



The British Dyslexia Association's response to the SEN and Disability Green Paper:

Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability - a consultation

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) is a national charity. The vision of the British Dyslexia Association is a dyslexia friendly society enabling all dyslexic people to reach their potential.

The BDA mission is to:

- provide impartial and objective advice and support to dyslexic people and those with whom they come into contact.
- set the standards for and accredit dyslexia knowledge and professional expertise.
- deliver innovative solutions which break new ground in the field of dyslexia.
- disseminate and share best practice regionally, nationally and internationally.
- campaign and lobby for long lasting and sustainable change for the benefit of dyslexic people.
- promote research.

Chapter 1: Early Identification and Assessment

1. How can we strengthen the identification of SEN and impairments in the early years, and support for children with them?

The British Dyslexia Association strongly endorses an integrated approach to early identification and provision which is known to provide the best prognosis for the dyslexic child, to the benefit of parents, schools and society.

The BDA is encouraged that Michael Gove has made a commitment to help children with dyslexia. Early identification is indeed positive, if followed by systematic targeted help.

It is important that the following recommendations are implemented:

- A clear commitment to provide additional support for a pupil who struggles to achieve expected reading standards at year 1
- Recognition from teachers and educators that children who struggle with phonics and are unable to achieve expected reading standards may have dyslexia.
- A commitment to carry out a more in-depth assessment, in order to build a comprehensive picture of the child's learning needs.
- If dyslexia is suspected, a structured, multi-sensory programme is followed regularly with the child.
- Child's progress should be monitored on a regular (i.e. termly) basis and information fed back to parents/carers.
- Regular input from a specialist AMBDA qualified teacher should be enlisted; monitoring the pupil's progression and adjusting the additional programme accordingly.
- Effective differentiation in the classroom is deployed to ensure that individual needs are addressed.
- All class teachers should be made aware of dyslexia friendly classroom practice.
- An awareness that children who speak English as an additional language may require support incorporating appropriate modifications to accommodate possible wider language and comprehension needs when dealing with dyslexia.

- As highlighted in the White Paper, additional funding is provided for intervention, in order to offer enhanced provision based on a pupil's **need**.

Knowledge and Understanding:

Early Years professionals' knowledge of SEN should be enhanced through training. We support the commitment to utilise Surestart Children's Centres in early identification, however are concerned that staff involved may not necessarily have sufficient knowledge of dyslexia. We therefore suggest that Surestart Centres become Dyslexia Friendly, through the BDA's Quality Mark scheme. This would ensure that all staff are appropriately trained and that practice is dyslexia friendly.

Good Practice:

Good, dyslexia friendly practice would meet the additional needs of many children with dyslexia. Multi-sensory working and child-centred experiences – would meet needs and assist the childcare professional in setting relevant goals and targets for individuals.

All early years staff and teachers in Primary Schools should cover dyslexia identification and dyslexia friendly good practice as a compulsory part of their initial teacher training (ITT), eg. using the government's module: 'Learning and Teaching for Dyslexic Children' as a base-line minimum level of training input (see <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/175600>). This move is long overdue and the current situation means that teachers continue to leave their ITT courses with very variable and often insufficient training in this area.

2. Do you agree with our proposal to replace the statement of SEN and learning difficulty assessment for children and young people with a single statutory assessment process and an 'Education, Health and Care Plan', bringing together all services across education, health and social care?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Yes – should be suitably rigorous to identify dyslexia – not just basic Dyslexia screener

No – Multi-Disciplinary Assessment should not be 'alarming' so long as the Panel are not briefed solely on the 'medical model' of disability.

Need to consider Co-Occurring difficulties that frequently go hand in hand with dyslexia ie Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder/Dyspraxia/Specific language impairment, etc.

Occupational Therapists, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Speech and Language experts are all important professionals in helping to take co-occurring difficulties into consideration.

Although the BDA support the principle of a multi-disciplinary team, sharing expertise, we have reservations regarding the implementation of such an all-encompassing assessment procedure. We also believe that for those with dyslexia such an in-depth assessment may be disturbing to parents.

Support:

The BDA wishes therefore to offer their support to the Department of Education for consultation process, in order to ensure that irrelevant and unnecessary assessments are avoided.

3. How could the new single assessment process and 'Education, Health and Care Plan' better support children's needs, be a better process for families and represent a more cost-effective approach for services?

The BDA would support a school focus for EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) but issues of increased funding need to be considered if they are to be 'hosts' –

i.e. additional costs (rooms/admin support/liaison)

- An education centred approach may be the solution.
- School should be the hub of Education, Health and Care Plan
- Streamlining application procedure so that repetition of 'evidence' of a child's case does not happen unnecessarily. Bureaucracy should be kept to a minimum.
- Knowledge – ensuring that all professionals involved have good working knowledge of dyslexia, through initial training and continuing professional development, which should be a requirement.
- Formalise Parent input ie with Parental Contribution Response opportunities at key stages of Assessment process (with support from named Key Worker). This should ensure misunderstandings do not cause unnecessary delays/appeals at later stage.

4. What processes or assessments should be incorporated within the proposed single assessment process and 'Education, Health and Care Plan'?

