**Youth Offending Teams**

**Guidelines for Supporting Young Offenders with**

**Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties**

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# 1. Introduction

Dyslexia is estimated to affect around 10% of the population, 4% severely. It also frequently co-occurs with related specific learning difficulties which in total may affect 15% or more of the population.

Many studies have shown that a disproportionate number of offenders are likely to have dyslexic difficulties, ranging from 25 – 50%.\*

While dyslexia awareness training is still lacking for most teachers in schools, many pupils with dyslexia and related conditions are not identified and supported. Parental pressure is often vital in achieving educational support, and in the absence of educational intervention there is likely to be an early loss of self-esteem, frustration and alienation leading to exclusions, a tendency to substance abuse and offending behaviour.

Research shows that early dyslexia identification and specialist intervention is important for the acquisition of literacy skills. Unfortunately without this early support, it is more challenging for older children and adults to acquire good literacy skills.

These guidelines attempt to offer advice on useful strategies and resources to identify and support dyslexic young offenders.

**\*Research Showing the Incidence of Dyslexia among Offenders:**

**BDA Project – Bradford Young Offenders (2004):**

31% showed indicators of dyslexia.

**The Incidence of Hidden Disabilities in the Prison Population, (2005) Dyslexia Action.**

Conclusion: 52% had literacy difficulties and 20% had a hidden disability such as ADHD.

**Young offenders in Scotland (2001) Reid and Kirk:**

50% of those studied had indicators of Dyslexia.

# 2. What is Dyslexia?

Specific Learning Difficulties (or SpLDs), affect the way information is learned and processed. They are neurological (rather than psychological), usually run in families and occur independently of intelligence. They can have significant impact on education and learning and on the acquisition of literacy skills. They can also impact on the ability to acquire vital organisational and time management strategies for success in everyday life.

SpLD is an umbrella term used to cover a range of frequently co-occurring difficulties, more commonly:

* Dyslexia
* Dyspraxia
* Dyscalculia
* Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder AD(H)D
* Auditory Processing Disorder

SpLDs can also co-occur with difficulties on the autistic spectrum such as Asperger Syndrome.

Similar terminology can lead to confusion. For example, the term ‘Learning Difficulties’ is generally applied to people with **global** (as opposed to **specific**) learning difficulties, indicating an overall impairment of intellect and function.

In general, someone may be diagnosed with a SpLD where there is a lack of achievement at age and ability level, or a large discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability.

An untrained observer may conclude that someone with a SpLD is ‘lazy‘, or ‘just not trying hard enough’. For example they may find it difficult understanding the large discrepancy between reading comprehension and proficiency in verbal ability, or between reading level and poor written work. The observer only sees the input and output, not the processing of the information. Deficiencies in the processing of information can make learning and expressing ideas difficult or impossible tasks.

Because of the high level of co-occurrence between different SpLDs, it is important to understand that each profile is unique to the individual and can appear in a variety of ways. The effects of a SpLD are manifested differently for different people and range from mild to severe. It may be difficult to diagnose, to determine impact, and to accommodate.

Unidentified and unsupported dyslexia and related conditions can lead to emotional distress, frustration and poor self-esteem. This can result in a young person becoming withdrawn, or more commonly to develop behavioural issues. Rather than focusing on behavioural problems, staff would be advised instead to address the possible underlying causes, which in many cases may be previously undiagnosed specific learning difficulties.

## Types of Specific Learning Difficulty

**Dyslexia:** Dyslexia is a hidden disability thought to affect around 10% of the population, 4% severely. It is the most common of the SpLDs. Dyslexia is usually hereditary.

Someone with dyslexia may mix up letters within words and words within sentences while reading. They may also have difficulty with spelling words correctly while writing; letter reversals are common.

However Dyslexia is not only about literacy, although weaknesses in literacy are often the most visible sign. Dyslexia affects the way information is processed, stored and retrieved, with problems of memory, speed of processing, time perception, organisation and sequencing. Some may also have difficulty navigating a route, left and right and compass directions.

**Dyspraxia/DCD:** Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), also known as Dyspraxia in the UK, is a common disorder affecting fine and/or gross motor coordination in children and adults. This condition is formally recognised by international organisations including the World Health Organisation. DCD is distinct from other motor disorders such as cerebral palsy and stroke. The range of intellectual ability is in line with the general population. Individuals may vary in how their difficulties present; these may change over time depending on environmental demands and life experience, and will persist into adulthood.

