



BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations

The BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations

What is the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark?

The philosophy underpinning the Quality Mark is that changing practice to accommodate dyslexic individuals often results in good practice for everyone. This is what the Quality Mark strives to ensure.

Dyslexia is a learning difference that affects 10% of the population, a combination of strengths and weaknesses which affects the learning process in reading, spelling, writing and sometimes numeracy. Dyslexic individuals may also have accompanying weaknesses in short term memory, sequencing and the speed at which they process information. These are skills that everyone needs if they are to learn effectively and they are also key skills for life.

Problems arise if dyslexia is not recognised and the environment and/or training are inappropriate. Viewing dyslexia as a learning difficulty implies that something is “wrong” with the individual. This leads to a focus on identifying weaknesses rather than celebrating strengths.

The BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark focuses on supporting individuals within their setting. The Quality Mark does also, however, recognise that there are also individuals whose needs are more profound and complex and will therefore require specialist support, indeed a requirement of the Quality Mark is that such support is also available. Even where this is the case the success of such support is likely to be greater if this is provided within a setting that accommodates such individual needs.

One of the basic principles of becoming dyslexia friendly is the expectation that those providing the service take immediate action when faced with individual needs, rather than refer for assessment and wait for a “label”. In a dyslexia friendly environment those providing the service are empowered through, training, policy and ethos to identify issues and take front line action.

Dyslexia Friendly Organisations

The Quality Mark for organisations has been developed for employers who want to demonstrate a real commitment to equality and diversity and maximise the potential of their workforce. Just as 10% of employees are likely to be dyslexic so are 10% of customers. Commitment to becoming a Dyslexia Friendly Organisation can result in the more effective achievement of performance targets and a competitive advantage.

Dyslexia Friendly employers recognise and utilise the strengths that dyslexic individuals have and create a climate where such abilities can be maximised, this leads to increased levels of motivation and morale, less stress and also enable an employer to meet their responsibilities associated with the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Quality Mark standards cover the 6 areas listed below:

1. Policy
2. Meeting needs/service delivery
3. Communication
4. Training
5. Partnerships
6. Employment

Under each of the above headings are criteria that must be achieved in order to demonstrate that the standard for a Dyslexia Friendly Organisation has been met.

What is The Process?

The process starts with our receipt of your completed application form. From here you will have a two year period to work towards the standards provided, collecting evidence of your good practice and the steps you have taken to achieve the criteria we have stipulated.

Some organisations find it useful to undertake a self-evaluation against the standards at this stage. From here you will be able to set out an action plan with appropriate time frames for achieving any gaps identified within your initial self-evaluation.

When you have completed this process, it is time to book your Verification Visit. You will be provided with your verification plan, detailing the standards for review within your organisation, in advance of the visit. (A sample verification plan is enclosed within pages 44 – 45 of this document).

During the visit your verifier will need to see evidence of your organisations achievement of the standards confirmed within the verification plan. Once successful, your organisation will be awarded the BDA Quality Mark and will be able to publicise its status as a Dyslexia Friendly Organisation.

The BDA Quality Mark Team are available to work with you to conduct Consultation Visits to guide you through this process and offer advice relevant to your market setting; calling upon best practice we have observed for achieving the standards set.

In addition a Mock Verification Visit can be arranged with the team. This in effect is a dry run of your official verification and again is based on supporting you through the process, offering you advice and guidance towards achievement of the BDA Quality Mark.

Once achieved you will hold your Quality Mark status for a three year period, after which you will undertake a further verification to ensure standards have been maintained before the award can be renewed for a further three year period.

Documents for BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations



BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations

Application Form

Your Details

Name of Organisation:

Contact Name:

Position:

Address:

.....

Post Code:

Daytime Tel No:Mobile

Email address:

Fax:

BDA Code of Practice for Employers

Please tick here to receive your free copy of the BDA Code of Practice for Employers.

Organisations are advised to refer to this document when working towards their achievement of the BDA Quality Mark for Organisations. Your free copy will be posted to you upon our receipt of your completed application form.

Please provide us with a few details of your organisation / department / team you wish to register onto the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark award for organisations, e.g. the business focus of the organisation / department, responsibilities etc.

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Payment

The registration payment is due with the application. You have up to two years to achieve the BDA QM. Please note that all fees are non-refundable. The Verification Payment is due when your verification visit is arranged.