- Parents' opinions should be valued and acted upon where appropriate. A professional from the team should be identified as the parental liaison officer and feedback important information to the family when needed, as identified in the Green Paper as the 'key worker'
- The school would be at the hub of this process and the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCo) should be the conduit for these reports. They would therefore require explicit training in this procedure. This will therefore make time demands on SENCo – what extra resources will be made to support this?
- Assessments to be mindful of co-occurring issues around dyslexia, if ADHD is thought to be a child's primary difficulties, do not ignore the possibility that other Specific Learning Difficulties may be co-occurring. A pro-active, not reactive assessment procedure is needed. Rose Review (2009) highlighted high incidence of co-occurrence which frequently goes unnoticed during statutory assessment process.
- Lack of awareness of such issues by parents and teachers of co-occurring difficulties results in dyslexia either not being identified or being identified at a late stage in the child's schooling, making it much harder to effectively support literacy difficulties. Information should be made readily accessible and available to parents about the signs of dyslexic and co-occurring SpLDs and about the EHCP process.
- Regular feedback and time milestones should be built in to the process so that families and professionals are aware of the journey of the assessment.
- Assessments should also identify areas of strength and potential as well as challenges.
- Ongoing appraisals of progress should be built in to the assessment procedure, with modifications to recommendations as appropriate.

5. What is the potential impact of expanding the scope of the proposed single assessment process and plan beyond education, health, social care and employment?

a) What role should the voluntary and community sector play in the statutory assessment of children and young people with SEN or who are disabled?

The BDA support the principle of involvement of voluntary and community groups in statutory assessment, where appropriate.

The Rose Review stated clearly that diagnostic assessment reports from appropriately qualified professionals (i.e. in the case of Dyslexia, those qualified at AMBDA (Associate Member of the British Dyslexia Association) level or equivalent) should be accepted as valid within the local authority or school assessment process. The BDA would endorse this.

It is important for appropriately qualified individuals (e.g. Specialist Dyslexia Teachers) to have a role in setting and monitoring intervention programmes for dyslexic pupils, as well as training, advising and coaching other school staff (including teaching assistants and class teachers). The specialist teachers should also advise on school policies and dyslexia friendly practices (e.g. early identification systems, choice of intervention materials, appropriate use of assistive technology, homework policies and information for parents).

Voluntary and Community Groups can also fulfil the following functions:

- Expert Advisory liaison with schools, academies and government
- Supportive role to the process and families involved
- Advocate role
- Work in partnership within the process
- Provide parent and pupil voice in feedback to schools, academies, local authorities and government
- Facilitating Local Authority organisational change (e.g. through the dyslexic friendly schools scheme)

6b) How could this help to give parents greater confidence in the statutory assessment process?

Parents may feel that the voluntary and community group was:

- Impartial and objective
- Seen as experts in the particular field.

Parents would be provided with appropriate information and support. However, government should fund this function.

7. How could the proposed single assessment process and 'Education, Health and Care Plan' improve continuity of social care support for disabled children?

As the assessment has a holistic approach to assessment, it would therefore see the child's overall strengths, potential and issues.

As social care professionals would attend assessment meetings, an overall profile of the child would emerge.

However the BDA is deeply concerned that those children with dyslexia who have mild or moderate difficulties or who are just about coping, but are not reaching their potential, will be disadvantaged.

The fear is that a child who is not deemed in need of an E H and C Plan will be left to cope without any support or too little support.

8. How could the arrangements for provision of health advice for existing statutory SEN assessments be improved?

Good working relationships and active participation in the assessment process between health advisory professionals, school, appropriate SpLD specialists and families should be fostered. This would enhance the lines of communication.

- Consider other SpLDs when inviting Health Professionals for Assessments – remember high incidence of co-occurring difficulties often left undetected.

9. How can we make the current SEN statutory assessment process faster and less burdensome for parents?

The BDA supports strategies to streamline the statutory assessment process and to assist children as quickly as possible. Consideration should be given to parents who themselves have difficulties with literacy.

- **Respect and Communication** – Class teachers and SENCOs ensure that they consider fully parents' concerns about their child.
- **Consistency** – communication between school staff in child's previous classes to share information and concerns.
- **Action** – if class teacher and SENCO feel that parents' concerns are valid then a Dyslexia/SpLD specialist teacher-based assessment takes place **within that term**.
- Additional programmes and/or support as appropriate are then put in place.
- **Consideration** – open communication with parents about their child and an 'open-door' policy to discuss concerns.
- Regular progress updates.
- Clear timelines for actions and responses with the process
- The level of support (e.g. number of additional programme sessions per week, ratio of pupils to staff) should reflect the degree of need identified from the assessment. Insufficient input is unlikely to be effective.

Chapter 2: Giving Parents Control

10. What should be the key components of a locally published offer of available support for parents?

- Access to Specialist Dyslexia Teachers (for assessment, setting programmes, teaching, monitoring progress, reviewers and advising/coaching other staff).
- A comprehensive list of local and national support networks
- Support should reflect as varied requirements as possible: education, health, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, social services, services of voluntary groups and charities.
- Accessible information in a variety of formats and heritage languages.
- Intervention and regulation by the Local Authority or other regulatory body (e.g. Ofsted) on the offer of support; ensuring it is realistic and accurate.
- Clear and detailed breakdown about the support offered.
- A clear process map of when specialist teacher assessment will take place, when/where provision/support will begin and be received and the level and nature of additional provision/support, with resources allocated including: staff, equipment, teaching materials and assistive technology as appropriate.
- Clear information about any diagnosis and the nature of the child's special educational needs.