An individual’s coordination difficulties may affect participation and functioning of everyday life skills in education, work and employment. Children may present difficulties with self-care, writing, typing, riding a bike, play as well as other educational and recreational activities. In adulthood many of these difficulties will continue, as well as learning new skills at home, in education and work, such as driving a car and DIY. There may be a range of co-occurring difficulties which can also have serious negative impacts on daily life. These include social emotional difficulties as well as problems with time management, planning and organisation and these may impact an adult’s education or employment experiences.

**Dyscalculia:** is a difficulty in understanding maths concepts and symbols. It is characterised by an inability to understand simple number concepts and to master basic numeracy skills. There are likely to be difficulties dealing with numbers at very elementary levels; this includes learning number facts and procedures, telling the time, time keeping, understanding quantity, prices and money. Difficulties with numeracy and maths are also common with dyslexia.

**ADHD/ADD:** Signs of Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder include inattention, restlessness, impulsivity, erratic, unpredictable and inappropriate behaviour, blurting out inappropriate comments or interrupting excessively. Some students come across unintentionally as aggressive. Most fail to make effective use of feedback.
If no hyperactivity is present, the term Attention Deficit Disorder should be used: these individuals have particular problems remaining focused so may appear 'dreamy' and not to be paying attention. Students with this condition are very easily distracted, lose track of what they are doing and have poor listening skills. By failing to pay attention to details, they may miss key points. Often co-occurs with dyslexia.

**Auditory Processing Disorder:** frequently associated with dyslexia, students may have difficulty understanding when listening, expressing themselves clearly using speech, reading, remembering instructions, understanding spoken messages and staying focused.

**Autistic spectrum:** autistic characteristics such as Asperger Syndrome, can co-exist with the conditions described above. Those affected often demonstrate unusual behaviours due to inflexible thinking, over-reliance on routines, a lack of social and communication skills and emotional immaturity.

## Some common characteristics of SpLDs

* Memory difficulties
* Organisational difficulties
* Writing difficulties
* Visual processing difficulties
* Reading difficulties
* Auditory processing difficulties
* Time management difficulties
* Maintaining concentration and focus
* Sensory distraction: an inability to screen out extraneous visual or auditory stimuli
* Sensory overload: a heightened sensitivity to visual stimuli and sound; an inability to cope with busy environments

## Speech and Language and Communication Difficulties

From an early age some dyslexic children will have exhibited speech and language difficulties. This can be related to auditory processing issues and difficulties with discriminating the sounds that make up language. There may also be dyspraxic difficulties affecting speech co-ordination. <http://www.helpwithtalking.com/speech-issues/dyslexia>

Some dyslexic adults may lack verbal fluency, including problems with articulation, organising thoughts and finding the right words (expressive language). Auditory processing difficulties may give rise to difficulty:

* Understanding when listening
* Expressing their self clearly using speech
* Reading
* Remembering instructions
* Understanding spoken messages
* Staying focused

# 3. Screening and Assessments

## Checklists

Checklists are a list of questions which provide an initial indication of the probability of dyslexia. They can be done by the individual themselves or with the assistance of a reader if necessary. A checklist is a first line indicator but in some cases may not offer an accurate prediction.

For details of current Checklists for dyslexia, see Further Resources, page 23.

## Screening Tests

A screening test is a specially designed test to predict the probability of dyslexia. Some can be 90% accurate in their prediction. There may be false negatives where dyslexia is well compensated, and false positives where there may be other learning difficulties.

There are many different types of screening tests: some are delivered by computer, others need to be administered by a teacher. Some just give an estimate as to whether the individual is likely to have dyslexic difficulties. A few offer a more detailed profile of strengths and weaknesses which help inform an appropriate teaching strategy.

Screening tests are not a diagnosis but provide a snap shot of an individual performance on that specific day completing that particular test. A proportion of the mark will be based on the guessing ability of the individual, how they feel that day, if they like you, if they have been up all night playing computer games etc. You may not always get the same result on a different day.

Where an individual comes up as moderate or high risk of dyslexia, it may be necessary in some circumstances to obtain a full diagnostic assessment. Unfortunately dyslexia assessments are not funded by the NHS.

For information on Screening Tests, see Further Resources, page 23.

