



DYSPRAXIA

Guidelines for Employees



Helpline Service: 01462 454 986, 9-1pm Mon-Fri

Email: Via the 'Helpline' tab on the website

Admin No: 01462 455016

Enquiries: info@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

Web: www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

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Dyspraxia, a form of developmental coordination disorder (DCD) affects around 3% of the adult population. It is a medically and educationally recognized brain-based condition that affects the coordination of movement.

It occurs across the range of intellectual abilities and can affect any muscle group in the body and so has wide-ranging presentation and effect on the individual. While DCD is often regarded as an umbrella term to cover motor coordination difficulties, dyspraxia refers to those people who have additional problems planning, organising and carrying out movements in the right order in everyday situations. Dyspraxia can also affect articulation and speech, perception and thought.

Every individual with dyspraxia is affected differently and will not experience all of the difficulties listed below. The most important source of information about what will help will be the individual themselves.

It is most likely that as an individual with dyspraxia, you will be covered by the disability provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Further information for employers is available from the Dyspraxia Foundation.

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CONCERN

REASON

STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS

Illegibility of text to others and self.
Writing speed is slow.

Have not developed consistent automatic movements needed to control pen and paper.
Difficulty in consistently forming letters at speed.

Provide non slip mat and / or writing slope
Try different pen grips and pen styles
Consider alternatives to writing – word processors, iPad/tablets with keyboard. Then print labels to insert into record books
Telephone headset to free hands for keyboard
Dictation (Speech to Text) software
Digital recorder for notetaking, meeting minutes
Consideration needed for adjustments at assessment centres/exams

Writing deteriorates in a short time period

Low postural tone
Poor shoulder stability,
Excessive grip strength or pen pressure
Uses whole arm movements

Ensure a DSE assessment is completed
Self-monitor sitting position in line with good practice
Take breaks and exercise
Consider alternatives to writing e.g. dictation or speech to text software, tablet, iPad etc

Cannot control a computer mouse and “click” well

Poor isolation of fingers to click buttons
Delayed responses so holds button down for too long or double click too slow.
Poor control of extent of movements

Try a range of alternatives including smaller and larger models, left hand models, roller balls, penguin etc.
Adjust the repeat button speed
Explore alternatives. Visit www.abilitynet.co.uk and www.emptech.info for ideas.
Explore ergonomic adaptations (e.g. wrist supports)

Using hole-punch, stapler etc.
Difficulty in operating complex or infrequently used equipment

Difficulty with activities requiring use of both hands together
Cannot remember how to use equipment

Look for use special equipment that is helpful e.g. electric hole punch, stapler
Keep clear written instructions about how to use equipment at point of use



CONCERN

REASON

STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS

Difficulty using job specific tools e.g. spatula, stethoscope, chisel etc..

Difficulty stabilising materials with one hand whilst using equipment with the other
Lack of fine motor control
Poor co-ordination
Difficulty using fingers individually

Secure or stabilise self and materials where possible
Ensure good lighting
Minimise external distraction
Practice and repeat tasks in trial mode.
Request use of equipment for practice outside of usual hours if appropriate.
Consider work allocation, swap with colleague

Difficulty copying text from screen or other documents

Difficulty coordinating eye tracking and head movements
Perceptual difficulties – “sees” position differently if looking at them from the side
Difficulty locating work to be copied

Ensure material is facing you, use document holder
Consider twin screens
Check for Visual stress, tint screen and paper
Consider audio read (text to speech)
Consider colour filling spreadsheets to give more differentiation of column and row
Consider automating – scan and Optical Character Recognition (OCR), program scripts





CONCERN	REASON	STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS
Distracted at work	Auditory and visual sensitivity leads to minor events breaking into short term working memory Fatigue breaks concentration	Position desk away from busy thoroughfares Screen or avoid sightline distraction Listen to music quietly in work if this helps concentration (have a playlist ready to use) Use fidget devices Construct part-filled templates or forms to reduce unnecessary writing Maintain list of key concepts or subject vocabulary and acronyms
Poor memory for pins/passwords	Short term memory issues	Consider your learning style, move to strength e.g. remember pattern (shape) rather than number string Use acronyms for passwords: my mum's name is Alice, her house is 67 - mmniAhh67 Use password manager software Use memory techniques i.e., peg lists
Becoming overwhelmed	Not completing work on time Falling behind workload Becoming anxious	Look for extra 1 to 1 meetings and help to prioritise work Request clear statement of main tasks and dates as an email Look to supervisor to monitor load and capacity then to schedule work in to suit
Loses focus	Distracted by environmental factors Overwhelmed by variety/volume of work Gets stuck on difficult task Tendency to be stressed when overloaded	Reduce relevant environmental distraction, noise, visual disturbance and lighting Ensure seating and workplace are suitable (Display Screen Equipment) Schedule work in daily, keeping "to do" list short