11. What information should schools be required to provide to parents on SEN?

There is suggestion in the Green Paper to offer concise/ abridged versions of information and there is a place for this. However we would argue that information given should be relevant to parents needs. This may involve more in depth information in some circumstances; a balanced approach is therefore required.

Some schools do not accept independent psychologist's reports. Schools/authorities should acknowledge the validity of a diagnosis if undertaken by an appropriately qualified assessor. This is in line with the Rose Review which argues that the outcome report of an assessment from a suitable qualified person should be accepted unless 'sound reasons' can be provided (Rose, 2009, 54).

Intervention Programmes

There should be clear identification of the school's choice of literacy intervention programmes and materials used and this choice should be 'well founded.'

Schools should specify:

- Who delivers/monitors/reviews progress in programmes?
- How often (e.g. duration/frequency of sessions)
- What are qualifications/training/expertise of staff involved(ie TA or Specialist Dyslexia Teacher with AMBDA or ATS)
- Ratio of pupil to staff
- .What outside support from specialist units/agencies is available?
- What ICT support is available?(laptop/assistive software to support literacy, organisation, study skills etc.)
- Need for Plain English in all Reporting so parents can understand
- Less jargon
- Fully completed Foundation Stage Profile
- Attainment Level assessments with dates. These should include standardised scores and a clear indication of levels that are meaningful to parents (this may include age equivalents). Parents should be correctly informed about whether the measure used is scientifically validated or more subjective in nature
- Teacher assessment and test information
- Copies of all written reports from all agencies
- Full information from health authorities
- Attendance figures including the school's expectations on attendance
- Information on the behaviour and welfare of the child in school.
- Relevant information from Social Services (if this does not compromise the safety of the child)

- All information should be made available in good time (by 2 weeks of the school receiving it)
- SEN expertise and qualifications of staff (teachers and teaching assistants) within the school.
- Level of additional involvement/support of the child
- School policies on addressing Dyslexia/ Specific learning difficulty and other co-occurring difficulties.
- Arrangements for identification, assessment and review of progress (within school) for SEN. How the school proceeds when a child not currently identified with SEN is observed to be meeting a barrier to learning.
- Data protection information on storage and access to confidential information
- Arrangements for monitoring individual progress.
- Arrangements for consulting with and reporting to parents on SEN provision and progress.
- Details of the budget allocated to pupils with SEN and the way in which that budget is allocated.

12. What do you think an optional personal budget for families should cover?

Although the BDA support the concept of families being given control over how budgets can be allocated for their child we have reservations about how this would be exercised. The BDA are concerned that parents may be unaware of costings and effectiveness of 'bought in' extras.

The following are suggestions for some possible areas of budget expenditure:

- Assistive technology
- 1:1 support by a trained assistant
- Multi-sensory programme
- Specialist teacher assessment/monitoring/reviews
- In class personnel.

The BDA therefore raise the following questions:

- Who will advise parents? (proposed Key Workers?)
- Will they have a sound understanding of issues involved?
- Will they be sufficiently informed to advise on best use of available funds?
- Will they have too general a knowledge-base to support parents of severely dyslexic children?
- It is important that the individuals should not be overstretched and should be suitable resourced and trained.
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Budgets for funding personal and social care may also be required.

13. In what ways do you think the option of a personal budget for services identified in the proposed 'Education, Health and Care Plan' will support parents to get a package of support for their child that meets their needs?

In principle the BDA supports the idea of giving parents control over the support their child needs. However we have concerns that parents may be unsure and overwhelmed with this kind of obligation.

We would therefore hope that parents would receive expert, impartial advice on how best to meet their child's needs.

The BDA would therefore like to offer their advisory services to the Department of Education to support parents of children with dyslexia in this way, if this can be funded.

14. Do you feel that the statutory guidance on inclusion and school choice, *Inclusive Schooling*, allows appropriately for parental preferences for either a mainstream or special school?

Yes

x No

Not Sure

The BDA supports parental choice however we also support an inclusive school system whereby mainstream schools support all their pupils' needs. We therefore believe that every school should have a dyslexia specialist teacher within the team. This would therefore ensure that as *Inclusive schooling* says 'All children should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential'.

Where a child's needs cannot be met (even with access to a dyslexia specialist teacher and a school meeting Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Status) the BDA supports independent specialist provision or LA specialist provision. Unfortunately, there are extremely few specialist dyslexia schools that are LA. This has resulted in many parents seeking tribunals to get the specialist dyslexia school setting to meet their child's needs, from within the private school sector. The government should set up more state dyslexia specialist schools, at least one per local authority area.

15. How can we improve information about school choice for parents of children with a statement of SEN, or new 'Education, Health and Care Plan'?

Parents should be encouraged to meet with SENCOs from their chosen schools during their pre-school visits, this would inform their choices.

A SEN liaison/ support worker from Children's Services could be assigned to a family to support them through the process of navigating through the school selection process. This practice should be continued throughout every transitional stage.

Schools should publish information on the level of dyslexia provision offered.

16. Should mediation always be attempted before parents register an appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (SEN and Disability)?

Yes

x No

Not Sure

Mediation should always be offered however it should not be compulsory, it should not be perceived as another 'hurdle' to be overcome.

LA officers often fail to appreciate that Local Authorities' policies cannot override Case Law and Legislation.

If parents choose Mediation, there should be independent legally qualified mediators.