## Diagnostic Assessments

Diagnostic assessments for dyslexia can be carried out by specialist teacher assessors with a Practicing Certificate for assessing students and adults (£3-400) or a Psychologist (commonly Educational) specialising in specific learning difficulties in young people and adults (£4-500).

In each case the assessment takes around 3 hours and is followed by a full written report with appropriate recommendations for support and accommodations.

The Specialist Teacher Assessment is used more commonly in an educational setting. A variety of tests are employed to explore the individual’s profile of strengths and weaknesses.

The Psychologist Assessment will be the most accurate diagnosis of dyslexia and would be preferable for employment issues, court proceedings or litigation to provide evidence of dyslexic difficulties. This type of assessment is also required by some examination bodies.

It would not normally be possible to book a full diagnostic assessment and receive the written report inside a month.

Local Dyslexia Associations will have information on local assessors and the British Dyslexia Association Helpline has suggestions for London and other areas not covered by local groups.

The professional association of specialist teachers, PATOSS, can provide details of local Specialist Teacher assessors.

Diagnostic assessments can also be obtained from the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre in Farnham and branches of Dyslexia Action round the country.

For contact details, see Further Resources, page 23.

# 4. Vision and Dyslexia

## Eyes and Dyslexia

There a common misconception that everyone with dyslexia would benefit from a coloured overlay to mitigate visual stress difficulties. However, only a minority of people with dyslexia will have visual difficulties which can be improved by coloured filters.

Around 35-40% of people with dyslexic difficulties are estimated to experience visual disturbance or discomfort when reading print. They may experience one or several of the following:

* Blurred letters or words which go out of focus.
* Letters which move or present with back to front appearance or shimmering or shaking.
* Headaches from reading.
* Words or letters which break into two and appear as double.
* Find it easier to read large, widely spaced print, than small and crowded.
* Difficulty with tracking across the page.
* Upset by glare on the page or oversensitive to bright lights.

In some cases any of these symptoms can significantly affect reading ability. It can also make reading very tiring. Of course an individual will not necessarily recognise what they see as a problem, as this is how they always see text.

If it appears that an individual has visual stress difficulties, a selection of coloured overlays could be offered. If a particular colour seems to be helpful initially, this could be tried out for a month. If it is still effective, a professional eye assessment may be necessary. This would help to determine the exact shade of overlay which would be the most appropriate, including the option of coloured glasses. However this is not normally funded under the NHS.

Multipacks of different coloured overlays can be obtained via the BDA Shop.

Research in the UK and in Australia shows that people who need coloured filters, who are said to have visual stress, need to have exactly the right colour. Many optometrists and orthoptists use a special instrument, the Intuitive Colorimeter, to determine the exact colour that is necessary for coloured glasses. For information on practitioners see Resources.

The use of a coloured filter can sometimes make a dramatic improvement in reading efficiency, (but of course it will not teach someone read).

## Dyslexia Friendly Print

Many dyslexic people are sensitive to the glare of white backgrounds on a page, white board or computer screen. This can make the reading of text much harder.

* The use of cream or pastel coloured backgrounds can mitigate this difficulty as can coloured filters either as an overlay or as tinted reading glasses
* The choice of colour of text on white backgrounds can also affect clarity e.g. using red on a whiteboard can render the text almost invisible for some dyslexic students.

The aim is to ensure that written material takes into account the visual stress experienced by some dyslexic people, and to facilitate ease of reading.

Adopting best practice for dyslexic readers has the advantage of making documents easier on the eye for everyone.

### Media

* Paper should be thick enough to prevent the other side showing through
* Use matt paper rather than glossy. Avoid digital print processing which tends to leave paper shiny
* Avoid white backgrounds for paper, computer and visual aids. White can appear too dazzling. Use cream or a soft pastel colour. Some dyslexic people will have their own colour preference

### Font

* Use a plain, evenly spaced sans serif font such as Arial and Comic Sans. Alternatives include Verdana, Tahoma, Century Gothic, Trebuchet
* Font size should be 12-14 point. Some dyslexic readers may request a larger font
* Use dark coloured text on a light (not white) background
* Avoid green and red/pink as these are difficult for colour-blind individuals

### Headings and Emphasis

* Avoid underlining and *italics*: these tend to make the text appear to run together. Use **bold** instead
* AVOID TEXT IN BLOCK CAPITALS: this is much harder to read
* For Headings, use larger font size in bold, lower case
* Boxes and borders can be used for effective emphasis

