information about the process involved and about appropriate support / equipment.
Access to Work applies to any paid job, part-time or full-time, permanent or temporary. In the case of those who have dyslexia, the support is likely to include computer-based technologies.

A key issue in determining what resources are supplied is the extent to which the employee is able and willing to work with technology. Some will prefer to use calendars, diaries, sticky notes and lists whereas others are ready to embrace technological innovations and find that the ability of technology to assist with reading, writing, calculations and navigation suit them well. The auditory and graphical feedback, which is increasingly a feature of ICT solutions, provides a multi-sensory approach that is an appropriate way for adults with dyslexia to cope with various aspects of their work.

The following sections explore ICT solutions to a number of work-related areas. We begin with support for organisational skills and short-term memory.

Support for organisation and memory

The issue of organisation was raised in Chapter 3 and shown to be a core aspect of the challenge many (ex-)offenders face, let alone those with dyslexia or related difficulties. Technical aids include the following: Microsoft Outlook, which comes as part of the Microsoft Office package, can help with organisation by taking on functions similar to an appointment diary, address book, task lists and notes that can be updated at any time. Sound alerts can be added to appointments as reminders and these can be synchronised with some mobile phones or personal digital assistants (PDAs) so that the user has a copy of the entire diary system when on the move. However, these devices tend to follow a hierarchical pattern of reminders with linear layout; this may not be the best way of working for some with dyslexia.

Since short-term memory is generally limited in people with dyslexia, they should always be advised to make notes of phone conversations. These can then be read back to the speaker, in order to check the information has been relayed correctly. Using a recorder to recall important conversations or phone messages can be very helpful for those who need to re-listen to information in order to retain it (and may lack literacy skills). Digital recorders are discrete, produce very good sound output and can be used to record one’s own speech; there is also the option of conversion to text via speech recognition software.

Support for navigation

When it comes to navigation aids, there are many choices including the Handheld Global Positioning Systems (GPS). These tools may be part of a PDA such as the HP: iPAQ Pocket PC hx4700 or just mapping software which offers a cheaper solution but does not actually guide the user like interactive GPS. The AA and RAC offer journey details with highlighted maps on the internet and multimap.com or streetmap.co.uk offer precise details of a building’s position, with aerial views as well as maps.

Support for calculations

Sequencing errors, transposing / reversing numbers or jumping lines of calculations are often highlighted as dyslexic-type errors. Using spreadsheets with text to speech can help, as can talking handheld calculators. However both the typical handheld calculators and the complex graphical ones used in most offices, sometimes fail to help those with dyslexia because the text is too small, the small screens unclear and the left to right layout unhelpful.
Computer-based onscreen calculators usually allow for adaptations in font and background colour and even a descending layout for sums and a talking mode. There are also several free talking calculators that can be downloaded (e.g. BigCalculator from Sensory Software International).

Support for reading

Even if reading has been mastered, adults with dyslexia generally lack the ability to skim or scan information. If there is no support strategy, ploughing through documentation is laborious and exhausting. One approach is listening to texts through audio means; it is helpful to have the written version available at the same time to enable the reader to highlight key points and mark sections that require further attention.

ICT solutions to reading include scanning text by means of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and then reading it back with synthesised speech; it is then possible to follow the text whilst listening. Reading and scanning pens can also be used when on the move, to take in short amounts of text that can be read back or to take in one word so that the meaning can be read back through the pen's dictionary. The scanning pens operate in conjunction with a computer and some have diaries and address books.

Programs such as Microsoft Reader (http://www.microsoft.com/reader/) can be downloaded to a computer, to provide a free text-to-speech program, dictionary and highlighting for certain file formats. Another free program is WordTalk (http://www.wordtalk.org.uk/) which works with Microsoft Word. Headphones will be necessary so that read-back software does not disturb colleagues; these are also an invaluable aid to concentration because they cut out background noise.

Connection to the internet can be immensely helpful but also somewhat stressful due to information overload. Search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Ask Jeeves offer endless trawling facilities for the World Wide Web and, by combining with the text to speech programs, the results can be read back. A Scottish company has now produced a speaking version called Speegle and KarTOO offers a graphical, instead of a linear format.

Support for writing

ICT offers different ways of presenting ideas in graphical rather than written form, such as mind mapping or concept mapping. All these programs have outline versions with good export facilities into other Microsoft Office programs such as Word and PowerPoint. They work in slightly different ways so the user has to try before buying them; a comparison can be found on Iansyst's website, www.dyslexia.com.

Speech or voice recognition software, that allows the user to dictate text into the computer, has developed rapidly and training times have been cut drastically on powerful machines with ample memory and a good head-set microphone. The problem is that the user needs to know how to dictate and have some understanding of punctuation and written language sentence structure which is different from spoken language. It may be that the software is used for the initial drafts and note making and then the keyboard is used for the final stages.

Spellcheckers are incorporated within most word processing packages and handheld pocket spellcheckers are available with a variety of dictionaries including Collins. Some have thesaurus, dictionary and homophone facilities. The more expensive versions have speech and larger screens with bigger keys.
Accurate proof reading is essential as incorrect words can be missed because they may sound similar to the intended word when the screen reader is being used, for this reason human help is preferable. Training is essential if full use of all the commands and shortcuts are to be learnt and tips are tried before frustration and valuable time is lost. It is important to allow time between writing and reading – otherwise readers only see what they remember they wrote.

After a long sentence Martin was released from prison. He had done a range of ICT courses then trained to mend computers in a Prison ICT Academy establishment (see Chapter 9), during which time he was screened as possibly dyslexic. On getting work as a computer engineer, he contacted the local Disability Employment Adviser and underwent an assessment by a Works Psychologist; the process included a workplace assessment of his needs. Under Access to Work, Martin received a laptop with speech input and a screenreader. In order to assist him with organisation and orientation he was given an electronic personal organiser and a satellite navigation system. Martin feels he has been well supported and is working hard to make a success of his job.