Parents are often unaware of their legal position and are vulnerable to accepting what they are being told by LA advisers who are not working independently and do not have a full grasp of legal protocol.

17a) Do you like the idea of mediation across education, health and social care?

Yes

No

Not Sure

17 b) How might it work best?

Mediation if utilised by a family should involve all agencies concerned.

See also response to 16 above.

Chapter 3: Learning and Achieving

18. How can we ensure that the expertise of special schools, and mainstream schools with excellent SEN practice, is harnessed and spread through Teaching Schools partnerships?

- Implementation of The Rose Review - specifically the strategy for building a network of dyslexia specialists, the most highly trained supporting others in their area, working with a cluster of (eg. 5) schools, so that all teachers would be able to access advice and support. **This vision is far from being fulfilled as yet.**
- Sharing of resources – programmes/screeners/assessment tools/library resources/expertise (e.g. secondment of staff for coaching/training purposes)
- Parent Support Group Access
- Parent Forums – Groups
- A culture of openness and celebration of success be fostered.
- Good practice forums – promoting the Extended Schools agenda.
- Award schemes and Quality Marks, particularly the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Quality Mark (BDA)
- Beacon schools in partnership chains,
- Training commitment for SENCos and Teaching Assistants
- National networks or professionals as well as local co-operation.

- Welcome all schools (including special schools, which in the case of dyslexia, would mean mainly private schools, but also some local authority dyslexic specialist units) to engage in the sharing process.

19. How can we ensure that we improve SEN expertise, build capacity and share knowledge between independent specialist colleges, special schools and colleges?

Include independent specialist colleges, special schools and colleges in the provision highlighted above.

- Fund secondment of staff from this sector to share expertise with teachers in state schools (and vice versa).

The vast majority of private schools have at least one dyslexia specialist trained teacher on the staff. A minority of state schools do. Partial secondment or a 'partnering' system could enable the specialists from the private sector to contribute to the 'cluster working model'; enabling all state schools to have access and make use of dyslexia specialist teachers (to advise/coach/carry out early identification, assessment, set programmes mentor progress, train staff - class teachers and teaching assistants, select intervention and class material/aids/assistive technology and create dyslexia friendly teaching/classrooms etc.). Private schools are required to demonstrate how they are fulfilling their charity status and partial secondment of SEN staff to state schools could contribute to this. Private schools with good Dyslexia/SpLD provision could also invite teachers from other schools and local authority advisors/policy makers in to observe and share good practice, and vice versa. N.B. some state school dyslexia friendly classroom practice and SEN practice is outstanding.

20. How can we continue to build capacity and SEN specialist skills at each tier of school management?

- Ensure that SENCOs are fully trained in the identification and understanding of dyslexia, how to meet the children's needs in and out of the classroom and the setting and delivery of additional programmes and support and have a core teaching assistant team with specialist/enhanced SEN knowledge.
- Ensure SENCO is on senior management team. Allow for ring fenced time to carry out SENCO duties – too many SENCOs have full class teaching timetables with minimal time to carry out the SENCO role. Consequently only the statutory role of a SENCO is given priority, i.e. preparing for Annual Reviews etc, with minimal capacity to monitor, support and review children's progress, whole school and provide teacher development in SEN training.
- Creating a culture of supporting all children and meeting all children's learning needs.
- Ensure that SENCOs are given time and support to carry out their role.
- All schools are required to become Dyslexia Friendly – this commitment is reflected in policy and practice. All teachers are teachers of dyslexic children, as prevalence is 1 in 10 children showing some degree of dyslexia, with about 4% of children showing severe dyslexic difficulties.

21. What is the best way to identify and develop the potential of teachers and staff to best support disabled children or children with a wide range of SEN?

Those working with SEN children (including Teaching Assistants) should have additional training

- Identify benefits for staff to undergo training
- Does it lead to increase in responsibilities/status/qualifications?
- Will there be financial incentives or personal career development benefits?
- Schools should provide flexible approach to training e.g. foster partial release, or distance learning
- Use of Dyslexia awareness training in staff inset training (e.g. IDP modules, dyslexia friendly schools INSET)
- Should not expect staff to do this 'in own time' or 'as well as'
- Ensure new learning/training is put into practice – not just done as a 'tick in the box' exercise.
- Identify needs of children in school and prioritise area of training and staff

to be trained.

- Apply training in school setting with appropriately qualified and trained staff to support (e.g. Dyslexia/SpLD specialist teachers)
- Build Dyslexia Friendly Classroom Observation checklist into the usual staff appraisal observations carried out by managers on all teachers, with follow up targets for improvement and review.
- Early identification training.
- Cluster working with a dyslexia specialist teacher (AMBDA level) whose role includes training staff (class teachers and TAs) in the cluster schools. This may be partially direct (e.g. INSET) and partly through coaching (e.g. the specialist assesses a child, sets an additional programme/support up and works with the TA delivering the programme as well as the class teacher/in class support TA (as appropriate) to coach them in how best to support the child. The specialist also monitors progress termly and adjusts the programme/support accordingly).

22. What is the potential impact of replacing School Action and School Action Plus and their equivalents in the early years with a single category of SEN in early years settings and schools?

The BDA is concerned about this proposal.

Since the introduction of Provision Mapping the requirement to have IEPs for those Early Years children has been removed. It therefore becomes difficult to track a child's progress and feedback to parents on the child's attainments. SEN children may then 'disappear' from the school's list and this will have a negative impact on funding.