### Layout

* Use left-justified with ragged right edge
* Avoid narrow columns (as used in newspapers)
* Lines should not be too long: 60 to 70 characters
* Avoid cramping material and using long, dense paragraphs: space it out
* Line spacing of 1.5 is preferable
* Avoid starting a sentence at the end of a line
* Use bullet points and numbering rather than continuous prose

### Writing Style

* Use short, simple sentences in a direct style
* Give instructions clearly. Avoid long sentences of explanation
* Use active rather than passive voice
* Avoid double negatives
* Be concise

### Increasing accessibility

* 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
* Avoid abbreviations if possible or provide a glossary of abbreviations and jargon
* For long documents include a contents page at the beginning and an index at end

### Checking Readability

The Gunning Fog Index is a free online resource which checks the reading age level required to read a passage or piece of writing. <http://gunning-fog-index.com/>

## Resources for Visual Stress

**Where to go for a specialist eye assessment and overlays.**

You are advised to ensure that any practitioner is properly trained and qualified in this area.

**Society for Coloured Lens Providers**

A list of *recommended* practitioners following an agreed code of conduct.

Web: <http://www.s4clp.org>

**Local Dyslexia Associations**

Contact your Local Dyslexia Association for recommendations of suitable local practitioners.

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/membership/directories/lda-directory.html>

**NHS**

Contact your GP for a referral to an appropriate specialist.

In some hospitals the orthoptist may have expertise in this field.

**Dyslexia Research Trust** have Eye Clinics in Reading and Oxford.

Tel: 0118 958 5950

Web: <http://www.dyslexic.org.uk>

A leading research organisation into the visual aspects of dyslexia.

**Visual Perception Unit, University of Essex**

Information on Colour in the Treatment of Visual Stress

References to practitioners and suppliers.

Tel: 01206 872 381

Web: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/overlays>

**University Optometry Departments** It would be worth contacting Optometry Departments of universities to see if they offer a free service of assessments.

# 5. Practical Solutions

**Communications**

Dyslexia is not just about difficulties with reading and writing but affects the way information is processed, stored and retrieved. This can have a significant impact on both learning and verbal communication and can often lead to serious disadvantage when coping with police interviews and court appearances.

The Communications Trust have recently produced a film, Sentence Trouble, highlighting communication issues for young offenders: <http://www.sentencetrouble.info/film>

Dyslexia also impacts on memory, organisational skills and time management. This can lead to problems with remembering appointments and getting to places on time. Some people with dyslexia may also have navigational difficulties leading to a tendency to get lost and difficulty finding their way around an unfamiliar building.

Below are some useful guidelines for supporting dyslexic young offenders:

**Appointments**

* Plan appointments and visits with the offender
* Phone or text the offender to remind of appointments
* Give simple step-by-step directions, including landmarks as visual clues
* Remember that dyslexic people frequently confuse left and right
* Don’t rely on verbal memory – back up instructions with written reminders
* Use a mobile phone to set reminders or take pictures to help memory
* Avoid harsh criticism if the offender is late

**Verbal Communication**

* Give an overview of a subject before going in to details. Summarise where necessary by repeating and paraphrasing key points
* Deal with an issue in chronological order: do not jump around in time.
* Use simple direct language and avoid multiple or complex questions.
* Allow time for responses: do not prompt or press.
* Repeat or rephrase a question where necessary to aid comprehension, without implied criticism.
* Avoid acronyms, metaphors or nuances.
* When reading information, allow pauses to aid processing and comprehension.
* Check back during conversations to ensure understanding
* Avoid criticism of memory weaknesses.
* Make allowances for sequencing difficulties, for instance in the recall of numbers or the chronology of events.
* Be aware of limited concentration span.
* Be aware that the young offender may experience mental overload and 'shut-down' causing them to appear indifferent or disengaged
* Allow regular breaks

**Learning**

* Individual dyslexic learners will have different needs. These should be understood at the outset of training if effective learning is to be achieved.
* Dyslexic people often take longer to master new tasks, but once mastered they are well and truly learnt.
* Dyslexic people tend to be big picture thinkers, but may be less adept at processing and remembering detail. Give an overview first and also at the start of any new section of training.
* Dyslexic people tend to be visual and kinaesthetic learners (practical, hands-on) rather than auditory learners and learn more efficiently if they are using all sensory pathways (multisensory learning). Sitting for long periods just listening is not one of them! Weighting should be towards the visual and hands-on rather than the auditory mode.

