

Introduction: Dyslexia is a lifelong neurological condition and a specific learning difficulty centered on information processing (British Dyslexia Association, 2020). It derives from the Greek language meaning 'difficulty with words'. Dyslexia is categorized by a brain structure that processes information differently to a neurotypical ('normal') brain.

What is Dyslexia?
Dyslexia is a condition in which numeracy and literacy are most commonly affected, along with memory retention and organizational skills. These difficulties make it harder for learners in school, as they may take longer to learn to read and write, as well as having difficulty retaining information. These children may require additional learning support. They typically avoid or show a lack of interest in language-based tasks and they may also exhibit hesitancy when reading aloud. These struggles may lead to frustration or withdrawal both at home and at school (NHS, no date).
Ten percent of the United Kingdom's population is dyslexic, with 4% being severely dyslexic. It is estimated that 80% of school children with dyslexia remain undiagnosed (Dyslexia Cymru, no date). Dyslexia is an additional learning need that typically goes hand in hand with another specific learning difficulty, such as ADHD. When overlapping with other Additional learning needs, it is estimated that 20% of the United Kingdom's population has dyslexia. It is important to note that no two individuals with dyslexia possess the same strengths or weaknesses. Similarly to Autism, every person with the condition possesses their own unique struggles with daily life and tasks. Many local authorities in Wales tend to avoid labelling children with dyslexia without a formal diagnosis, therefore terms such as 'specific literacy difficulties' or 'dyslexic tendencies' are used to ensure adequate support is available to them without requiring a formal, official diagnosis.



How is dyslexia identified and diagnosed?
Signs of dyslexia may become apparent when a child starts school and then becomes more obvious as the child progresses through school, more so when they begin to learn how to read and write. Children with dyslexia may read and write slowly, which can cause them to fall behind during lessons. They may also understand verbal information and instruction, but struggle to put thoughts and feelings onto paper. They may also find it hard to process information that has been written down (NHS, no date). It often comes down to teachers and teaching assistants to identify difficulties a child may be experiencing; however, parents may be having concerns too. When a child's difficulties become recognised, staff and parents can pass their concerns to the setting's designated ALNCO (Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator). From there, there will be an option for parents and carers to request support. This can include discussions on diagnosis, as well as support strategies to trial whilst a formal and official diagnosis takes place. It is possible to request a diagnosis through the school, NHS, or privately, which does cost more money than going through the NHS or school. Schools typically use observations by classroom teachers and assistants focusing on those children that experience difficulties in literacy, phonological awareness, memory or processing speed in the Early Years.

According to the Welsh Government (2012), some local authorities use tailored Welsh tools to screen children of early years age (0-5). If a setting does not screen children during the earlier years of school life, the local authorities wait until the children reach year 3 (8 years old). This is from a dated source; however, new research and new diagnostic tools for Welsh-medium learners are being made available through the HWB platform, which is the Welsh digital learning platform. Researchers at Cardiff Metropolitan University have come up with innovative tools designed for school children in Welsh-medium provisions. This is a huge step in the right direction, as there are currently limited Welsh language diagnostic tools, often resulting in children receiving diagnostic assessments through the medium of English.

Conclusion:
Dyslexia is an extremely common condition in which 1 in ten people in the UK have. It will never be mitigated as it is a lifelong condition, but new screening tools by Cardiff Metropolitan University allow Welsh medium learners in secondary school to be screened in Welsh. Dyslexic people face barriers in everyday life with memory retention, which can lead to frustration and withdrawal from certain tasks, however assistive technology and artificial intelligence can be used to assist those with dyslexia in everyday life tasks.

What barriers are linked to dyslexia?
It is also possible for people to be dyslexic in one language and not the other. For example, a bilingual child who speaks Welsh and English may only be dyslexic in the English language. Of course, these difficulties may also carry through to the Welsh language. This happens more commonly with the English language as the characteristics of the language itself and its writing system (Brunel University of London, 2020). Dyslexia typically falls into the social model of disability, as it is a neurological condition, which includes more societal barriers than medicinal barriers. Children with dyslexia may require additional support in school due to societal barriers. This can include providing alternative formats of information, such as multisensory learning, which uses a blend of sight, hearing and touch.

While there is no cure for dyslexia, effective evidence-based pedagogical interventions are available, which can significantly mitigate the functional impact of the disability on daily learning. Timely intervention is paramount, however, one of the biggest barriers for a dyslexic child in a Welsh medium school, is that they may only be dyslexic in English, and may not display any difficulties with the Welsh, but find English extremely hard. These children may often progress through school without knowing or suspecting they are dyslexic.

What strategies support dyslexia?
There are many new ways to support dyslexic students. Many ways to support include using assistive technology such as text to speech. Programmes like Speechify enable learners to listen to text which allows those who struggle particularly badly with reading, to access information in a way that they will retain it better. A way of supporting this inside the classroom would include allowing access to audiobooks to ensure equity. Another strategy would be to allow students to provide work in alternative ways, such as orally instead of producing written work. This gives students the opportunity to provide a piece of work that is typically of higher standard as it is a way they are able to, without or with less difficulty. In addition to this, dyslexic students can often benefit from having extra time to present assignments or tasks. As people with dyslexia find it harder to read and write, researching a topic can prove difficult, as well as converting the newfound knowledge into words for an assignment.