The potential loss of School Action and School Action plus stages may have serious repercussions:

- IEPs are useful to track a child's progress, a child at School Action is currently monitored closely and therefore changes in performance can be quickly monitored.
- Parents are involved in feedback.
- Without School Action stage children with dyslexia may have to profoundly fail in order for their need to be picked up at School. It may also make it more difficult to address their needs quickly. Early identification and intervention provides the best prognosis for dyslexic children (and is also the more cost effective policy – see Rose Review 2009).

23. How could changing the school and early years setting-based category of SEN embed a different approach to identifying SEN and addressing children's needs?

The BDA is concerned that these changes could lead to an under-identification of dyslexia. Due to its developmental nature dyslexia can often only become more apparent as a child develops. We strongly recommend that:

Clear formalised assessment procedures are put in place and due vigilance is exercised throughout a child's school career. Parents should be kept fully informed of their child's progress.

Every Primary school should have a clear, reported system for the early identification of possible 'at risk of dyslexia' signs, with appropriate additional programmes and support for those children identified.

All school teachers (across the age ranges) should be trained to spot the signs of possible dyslexia, know who to refer the child to and how to teach in a dyslexic friendly way and a dyslexia friendly classroom environment.

The BDA does support the idea of educators employing good dyslexia friendly practice, thus ensuring that most children's needs are met. The Rose Review highlighted the need to improve the skills of professionals so that normal good classroom teaching would meet the needs of children with less severe dyslexia. This is an excellent aspiration, and the BDA hope that the Department of Education still support this recommendation.

24. How helpful is the current category of Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development (BESD) in identifying the underlying needs of children with emotional and social difficulties?

<input type="checkbox"/> Very helpful	<input type="checkbox"/> Helpful	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not very helpful
<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all helpful	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	

Discovering the cause of BESD can be difficult. BESD can be a symptom of underlying difficulties rather than a cause in itself. Children identified as BESD can often have literacy difficulties and their BESD signs arise partly out of frustration. Children showing BESD should be assessed for possible dyslexia and other SpLDs and additional provision and/or support given as appropriate. This can dramatically improve the behaviour and life chances of these children.

25. Is the BESD label overused in terms of describing behaviour problems rather than leading to an assessment of underlying difficulties?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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It is clear that unidentified dyslexia can be one of many possible underlying causes of frustration and consequent behaviour/emotional issues. Unidentified dyslexia can cause children to become frustrated by their difficulty with learning and resort to challenging behaviour. Others may emotionally withdraw from the difficult situation and fail to engage with learning.

It is therefore a serious cause for concern if an unmet learning need leads to BESD. Counselling and various forms of therapy may help. If a child is identified as having BESD, it is the clear duty of the school to examine possible causes of the behaviour. This can be difficult and complex.

See also response to 24 above.

26. How could we best ensure that the expertise of special schools in providing behaviour support is harnessed and shared?

- Close links between special schools and their mainstream counterparts are valued and promoted.
- Joint staff meetings, for example, are a good way for teams to feel connected.
- Joint training initiatives and skill swapping can also be positive.
- BESD settings often do not have anyone on the staff (including SENCo) who is dyslexia/SpLD trained. This is a real barrier to identification and appropriate provision for those dyslexic students. Assessments often focus on BESD without looking for the causal factors from frustration (e.g. from undiagnosed dyslexia and literacy difficulties).

27. What are the barriers to special schools and special academies entering the market for alternative provision?

Dyslexia Specialist schools are almost exclusively in the private sector. The government should set up dyslexia specialist schools in the state sector (at least one per local authority). Often the goal would be to provide intensive specialist training for around 2 years and then return to mainstream education.

Existing Dyslexia specialist units on state schools should be better funded and more dyslexia specialist units for state schools should be set up. This would offer dyslexic pupils a better chance to progress and give parents a greater choice.

28. What are the ways in which special academies can work in partnership with other mainstream and special schools and academies, and other services, in order to improve the quality of provision for pupils with SEN and disabilities?

- Special academies with Dyslexia/SpLD qualified staff could share the expert teachers in a 'cluster working' capacity with a number (e.g. 5) of the surrounding schools.
- Special academies with Dyslexia/SpLD expertise could link with Dyslexia/SpLD training course providers (e.g. the BDA accredited post graduate level Associate Member of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA) and Approved Teacher Status (ATS) courses currently funded by the government for teachers).

29. What are the barriers to special academies becoming centres of excellence and specialist expertise that serve a wider, regional community and how can these be overcome?

If schools and academies have a commitment to good practice and meeting the needs of all its pupils this can reduce any barriers.

There should be a commitment for academies to have at least one dyslexia qualified teacher on staff. Funding should be made available for the specialist to be part seconded for 'cluster working' (e.g. with 5 local schools) and for inter-school visits, observations, staff training and liaison.

The government should commit to setting up academies nationally that represent centres of excellence for dyslexia/SpLD provision and dyslexia friendly whole school practice. They could have a role as a model of good practice.

30. What might the impact be of opening up the system to provide places for non-statemented children with SEN in special free schools?

The BDA supports a fair education system where all children's learning needs are met.