**Teaching Style**

* Never ask a dyslexic person to read out loud
* Read out written material if necessary
* Use pictures and symbols to illustrate written information
* Consider mind-mapping techniques and assistive software
* Teach one thing at a time in bite size chunks
* Be prepared to demonstrate and give examples
* Allow time for over-learning – practice, practice, practice
* Be prepared to work to the learner’s learning and working style: it might be different from yours!
* Make your training as multisensory as possible and be creative. If a learner just can’t retain a point use humour, put it into a funny or ridiculous story. Or get them to associate a smell or taste with the action; you can do this by asking them what their favourite smell or taste is and get them to close their eyes and imagine doing the task whilst smelling or tasting their favourite thing: this really works.
* For kinaesthetic learners give them something to hold in their hands whilst listening to instruction: this will improve their listening skills.
* Get learners to visualise doing the task or demonstrate it to them; then get them to say what they are doing whilst doing it. This gives the memory more to latch on to and help to embed learning.

**Positive Reinforcement and Feedback.**

* Make sure that you emphasise the progress that the learner is making: this helps motivation and self-esteem.
* Work with the learner as an equal: dyslexic individuals are very sensitive to authority figures and this can impede learning or they may have a ‘learned helplessness’ attitude as a ‘left-over’ emotion from their previous learning experiences at school.
* Discuss with the learner what they think they have done well and what they think they have not done so well. Identifying what they have done well and what strategies they used can give them and you clues as to how to improve the parts that didn’t go so well.

# 6. Resources to Support Dyslexic Learners

**Practical Aids**

* Whiteboards and whiteboard markers
* Highlighters
* Post-it Notes
* Pastel coloured paper/exercise books
* Coloured overlays and reading rulers
* Crossbow Write and Wipe Pockets
* Wooden letters – upper and lower case <http://www.dyslexiaactionshop.co.uk>

**Computerised Reading Schemes**

If financial resources permit, the following are particularly effective:

* **Lexia.** A popular and fun product including Early Reading, Foundation Reading, and Strategies for Older Students . It does, however, address the needs of very poor literacy skills down to phonics with the addition of worksheets to print off. Lexia offer a free trial with good support in its use. <http://www.lexialearning.com/mylexia/indexUK.html>
* **Units of Sound.** Amultimedia and multisensory reading and spelling programme. <http://www.unitsofsound.net/index.html>
* **Nessy.** A fun and well thought through programme for primary school which may appeal to younger offenders. <http://www.nessy.com/>
* **Wordshark.** Using games to reinforce learning. <http://www.wordshark.co.uk/wordshark.aspx>

**Paper Based Reading Scheme**

Toe by Toe is also a useful resource. <http://www.toe-by-toe.co.uk/>

**Intervention Programmes**

* Word Wasp <http://www.wordwasp.com/>
* Hornet (basic rules and structures of English): <http://www.wordwasp.com/order-online/hornet.html>

**Consolidation/Reinforcement**

* Dyslexia Stile - <http://www.dyslexiaactionshop.co.uk/stiledyslexia.html>
* Swap it Games <http://www.gamzuk.com/index.htm>
* TRUGS (teaching reading using games) Sets 1-3 <http://www.readsuccessfully.com/>

**Dictionary**

Ace Dictionary: <http://www.thedyslexiashop.co.uk/a-c-e-spelling-dictionary-3rd-edition.html>

(The Ace dictionary is a phonics dictionary based on word sound and requires understanding of language by tutors of syllables, short and long vowel sounds etc.)

Spell it Yourself

<http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Spell_It_Yourself.html?id=-gVcGQAACAAJ>

**Comprehension**

Readers with Exercises:

Brown and Brown <http://www.brownandbrownpublishing.co.uk/readerswithexercises.htm>

Reading Accuracy and Comprehension:

Stride Ahead - <http://www.strideahead.co.uk/strideahead/strideahead.htm>

**Fiction Books for Reluctant Readers**

Gatehouse Readers:

<http://www.gatehousebooks.co.uk/reading-books/beginner-readers/>

Barrington Stoke: includes titles for teenagers and adults [www.barringtonstoke.co.uk](http://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk)