Every third year you will need to seek Recognition Renewal. We will contact you each year to remind you when fees and your renewal are due.

Please select the pricing structure appropriate to the annual turnover for your organisation.

Payment	Annual turnover of up to £50,000*	Annual turnover of up to £1 Million*	Annual turnover of £1 Million plus*
Registration payment Due with your application form.	£300.00 (£250.00 plus VAT)	£600.00 (£500.00 plus VAT)	£900.00 (£750.00 plus VAT)
Annual Maintenance Fee	£120.00 (£100.00 plus VAT)	£180.00 (£150.00 plus VAT)	£240.00 (£200.00 plus VAT)
Verification payment - Due before your verification visit.	£600.00 (£500.00 plus VAT)	£900.00 (£750.00 plus VAT)	£1,200.00 (£1,000.00 + VAT)
Annual Quality Mark Status Maintenance Fee	£60.00 (£50.00 plus VAT)	£120.00 (£100.00 plus VAT)	£180.00 (£150.00 plus VAT)
Renewal payment - Due every 3 years after the Quality Mark is awarded.	£600.00 (£500.00 plus VAT)	£900.00 (£750.00 plus VAT)	£1,200.00 (£1,000.00 + VAT)

*Based on annual turnover from previous years accounts.

For example, if an organisation applied to join the scheme in September 2010, they would pay the initial Registration Fee immediately, appropriate to their annual turnover. One year later they would pay the Annual Maintenance Fee. The verification payment would be due after they had submitted their completed Standards and Record of Evidence documents and invoiced before the initial verification visit.

The Annual Quality Mark Status Maintenance Fee will be due a year after the date of the verification and for a further consecutive year, after which the re-verification fee will be applicable, when the Quality Mark must be renewed.

I wish to pay by:

Cheque Please make all cheques payable to “British Dyslexia Association”

Invoice

Order Number:

Invoice address:

.....

.....

Declaration

- I wish to apply for membership of the BDA QM Initiative and agree to pay the membership fees as outlined above.
- I understand that the initial Quality Mark fee must be received in full before the application is processed and that all fees are non refundable.
- I undertake to adhere to all decisions made by BDA.

Signed:..... **Date:**

Print Name:

Data Protection Act 1998

The information you provide on this form will be processed by the BDA and used to process your application for the BDA Quality Mark Initiative.

From time to time we would also like to send you information about the BDA's other services, offers, activities and appeals.

If you would like to receive this information please tick here

We may also share your information with other organisations within the European Economic Area upon their request.

If you are happy for your details to be used in this way please tick here

Disclaimer

In awarding the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark, the BDA cannot guarantee or be responsible for individual performance and / or attainment within related departments or teams.

Please return your completed form to:

Eorann Lean, Personal Assistant to CEO

British Dyslexia Association

Unit 8 Bracknell Beeches

Old Bracknell Lane

Bracknell

RG12 7BW

Tel: 0845 251 9003,

Email: qualitymark@bdadyslexia.org.uk

BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations

The Dyslexia Friendly Standards

Mission Statement

The aim of the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations is to promote excellent practice by the organisation as it carries out its business function in supporting customers and employees to improve accessibility.

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Quality Standards for Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark.

These standards are intended to be used by organisations who are seeking to receive accreditation for Dyslexia Friendly good practice.

The BDA definition of dyslexia states that dyslexia is:

“a specific learning difference which is constitutional in origin, independent of socio-economic or language background, and can occur at any level of intellectual ability. It can cause unexpected and persistent difficulties in acquiring certain skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing and sometimes numeracy and spoken language. There may be accompanying weaknesses in the skills that support personal organisation: for example, speed of processing, short term memory sequencing, and possible weaknesses in auditory and/or visual perception skills.”

Changing practice to accommodate dyslexic individuals often results in good practice for everyone. What is good for dyslexic people is good for all!

Achieving the Quality Mark – meeting the standards and providing the evidence

Each Standard is broken down into key elements. The client is required to provide evidence of achieving each element by completing the ‘Evidence Exists’ section.

The Quality Mark can be achieved by either, whole organisations and/or departments within an organisation and/or different sites/geographical locations of an organisation.

It is recommended that organisations seeking to achieve the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark refer to the BDA’s “Code of Practice for Employers”. This document is available for order via the BDA website: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk, or alternatively, a copy will be provided free of charge upon our receipt of your completed application form.