CONCERN	REASON	STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS
Poor organisation of ideas	Extra concentration required for the physical writing process means individuals lose thread of arguments Difficulty in sequencing	Blank pages can be threatening, use templates with headings to help structure activity Use mind-maps, spider diagrams, lists Consider separation of planning, creation of ideas then re-order to give framework for writing
Poor organization of work/diagrams	Poor visual motor integration Poor spatial relationships	Obtain/make templates and exemplar documents Use mind map software Prepare a template for reports/letters They usually follow a format which can be used time and time again
Work is not completed on time	Work requirements not written down correctly Forget to deliver or the desired deadline Do not start in sufficient time Do not know what delivery method is expected	Obtain clear time frames at the start of the task allocation, agree the priority of the task Request an email of work requirements to add into your planner/diary Set up a timetable to show when milestones should be achieved Consider progress checks/ milestones, e.g. submission of outline, first draft - each with due date Review milestones with supervisor as part of a regular routine Use technological apps/calendars etc. as reminders
Work completed at home is of a higher standard than in the office	Less stress Individual is less distracted at home so finds it easier to focus Environment suits individual Individual works for longer than contracted	Find out what causes distraction at work and look to reduce to match home environment. Visual, auditory and/or temperature change could be causes Consider increasing proportion of home working Check how long you are spending on work Consider suitable time limits



CONCERN	REASON	STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS
Telephone and verbal messages for others do not get delivered	<p>Misses key content of message</p> <p>Individual loses pieces of paper</p> <p>Forgets to hand message to recipient</p>	<p>Make message template including key data fields. Consider electronic form to forward as email</p> <p>Deliver notes to colleagues desk at end of each call. Consider tasks checklist at end of shift to include checking message delivery</p>
Individual struggles with diary management, is late for meetings and misses' special appointments	<p>Does not retain verbal messages</p> <p>Uses multiple notes and lists</p> <p>Has a weak "internal clock" so is unaware of time passing</p> <p>Is easily distracted</p>	<p>Use electronic diary, integrated with phone. Set alarms</p> <p>Work with a day book</p> <p>Set up regular planning sessions</p> <p>Consider daily review of timetable morning and/or evening</p> <p>A range of freeware can be found here http://bdatech.org/what-technology/freewareproducts/#plan</p>
Mislays work or equipment	<p>Rushes to leave at the end of meetings & leaves stuff behind</p> <p>Poor filing skills</p>	<p>Try and build meeting "set" of material</p> <p>Allow time for movement between tasks</p> <p>Use one day book, perhaps with sections for each project.</p> <p>Consider colour coding (folders, labels, day book sections) to help keep items together</p>
Work space is disorganised	<p>Is disorganised</p> <p>Loses equipment</p> <p>Forgets equipment</p>	<p>Make an equipment checklist to list what is needed for the task, ensure tasks are clear on diary/task list</p> <p>Use sets of equipment stored in container/bag with contents list</p> <p>Arrange time to pack the equipment away into the set where possible</p> <p>Keep a spare set of equipment at base</p> <p>Mark your equipment or ensure it is distinctive</p> <p>Consider preparing items required the evening/shift before</p>
Paperwork is confused, cannot find relevant documents	<p>Difficulty managing more than one task at a time.</p> <p>Poor organization skills.</p>	<p>Consider colour coding different folders and ringbinders for each project/activity</p> <p>Use colour coded notebooks</p> <p>Match physical and electronic organization structure</p>



CONCERN

REASON

STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS

Concerns about personal hygiene

Individual has difficulty using a shower or bath at home
Stress increases perspiration
Individual may be reluctant to use communal facilities because of embarrassment
Individual may have difficulty with detailed practicalities of personal care

Consider a referral to help to develop independent skills (HR or welfare/ Occupational Health may help)
Referral to social services may be possible
Consider use of accessible toilets for more space and privacy