Boffin Boy: A popular manga comic style series designed specifically for struggling readers. Interest Age 8 - 14 yrs. | Reading Age 6 - 7 yrs. <http://www.ransom.co.uk/BoffinBoy.html>

Quick Reads: short, fast-paced books by leading authors [www.quickreads.co.uk](http://www.quickreads.co.uk)

**Touch Typing Tutors**

Pupils struggling with handwriting could benefit from learning to touch-type and using a computer for written work. The following CD Rom tutors are designed for dyslexic pupils:

* English Type Senior
* Touch Type Read & Spell

For further information see the [BDA Technologies website.](http://www.bdatech.org)

**Assistive Technology**

There are many excellent software aids to support dyslexic reading and writing.
These are detailed in a separate section.

**Suppliers**

There are number of suppliers of dyslexia resources, including:

**For general resources and games:**<http://www.bdastore.org.uk>
<http://www.dyslexiaactionshop.co.uk/>
<http://thedyslexiabookshop.com/>
<http://www.crossboweducation.com>
<http://www.thedyslexiashop.co.uk>
<http://www.ldalearning.com>

**For books:**
<http://www.senbooks.co.uk>

**For computer based resources:**
<http://www.dyslexic.com.>

**IT information**Further information about computer based resources can be found on the [BDA Technologies website.](http://bdatech.org)

# 7. Assistive Technology

Technology can assist with overcoming many of the barriers associated with SpLDs. Assistive technology improves access to computers or to tasks involving literacy, numeracy and organisational skills. It is likely that any computer, tablet of smartphone can be adapted to suit the needs of the individual.

Today there is a vast range of technology led strategies that can cater for the needs of most individuals and is continually changing and developing. In this section we will highlight some of the main types of tools used by individuals with SpLDs. We would suggest visiting [www.bdatech.org](http://www.bdatech.org) for the links to the latest information.

## Text to Speech

Text to speech tools (TTS) speaks aloud the text on a screen using a generated voice. TTS is one of the most powerful technologies for help with reading or writing, particularly if you:

* read slowly or with difficulty
* find it difficult to concentrate when reading
* want feedback when writing
* want help with spotting errors when proof-reading
* have visual stress when reading paper or a screen
* benefit from the multisensory experience of seeing and hearing

Nearly all computers come with some basic text to speech function. Controls and functions are displayed in a window or as toolbars in applications such as Word, PDF, e-mails, text files, e-readers and the web.

Many TTS tools can speak letters, words and/or sentences as you type them. Text to Speech is most helpful when it highlights the words as they are spoken. Dyslexic people say this focuses their attention and helps understanding of the content. Some studies have shown that a combination of TTS and highlighting improves reading skills.

Text to speech tools can be used as an alternative to human readers in exams and assessments. These are referred to as “computer readers” by exam boards. Tools range from free programs that can read text copied to the clipboard (such as Ivona Reader) through to extensive toolbars that offer speech in websites, dictionaries and PDFs (such as Texthelp Read & Write Gold).

For information on TTS tools read <http://bdatech.org/what-technology/text-to-speech/>.

## Concept / Mind Mapping tools

A concept map is a web diagram where each “node” contains an idea, concept or question that is clearly framed with very little chance for ambiguity. These ideas are linked together by branches to show their relationship to each other. This can be particularly useful for individuals who have difficulties with:

* structuring ideas and information e.g. when planning an essay, assignment or report
* organising and planning: mindmaps can be used for to-do lists through to detailed project plans
* expressing themselves using sentences and words: using pictures and colours to communicate information
* remembering information: mindmaps can be used to link concepts and facts

There are a number of software packages, websites and tablet apps that allow concept/mind maps to be created electronically. The advantage of creating maps electronically is that they can be easily edited and shared. Many programs also create a linear, outline view that can form the plan for an essay or presentation while some also allow for task and reminders to be added.

For more information on concept/mind mapping tools read <http://bdatech.org/what-technology/mindmaps/>.

## Speech recognition or Speech to Text

Being able to dictate text can be a great tool for some who struggles to write due to poor spelling, hand-writing and other barriers. Speech recognition software and apps allow you to speak into a computer and see the text appear on screen. They can also be used to transcribe recordings made with a digital recorder or phone app.

