



6 March 2009

### **Mentor Project Launch with Sir Jackie Stewart**

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) and Dyslexia Scotland are launching a mentoring scheme, with Cass Business School, City University London, to link adults with dyslexia with successful dyslexic people who will share the benefit of their experience and knowledge.

Sir Jackie Stewart, President of Dyslexia Scotland and Vice President of the British Dyslexia Association, will be both the key speaker at the launch event and a Mentor. The British Dyslexia Association is delighted to announce other keynote speakers and mentors including Zenna Atkins, Chair of Ofsted and Louis Barnett, founder of Chokolit.

The programme is an informal mentoring scheme, which is designed to be flexible. The emphasis is on two people getting together who share something in common - dyslexia. The aim is for the mentor to share some of their coping strategies and above all instill confidence in the mentee.

The BDA, Dyslexia Scotland and Cass believe if dyslexic people in the UK were provided with mentoring to increase their confidence, there could be an increase in the number of dyslexic people unlocking their potential and creating new business ventures\*.

The BDA, Dyslexia Scotland and Cass believe that one of the key ways we can help people who are dyslexic is to provide role models who have excelled. This will demonstrate that being dyslexic does not have to be a barrier, an important message for the people involved in the programme as well as the world at large.

Sir Jackie Stewart, who will be a key speaker at the launch and a mentor, said of the scheme: "I am looking forward to being a part of this new project. I know from personal experience the difficulties that people with dyslexia face. To have a mentor who has suffered the enormous frustrations, humiliation and mental abuse will be tremendously constructive. I hope that myself and the other mentors will be able to provide help and give strength to demonstrate that being dyslexic does not have to be a barrier to success."

Judi Stewart, Chief Executive, British Dyslexia Association said: “This is such an exciting project. We firmly believe that the talent and skills of a successful dyslexic person is invaluable to a similarly like-minded person with dyslexia, whether they are just starting out in their career or at a key point in their working life. We have a number of Mentors already on board, including Sir Jackie Stewart and David Richards the CEO of Aston Martin, and are inviting anyone who is dyslexic and feels they can benefit from this project to apply.”

**The launch event is taking place on 11 March at Cass Business School, London, at 6 pm – 8.30 pm.**

## **Contacts**

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## **Notes to Editors**

1. All members of the press are invited to the launch to meet the Mentors and hear about further information about the scheme. Please contact Rachel Lawson or Ben Sawtell to confirm your attendance.
2. The launch mentors are:
  - a. Sir Jackie Stewart, former F1 champion
  - b. Louis Barnett, entrepreneur and founder of Chokolit
  - c. Zenna Atkins, Chair of Ofsted
  - d. Jonty Hearnden, Cash in the Attic's Antiques Expert
  - e. David Richards, CEO of Aston Martin
  - f. Professor Paul Palmer, Cass Business School
  - g. Lord Addington, Liberal Democrat Peer
  - h. John Cavill, Entrepreneur
  - i. Peter Hall, Professional Photographer

- j. Paula Bishop Liebler
- k. Michelle Masters

3. Further quotes from the launch mentors are available at request.
4. Cass Business School has carried out several pieces of research into the link between dyslexic people and entrepreneurs. They have also undertaken a piece of research for Microsoft called 'Unlocking the potential of the UK's Hidden Innovators'. This research discovered that dyslexic people make up almost 20% of the 3.5 million entrepreneurial population in the U.K., with the U.S. figure being even higher at 35% (J. Logan 2008).
5. \* If US rates were matched a further 560,000 UK entrepreneurs would exist (J. Logan, C. Hendry, N. Courtney, J. Brown, 2008).
6. Mentee applicants can apply to be a part of the scheme through the British Dyslexia Association's website: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/Mentoring.html>
7. Mentees will need to be:
  - a. 18 or over and dyslexic (self identification or referral of dyslexia based on a screening test or assessment)
  - b. Be working in an employed or self-employed basis, or wishing to enter the work force.
  - c. Be prepared to commit to the process and spirit of the scheme as outlined below.
8. Mentor applicants will be able to apply via the BDA website after the launch on 11 March.
9. The mentors will be from a variety of backgrounds from the arts to business to politics. All will be dyslexic or have a good knowledge of what it is like to live with dyslexia.
10. For more information on dyslexia please go to [www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk) or call the helpline on 0845 251 9002.