Women into Work

A series of ESF funded projects by SOVA (Supporting Others through Volunteer Action) focused on identifying barriers to employment for female ex-offenders through peer research. Key factors in addressing multiple disadvantages emerged as empowerment, an early start to resettlement work; partnership working; engaging employers; recruitment issues. A toolkit was produced to highlight different aspects of the work - email wiw@sova.org.uk. Executive summaries of the five Women into Work pilot projects are on the website: www.wiw.org.uk

Conclusion

Research from the National Research and Development Centre (Research Resources: Working with Young Offenders) confirms that employment is a key aim for young offenders but notes that a lack of skills is as much of a barrier to an ex-offender gaining employment as his/her criminal record. The Social Exclusion Unit report, Reducing Re-offending by Ex-Prisoners (2002) confirms that becoming employed is the biggest factor in ‘positive community re-integration’

For information on a project between Remploy and Dyslexia Action to support workers with dyslexia, see www.onrec.com/newsstories/15104.asp

- reducing re-offending through upskilling and employment and is a government priority
- speaking and listening skills are essential aspects of employability
- a wide range of technologies are available to assist people with dyslexia in the workplace
- the entitlements of employees with disabilities are laid out in the Disability Discrimination Act
There are a range of examples of good practice in delivering e-learning to offenders. Several projects will be highlighted which bring out different aspects and approaches. Useful materials will be discussed.

The delivery plan for offender learning contains a number of challenging commitments, these include:

• providing learning in prisons comparable to that available in the community;
• offering improved access to education, enabling offenders to gain the skills and qualifications needed to find a job;
• creating a learning environment within prisons which encourages the use of e-learning.

This chapter will look at a number of initiatives that are rising to the challenge in the sphere of e-learning.

**The European Social Fund / learndirect Pathways Project**

learndirect has been working in prisons since 2002. The organisation aims to set up a network of centres in prisons to enable prisoners to continue to learn and progress when they are moved to new locations. On release, they can access their courses in a local learndirect centre. One particular project has started to make this aim a reality:

The ESF Pathways Project concentrated on delivering qualifications in *Skills for Life* and IT to prisoners due for release within two years. Prisons were partnered with local learndirect centres to establish clear routes for prisoners to progress with their learning, for the duration of their sentence and then on release. For the first time, learners also had the opportunity to work with the same tutor both pre- and post-release to ease transition into probation and the community. Also new was the fact that learning records were transferred to the offender on release, along with a user identification name and password enabling them to access their learning via the internet.

In the lifetime of this project (Jan 2005 – Dec 2006), learndirect delivered over 300 learndirect courses to offenders in 12 prisons and county-based probation offices. One institution that became involved was HMP Swaleside, which boasted a new on-site centre, the first of its kind in a closed prison.

Dennis took *Skills for Life* courses alongside his workshop training.

I left school early, and by that time I was already in trouble with the police. I know what I’m capable of, but the fact is if you’ve not done it since school you get rusty. Besides, you need good maths and English to get anywhere now – and you need to know about computers.

I was in air conditioning maintenance before, and I’d like to go back to it, maybe set up my own business. I first wanted to come when I saw learndirect did a waste management course, which would be relevant, and I’d like to go on to do web publishing so I can build a business website.

“I didn’t think I’d like being stuck in front of a computer, but it actually suits me to go at my own pace. It’s not like any learning I’ve done before, and at the end of the day I’m getting something out of it. You’ve got to think about getting out and what you’re going to do differently, and you’ve got to grab whatever you can to help you do it.

The learndirect centre at Swaleside allows learners to follow a range of courses online via a secure web connection to the
learndirect domain but without being able to access the wider internet. It’s an ideal fit for offenders, who are often at different stages - working one-to-one with a computer they can learn different things at different speeds, without competing with peers or being embarrassed in front them – this is vital for learners with dyslexia. The modular structure of courses gives a quick result and sense of achievement.

Mike Harrison, Head of Learning and Skills at HMP Swaleside, was pleased with the uptake: “We hope the informality of learndirect will make it a first step back into learning many might not otherwise have taken.”

**Touch Type Read and Spell at HMYOI Rochester**

TTRS (Touch Type Read and Spell) was first introduced into HMYOI Rochester through staff at the prison Chapel and was run in the evenings by volunteers. The prison soon realised the benefits of the programme and adopted it as part of their mainstream education provision. It is now run in the learndirect computer suite, enabling at least 20 offenders a week to take part. TTRS is offered as part of the provision for those offenders who are identified ‘at risk’ of being dyslexic or who have lower literacy skills. Prisoners come to the session for an hour and a half. They cannot touch-type for that length of time, so other literacy based activities are offered as well, including individual tuition developing reading and spelling skills with a specialist dyslexia tutor. It works very well.

Michelle, the current TTRS tutor said ‘TTRS does not suit everybody, but for those it does, they enjoy it and really benefit. It not only teaches them touch-typing skills but also to read and spell in a structured way using as many of their senses as possible. The kinaesthetic approach is effective. The computer screen and headphones often help the learners to concentrate and focus on the task.’

Some of the current group of TTRS students had these comments to make:

Chris: ‘Yeh, it’s definitely useful. Very beneficial! The dyslexia teaching helps me to listen to sounds and I can use that to help me read and spell in other lessons. TTRS teaches me to read and spell, and to use the keyboard; I try not to look at my hands!’

Kevin: 'It's helped me to read. I used to just look at the pictures on page 3, now I can read the paper!'

Ross: ‘TTRS - it’s interactive learning. It allows you to learn actively. I like computers and learning on the computer is easy for me. I do other IT courses as well.'

Sedley typed: ‘I like T.T.R.S. because it helps my typing skills. It also helps me to spell words and pronounce them properly. It has made me more confident with my reading. In the sessions I have also learnt about punctuation, for example, commas, full stops and where to put exclamation marks. With all these skills I find it much easier to read and write letters to my friends and family!’