The market leader speech recognition tool, Dragon NaturallySpeaking, requires minimal training and is now very accurate if you are able to dictate in a fluent style. However speech recognition does not suit all users, particularly those who struggle to express ideas verbally in clear sentences. For those who would like to see if speech recognition suits them it is also built into the Windows and Mac operating system as well as into smartphones and tablets (namely through Google Vice and Siri). These systems tend to be less forgiving for those who struggle with grammar and dictating punctuation but can be a good place to start if you want to see if it is a worthwhile strategy to consider.

See <http://bdatech.org/what-technology/speech-recognition/> for more tips and information on speech recognition.

## Colour and font customisation for e-books and computer based reading

One of the fast developing areas is the availability to read books, publications and learning materials online, on computers or tablets. For those who struggle with reading or are sensitive to fonts and colour settings this can make reading easier.

For those reading on a computer it is often possible to change the colour of the background within the operating system: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/guides/change_colours/computer/>

Many tools with text-to-speech include colour wash options that act like a colour overlay on screen.

For dedicated ebook readers (such as the Kindle) and ebook apps on tablets (such as iBooks on an iPad) some devices have the facility to customise fonts and backgrounds. However this is not always the case, particularly for book content that is protected by digital rights management. Before purchasing a device or content it is always worth investigating whether it will provide the options needed for the reader.

The RNIB has developed advice on the accessibility of ebook readers for blind and partially sighted which also covers altering fonts and colours: <http://www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/reading/how/ebooks/accessibility/Pages/ebook-accessibility.aspx>.

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# 8. Further Resources

**Checklists**

BDA Adult Checklist: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/files/Adult%20Checklist.pdf>

There are also useful supplementary adult checklists for dyslexia and co-occurring specific learning difficulties to download from <http://www.workingwithdyslexia.com/are-you-dyslexic/>

YOT Concern List checklist has been developed in conjunction with Liverpool YOT, available through the BDA.

**Computerised Screening Tests**

BDA Spot Your Potential, 15 yrs +, (by Lucid Research) <http://www.spot-your-potential.com/index.htm>

LADS (16 yrs +), LADS Plus (15 yrs +), Lucid Rapid (4-15 yrs) [www.lucid-research.com](http://www.lucid-research.com)

Dyslexia Screener (5-16+ yrs) <http://www.gl-assessment.co.uk>

**Assistive Technology**

Text readers, predictive software, voice recognition software, mind mapping software and more see [www.bdatech.org](http://www.bdatech.org)

**Publications**

BDA Guide for Justice Professionals [www.bdastore.org.uk](http://www.bdastore.org.uk)

Releasing the Potential of Offenders with Dyslexia: A Practical Guide for Staff working with Offenders, M Jameson [http://www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Releasing Potential.pdf](http://www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Releasing%20Potential.pdf)

KIWIs for Young People (Resources for Justice staff), M Jameson [www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Resources for justice sector staff - Kiwis for young people.pdf](http://www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Resources%20for%20justice%20sector%20staff%20-%20Kiwis%20for%20young%20people.pdf)

Sentence Trouble, Communications Trust; <http://www.sentencetrouble.info/images/resources/Sentence%20Trouble.pdf>

**Videos**

Left from Right: an excellent 45 minute video explaining dyslexia. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPhV9SyVmwA>

Sentence Trouble: film from the Communications Trust highlighting communication issues for young offenders: <http://www.sentencetrouble.info/film>

Toe by Toe: multisensory approach to learning reading <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDBT8yhY-8Y>

### Dyslexia Identity Card

**Dyslexia Alert** card for dyslexic offenders. A fold out, credit card size card explaining difficulties and help required. Produced by The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust. Available from the British Dyslexia Association.

**Further Help**

The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust: <http://www.dyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk>

The British Dyslexia Association. Helpline: tel. 0845 251 9002 <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk>

Dyslexia Action: <http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk>

Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre: <http://www.arkellcentre.org.uk>

The Communication Trust: <http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk>

ADDISS (Attention Deficit Disorder): <http://www.addiss.co.uk>

Dyspraxia Foundation: <http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk>

National Autistic Society: <http://www.autism.org.uk>

Professional Association of Teachers of SpLD: <http://www.patoss-dyslexia.org.uk>

Shannon Trust: <http://www.shannontrust.org.uk/>

The material produced in this publication is based on information held by the British Dyslexia Association, including the BDA publication: Guide for Justice Professionals, produced in conjunction with Melanie Jameson, who has also provided additional information and editorial support for this Handbook.