

Understanding Dyslexia

A guide for students in further or higher education



DYSLEXIA SOUTH EAST CIC



Accessible dyslexia support
at the heart of our community

A not-for-profit community project

Clear Information · Study Support · DSA guidance

dyslexiasoutheast.org.uk

community@dyslexiasoutheast.org.uk



DYSLEXIA SOUTH EAST CIC

Helping students across East Sussex and Kent understand dyslexia, build confidence, and find the right help at the right time.

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Understanding Dyslexia

Dyslexia literally means “difficulty with words.” It describes a difference in how the brain recognises, processes, and remembers written and spoken language (particularly the links between sounds, letters, and words).

For students, this can affect reading and writing speed, spelling accuracy, organisation and memory for sequences such as instructions, names, or appointments. The exact pattern of strengths and challenges varies widely from person to person.

These differences are neurological, not linked to motivation or intelligence. Students with dyslexia are often highly capable thinkers who process information visually or intuitively, often bringing strong problem-solving, interpersonal, and creative skills to their studies and future careers.



Every person's profile is unique, but challenges often present in:

- **Reading, spelling, and written accuracy**
- **Note-taking, report writing, or spelling under pressure**
- **Remembering verbal information, sequences, or instructions**
- **Organising workload, time, or paperwork**
- **Processing written information (emails, forms, etc)**
- **Numbers, data entry, or remembering PINs/postcodes**

At College or University

These difficulties can cause extra stress or fatigue, particularly where study depends on reading, writing or short-term memory. With the right tools and understanding (for example, assistive technology, clear communication and flexible practices), those with dyslexia can thrive and bring valuable insight and creativity to their studies.

Some of the world's most successful and creative minds have shown the benefit of dyslexic thinking

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Some studies suggest that up to
1 in 3
Entrepreneurs in the UK are dyslexic

Recognising the Strengths



Alongside the challenges, many students and adult learners with dyslexia show distinctive strengths such as:

- Strategic and problem-solving ability
- Creative or innovative thinking
- Strong communication and people skills
- Visual, spatial and design awareness
- Curiosity, empathy and determination

These are the abilities that make many dyslexic thinkers natural innovators, entrepreneurs and communicators.

When is dyslexia usually identified?

Dyslexia can be recognised at any age. Some people are identified at school, while others only discover it later during further study, university, or later in adult life. Early recognition helps build confidence and prevents unnecessary stress, but it is never too late to understand how your brain works best.

With the right support, students with dyslexia can thrive in academic and university life. Access to reasonable adjustments, technology and open communication channels between the learner and the institution can all make a huge difference.

At **Dyslexia South East CIC**, we believe that understanding brings empowerment. Recognising both the challenges and the strengths allows people to develop strategies that unlock their full potential.



Getting the Right Support:

- Colleges and universities have responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) to make reasonable adjustments for dyslexic students.
- Some students may also benefit from short supplementary or support courses, mentoring or student coaching through the university or college's access and inclusion support programmes, or with a qualified dyslexia specialist.

Taking the Next Steps

Finding that reading, writing or organisation feel harder than for others can be frustrating, but it is also the first step towards understanding how you learn best. You do not need to have all the answers before asking for help; curiosity, reflection and a willingness to explore support are enough.

Start by talking things through with your tutor or student support team

If you think you may be dyslexic:

- Speak to your course tutor or Learning Support/Student Services
- Ask about a dyslexia screening to see whether your profile shows patterns linked to dyslexia. (A screener gives an indication, not a diagnosis.)
- If further assessment is advised, a full diagnostic assessment can confirm dyslexia and suggest practical strategies and adjustments.



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Practical next steps

- Check vision and hearing, as subtle sight or processing issues can sometimes mimic dyslexia.
- Explore assistive technology such as text-to-speech, spell checkers, planning apps or dictation tools.
- Keep brief notes about situations you find challenging and those that go well. This helps identify your learning style.
- Seek advice from qualified professionals (PATOSS, BDA, or accredited assessors like Dyslexia South East) if you wish to pursue a diagnostic assessment.



"Understanding yourself is the first step towards self-confidence and lasting change."

Why understanding matters

Recognising how your own mind works is the key to managing dyslexia effectively. **Understanding your strengths and challenges helps you identify the strategies, tools and environments that bring out your best performance.**

Many adults spend years developing ways to work around their difficulties without realising that these differences are part of a recognised neurodivergent profile. Once identified, the focus can shift from frustration to problem-solving and growth.