Does not seem to make good relationships at work

Difficulty picking up non-verbal cues so appears tactless to peers
Communication difficulties
Difficulties understanding humour and sarcasm
Clumsiness and embarrassment
Have unusual interests & sometimes use inappropriate language

Consider disclosure of condition, celebrate individuality
Look to raise awareness among colleagues about dyspraxia/DCD & other Neurodivergent profiles
Pair up with a supportive peer/buddy or mentor
Share examples of good communication, be specific about instances of difficulty
Look to participate in work activities that match your interests, such as club/activity groups
Request choice to participate in social events or not
Discuss appropriate involvement in team building activities with supervisor



CONCERN

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STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS

Difficulty adapting to new situations

Stress increases emotional responses, such as fears,
Emotional outbursts, obsessions
Individual is slow to pick up social cues or unwritten rules of a workplace or team.

Take time to settle, don't take on too much variety too soon
Understand rules and expectations, confirm by repeating back in unambiguous language
Ask about unwritten rules and conventions e.g. visitors cups on second shelf
Make written notes of routines etc.
Consider asking for a specific buddy or mentor to help during change or when additional support is required

Immature behaviour

Difficulty picking up non-verbal cues so appears tactless to peers
Dislikes being touched
Communication difficulties
Difficulties understanding humour and sarcasm
Have unusual interests & sometimes use immature language

Social skills training
Consider disclosure and awareness training among staff about dyspraxia and other learning differences
Celebrate individuality
Share examples of good communication
Pair up with a supportive peer or buddy

Anxiety

Unable to focus
Outbursts
Behaviour issues
Depression
Absence

Employ a 'safe code' or word which alerts your supervisor to distress
Discuss 'time out' periods
Focus on what you do well and what has worked for you before, share with supervisor





CONCERN	REASON	STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS
Does not follow key points in meetings and difficulty taking relevant notes	Difficulty combining thoughts with physical aspect of writing Memory overload Has not understood the content before point moves on Loses sequence of conversation	Prepare note framework beforehand Chair ensures meeting follows agenda Chair ensures points are summarised before moving to new topic Audio record meeting content (index topics)
Does not contribute in formal meetings or contributes at the “wrong” time	Processing is slower than pace of meeting. Overloaded by notetaking/ minutes	Make note of point to be made Chair to ask for comment at summary Excuse from formal note or minute taking Record meeting Copy colleagues notes Only note specific instructions
Has difficulty contributing in team briefings, either inappropriately voluble or says nothing	Difficulty picking up non-verbal cues so appears tactless to peers Dislikes close proximity of others Communication difficulties Difficulties understanding humour and sarcasm Have unusual interests & sometimes uses inappropriate language	Provide precise, clear instructions Allow extra time to process information and provide an answer Encourage individual to ask questions, or specifically request response Allow recording devices Be empathic/supportive Agree protocol for questions and meeting management Encourage the individual to write down questions that could be asked at end of topic or after the meeting





CONCERN

REASON

STRATEGIES & ACCOMMODATIONS

Difficulty with hot desking in open plan offices

Sensory sensitivity
Change in location disrupts patterns
Equipment needs set up

Consider fixed desk
Consider location of desk with regard to distraction
Label chair to be left at settings

Health and safety concerns e.g. Difficulty pouring and measuring, difficulty carrying liquids

Poor control of force/extent of movements
Gross motor coordination issues
Tendency to lean forward over the table for extra stability affects fluency of arm movements
Poor balance means some people struggle when sitting on high stools

Conduct risk assessment after risks have been considered.
Consider work allocation as to who will pour, move and measure
Consider alternatives e.g. syringe, prepared packs
Make sure there is space around coffee station
Ensure gangways and aisles are kept clear, benefits all staff with access issues
Consider lidded cups, washing up bowl as tray

Difficulty with travel, arrive late or avoids travel

Difficulty planning journeys, allowing sufficient time and navigating new routes
Get lost easily

Use satellite navigation in the car and when walking, smart phone apps
Before the visit use computer journey planner and put travel time in diary before event
If using public transport check journey times and bus number, stop, station platform, end destination of bus/train beforehand. Write down the information





**DYSPRAXIA
FOUNDATION**

Incorporating Developmental
Co-ordination Disorder (DCD)

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