Standards for BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations

Standard One: Policy	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
1.1 The organisation's policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Highlight inclusive practice for dyslexia and conform to the Disability Discrimination Act 95/05. b) Are accessible and disseminated to interested parties. 			
1.2 Relevant policies are regularly monitored for effectiveness.			
1.3 A senior manager has responsibility for the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark.			
1.4 Dyslexia support policies are promoted throughout the whole organisation.			

Standard One: Policy	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
<p>1.5 Resources / staff / budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are available to support those with dyslexia. Alternatively organisations are able to access external support when required. • Processes are in place to ensure individuals have access to appropriate support. • Information on procedures are shared with staff and personnel. 			
<p>1.6 Advice and guidance is available to dyslexic employees.</p>			
<p>Total for Policy: Number of Standards Achieved</p>			

Standard Two: Meeting needs / service delivery for customers	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
2.1 Systems and services are checked for accessibility issues relating to dyslexia.			
2.2 Guidelines are provided to all staff on good practice when working with dyslexic individuals, both internal and external customers.			
2.3 Written communications with customers (internal and external) conform to the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide (a copy is enclosed within these standards).			
2.4 Where forms are used these are available in different formats, e.g. electronically or assistance with the completion of the form(s) is provided.			

Standard Two: Meeting needs / service delivery for customers	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
2.5 Interactions with customers (internal and external) reflect an understanding of the potential needs of an individual who is dyslexic and are monitored for effectiveness.			
<p style="text-align: center;">Total for meeting needs / service delivery for customers:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Number of standards achieved</p>			

Standard Three: Communication	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
<p>3.1 Communications meet BDA Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide Standards e.g. size of font, colour of paper, use of plain English, presentation style</p> <p>A copy of the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide is enclosed with these standards.</p>			
<p>3.2 Processes are in place for quality checking communication materials.</p>			
<p>3.3 Communications guidelines are circulated to all personnel.</p>			
<p>3.4 Where form filling is required such forms are available in different formats, e.g. electronically or other assistance to be available if required.</p>			
<p>3.5 Website design follows dyslexia friendly style guide principles. (A copy of the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide is enclosed within these standards).</p>			

Standard Three: Communication	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
3.6 Signage is accessible, e.g. use of symbols & colour as well as words.			
Total for Communication: Number of standards achieved			

Standard Four: Training	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
4.1 A programme of dyslexia awareness raising is available for all personnel.			
4.2 There are individuals within the organisation who have achieved OCN Level 2 Dyslexia Awareness or its equivalent.			
4.3 In-house training is delivered in a dyslexia friendly style.			

Standard Four: Training	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
4.4 External providers of training deliver the training in a dyslexia friendly style.			
Total for Training: Number of standards achieved			

Standard Five: Partnerships	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
5.1 The organisation, where possible, works with relevant partners associated with the support of dyslexic individuals.			
Total for Partnerships: Number of standards achieved			

Standard Six: Employment	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
<p>6.1 Recruitment practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application procedures and systems conform to communications guide (please refer to the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide included within these standards) and the BDA Code of Practice for Employers (please refer to BDA website www.bdadyslexia.org.uk). • Interview location and practice proactively identifies and delivers to the needs of the dyslexic interviewee and interviewers. • Where tests are administered as part of the recruitment process reasonable adjustments are made available to facilitate access for dyslexic candidates where appropriate. 			
<p>6.2 All staff are aware of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995/2005 and its implications.</p>			

Standard Six: Employment	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
6.3 The organisation accesses screening and/or assessments for dyslexia when required.			
6.4 The organisation accesses work based assessments for reasonable adjustments when required.			
6.5 Reasonable adjustments are implemented and monitored for effectiveness appropriately.			
6.6 Appraisals and performance reviews are implemented with due regard for the needs of the dyslexic employee.			
Total for Employment: Number of standards achieved			

Final Score	Evidence Exists	Further Work Required	Target Achieved
Total number of standards achieved in all Sections			

Declaration

- I understand that the initial Quality Mark fee must be received in full before the application is processed and that all fees are non-refundable.
- I undertake to adhere to all decisions made by BDA.

Signed:.....

