ECED7005

‘Identify a group that is at risk of exclusion; critically reflect upon two barriers to full participation in society and consider possible solutions’

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Overview of the Presentation

To describe how young people and children with dyslexia are at risk of exclusion.

To critically reflect upon the educational and emotional barriers that impede their full participation in society.

To consider possible interventions and solutions to overcome barriers faced by dyslexic young people and children, using the social model of disability.

A Group that is at risk of Exclusion: **Young people and Children with Dyslexia**

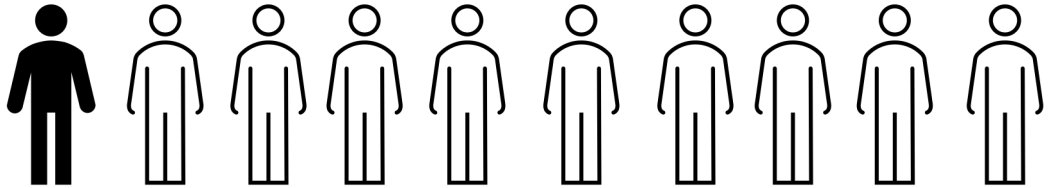
Dyslexia is a ***learning difficulty*** **that:**

- Affects word reading and spelling
- Presents a difficulty in phonological awareness
- Presents a difficulty in verbal memory
- Presents a difficulty in verbal processing
- Is best understood as a continuum

(Rose, 2009).

Individuals with dyslexia often exhibit **'enhanced abilities'** in areas such as **discovery, invention, and creativity** (Taylor & Vestergaard, 2022).

The Scale of Dyslexia in the UK



Dyslexia has a prevalence of **at least 10%** in the UK population (Central & Data Office, 2017).

- Dyslexia Action (2017) finds that this figure may be an underestimate, with approximately **16%** of the British population potentially influenced by dyslexia.
- Some studies show that if **one parent has dyslexia, there is a 40-60% likelihood** that their child will also have dyslexia (Schumacher et *al.*, 2007; British Dyslexia Association, n.d.; Habib, 2021).
- On average, between **two to three children in every classroom** in the UK are dyslexic (HOC, 2006).

Why are children and young people with dyslexia at risk of exclusion?

(Financial Tribune, 2016)

Exclusion refers to the process by which individuals or groups are **marginalised or ostracised** from **various social, economic, political, or cultural spheres** (Popay et al., 2008: 2).

There is a danger of children and young people with dyslexia being marginalised and isolated from **traditional education settings, professional and career opportunities, social relationships, cultural representation, and access to legal rights** (Taylor, 2019; Taner, 2009).

Educational barriers involving difficulties in academic settings and insufficient support mean that this vulnerable group may be prevented from fully participating in society (Pennacchia et *al.*, 2018).

Emotional barriers associated with this can impact their confidence, relationships and overall well-being limiting their engagement in society and quality of life (Sako, 2016).

Educational barriers affecting young people and children with dyslexia:
Shocking Statistics

A student with dyslexia or another SpLD is **twice as likely to fail** to achieve a pass mark or above in English and Maths at GCSE (Thompson, 2021).

A student with dyslexia is **three and a half times** more likely to face **expulsion** from educational settings (The Centre for Social Justice, 2021).

80% of young people and children with dyslexia **do not receive a formal diagnosis** while in primary school (British Dyslexia Association, 2019).

41% of **Year Six** students in England leave primary school **without achieving the expected standards in literacy and mathematics** (The Centre of Social Justice, 2023).

The National Longitudinal Transition Study finds that **41% of adults with learning disabilities acquire an undergraduate education degree**, compared to 52% of the general population (Kuriarose & Amaersha, 2024).

Educational barriers affecting young people and children with dyslexia: Discriminative Education System

- The British education system primarily relies on **exam-style assessments and traditional teaching methods**, **which pose significant challenges for dyslexic students due to their unique cognitive processing differences** (Crisp et al., 2011; Peer & Reid, 2002).
- Unfortunately, there is often insufficient recognition of the **disadvantages of this assessment format** for dyslexic individuals, who **may struggle to comprehend written information** (Riddick et *al.*, 1999).
- Research indicates that students with dyslexia exhibit '**less robust vocabulary**, **slower writing speeds** and **produce less text in a set time compared to their peers'** (Sumner et al., 2016; Hatcher et al., 2002; Gregg et al., 2007).
- While individuals with dyslexia can benefit from **specialised accommodations**, **these supports are only provided if there is sufficient supporting evidence** (Woods et *al.*, 2010)**.**
- In 2011, the UK government reintroduced the **inclusion of SPaG marks** in numerous GCSE and A-level exams (Department for Education, 2011).