**NEARIS (Northern Education & Resettlement Information Services)**

NEARIS had the idea of taking laptops out to learners in places where they live or meet regularly - the first set of 10 laptops were ready for action at the beginning of 2002. NEARIS tutors soon began running computer courses using these “wireless laptops” in hostels and day-centres in Manchester, Bolton and Oldham. The fact that the laptops were battery operated and could use radio links to send signals to and from printers and Internet connections meant that there was no need to have wires trailing round the room. NEARIS worked in partnership with agencies providing help to adults undergoing some form of resettlement or rehabilitation process. Ex-offenders made
up a sizeable proportion of the client base. With the help of a National Lottery grant the work was extended to community and voluntary groups. This outreach work was soon operating at 30 different locations providing courses for over 700 learners. A selection of Learners Stories have been published as Opening Windows Opening Doors (see www.nearis.com).

The opening contributor to the publication, Darren, writes:

I am 36, sitting at a table with the laptop writing you this script. For me, an achievement, a very big one. I managed to get help from the workers at probation on where we could look for a course and with a bit of pushing and shoving we found NEARIS. I was asked to go to an interview where I was asked ‘how much do you know?’. I told them, ‘I haven’t got a clue about computers’. My first session was for two hours, felt like one. I’m really interested to improve and move on and learn. I also got loads of help from Chris who helped me to get myself a library card which gives a me a chance to use their computers. I’m hoping to get some kind of certificate at the end. The things I’m doing now make me want to learn. There’s so much I thought had passed me by. I WAS SO WRONG! Never mind WINDOWS, I have loads more DOORS opened for me.

A European-wide ICT initiative: the Grundtvig Pipeline project

The extract below is adapted from their website: [www.pipeline-project.org](http://www.pipeline-project.org)

The main aim of this project is to improve prison education in Europe by making ICT available to learners and teachers in prisons. By preparing prisoners for e-citizenship and bridging the gap between prison and life in the community, the project aims to reduce re-offending. People need to be multiliterate in today’s society, this includes the ability to navigate within and locate digital resources for professional as well as private use.

**Target groups**
The primary target group is prisoners, both men and women. Prison teachers will also benefit by developing their professional expertise in this area. Furthermore, the prison as an organisation, will benefit by engaging with ICT.

**Main Activities**
These are as follows: developing a socio-technical system, developing ICT-based educational activities, engaging prisons and prisoners in learning and teaching that looks to the future and producing dissemination materials.

**Expected outcomes**
These include a socio-technical system comprising Virtual Private Networks (VPN), a Learning Management System (LMS), firewalls and dedicated servers adapted to organisational and educational needs while complying with security requirements. Examples of good practice, teleteaching material, manuals, a project website and dissemination material will be produced. The project runs till the autumn of 2007.

**Good practice publication**

Good practice in delivering e-learning to dyslexic adults is presented in the NIACE e-guidelines booklet Supporting adults with Dyslexia: harnessing the power of technology (2006). Chapter 6 contains good examples of activities which familiarise learners with the tools available on a computer and provide alternatives to paper-based teaching. Chapter 8, Good Skills for Learners, provides clear guidance on e-learning tools and stresses the importance of moving learners on, once they have found confidence in their ability to handle ICT. A chapter is dedicated to Making Reading Easier, and the booklet itself is an example of accessibility and clear presentation.
Research into good practice

A key message from studies commissioned by the National Research & Development Centre (NRDC) is that contextualised or embedded literacy and numeracy tend to be associated with higher levels of learner engagement. (Research Resources: Working with Young Offenders, 2006). The example is given of a joint session delivered by an IT tutor and a personal and social skills tutor in a community setting. This involved discussion, literacy and numeracy work together with use of a software program. Combining ICT with elements of embedded learning contributes to successful outcomes; the other key factor is the context: this should be of interest/relevance to the learners or chosen by them.

Listening to the learner is flagged up as a key issue; this is explored in Time to Learn: Prisoners’ Views on Prison Education (Prison Reform Trust, 2003)

Research has also pointed to the importance of breaking down negative associations with school experiences; this can be fostered by relaxed and informal learning environments reflecting a more adult status.

Addressing Social Exclusion

Those of us engaged in delivering e-learning to offenders are working to give this largely excluded population the skills they need to find employment and re-integrate into society.

No civilised country should ignore the plight of the most excluded from society and no-one should be shut off from opportunities, choice and options in life that most of us take for granted. We know that once people are given the chance to excel, they often do (Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion, 2006)
**Strategies for a successful e-learning environment**

You can check your understanding by studying the links between aspects of specific learning difficulties and their implications for e-learning, on the chart below.

Now consider what helpful strategies you could implement.

When you have formulated your responses, turn the page to see possible solutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SpLD DIFFICULTY</th>
<th>PROBLEMS WITH E-LEARNING</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracking problems</td>
<td>Losing the place on the screen</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak short-term or working memory</td>
<td>Remembering info. on previous screen Retaining instructions</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequencing difficulties</td>
<td>Remembering the order of operations Entering web addresses incorrectly</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meares-Irlen Syndrome / Visual Stress</td>
<td>Finding the screen too bright, glare of black text of white or background colour ‘uncomfortable’</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-ordination problems</td>
<td>Difficulties moving the mouse. Hitting the wrong key, problems double-clicking. Slow work speed</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence Low self-esteem</td>
<td>Fear of failure and of being shown up in front of others</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E-LEARNING PROBLEM</strong></td>
<td><strong>STRATEGIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing the place on the screen.</td>
<td>Customise the software and use accessibility options offered by the operating system. Text highlighting and readback software + headphones. Use post-it notes to mark the place.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remembering information. Retaining instructions.</td>
<td>Print out key information. Take screen grabs of useful menus and options available.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remembering the order of operations. Entering web addresses incorrectly.</td>
<td>Go through the sequence with the learner. Print off instructions. Use a search engine that suggests likely options.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding the screen too bright or the background colour ‘uncomfortable’.</td>
<td>Dimming down the brightness of the screen. Adaptation of background / foreground colours, according to the learner’s preferences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties moving the mouse. Keyboard problems. Slow speed of work.</td>
<td>Adjust speed of operations. Try different types of mouse. Use big keyboards Install dictation software</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of having weaknesses shown up in front of others.</td>
<td>Provide reassurance/encouragement. Offer discreet help?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a) Adult Dyslexia Organisation Checklist  
b) Checklist for Visual Stress  
c) Projects on Dyslexia and Offending  
d) Dyslexia & Disability Networks  
e) Resources & Publications  
f) Specialist Technologies  
g) Additional Learning Support

Please note that the authors of this Guide do not necessarily endorse all the views expressed in the resources listed.