Date:

Print Name:

Position:

Please send your completed documents to:

Eorann Lean
British Dyslexia Association
Unit 8, Bracknell Beeches
Old Bracknell Lane
Bracknell
RG12 7BW

Data Protection Act 1998

The information you provide on this form will be reviewed by the BDA and used to process your application the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark. The information may also be used to send you information about the BDA's other services, offers, activities and appeals. We may also share your information with other organisations upon their request. If you do not wish your details to be used for these purposes, please tick this box



Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations

Record of Evidence

Name of Organisation:

Contact Name:

Mission Statement

The aim of the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations is to promote excellent practice by the organisation as it carries out its business function in supporting customers and employees to improve accessibility.

Disclaimer

In awarding the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark, the BDA cannot guarantee or be responsible for individual performance and / or attainment within related departments or teams.

Please attach additional information sheets as required

Standard One: Policy

1.1 The organisation's policies:

- a) Highlight inclusive practice for dyslexia and conform to the Disability Discrimination Act 95/05.
- b) Are accessible and disseminated to interested parties.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

1.2 Relevant policies are regularly monitored for effectiveness.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

1.3 A senior manager has responsibility for the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

1.4 Dyslexia support policies are promoted throughout the whole organisation.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

1.5 Resources / staff / budget:

- Are available to support those with dyslexia. Alternatively organisations are able to access external support when required.
- Processes are in place to ensure individuals have access to appropriate support.
- Information on procedures are shared with staff and personnel.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

1.6 Advice and guidance is available to dyslexic employees.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

Standard Two: Meeting needs / service delivery for customers

2.1 Systems and services are checked for accessibility issues relating to dyslexia.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

2.2 Guidelines are provided to all staff on good practice when working with dyslexic individuals, both internal and external customers.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

2.3 Written communications with customers (internal and external) conform to the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide (a copy is enclosed within these standards).

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

2.4 Where forms are used these are available in different formats, e.g. electronically or assistance with the completion of the form(s) is provided.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

2.6 Interactions with customers (internal and external) reflect an understanding of the potential needs of an individual who is dyslexic and are monitored for effectiveness.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

Standard Three: Communication

- 3.1 Communications meet BDA Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide Standards e.g. size of font, colour of paper, use of plain English, presentation style

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

- 3.2 Processes are in place for quality checking communication materials.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

3.3 Communications guidelines are circulated to all personnel.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

3.4 Where form filling is required such forms are available in different formats, e.g. electronically or other assistance to be available if required.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

3.5 Website design follows dyslexia friendly style guide principles. (A copy of the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide is enclosed within these standards).

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

3.6 Signage is accessible, e.g. use of symbols & colour as well as words.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

Standard Four: Training

4.1 A programme of dyslexia awareness raising is available for all personnel.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

4.2 There are individuals within the organisation who have achieved OCN Level 2 Dyslexia Awareness or its equivalent.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

4.3 In-house training is delivered in a dyslexia friendly style.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

4.5 External providers of training deliver the training in a dyslexia friendly style.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

Standard Five: Partnerships

5.1 The organisation, where possible, works with relevant partners associated with the support of dyslexic individuals.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

Standard Six: Employment

6.1 Recruitment practice:

- Application procedures and systems conform to communications guide (please refer to the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide included within these standards) and the BDA Code of Practice for Employers (please refer to BDA website www.bdadyslexia.org.uk).
- Interview location and practice proactively identifies and delivers to the needs of the dyslexic interviewee and interviewers.
- Where tests are administered as part of the recruitment process reasonable adjustments are made available to facilitate access for dyslexic candidates where appropriate.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

6.2 All staff are aware of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995/2005 and its implications.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

6.3 The organisation accesses screening and/or assessments for dyslexia when required.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

6.4 The organisation accesses work based assessments for reasonable adjustments when required.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

- 6.5 Reasonable adjustments are implemented and monitored for effectiveness appropriately

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

6.6 Appraisals and performance reviews are implemented with due regard for the needs of the dyslexic employee.

What form is the evidence in?

Where is the evidence located?

Signed: **Date:**

Print Name:

Position:

Please send your completed documents to:

Eorann Lean
British Dyslexia Association
Unit 8, Bracknell Beeches
Old Bracknell Lane, Bracknell
RG12 7BW

BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations Sample Verification Plan

Standard	Criteria	Criteria	Criteria	Criteria	Criteria	Criteria
Standard One: Policy	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6
Standard Two: Meeting needs / Service delivery for customers	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	
Standard Three: Communication	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6
Standard Four: Training	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4		
Standard Five: Partnerships	5.1					
Standard Six: Employment	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6

BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations

Sample Verification Plan

The criteria highlighted will form the basis of the sampling undertaken by the verifier, however, in addition the verifier reserves the right to assess further criteria at the time of verification and therefore all evidence should be readily available for inspection on the day of the verification visit.