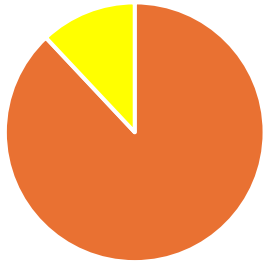
Educational Barriers Affecting Young People and Children with Dyslexia:

Teacher Support and Training

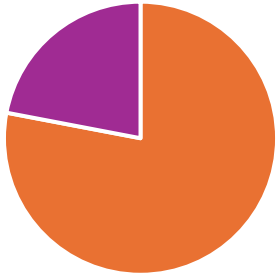
Despite the mandates outlined in the **Equality Act (2010), Children & Families Act (2014**), and the **Welsh Additional Learning Needs Code and Regulations (2021)** for additional and equitable for young people and children with dyslexia:

- Many educational institutions struggle to meet these requirements due to **insufficient resources** and a shortage of **trained personnel** (Jacobs et al., 2022).
- Research compiled from Made by Dyslexia (2022) revealed that **over half of their respondents** believed that **schools fail to understand the challenges faced by dyslexic students.**
- The 'Fish in a Tree' (2012) report highlights that **52%** of the respondents reported that they had received **no training on dyslexia** (Drivers Youth Trust, 2012).
- Currently, **mainstream schools face challenges in providing timely access to diagnosis** (Harding. et *al.*, 2023). For many families, the **cost of private testing** for conditions like dyslexia is **prohibitively expensive** (APPG, 2019).
- **Four in five young people leave school with dyslexia unidentified** (Made by Dyslexia, 2022)**.**

Emotional Barriers Affecting Young People and Children with Dyslexia: Shocking Findings

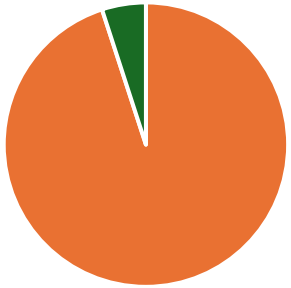


88% of respondents reported their child experiences **low self-esteem** due to dyslexia



78% of respondents stated their 'child **feels embarrassed** because of their dyslexia'

52% of respondents asserted their 'child **avoids school** to cope with dyslexia'



95% of respondents disclosed that 'their child **experiences frustration** due to dyslexia'

(All-Party Parliamentary Group for Dyslexia and Other Specific Learning Difficulties, 2019)

Emotional Barriers Affecting Young People and Children with Dyslexia:

Self-esteem and Self-worth

- Morgan and Klein (2000) found that adults who **were not diagnosed early enough in their lives;** often experienced feelings of **inadequacy, frustration and anger**.
- The combination of **poor academic performance and the stigma associated with dyslexia** can impact students' **emotional well-being and have lasting social consequences** into adulthood (Livingston et *al.*, 2018; Nalavany et *al.*, 2011).
- The 'accumulation of **small failures and humiliations** both at home and at school can severely damage **self-esteem**' (Mortimore, 2008).
- While the label 'dyslexia' can be **crucial in ensuring access to specialist services,** it can also **lead to segregation and stigmatisation** (Gibby-Leversuch et *al.*, 2021).
- This can lead to **negative self-evaluation**, akin to what Goffman identifies, as an '**identity blemish**' (1963).

Emotional Barriers Affecting Young People and Children with Dyslexia: Mental Health

- One study found that children with learning disabilities are **four and a half times more likely to have a mental health problem** than those without such disabilities (Emerson & Hatton, 2007).
- There is evidence to suggest that dyslexic students are **three times more likely to commit suicide** than their peers without dyslexia (Daniel et *al.*, 2006).

Considering Possible Solutions: Using the Social Model of Disability

Social:

This model asserts that people are disabled by **structural barriers** in society, not by their innate differences. It emphasises that disability arises from **societal limitations** and attitudes '**rather than [the] functional limitation of the body**' (Macdonald, 2019: 10).

Seeks to remove barriers by promoting **accessibility, equity and awareness**, ensuring a more inclusive environment for all individuals (HM Government, 2021).

Eliminating barriers eliminates the disability, reasonable adjustments can be made to support vulnerable groups (Shakespeare, 2017).

How to Overcome the Barriers Associated with Dyslexia?

When young people and children are suitably supported, they are more likely to actively participate in society (Ross, 2021).

- All schools nationwide should consider employing a Specialist Teacher Assessor (STA) (BDA, 2019). If hiring an STA is not feasible, schools should prioritise expanding the expertise of their current staff through comprehensive SpLD training (Hartley, 2010).
- The UK Government to introduce dyslexia screening during primary education (Maxwell, 2019).
- One-size-fits-all teaching is not accommodating for children with dyslexia, the education system must become ‘multi-educational’ (British Dyslexia Association, 2020). Rework the curriculum to include the complex needs of all students (Ofsted, 2021).
- Ensure reasonable adjustments in the classroom and assessments are fully accessible to those who require them (Leveroy, 2013).

How to Overcome the Barriers Associated with Dyslexia?

- Greater awareness and advocacy for individuals with dyslexia.
- Schools to provide adequate pastoral, academic and mental health provisions for children who experience difficulty learning at school, as the emotional effects can go unnoticed.
- Stronger cooperation between services will ensure that national child and adolescent mental health services schools reach services.
- Receiving optimal support should have a lasting positive effect on their emotional well-being. It is imperative for schools to consistently implement tailored adjustments, making allowance for the severity of dyslexia rather than adopting a uniform approach.
- Focus on the strengths and talents that these young people have.

(Beck, 2022; Healey et al, 2008; Learning Differences Aotearoa Trust, 2019; Novita, 2016).

Conclusion

- Abundant research indicates that young people and children with dyslexia face a heightened risk of exclusion, hindering their ability to fully participate in society.
- Many educational and emotional barriers impede their capacity to engage equally across all societal dimensions, affecting access and inclusion. This includes a troubling trend where individuals go undiagnosed, alongside the emotional toll of unfair treatment and stigma associated with their condition.
- Although various potential solutions exist to address these barriers, their successful implementation demands robust support and substantial investment from the British and Welsh Governments.

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