A fuller list of networks and resources can be found in the following publication: Adult Dyslexia: A Guide for learndirect Tutors Adult Dyslexia Organisation / Ufi Ltd (rev 2005) Available on line, see www.ufi.com/dyslexia

Many of the publications listed are available from:  
The Dyslexia Shop [www.thedyslexiashop.co.uk]  
Better Books Tel: 01384 253276 www.dyslexiabooks.co.uk

Technology suppliers and advice from : iANSYST Ltd, Tel: 0800 018 0045 www.dyslexic.com and the Dyslexia Shop Tel:0131 672 1552

For more suppliers, their addresses and information about the products, refer to the ADO EEOLS CD or from Emptech www.emptech.info

Advice also available from AbilityNet, Freephone: 0800 269545 www.abilitynet.org.uk

The revised Adult Dyslexia Organisation Checklist is overleaf
Revised Adult Dyslexia Organisation checklist

Please answer Yes or No. Do not miss any questions out. If you are in any doubt, answer whichever feels like the truer answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>When using the telephone, do you get the numbers mixed up when you dial?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Is your spelling poor?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>When writing down the date, do you often make mistakes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do you mix up dates and times and miss appointments?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do you find forms difficult and confusing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult to take messages on the phone and pass them on correctly?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Do you mix up bus numbers like 35 and 53?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Do you find it difficult to say the months of the year forwards in a fluent manner?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>When you were at school, did you find it hard to learn the multiplication or times tables?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Do you take longer than you should to read a page of a book?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Do you find difficulty in telling left from right?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Did you find it difficult to decide how to answer these questions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This checklist was developed in conjunction with Professor Tim Miles OBE of Bangor University following empirical research by Dr Ross Cooper of LLU+, London South Bank University.

This checklist does not attempt to record the talents, skills or potential linked with dyslexia. The checklist is organised around some of the key difficulties experienced by people with dyslexia in terms of reading, spelling, memory, organisation and sequencing.
Count the points for each YES answer e.g. 3 marks for question 1.
Mark one box for each point scored to find your chance of being dyslexic.

This tells you how likely you are to be dyslexic. 1 in 7 is an above average chance.

Of course, it is always possible for you to be the 1 in 60 with a low score who is dyslexic, or the 1 in 4 with a very high score who is not dyslexic. Your own feelings about the matter can sometimes be more significant than the score.

This new version of the adult dyslexia screening has been piloted with a significantly larger sample than previous, across a wide range of educational experience. Results were compared with 140 people diagnosed as dyslexic. For the background research please see ADO's website www.adult-dyslexia.org
Consequently, the screening benefits from:

- a reduced number of questions, using the best indicators
- weighting the value of the questions for more accurate screening
- eliminating the questions which are out of date
- clearer guidelines about the chance of being dyslexic

When you have completed the questionnaire:
If you feel that you may be dyslexic, you can contact the Adult Dyslexia Organisation for advice:
Adult Dyslexia Organisation, Ground Floor, Secker House, Minet Road, Loughborough Est, London, SW9 7TP
Helpline: 0207 924 9559 Admin: 0207 207 3911
Email: ado.hq@dial.pipex.com website: www.adult-dyslexia.org
Alternatively, you can investigate a little further at www.outsider.co-uk.com/tryout.htm before seeking advice.
b) Checklist for Visual Stress  (further information in Chapter 6)

- If an individual scores highly on this checklist it is worth exploring if coloured overlays make a difference. Suppliers are given at the bottom of the page.

- By working through a testing set of overlays, individuals can select the most ‘comfortable’ colour.

- The loan of the selected overlay can show whether colour is of sustained benefit.

- There is a link between dyslexia and certain eye problems. It is important that these eye problems are treated by an eye specialist, if possible.

- Indicators 2, 3, 12, 13, & 14 are very common amongst the dyslexic population

- The following may be helpful: adjusting the background / foreground colours on the computer; writing on / reading from tinted paper.

THIS CHECKLIST IS APPROPRIATE FOR ADULTS WITH BASIC SKILLS NEEDS

A tick in the “?” column indicates that the symptom is present sometimes.

1. Have you been prescribed glasses? [If YES, why?] YES NO ?
2. Do you often lose your place when reading?
3. Do you use a marker / your finger to keep the place?
4. Do you ever read numbers / words back to front?
5. Do you get headaches when you read?
6. Do your eyes become sore or water?
7. Do you screw your eyes up when reading?
8. Do you rub or close one eye when reading?
9. Do you read close to the page?
10. Do you push the page away?
11. Do you prefer dim light to bright light for reading?
12. Does white paper [or a whiteboard] seem to glare?
13. Does print become distorted as you read?
14. Do your difficulties increase the longer you read?

Testing Kits & batches of overlays are available from the following sources:
2. The Institute of Optometry Marketing Ltd [www.ioo.org.uk] Tel 020 7378 0330.
3. Mike Ayres Design, Bury St Edmunds [www.mikeayresdesign.co.uk] Tel 01359 251551
c) Projects on Dyslexia and Offending

1. DYSPEL PROJECT (Initially 1995 – 1997, now extended) [www.lat.org.uk]
   Original findings: 52% of the sample of offenders found to be dyslexic
   Dyslexia tutors work with offenders and provide training. Covers London Probation, HMP Brixton, drug agencies and Youth Offending Teams
   DYSPEL, London Action Trust, 88 Clapham Rd, London SW9 OJR

   31% dyslexic people amongst their sample of offenders
   CTAD, 12 Trimpley, Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 0EA

3. Uppsala County, Sweden (1996): investigation of reading/ writing difficulties in prisons 31% of a small sample showed qualitative and quantitative indications of underlying dyslexic problems. Email contact: jan.alm@swipnet.se

   Screening found that 42% of the sample of offenders had clusters of significant dyslexic indicators.
   The Practice Development Unit, 64 Manley Rd, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8ND

   Julie Conalty, Employment Service, Maritime House, Old Town, Clapham Common, SW4 0JW

7. University of Cambridge Institute of Criminology Reading Study (1998) M Rice
   Rice asserts that dyslexia is not more prevalent amongst offenders, figure of 5%.