Organisations are strongly advised to ensure that evidence is clearly referenced to the criteria and that a brief explanation of each piece of evidence is supplied along with an explanation of the relevance of each document in terms of why the organisation feels that it meets the criteria, if they feel that this is required.

Organisations are reminded that whilst assessing the paper based evidence is an important part of the verification the verifier will also be assessing whether such evidence is translated into practice within the business environment.

BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark for Organisations

Additional Useful Documents

Pack Contains:

1. BDA Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide
2. BDA Top 10 Reasonable Adjustments (extract taken from BDA Employers Code of Practice*)

Upon our receipt of your completed application form you will be issued with a copy of the “BDA Employers Code of Practice - Good practice guide for supporting employees with dyslexia in the workplace”. This document contains a wealth of information to help guide you through some of the requirements of the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark award for Organisations.

Please note that further, helpful information can be found on the BDA website:

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide.

"Information is power" and is therefore key to empowering individuals to form a greater understanding of the world around them. The style in which this information is produced is key to facilitating comprehension for the reader. Presenting information in a format which makes it easily accessible is vital, if the information it contains is to be understood by everyone.

It is important to understand why and how to make changes in order to increase readability. This Guide aims to explain how dyslexic people read and thus process information differently and how some simple changes to the way information is presented to them can make all the difference.

1. The skill of reading and comprehension

Every individual has a different perception of what they see and reading is no exception. The shape and size of words can appear different to each reader. For some dyslexic readers there can be barriers to overcome.

People often talk about 'tuning in' to text and 'focusing' on what they are looking at. This describes concentrating on content as well as the simple decoding exercise that occurs when we read. For many people, reading becomes an automatic skill that requires little conscious effort. When decoding occurs unconsciously, the reader is able to concentrate on comprehension.

For some dyslexic readers decoding the words is not always an automatic or unconscious skill. Anyone with a history of reading difficulties may have to concentrate harder to interpret text and remember what they have read.

Suggestions included in this document are aimed at improving accessibility to information, thus allowing the dyslexic reader more time to comprehend the information.

Everyone is susceptible to eye strain and tiredness when working. When a person concentrates for a long period on a particular piece of text the words may go blurry, though this is only temporary. Dyslexic people frequently experience visual discomfort when reading. Some dyslexic people focus on the spaces rather than on the words. This is often described as seeing 'rivers' moving down the page. The words and text can appear to be moving around the page or wobbling.

Anything that disturbs concentration, such as visual discomfort, makes the problem worse. With a few small alterations however it is possible to alleviate the pressures of visual discomfort.

2. It makes sense for you to adapt the presentation of your material.

- It promotes a culture of equal opportunities for all.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, employers and service providers are obliged to make reasonable adjustments in order to ensure accessibility for all.

- It makes good business sense.

Consider that 10% of your service users, employees, and customers may be dyslexic. Remember that changes you make to accommodate dyslexic people are good practice for everyone.

3. Hints and Tips: how to make your information accessible.

Adopting some simple strategies can help dyslexic people to get the most from their reading.

4. Font Style.

Fonts should be rounded, allow for space between letters, reflect ordinary cursive writing and be 'easy on the eye'. Look for a font that spaces letters rather than running them closely together. Bear in mind that fonts that have unusual shaped letters can create difficulties.

- Select sans serif fonts such as Arial or Comic Sans. Other suggestions include Verdana, Helvetica, Tahoma, Trebuchet and Sassoon. Information on Sassoon is available at www.clubtype.co.uk
- Use a minimum of size 12pt or 14pt.
- Where possible use lower case letters rather than capitals. Using capital letters for emphasis can make text harder to read.
- Don't write sentences entirely in capitals; this infers that the reader is being shouted at.

5. Paper.

- Avoid light text on a dark background.
- Use coloured paper instead of white. Cream or off-white provides a good alternative.
- Matt paper is preferable to glossy paper, as this reduces glare.
- Ensure the paper is heavy enough to prevent text glaring through from the back. Good quality 80 or 90 gms is effective.