Consideration should be given to whether free schools necessarily represent the best way to allocate resources in the interests of all. The Lamb report identified an unfair 'postcode lottery' in the SEN provision available. The introduction of free schools can only provide a fair answer if it's part of an integrated process for ensuring equal access to suitable provision for all dyslexic students in all regions.

31. Do you agree with our proposed approach for demonstrating the progress of low attaining pupils in performance tables?

Yes

No

Not Sure

The BDA does support this proposal.
The system currently does not allow for some children's progress to be celebrated.

32. What information would help parents, governors and others, including Ofsted, assess how effectively schools support disabled children and children with SEN?

For dyslexia/SpLD pupils:

- Does the school have a clear and robust system for the early identification of 'at risk of dyslexia' signs?
- Does the school have access to a specialist qualified dyslexia teacher (e.g. at AMBDA level for diagnostic assessments, ATS level for basic skills assessments) for assessments, setting additional programmes/support and monitoring progress, reviewing programmes, INSET, coaching and advising on dyslexia friendly classroom practices and whole school approaches.
- Evidence of the use of innovative methods and equipment to help children to overcome the effects of their difficulty (e.g., for dyslexic children, use of appropriate assistive technology and recognition of non-written recording of achievement)
- Evidence of outcomes for children with different types of SEN. Are the dyslexic children fulfilling their potential? Is the gap between where they should be for their ability and where they are in terms of literacy skills performance closing?
- Evidence of ongoing in-service training of staff across a relevant range of SEN.
- Details of a consistent system for regular consultation with parents of children with SEN
- Are dyslexic children given positive role models and is positive self-esteem fostered?
- For additional programmes are teaching materials robust (e.g. those with research evidence of delivering 2 years reading progress in 1 year)
- Is the level and frequency of the additional programme and/or in class support sufficient to meet the child's needs (e.g. for a severe dyslexic they may require 1:1, 1 hour a day, daily for a 2 year period or longer. This level of provision for severe needs is hardly ever available)?

Chapter 4: Preparing for Adulthood

33. What more can education and training providers do to ensure that disabled young people and young people with SEN are able to participate in education or training post-16?

- Ensure that their learning difficulties including dyslexia/SpLD are identified and that provision is made promptly.
- Become Dyslexia Friendly through the BDA Quality Mark.
- Encourage young people to understand their own difficulties and have ownership of their needs. Provide awareness training for those working with young people and young people themselves.
- A mentor could be assigned to encourage and inspire.
- Resources should be provided for example, assistive software, coloured overlays to assist in their studies.
- Ensure that the young person's difficulties are properly diagnosed, including dyslexia/SpLD, if they have not previously been and that up to date assessment of literacy and numeracy attainment levels are produced before terminating school for the transition.
- Information about the individual's SEN needs should be available in advance through a supervised process on transition to alternative education/training, as appropriate.
- Ensure that those responsible for compilation of the Apprenticeship Award reflect the assessment appropriate to the job and do not include inappropriate forms of testing. (e.g. currently testing homophone spelling recognition for a farmer or hairdresser recognition, which is totally inappropriate).
- Ensure that colleges are aware of the Apprenticeship Act, know how to seek funding for support and are familiar with the range of possible reasonable adjustments for examination purposes (they are not currently sufficiently informed about adjustments or exemptions).

34. When disabled young people and young people with SEN choose to move directly from school or college into the world of work, how can we make sure this is well planned and who is best placed to support them?

- Increase Awareness Training including for Dyslexia/SpLD for Connexions, Apprenticeship Skills Sectors, School/College/HE staff and employers
- They should be issued with a Transition Assessment document.
- Dyslexia is a disability under the Equality Act, 2010. Protection and support in the workplace is not always understood by employers. Skills Sectors School/College HE and young people need to be aware themselves of the support they are entitled to.
- Range of possible reasonable adjustments to be offered at recruitment, in workplace training, workplace support etc:
- Access to Work scheme (Workplace Needs Assessment)
- Obligations of Employer (see BDA Employer's Code of Practice)
- Communicate with the young person and discuss what would be of help to them.
- See BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark transition requirements
- Mentor – a supportive member of the team to enable them to make the transition.
- Voluntary/ charity agencies, the BDA can play a supportive role to individuals as they face new challenges –signpost to the BDA helpline.

35a) Do you agree that supported internships would provide young people for whom an apprenticeship may not be a realistic aim with meaningful work opportunities?

Yes

No

Not Sure

35b) How might they work best?

If it could be certificated and an award gained and replace an Apprenticeship which has inappropriate literacy and numeracy testing then it could be considered helpful for some individuals.

36. How can employers be encouraged to offer constructive work experience and job opportunities to disabled young people and young people with SEN?

Through services such as Remploy and volunteer agencies, offering case studies of positive work experience situations, employers could be encouraged to offer work experience and job opportunities. This should include information for the employer about the individual's needs, strengths and support available. Many dyslexic individuals do very well once given the chance to show their ability, including in practical working situations.

The government should set targets for the take up of SEN individuals and publicise positively in order to overcome prejudice against dyslexia applicants and employees. Employers should be required to provide a breakdown by disability of their recruitment record. Employers should be encouraged to achieve the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark and this would signal to dyslexic applicants that they would be appropriately treated.

37. How do you think joint working across children's and adult health services for young people aged 16 to 25 could be improved?

38. As the family doctor, how could the GP play a greater role in managing a smooth transition for a disabled young person from children's to adult health services?