8. Study of YOs at Polmont, Scotland (1999, shown on Channel 4) Reid and Kirk
   50% of a sample of 50 young offenders screened positive for dyslexia using an adapted computerised screening programme and were then assessed.
   Gavin Reid, Moray House Institute of Education, Holyrood Rd, Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ

   38% of Young Offenders found to have specific phonological deficits associated with dyslexia. Poor early language skills link with later reading impairments and attentional difficulties

    Random testing of cognitive, literacy and information processing skills in 97 Young Offenders led to 17.5% of the sample showing up on a Dyslexia index.

    This Pathfinder Project works with all basic skills clients. Key elements are Volunteer Mentoring, screening, assessment, ongoing support including post-release, ACCESS Employment Officers.

    An information pack and training were developed for probation and ETE workers, showing how dyslexia can affect the ability to complete probation orders and how procedures can be modified.
    M Jameson, Dyslexia Consultancy Malvern Email: dyslexia.mj@dsl.pipex.com

    British Dyslexia Association + YOI Wetherby. CONCLUSION: 31% showed signs of dyslexia

    ESF funded project in the SE England to raise awareness of dyslexia in prisons and facilitate appropriate support for dyslexic prisoners. Staff training, installation of offender screening systems, provision of dyslexia tuition and mentoring of offenders upon release to help resettlement.
LSC funded work: Dyslexia Action + 8 prisons in Yorkshire and Humberside
Covered the range of Specific Learning Difficulties. CONCLUSION: 52% have literacy difficulties.
20% have a hidden disability, affecting learning/employment, such as Attention Deficit Disorder.

A learndirect/ESF project to deliver 300+ learndirect courses to offenders in 12 prisons and county-based
probation offices via a secure web connection to the learndirect domain. Features include continuity in
e-learning as offenders move from custody to community and electronic transferral of learner records.
Funding for follow-on work has been agreed.

A study of the prevalence and associated needs of offenders with learning difficulties and disabilities,
with the aim of making recommendations for change. The study found that these offenders were more
likely to be victimised and less likely to benefit from prison behavioural programmes.
d) Dyslexia and Disability Networks
Would these be easier to access in alphabetical order or is there a hierarchy?

**Adult Dyslexia Organisation (ADO)** [www.adult-dyslexia.org](http://www.adult-dyslexia.org)
Address: Ground Floor, Secker House, Minet Road, Loughborough Estate, London SW9 7TP
Email Helpline: dyslexia.hq@dial.pipex.com  Admin: ado.dns@dial.pipex.com
Tel Helpline: 0207 924 9559  Admin: 0207 207 3911

**PATOSS** (Prof. Assn, of Teachers of Students with SpLDs), advice on specialist tutor training
Tel: 01386 712 650  [www.patoss-dyslexia.org](http://www.patoss-dyslexia.org)
Address: Patoss, PO Box 10, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 1ZW

**British Dyslexia Association**  Tel: 0118 966 8271  [www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)
E-mail: helpline@bbadyslexia.org.uk
Address: The British Dyslexia Association. 98 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU.

**Dyslexia Action**  Tel: 01784 222300  [www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)

**N Ireland: EGSA** (the Educational Guidance Service for Adults ) Connecting Adults with Learning: Tel: 028 9024 4274  [www.egsa.org.uk](http://www.egsa.org.uk)
Address: EGSA, 4th Floor, 40 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BA

**Dyscovery Centre, Cardiff**  (assessment, counselling, training courses, information and materials for individuals with a range of SpLDs)
Tel: 01633 432 330  [www.dyscovery.co.uk](http://www.dyscovery.co.uk)  E-mail: dyscoverycentre@newport.ac.uk

**DANDA: Organisation for Adults with SpLDs**
Developmental Adult Neuro-Diversity Association (DANDA)
Tel: 0207 435 7891  [www.danda.org.uk](http://www.danda.org.uk)  E-mail: mary.colley@danda.org.uk
Address: DANDA, 46 Westbere Road, London, NW2 3RU England

**Attention Deficit Disorder**
**ADDISS**  Tel: 020 8952 2800  [www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk)
E-mail: info@addiss.co.uk
Address: ADDISS, P O Box 340, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 9HL

**ADDept**  Tel: 01932 237830  [www.addept.com](http://www.addept.com)
Email: info@addept.com
Address: ADDept, 8 Kingsbridge Road, Walton On Thames, Surrey, KT12 2BZ

**Autism**
**National Autistic Society**  Tel: 0845 070 4004  [www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk)

**SKILL**: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities: Tel: 020 7450 0620  [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)
Email: skill@skill.org.uk
Free Help line 0800 3285050

**Arts Dyslexia Trust**:  Tel: 01303 813 221 (covers the Arts, in the widest sense)

**Adult Dyslexia Access (ADA)**:  Tel: 0151 227 1519  [www.dyslexia-help.org](http://www.dyslexia-help.org)
Address: Suite 210, The Cotton Exchange, Old Hall St, Liverpool, Merseyside L3 9LQ

**Basic Skills Agency** (develops resources) Tel: 020 7405 4017  [www.basic-skills.co.uk](http://www.basic-skills.co.uk)
Email: enquiries@basic-skills.co.uk
Address: The Basic Skills Agency, Commonwealth House, 1–19 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1NU

**Learning and Skills Network** Tel: 020 7297 9000  [www.lsneducation.org.uk](http://www.lsneducation.org.uk)

**Right to Write Ltd**: Tel: 0870 240 4809  [www.right2write.co.uk](http://www.right2write.co.uk)
Email: info@right2write.co.uk