6. Presentation Style.

Presentation can make a big difference, both to readability and initial visual impact.

- Limit lines to 60 to 70 characters. Lines that are too long or short can put strain on eyes.
- Use line spacing between paragraphs to break up text.
- Use wide margins and headings.
- Use of boxes for emphasis or to highlight important text can be effective.
- Avoid dense blocks of text by using short paragraphs.

- Use bold to highlight. Italics or underlining can make the words run together.
- Keep lines left justified with a ragged right edge.
- Use bullets or numbers rather than continuous prose.
- Don't hyphenate words that are not usually split in order to fill up line ends, e.g. "operation".
- The space between lines is important. Recommendations suggest a leading (space) of 1.5 to 2 times the space.

7. Writing Style.

The way in which text is written can have an impact on the reader. Long and complicated sentences can be difficult for the reader to navigate and comprehend.

- Write in short simple sentences.
- Be conscious of where sentences begin on the page. Starting a new sentence at the end of a line makes it harder to follow.
- Try to call the readers 'you'; imagine they are sitting opposite you and you are talking to them directly.
- Give instructions clearly. Avoid long sentences of explanation.

Some additional hints from The Plain English Campaign Web: www.plainenglish.co.uk

- Stop and think before you start writing. Be clear what it is you want to say.
- Use short words where possible.
- Keep your sentence length down to an average of 15 to 20 words.
- Use active verbs as much as possible. Say 'we will do it' rather than 'it will be done by us'.
- Be concise.

8. Readability scores.

When Microsoft Word finishes checking spelling and grammar, it can display information about the reading level of the document, including the following readability scores. Each readability score bases its rating on the average number of syllables per word and words per sentence.

To set your spell checker to automatically check readability, go to Tools, Options, Spelling, and Grammar, then tick the Readability request. Word will then show your readability score every time you spell check.

- Flesch Reading Ease score

Rates text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, aim for a score of approximately 70 to 80.

- Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score

Rates text on a U.S. grade-school level. For example, a score of 5.0 means that a fifth grader, i.e. a Year 6, average 10 year old, can understand the document. For most standard documents, aim for a score of approximately 5.0, by using short sentences, not by dumbing down vocabulary.

9. Posters, boards and leaflets.

- Keep the design of leaflets simple. Background graphics can make text difficult to read.
- On leaflets or posters about events, keep essential information about time and place grouped together.
- On boards and posters, print lowercase rather than using joined writing.

10. Increasing accessibility.

Everyone processes information in a different style. It is important to consider this when presenting ideas and concepts. Some people might find it easier to access a long and wordy explanation whilst others may prefer an alternative style.

For example;

- Flow charts are ideal for explaining procedures.
- Pictograms and graphics help to locate information.
- Lists of 'do's and 'don'ts' are more useful than continuous text to highlight aspects of good practice.
- Provide a glossary of abbreviations and jargon.
- Include a contents page at the beginning and an index at end.

11. Text-reading software.

There are a number of points to bear in mind when preparing information for use with text readers.

- Full stops after headings to make the voice pause and drop in tone.
- Semi-colons, commas, or full stops after bullet points in order to separate each point.
- Number menu items to aid navigation.
- Don't write words in capital letters in mid-line, as they may be read as single letters.
- Include as few signs/symbols as are absolutely necessary, e.g. asterisks or slashes, as these will be spoken.
- Consider whether abbreviations and acronyms need full stops.
- Screen readers may have difficulty with tables. They read down each cell, going across the page from left to right.

12. Website design.

Web site design must consider all the above factors together with the following points.

Research shows that readers access text at a 25% slower rate on a computer. This should be taken into account when putting information on the web. When a website is completed, check the site and information for accessibility by carrying out these simple checks.

- Navigation should be easy. A site map is essential.
- Use graphics, images, and pictures to break up text, while bearing in mind that graphics and tables may take a long time to download.
- Large graphics make pages harder to read.
- Offer alternate download pages in a text reader friendly style.
- Where possible design web pages which can be downloaded and read off-line.
- Moving text creates problems for people with visual difficulties. It also creates a difficulty for text-reading software.
- Contents links should show which pages have been accessed.

- Most users prefer dark print on a pale background. Colour preferences vary.
- Some websites offer a choice of background colours.
- Encourage the use of hyperlinks at the end of sentences.
- Avoid green and red/pink as these are difficult for colour-blind individuals.
- Make sure that it is possible for users to set their own choice of font style and size, and background and print colours.