Self-understanding allows you to:

- **Recognise which tasks drain your energy and which play to your strengths**
- **Choose technology or supports that make daily life easier**
- **Communicate your needs confidently in your studies or placements**
- **Build self-belief and reduce the stress of masking or overcompensating**

With the right insight and practical adjustments, dyslexic learners can thrive in both academic study and in everyday life.

To put it simply:

When students understand how they learn, they stop doubting themselves and start using their strengths with confidence.



Understanding your options

Many learners choose to do this for different reasons: to understand how they process information, to rebuild confidence, or to access additional support (for example Disabled Students Allowance)

If you suspect you may be dyslexic, there are two main ways to explore this: a dyslexia screening or a full diagnostic assessment.

Dyslexia screening

- A **screening is a short check** that gives an indication of how likely someone is to have dyslexia. **This is NOT a diagnosis.**
- It takes about **25–45 minutes** and includes computer and paper-based tasks exploring areas such as sound–letter links, memory, reading, spelling, and processing speed.
- Results show a low, moderate, or high likelihood of dyslexia.
- **Screening can be a useful first step** if you are uncertain. It helps you understand your learning profile and decide whether a full diagnostic assessment might be useful.
- Results can also support conversations with your tutor or training provider about possible adjustments.



Full diagnostic dyslexia assessment

- A **diagnostic assessment** is a detailed, one-to-one investigation carried out by a qualified specialist assessor. **It provides a formal diagnosis of dyslexia.**
- The process includes a discussion about your background, education and study demands, followed by in-depth testing of literacy, memory, processing and reasoning skills.
- Assessments usually take between **three and four hours**.
- You receive a **detailed report** outlining your strengths and challenges, with practical recommendations for study strategies, assistive technology and adjustments to support you in education.
- At present, this **report can be used as evidence for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)** and to request reasonable adjustments at college or university.

Some reasons why students choose a full diagnostic dyslexia assessment

- To gain a clearer picture of personal strengths and learning preferences
- To understand past challenges and regain confidence
- To explain difficulties with reading, writing, memory or organisation
- To access support through Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)
- To request reasonable adjustments at work or university
- To guide career development, training or retraining decisions



Reasonable Adjustments for Students in Further or Higher Education

Everyone has the right to learn in a way that plays to their strengths. Reasonable adjustments make that possible.

Protection under the Equality Act

Students with dyslexia are protected under the Equality Act 2010, which means colleges and universities must take reasonable steps to remove barriers that could put you at a disadvantage. **These adjustments are not about lowering expectations. They are about giving you fair access to show what you can do.**

In Education: Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

If you are studying at university or on a higher education course, you may be eligible for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

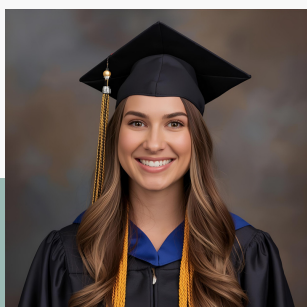
This grant can help pay for:

- Specialist software such as text-to-speech or mind-mapping tools
- One-to-one study skills support or assistive technology training
- Equipment and ergonomic accessories
- General allowance for study resources

You will need a full diagnostic dyslexia assessment as evidence for your DSA application.

More information is available at:

www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas



Top Tips for Effective Study

These evidence-based strategies can make reading, writing and revision more manageable:

Reading and Note-Taking

- Use text-to-speech software to reduce reading load
- Break reading into short, timed bursts with clear goals
- Mind-map or outline key ideas instead of taking linear notes
- Record lectures (with permission) to replay later

Organisation, Planning and Revision

- Use digital calendars or planning apps to manage deadlines
- Break assignments into small steps and tick off progress
- Keep a consistent digital filing system for notes and coursework
- Use reminders for tutorials, classes and submission dates
- Revise in shorter sessions (20–30 minutes) with breaks
- Use flashcards, quizzes, or retrieval practice rather than re-reading

THE DYSLEXIA SOUTH EAST FAMILY

WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE CAN HELP

#TogetherForDyslexia



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Through our not-for-profit CIC, we offer:

- **Free drop-in advice** and information sessions
- **Help with DSA** form completion
- **Community workshops** and awareness events
- **Peer support opportunities** and small-group discussions
- **Guidance for employers**, tutors and families who want to understand dyslexia better

Our aim is to make support easy to access, friendly and ongoing and not simply a one-off service.