**Disability Rights Commission** Tel: 08457 622 633  [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)
Address: Post: DRC Helpline, FREEPOST MID02164, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 9BR

**Employers Forum on Disability** Tel: 020 7403 3020  [www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk)
Email: website.enquiries@employers-forum.co.uk
Employers’ Forum on Disability, Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Street, London, SE1 2NY

**The Care and Treatment of Offenders with a Learning Difficulty network** (Via University of Central Lancs, mainly papers on mental health)  [www.ldoffenders.co.uk](http://www.ldoffenders.co.uk)

**Disability Technology Advice**

**iANSYST** advice / technologies related to dyslexia Tel: 01223 420101  [www.dyslexic.com](http://www.dyslexic.com)
Email: advice@dyslexic.com
Address: iANSYST Ltd, Fen House, Fen Road, Cambridge, CB4 1UN United Kingdom

**Emptech** an on-line database resource providing information on assistive technology  [www.emptech.info](http://www.emptech.info)
Email: info@emptech.info

**TechDis** an educational advisory service, working across the UK, in the fields of accessibility and inclusion. Tel: 01904 717580  [www.techdis.ac.uk](http://www.techdis.ac.uk)
Email: helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk
Address: TechDis, The Higher Education Academy, Innovation Way, York Science Park, YorkYO10 5BR.

**Abilitynet** charity providing free advice on technology Tel:0800 269545  [www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)
Email: enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

**BECTA** useful source of information on technology Tel:0800 269545  [www.ferl.becta.org.uk](http://www.ferl.becta.org.uk)
Email: ferl@becta.org.uk
Address: Ferl, Becta (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency), Millburn Hill Road, Science Park, COVENTRY, CV4 7JJ
Dyslexia and Vision
\textbf{Institute of Optometry} Tel: 020 7407 4183 \url{www.ioo.org.uk}
Email \texttt{admin@ioo.org.uk}
Address: 56-62, Newington Causeway, London. SE1 6DS
Tel 020-7407 4183 Appointments 020-7234 9641 Fax 020-7403 8007
\textbf{Cerium Visual Technologies} for list of specialist optometrists Tel: 01580 765211
\url{www.ceriumvistech.co.uk} E-mail: CeriumUK@ceriumvistech.co.uk
Address: Cerium Group Headquarters, Cerium Technology Park, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 7DE

\textbf{Irlen Institute} - website links to assessors across the country. \url{www.irlen.com}
Email: Irlen@IrIen.com

\textbf{EyeScience Tintavision}, computer-assisted help: Tel: 0845 130 5552 \url{www.tintavision.com}
Email: \texttt{enquiries@tintavision.com}

\textbf{Behavioural Optometry}, a holistic view of improving vision Tel: 029 2022 8144
\url{www.babo.co.uk} E-mail: childopt@aol.com,

Dyslexia and ESOL
LLU+ London Southbank University Tel: 020 7815 6290 \url{www.lsbu.ac.uk/llplus/}

Websites / Networks for Adults with Dyslexia
\url{www.adult-dyslexia.org} (website of the Adult Dyslexia Organisation)
\url{www.danda.org.uk} (website of the Developmental Adults Neuro-Diversity Association)
\url{www.dyxi.co.uk} (a website designed by dyslexics for dyslexics)
\url{www.elkinspiringpeople.co.uk} (increasing confidence of dyslexic adults through the arts)
\url{www.dyslexia-help.org} (website for Adult Dyslexia Access)
\url{www.ld-web.org} (develops guidelines and practical "how to" techniques for users with SpLDs, together with a discussion forum)

Websites for professionals working with dyslexics
\url{www.dyslexiaA2Z.com}
Dyslexia Forum: \url{www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/dyslexia.html}
Employer's forum: \url{www.employersforum.co.uk}
e) Resources & Publications

Offending, Exclusion and SpLDs

Education and Training for Offenders T Uden (2003) NIACE
On-line learning and social exclusion A Clarke (2002) NIACE
Reaching All Offenders’ Learning and Skills Unit.
Dyscovery Centre, Forensic Update 84
Dyslexia checklists for use with offenders Jameson (1998 and 2000) from ADO or the author (dyslexia.mj@dsl.pipex.com)
Women into Work project information: www.wiw.org.uk

Skills for Life

Skills for Life website: www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus  DfES orderline: 0845 6022260
Publications section contains subsection on Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
Access for All (2001) DfES (guidance on adapting the Skills for Life curricula for learners with
disabilities, including dyslexia - also available on CD)
Basic Skills for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities - A Resource pack to
Support Staff Development (2003) DfES
Learner Materials Pack (written at Entry Level): Entry 1/Unit 5 on Using computers; Entry 2/Unit
5 on Using the internet

Making the Curriculum Work for Dyslexic Learners  J Lee (2002) Basic Skills Agency

Improving the literacy and numeracy of disaffected young people in custody and the
community. A National Research and Development Centre report: www.nrdc.org.uk/
publications_details.asp?ID=28

nrdc.org.uk/publications_details.asp?ID=63

Engaging the disengaged: learning and skills for offenders Basic Skills Agency
www.basic-skills.co.uk/site/page.php?cms=4&p=323

PLUS Strategy Youth Justice Board: interactive CD Rom with topics mapped to the

E-learning

Offender Learning and Skills website: www.offenderlearning.net
E-guidelines series, NIACE publications www.niace.org.uk/publications, in particular:
E-guidelines 3: Developing e-learning materials
E-guidelines 7: Attracting and Motivating new learners with ICT
E-guidelines 9: Supporting adult learners with dyslexia: Harnessing the power of technology
McKeown (2006)

National Learning Network CDs for the Offender Learning & Skills Programme, see www.nln.ac.uk/projects/offenders

*A Dyslexic Perspective on e-Content Accessibility*, paper by Peter Rainger et al
www.techdis.ac.uk/seven/papers/dyslexia.doc
Techdis also has links to staff packs on making e-learning accessible.
See: www.techdis.ac.uk/index.php?p=6_6