39a) Do you agree that our work supporting disabled young people and young people with SEN to prepare for adulthood should focus on the following areas: *(please tick those with which you agree)*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ensuring a broad range of learning opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> moving into employment	<input type="checkbox"/> independent living
<input type="checkbox"/> transition to adult health services	<input type="checkbox"/> none	<input type="checkbox"/> not sure

This depends on the individual.
Ensuring appropriate learning opportunities (including strengthening literacy skills) would be most relevant for most dyslexic individuals. However, it will depend on the individual and their particular needs, stage, situation and on the nature of any co-occurring difficulties

39b) What else should we consider?

Stigma and prejudice can exist against dyslexic applicants and employees. Employers should be clear about their legal obligation not to discriminate and positive models and perceptions of dyslexic employees should be publicised to counter prejudice.

Dyslexic individuals do not always feel able to tell trainers/employers that they are dyslexic for fear of discrimination.

Chapter 5: Services Working Together for Families

40a) Do you agree with the following three core features of the role of local authorities in supporting children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families? *(please tick those with which you agree)*

strategic x planning for services	securing a x range of high quality provision	enabling families to make x informed choices and exercise greater control over services
<input type="checkbox"/> none	<input type="checkbox"/> not sure	

40b) Are there others? If so, please specify.

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
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41. How can central government enable and support local authorities to carry out their role effectively?

42. What would be the best way to provide advice to GP consortia to support their commissioning of services for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families?

Enable them to pay for dyslexia/SpLD assessments

43. What would be the most appropriate indicators to include in the NHS and public health outcomes frameworks in the future to allow us to measure outcomes for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled?

- Numbers of dyslexic/SpLD individuals, including children, who are:
 1. depressed, or suffering from another mental health difficulty
 2. suicidal
- Numbers of dyslexic/SpLD individuals with co-occurring difficulties (e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Specific Language Impairment, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Asperger's syndrome).

44. What are the ways in which the bureaucratic burdens on frontline professionals, schools and services can be reduced?

The BDA support streamlining the Statutory Assessment process however we have serious concerns about removing the advice for schools to use Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in an attempt to do this.

Parents value IEPs because they offer clear, well focussed information on the child's immediate additional learning needs, the plan to address them, a measure of progress and an ongoing structure to keep progress under constant review (e.g. termly)

An effective use of mediation may streamline processes.

Early identification of dyslexia/SpLD and early additional programmes where appropriate lead to improved long-term outcomes and lower subsequent SEN related requirements and bureaucratic demands.

45. In addition to community nursing, what are the other areas where greater collaboration between frontline professionals could have the greatest positive impact on children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families?

- Dyslexia/SpLD Specialist teachers working to serve a 'cluster' of schools (e.g 5), overseeing provision, policies and practices in those schools.
- Somebody (eg. the SENCo) should be clearly responsible for ensuring dyslexia friendly practice throughout the school, including ensuring that effective (early) identification systems, effective addition provision, support and materials/aids are in place, with careful regular (e.g. termly) monitoring of progress and adjustments to provision following on from this.

46. What more do you think could be done to encourage and facilitate local services working together to improve support for children with SEN or who are disabled?

Extended schools meetings can enhance co-operation. Local authorities with flourishing Dyslexia Friendly schools schemes sometimes have regular 'mentoring' meetings, where staff from various schools get together to share good practice and support each other through the process of achieving Dyslexia Friendly School status (e.g. Swindon Children's Service). These mentoring meetings are well received and effective in sharing good practice, saving teachers time by not having to 're-invent the wheel.'

47. How do you think SEN support services might be funded so that schools, academies, free schools and other education providers have access to high quality SEN support services?

- Central government should make mandatory a decent minimum standard of dyslexia awareness (e.g. make the government module 'Teaching and Learning for the Dyslexic' mandatory), identification and assistance training for all teachers in initial teacher training. This would assist identification and dyslexia friendly classroom teaching and reduce the demands on SEN support services.
- All schools/academies should have access to and demonstrate effective use of a dyslexia/SpLD suitable qualified teacher, who should oversee dyslexia provision in a cluster of schools (e.g. 5).
- All schools/academies should be encouraged to follow Dyslexia Friendly policies and practices (see www.bdadyslexia.org.uk) to improve outcomes for dyslexic pupils, thus minimising demands on SEN support services.

48. What are the innovative ways in which new models of employee-led organisations, such as mutuals and cooperatives, could improve services for children and young people with SEN and their families?

Charities with expertise in particular areas of disability or SEN could provide some services.

49. In addition to their role in the assessment process, what are the innovative ways in which educational psychologists are deployed locally to support children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families?

- Training providers
- Admissions for certain schools.
- Panel members
- Advisory role
- Provision advice
- Support for Staff, including SENCOs
- Supporting Dyslexia Friendly School schemes in local authorities.
- Advising on appropriate additional programme materials and monitoring progress and methods, reviewing provision and liaison with parents.
- Supporting setting up early identification systems within schools for possible dyslexia/SpLD, with follow-up advice on provisions.

50. How do you envisage the role and service structures of educational psychologists evolving to meet local demands?

- Continue supporting children in the ways highlighted above.
- Expand advisory roles for setting up early identification systems, analysing results and recommending follow up provisions.
- Expand role in fostering Dyslexia Friendly practice and policies in schools/academies e.g. through training (INSET)
- Assess, set additional programmes/support, monitor progress, review and liaise with parents.
- Ensure all dyslexics, including the most severe cases, receive the level of early, effective provision they need in order to make good progress.