**DYSLEXIA
SOUTH EAST**

**Dyslexia Assessments
in East Sussex and Kent**

Our qualified assessors provide:

- **Full diagnostic dyslexia assessments** recognised by employers, universities and funding bodies such as DSA and Access to Work
- **Screening options for adults** who are unsure but want to explore their profile
- **Clear, practical reports** that highlight strengths, challenges and outlines detailed recommended strategies
- **Advice on next steps**, including how to apply for workplace or study support

A valid assessment can open the door to formal adjustments, specialist coaching, technology funding and better self-understanding.

Two dedicated organisations working together to make dyslexia support stronger, fairer, and closer to home.

dyslexiasoutheast.org.uk

dyslexiasoutheast.co.uk



Understanding your profile is only the beginning.

At **Dyslexia South East CIC**, we shine a light on the practical help available for adults with dyslexia: from free advice and community connections to tailored mentoring and tuition through our sister organisation.

Whether you're seeking clarity, confidence, or connection, our aim is to make expert support local, visible, and accessible to all.

Support for Students

Many students contact us when they start college or university and realise that earlier support may have been missed. Others return to education later in life, encouraged by growing awareness of dyslexia and a clearer understanding of their own strengths. Whether you are beginning your studies, continuing a long-term learning journey, or taking a new step in adulthood, Dyslexia South East and Dyslexia South East CIC work together to ensure you don't face that journey alone.

Free Advice and Guidance

Our WhatsApp advice line and Facebook support group offer quick and friendly help for students and adult learners seeking guidance on dyslexia and related learning differences. We provide both individual support and opportunities for peer connection, so you can choose what feels right for you.

We can help you:

- Make sense of your assessment report or screening results
- Understand how to access higher education support (e.g. DSA, Reasonable Adjustments)
- Explore practical strategies, assistive technology, and next steps that fit your needs
- Share experiences and encouragement within a supportive community

Both the WhatsApp advice line and Facebook group are completely free, and open to anyone seeking clear, accessible advice or community support.

Group Support and Workshops

Through our community sessions and Dyslexia Café events, you can meet others with shared experiences, ask questions in a relaxed setting, and gain practical tools for everyday life.

We also run workshops on topics such as:

- Study skills and working memory
- Organisation and time management
- Confidence, communication and study skills

These sessions are open to all

Tuition and Mentoring

If you're looking for individualised support, our sister organisation, **Dyslexia South East**, can provide:

- 1:1 mentoring to build confidence and study or workplace skills
- Specialist tuition from qualified dyslexia tutors (PATOSS registered)
- Assistive technology coaching to help you work more efficiently

Join the conversation – message us on WhatsApp or connect through our Facebook group to start finding the support that's right for you.

Useful Links and Resources

National Services and Organisations for support



British Dyslexia Association



Leading UK charity promoting awareness, early identification, and better support for people with dyslexia

bdadyslexia.org.uk

Patoss Dyslexia



Professional association for specialist teachers and assessors of dyslexia

patoss-dyslexia.org

Dyslexia Action



A national organisation offering specialist teaching, assessments, and training

dyslexiaaction.org.uk

NHS (Learning Difficulties)



NHS guidance, and support on learning difficulties, including advice on diagnosis, and local services.

nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/

Made by Dyslexia



A global charity raising awareness and providing free resources and training to help every dyslexic mind thrive.

madebydyslexia.org

IPSEA



Charity helping children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities get the education they are entitled to by law

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/>

Local and Community Links and Support

Local Services and Organisations for support



East Sussex Local Offer



A special educational needs and disabilities information hub for the public - East Sussex..

<https://localoffer.eastsussex.gov.uk/>

East Sussex Parent Carer Forum



Forum for parent carers of children and young people with SEND in East Sussex

<https://www.espcf.org.uk/>

C-Zone



The schools and education portal for East Sussex. Includes SEND and Disabilities access information

<https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/>

Dyslexia South East



Professional accredited assessments for Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and SpLD in English and Maths

dyslexiasoutheast.co.uk

SUPPORT SERVICES FROM DYSLEXIA SOUTH EAST CIC



Our Local
Facebook Group



Dyslexia Cafe, Training and Workshops
dyslexiasoutheast.org.uk/events



Follow us on
Facebook

DYSLEXIA CAFE

INFORMAL DROP IN DYSLEXIA SUPPORT



Scan the QR code to find out about
upcoming community events



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Details and links may change without notice.

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