**Guidance in supporting dyslexic learners**

Available on line, see www.ufi.com/dyslexia


**Dyslexia: Self development & Study Skills**


*Living with Dyspraxia* M Colley (rev 2006) Jessica Kingsley

‘Use Your Head’, ‘Use Your Memory’, *Video on Mind mapping: Get Ahead*, Tony Buzan (various dates) [www.mind-map.com/EN/centers](http://www.mind-map.com/EN/centers)


Touch-type, Read & Spell (program, training needed) [www.ttrs.co.uk](http://www.ttrs.co.uk)
Address: Touch-type Read and Spell, PO BOX 535, Bromley, KENT BR1 2YF UK
Tel: 020 8464 1330

**Numeracy/Dyscalculia**

(See relevant sections in *A Framework for Understanding Dyslexia*)

*Basic Topics in Mathematics* A Henderson and TR Miles (2001) Routledge


*Mathematical Solutions: an introduction to dyscalculia* J Proustie Next Generation Books


Websites:

[www.dyscalculia.me/uk](http://www.dyscalculia.me/uk) (includes a 25 point checklist)
[www.dyscalculia.org](http://www.dyscalculia.org)
[www.crme/soton.ac.uk/dyscalculia](http://www.crme/soton.ac.uk/dyscalculia)

**Teaching Reading & Spelling**

*Toe by Toe* K & H Cowling (1986) distributed free to prisons and probation by the Shannon Trust, Tel 0845 458 2641 www.theshannontrust.org.uk  www.toe-by-toe.co.uk

E-mail: admin@shannontrust.com

Address: 38 Ebury Street, London SW1W 0LU

Available from the author at 14 Weston Close, Dorridge, Solihull, West Midlands B93 8BL
Crossbow games Tel: 01785 660902  www.crossboweducation.com
Email: sales@crossboweducation.com
Address: 41, Sawpit Lane, Brocton, Stafford, ST17 0TE  UK

English for Speakers of Other Languages
The Adult ESOL Core Curriculum, (2001), DfES.
ESOL Access for All (2005) DfES (guidance on adapting the ESOL Skills for Life curricula for
learners with disabilities, including dyslexia – updates original introduction)
It’s Not as Simple as you Think: Cultural viewpoints around disability, (2006) DfES,
International Book of Dyslexia: A cross-Language Comparison and Practice Guide, L Smythe, J
Everatt, R Salter (2003), Wiley & Sons Ltd
E-guidelines 8: E-learning for teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages, NIACE

Information on multi-lingualism from:
LLU+, London Southbank University, Email: llu+@lsbu.ac.uk

Identification, Screening and Assessment
The Dyscovery Profiler (for the identification of specific learning difficulties) Dyscovery Centre, Cardiff
Diagnosing Dyslexia, C Klein (1993), Basic Skills Agency,
Information sheet on Assessment & Guide to Assessment, M Jameson (2000), Adult Dyslexia
Organisation all from author Email: dyslexia.mj@dsl.pipex.com

Screening Tools:
Revised Adult Dyslexia Organisation Screening Checklist (Annex A in this Guide)
Jameson Offenders Checklist (1998) Email: dyslexia.mj@dsl.pipex.com
LADs Plus (Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening) Tel: 0148 288 2121
Order: www.dyslexic.com/itemMatrix.asp?GroupId=LucidLAD&eq=&MatrixType=1
DAST The Psychological Corporation Tel: 020 7424 4456  www.harcourt-uk.com
Instines Computer-based Dyslexia Screening  Tel: 0870 766 2499
QUICKSCAN Pico Educational Tel: 020 8674 7786 www.studyscan.com
Learning Styles and Dyslexia Screening, Outsider Software (2005) www.outsider.co-uk.com

National Network of Access Centres undertakes technology assessments Tel: 01432 376630
www.nnac.org
Email: admincentre@nnac.org
Address: National Network of Assessment Centres Administration Centre, The Royal National
College, College Road, HEREFORD, HR1 1EB

Dyscovery Centre, Cardiff, assesses for SpLDs  Tel: 01633 432 330 www.dyscovery.co.uk
Training:

Supporting Dyslexic Learners in Different Contexts (distance-learning training on dyslexia awareness and support strategies - option of Education, Offending or Work-based contexts) Tel: 0118 902 1000  www.cfbt.com
E-mail: enquiries@cfbt.com
Address: CfBT Education Trust, 60 Queens Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4BS

Supporting professional development in e-learning Learning & Skills Network Tel: 020 7297 9000  www.lsneducation.org.uk
Email: enquiries@LSNeducation.org.uk
Address: LSN Head Office, Learning and Skills Network, Regent Arcade House, 19-25 Argyll Street, London W1F 7LS

OCR training courses in dyslexia support and assessments Tel: 024 7647 0033.  www.ocr.org.uk
Address: The Director of Quality and Standards, OCR, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU.

LLU+ dyslexia courses include:
• Postgraduate Diploma in Adult Dyslexia Diagnosis and Support, LLU+ Tel Olu, 0207 815 6293. Practitioners Certificate approved course.
• Postgraduate Certificate in Multisensory eLearning & Dyslexia Support
• Dyslexia in the Workplace

E-Guide training:  www.niace.org.uk/eguides (Free training programme)
E-mail: e-guides@niace.org.uk
f) Specialist Technologies

*Access for All,* (2002), DfES (includes guidance on adapting the Skills for Life literacy and numeracy curricula to the needs of learners with dyslexia) ALSO available on CD from the DfES [www.dfes.gov.uk/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/)

**Touch-type, Read and Spell:** Tel: 020 8464 1330 [www.ttrs.co.uk](http://www.ttrs.co.uk)
Address: Touch-type Read and Spell, PO BOX 535, BROMLEY, KENT BR1 2YF UK
Telephone: +44 (0) 20 8464 1330 Fax: +44 (0) 20 8313 9454

**Arrow (Aural Read Respond Oral Written),** Tel: 01278 441249
Address: Bridgwater College Campus, Bath Road, Bridgewater, Somerset, TA6 4PZ