51. What are the implications of changes to the role and deployment of educational psychologists for how their training is designed and managed?

This is a concern.

The Green Paper proposes to increase the number of Educational Psychologists yet they are to have no role in assessment or monitoring.

What then is the purpose of their role?

BDA is also concerned about how 'independent' LA authority Educational Psychologists are. BDA's Helpline receives calls from parents who feel that the reports carried out by the LA Educational Psychologists often 'underplay' the child's needs.

Parents feel that what is reported in the Assessment is often guided by the direction of the LA and its policies.

52. What do you think can be done to facilitate and encourage greater collaboration between local authorities?

National coordination for specialisms and good practice e.g. the BDA could draw together a national working group for the many local authorities engaged in Dyslexia Friendly Schools schemes, to show case and disseminate good practice and encourage other authorities to take part.

53. What do you think are the areas where collaboration could have the greatest positive impact on services for children, young people and families?

- National systems to share good practice
- Nation reward systems for good practice - where 'doing good means doing well.'
- Drawing together voluntary/charity sector organisations and regional/national services (e.g. the BDA as a professional body setting and accrediting standards of Dyslexia/SpLD teacher training helps to provide appropriately trained staff for the education sector.
- Dyslexia friendly schools/college schemes.

54. How do you think that more effective pooling and alignment of funding for health, social care and education services can be encouraged?

- Reduce overall costs by identifying and providing good levels of provision/support early.
- Multi-disciplinary working, sharing knowledge/training.

55. What are the ways in which a Community Budget approach might help to improve the ways in which services for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families are delivered?

It would be helpful if this would pay for Dyslexia/SpLD assessments or screening, as well as of school teaching/workshops and equipment/support resources for home.

56. What are the ways in which we could introduce greater local freedom and flexibility into the ways in which funding for services for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled is used?

The BDA is aware that nationally, services and facilities vary and as such there is at present some local freedom and flexibility.

BDA's Helpline experiences often reflect the fact that freedom and flexibility is often down to whether or not a parent can pay for specialist tuition or an assessment – not much flexibility or freedom there!

Greater flexibility and freedom would mean access to funding for timely intervention and diagnostic assessment for dyslexia.

However we must ensure that despite location all young people with SEN or disabilities have a fair level of support.

Geographical location should not be a factor in provision. It should not be a 'postcode lottery.'

57. What are the areas where the voluntary and community sector could have the greatest positive impact on services for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families, and what are the ways we can facilitate this?

- The BDA's national Helpline, supporting families and offering professionals and dyslexic individuals advice
- Sharing information about available AMBDA teachers and specialists if required.
- Advisory role, ensuring information and good practice is disseminated. The voluntary sector sharing its expertise.
- Playing a supportive role to families as they journey through the process. Advising families and providing support networks.
- The 62 Local Dyslexia Associations are able regionally and willing to work with strategic partners to disseminate information and discuss expediency and effectiveness in policy making.
- To facilitate this role, schools/heads must be made aware and encouraged to use the expertise of the voluntary sector and to buy in their services.
- Offering reasonably priced out of school teaching workshops for children, linked to the Local Dyslexia Associations. Some also offer screening and assessments. Most offer support to parents on the telephone and through meeting with invited speakers. Often they also have a resource 'library' to share with parents/members
- Supporting the dyslexia friendly schools scheme through local associations and BDA nationally.

58. How do you think a national banded funding framework for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled could improve the transparency of funding decisions to parents while continuing to allow for local flexibility?

Equality in provision is positive and open, honest communication with parents is essential.

Provision banding should be linked to the child's need, including the severity of the need. Early identification together with early and, where appropriate, high levels of additional programme/support input which yield outcomes for the dyslexic individuals.

59. How can the different funding arrangements for specialist provision for young people pre-16 and post-16 be aligned more effectively to provide a more consistent approach to support for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled from birth to 25?

Communication and co-operation is essential amongst those working and supporting those with SEN.

An overall approach should be adopted towards an individual with SEN whereby the age and stage of an individual does not limit having their needs met. Rather than categorising individuals according to age an emphasis on need should therefore be employed. This would therefore ensure a joined-up approach to meeting an individual's needs as they develop.

Currently for dyslexic/SpLD provision there are key differences between funding mechanisms for pre-16 and post-16.

60. Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make

We believe that this Green Paper may lead to cuts and failures in provision for children with Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties.

It makes a welcome attempt to address some of the inadequacies of the current SEN system, as highlighted by various government inquiries over recent years. It seems to offer real improvements for families of a child with complex multiple impairments. However, we believe that children with dyslexia/specific learning difficulties may simply be incorrectly identified as 'low attaining' and their potential may not be recognised or their needs addressed.

'Aspiration' in the title of the paper is very welcome. It is high time that there was a recognition of the abilities that go undeveloped in many children with SEN. Giving a child the tools he or she needs to overcome barriers and achieve their potential is hugely rewarding for the child: it is also an excellent financial investment for the future.

61. Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, was it easy to find, understand, complete etc.)

Dyslexia and co-occurring SpLDs are the most common disabilities in the classroom, and currently an area with serious shortcomings in identification and support.

The BDA would welcome any further opportunities to consult and expand upon the responses given, to further the best interests of dyslexic individuals.