Further information on Web Design:

- W3C HTML Validator: validator.w3.org
- WAI Accessibility Guidelines: www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT
- Bobby: www.cast.org . This is an automated programme for checking the accessibility web pages.
- RNIB Campaign for Good Web Design: www.rnib.org.uk

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Top Ten Reasonable Adjustments In the Workplace

The most appropriate reasonable adjustments you can make as an employer, manager, colleague or friend is to invite the dyslexic individual to talk to you about the difficulties that they have (as they see them) and then discuss together the solution.

Many people anticipate that reasonable adjustments are going to be costly and difficult to implement, in ninety-percent of cases the opposite is true. Many people with dyslexia require little in the way of support beyond the acceptance that they will need to approach some tasks differently.

As the severity of dyslexia varies so do the strategies that help people overcome problems in employment. The majority of these are inexpensive and uncomplicated. However, should additional costs be incurred, for example a voice activated software or reader the employer can apply for funding through the Government's Access to Work scheme.

Communication

- Give verbal rather than written instructions.
- Highlight salient points in documents.
- Provide information on pastel coloured paper.
- Allow time for reading information and for it to sink in.
- Use flow charts and mind maps where possible.
- Use pod casts and other recorded options.
- Use sans serif font, pt 12.
- Use two coloured pens when writing on a flip chart/whiteboard.

Instructions

- Give instructions one at a time.
- Keep them simple and concise.
- Demonstrate more complex tasks.
- Encourage the person to repeat the instruction back to you.
- Write down the plan of action as well as verbalise it.
- Where multiple instructions cannot be avoided, use mind mapping or diagrams.
- Do not hint or imply or make assumptions.

Time and Work Planning

- Ensure that the person feels able to take mini breaks when working on the computer.
- Provide a workspace where there are few distractions.
- Encourage the individual to use a work plan to help them prioritise their work.
- Encourage them to use wall planners, diaries, outlook, mobile phone or PDA as prompts/alarms to remind them of meetings and deadlines.
- For important meetings text or phone them prior to the meeting with a gentle reminder.
- Create daily, dated, to do lists.
- Build planning time into each day.
- Allow time for unforeseen occurrences.

Organisation

- Keep work areas neat and tidy – a place for everything and everything in its place.
- Colour code items.
- Use numeric or date filing systems instead of alphabetic.
- Provide details of how to get from A to B.

Written Work

- Provide Franklin spell checker software for PC.
- Change background colour of screen to enhance readability.
- Provide screen reader to assist with proof reading own work and comprehension of complex documents.
- Provide a digital tape recorder to record meetings and important information and preparation for presentations.
- Provide voice activated software to assist with monitoring of own work and increase speed of report writing and other long documents.
- Don't expect a high output of written work or sophisticated words or sentence structure.
- Assign a colleague as a proof reader.

Reading

- Provide texthelp or other screen readers to improve comprehension.
- Provide a pen reader for reading single word or sentence when away from PC.
- Provide reading ruler or scanning pen for small amounts of text away from PC.
- Highlight, embolden, box important text in documents.
- Provide a summary/overview for long documents.

Directional difficulties

- Provide satellite navigation system in car.
- Provide PDA with sat nav software for walking.
- Always give a map with written details of how to get to destination.
- Allow extra time for getting from A to B.

Workplace Culture

- Have effective diversity groups.
- Disability forum where ALL disabilities are discussed.
- Celebrate difference.
- Encourage disability awareness wherever possible including dyslexia awareness training for senior management. Cascade this learning to line managers and staff.

Recruitment

- Where application forms are used offer applicants the opportunity to have a different format – list of questions to answer with CV and covering letter.
- Avoid psychometric testing – where unavoidable offer candidates the opportunity to complete this alone in a quiet room and if the candidate has disclosed their dyslexia give them additional time.
- Give candidates a list of questions that they will be asked at interview.

Appraisal

- Conduct one to one meetings in an informal environment.
- Allow the individual to verbally report their self-assessment.
- Allow the individual to use a digital recorder during the meeting so that they can replay after the meeting to ensure that they heard and understood everything.
- Encourage the individual to make their own notes.
- Always provide a copy of the notes taken to the individual.
- Give plenty of advance warning for a formal appraisal.
- Allow the individual to be accompanied by another member of staff to act as note taker and another pair of ears.

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