**Read-e, The Reading Software.** Tel: 0870 1331949

**The Reading Pen** Tel: 0870 720 3310 [www.scanningpens.co.uk](http://www.scanningpens.co.uk)
Address: Scanning Pens Limited, 6 The Quadrant, Newark Close, Royston, SG8 5HL UK

Further products:
- *Franklin electronic dictionary/thesaurus*
- Olympus digital voice recorders
- Pen and pencil grips
- *PenAgain* pens
- Yoropen pens
- Fingergrip rulers
- Magnifying rulers
- Coloured flexi-rulers
- Book rests
- Revision kits
- Coloured overlays
- *Inspiration MindManager*
- *Kurzweil 3000*
- *TextHELP*
- *Read & Write Standard and Gold*
- *ClaroRead*
- *ClaroView*
- *WordRead*
- *ScreenRuler*
- *ClaroConcepts*
- *Penfriend XP*
- *Dragon Naturally Speaking Preferred and Professional*
- *EnglishType Senior* (typing tutor for dyslexics)
- Writing slope

The above products, and many others, are available from the following suppliers, who can advise you

1. The Dyslexia Shop Ltd, a web-based “one stop- shop” providing a range of products relevant to adults with dyslexia, tutors and employers, Tel: 0131 672 1552 [www.thedyslexiashop.co.uk](http://www.thedyslexiashop.co.uk)
Address: The Dyslexia Shop Limited, 62, Ravenscroft Street, Edinburgh, EH17 8QW
2. iANSYST Ltd, (commercial supplier of technology mainly for those with specific learning
difficulties. A wide variety of items including speech recognition, spell-checkers, typing
programs etc. They also offer advice and guidance, Tel: 0800 018 0045  www.dyslexic.com.
Address: iANSYST Ltd Fen House Fen Road Cambridge CB4 1UN United Kingdom

Hagger Electronics - Recording devices  www.hagger.co.uk
E-mail: sales@hagger.co.uk
Address: Hagger UK Ltd. Unit 22 & (Unit 7 Showroom) Business Centre West, Avenue One,
Letchworth  Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 2HB
Tel: 01462 677331 Sales Line: 0845 8820505 Sales Fax: 01462 675016

For more suppliers, their addresses and information about technology products, refer to
the ADO EEOLS CD or Emptech  www.emptech.info  Email: info@emptech.info

Advice also available from:
AbilityNet, Freephone: 0800 269545  www.abilitynet.org.uk
Email: enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk
National Network of Assessment Centres, Assessment Centres throughout England and
Wales offers technology assessments for learners with disabilities  www.nnac.org.
Email: admincentre@nnac.org

On-line resources to support e-learning.
Speegle talking search engine  www.speegle.co.uk
Kartoo – online search engine with a graphical interface  www.kartoo.com

Smart Sum free calculator at  www.smartcode.com/smartsum
Email: general@x2net.com
Address: X2Net Limited, 34 Dukes Way, Northwich CW9 8WA

Reader for electronic books
www.microsoft.com/reader  Tel: 0870 60 10 100
Address:  Microsoft, Microsoft Campus, Thames Valley Park, Reading Berkshire RG6 1WG

Free Text to speech in Microsoft Word
www.wordtalk.org.uk
g) Additional Learning Support

Key features of the funding mechanism for Additional Learning Support are as follows:

(# refers to paragraph numbers in the document FUNDING GUIDANCE FOR FURTHER EDUCATION IN 2006/07 )

# 161/162 **Homeless learners**: Higher ‘disadvantage uplift’ (former widening-participation factor) for those in ‘supported accommodation’ eg hostels. Basic skills provision also attracts ‘uplift’.

# 352 / 436 refers to programmes for learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.

# 431 All colleges and providers will need to reclaim the costs of ALS delivered to their learners through their ILR and funding claim returns to the LSC.

# 433 ALS should only be claimed for the additional costs in delivering provision to learners with identified wholly and exclusively additional support needs.

# 435 The activities for which ALS funds may be used are intended to be additional activities that provide direct learning support to learners

# 443 The types of ALS provided for learners may include: additional teaching; other specialist staffing e.g. a dedicated technician; specialist tutor*(for example a teacher of learners with dyslexia)*; personal counselling, where such support is necessary to enable a learner to achieve his or her learning goal; administration linked directly to individual learners that is in excess of usual requirements – for example time spent negotiating or delivering special examination arrangements.

# 460 Colleges and providers are expected to provide ALS to all learners with assessed and diagnosed ALS needs, but only where the costs of providing the ALS are in excess of these thresholds (see most recent update for figures) will the funding be ‘counted’ as ALS. 

*It is important to stress that institutions receive a block allocation, additional payments are triggered when this is exceeded.*

# 475 The evidence for claiming ALS funding (that is, the completed form) is the outcome of the process of initial assessment for learning support. This initial assessment process generally occurs at the pre-entry and entry stages of the learning programme, and may be considered to have three main elements:

• initial identification of the learners who will need learning support
• detailed assessment of their learning support needs
• development of a plan to provide ALS.

# 478 There are some learners who will have needs that are not identified during the pre-entry and entry stages. It is important that, as soon as these needs are identified, an assessment is carried out and the ALS costs form completed. An individual’s learning support needs may change during the programme and, if a review of that person’s needs leads to a significant change in the provision being offered to him or her, the form should be revised.
# 486 The outcome of the initial assessment is an ALS plan that details the provision a learner will need in order to achieve his or her learning aims. This provision should be costed as part of the process of completing the ALS costs form. The costings used in completing the form should reflect the actual costs borne by the provider. Providers should adopt costing formulas that reflect the variations in their provision.

# 487 and # 16 of Annex K outline issues that arise when costing the ALS provision

In addition to the items in # 443, these include:

- The costs of any assessments required to identify equipment needs can be included in the costing of initial assessment.
- Maintenance of equipment, and training for the learner in the use of the equipment, can also be included.
- Where a learner needs to have his or her learning materials adapted, the cost of preparation can be included in the form. This may involve tutor, administrator or support staff costs.
- The cost of providing ALS during assessment of achievement should be included. This might include, for example, extra examination invigilator time, note-takers or an amanuensis.