

LEICESTERSHIRE

FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

SERVICE PROCEDURE

CONTENTS	PAGE No
-----------------	----------------

Introduction	1
--------------	---

Legislation	1
-------------	---

What is Dyslexia?	2
-------------------	---

Management of the Dyslexia Policy	2
-----------------------------------	---

Assessment for dyslexia	3
-------------------------	---

Supporting the Individual	4
---------------------------	---

Reasonable Adjustments	5
------------------------	---

Recognising Dyslexia Symptoms	5
-------------------------------	---

Additional Support	7
--------------------	---

Appendix A – Support flow chart

Appendix B – Other Specific Learning Difficulties

Appendix C – Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

**HUMAN
RESOURCES**

**DYSLEXIA
POLICY**

LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

DYSLEXIA POLICY

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) is committed to ensuring that everyone within the organisation and in the community is treated fairly and with dignity and respect. It has signed up to the principles of Equality and Diversity as detailed in the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework.
- 2 In this regard the service has made a commitment to work towards recruiting and retaining a workforce that is diverse and reflective of the community that it serves. Therefore the service continues to develop policies that promote equality and diversity in the workplace.
- 3 This policy is designed to recognise and support employees including potential employees who may be affected by dyslexia and other associated conditions.
- 4 Dyslexia is known to severely affect 4% of the UK population while a further 6% will have a mild to moderate form of dyslexia. Similarly Dyspraxia affects up to 10% of the population with 2% being affected severely.
- 5 This policy seeks to provide practical guidance regarding how someone with dyslexia can be effectively supported while working for LFRS.
- 6 The East Midlands Fire and Rescue Services policy framework on Dyslexia has been taken into consideration.

LEGISLATION

- 7 The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against discrimination for people with particular characteristics. The characteristics are known as “Protected Characteristics” and are listed below:
- 8 **Protected Characteristics**
 - Age
 - Disability

**WARNING – If you are viewing a printed copy of this document it may not be current.
Refer to SharePoint for the latest version.**

- Gender Reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnerships
 - Pregnancy or maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation (Gay, lesbian or bisexual)
- 9 Dyslexia is recognised as a disability and therefore people with dyslexia are protected against discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.
- 10 Employers are required to consider reasonable adjustments to premises and employment arrangements if these disadvantage a disabled employee or prospective employee.
- 11 LFRS will seek to reasonably support employees (including potential employees) with dyslexia based on individual need. The Service will make reasonable adjustments during the recruitment, selection and promotion processes to support individuals where dyslexia has been declared.
- 12 The Service will also make reasonable adjustments to the work environment to support an individual with dyslexia to ensure the individual continues to undertake their duties and responsibilities.

WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

- 13 Dyslexia is a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the processing of information. A dyslexic individual may have experienced difficulty in developing skills for reading, writing, spelling and numeracy.
- 14 Dyspraxia is associated with the way the brain processes information which results in messages not being fully transmitted. It can affect language, perception and thought.
- 15 For the purposes of this policy, the reference to dyslexia will include dyspraxia and any other condition that is associated with learning difficulties and recognised as a form of disability. Examples of these conditions are given in Appendix B.

MANAGEMENT OF THE DYSLEXIA POLICY

- 16 This policy will be overseen by the Human Resources Department who will ensure that the policy is being adhered to and continues to meet organisational needs, current legislation and best practice.

**WARNING – If you are viewing a printed copy of this document it may not be current.
Refer to SharePoint for the latest version.**

- 17 LFRS will raise awareness of dyslexia amongst staff groups through appropriate media including training. All managers with supervisory responsibilities will be expected to ensure they receive appropriate training in managing staff affected by dyslexia.

ASSESSMENTS FOR DYSLEXIA

EXISTING EMPLOYEES

- 18 Where an employee identifies themselves as having dyslexia, or believes they may have dyslexia the service cannot be expected to undertake any responsibility for assessments and/or reasonable adjustments where this does not impact on an individual's performance within their existing role.
- 19 However, LFRS will exercise its responsibility to consider assessments and reasonable adjustments where symptoms associated with dyslexia have been identified as affecting the performance and capabilities of an individual within their existing role.
- 20 LFRS will also exercise its responsibility to support and consider reasonable adjustments where an individual with dyslexia requests such support in order to take part in a recruitment or promotion process within the service.
- 21 Unless a diagnostic assessment with recommendations is available, all cases where it has been identified that a dyslexia assessment is required will be referred to the Occupational Health Unit for this to be arranged.
- 22 Employees on the Retained Duty System will be able to claim any lost earnings while attending agreed assessments and/or activities.
- 23 Managers should refer to Appendix A – Support Flow Chart.

POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES

- 24 In order for requests for reasonable adjustments to be considered during the recruitment process, potential employees must disclose details of their disabilities on the application form and any diagnostic assessments with recommendations (where available).

CONFIDENTIALITY

- 25 Staff involved in any cases or potential cases of dyslexia must maintain an approach that maximises confidentiality and should be sensitive to the needs of the individual concerned.
- 26 Whilst an open approach is encouraged to facilitate support and understanding, employees must not be pressurised to reveal any diagnosis. Referrals and assessments should only be arranged with the full consent of the individual concerned.
- 27 Coordination of any dyslexia screening and formal diagnostic assessments will be arranged by the Occupational Health Unit.
- 28 LFRS will pay the full cost of the diagnosis assessments where this has been approved.
- 29 Employees wishing to undertake initial screening assessments can consider accessing online tests that are available at www.beingdyslexic.co.uk

SUPPORTING THE INDIVIDUAL

- 30 The needs of people diagnosed as having dyslexia will vary and so will the support they will require. Therefore LFRS will consider the support needs including reasonable adjustments on a case by case basis.
- 31 Where reasonable adjustments have been recommended following a diagnostic assessment, an action plan should be devised and agreed between the individual concerned and his/her line manager (supported by the relevant Human Resources Business Partner).
- 32 The action plan should be based on the recommended adjustments that have been agreed to be reasonable and relevant to an individual's role. Adequate but reasonable time should be built in to the action plan to ensure that the intended outcome is achieved.
- 33 Progress against this action plan should be monitored at regular intervals.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

- 34 A range of initiatives can be undertaken to adjust the nature of an individual's work environment to ensure that they are supported in achieving departmental/ organisational goals.
- 35 Reasonable adjustments may involve agreed changes to systems and procedures which are deemed to be dyslexia unfriendly, adjustment to equipment (e.g. through IT), recommended development techniques or a training course/programme etc.
- 36 Some examples are included at Appendix C.

RECOGNISING DYSLEXIA SYMPTOMS

37 The problem of undiagnosed dyslexia

- Often the individual reaches adulthood having experienced a range of difficulties but without any formal diagnosis. This may in turn give rise to a range of negative emotions such as low self-esteem and confidence, anger, anxiety and confusion.
- The symptoms of dyslexia, if not understood or diagnosed, may produce perceptions from colleagues and managers of the individual being perhaps less effective or unengaged. The person may become withdrawn or oversensitive and may be seen as not fitting in.
- It is only when dyslexia is diagnosed that such behaviours and difficulties may be explained and understood by the person themselves and others. A range of adjustments may be made to support the individual and alleviate problems. Often such adjustments relate to the different ways that those with dyslexia learn, understand, process information and solve problems.

RECOGNISING DYSLEXIA SYMPTOMS

- 38 People with dyslexia will not all exhibit the same characteristics, nor to the same degree. The severity of dyslexia is likely to vary between individuals. The condition may manifest itself in a number of ways:
- Often late learning to read, but in most cases eventually successful
 - Difficulty with mental arithmetic

**WARNING – If you are viewing a printed copy of this document it may not be current.
Refer to SharePoint for the latest version.**

- Difficulty learning/reciting sequences such as months of the year, multiplication tables
 - Slow in learning material presented solely in verbal or written form.
 - Slow speed of information processing.
 - A discrepancy between academic achievement and performance in practical problem solving and/or verbal skills.
 - Some initial difficulty in detecting rhyme.
 - Difficulty with paired associate learning (i.e. associating a label with an object).
 - Excessive misspelling in written work, including errors such as confusion in letter order.
 - Problems organising work.
 - Difficulty with naming tasks.
 - An aversion to writing notes or using excessive note-taking.
 - Evidence of working memory deficit on tasks such as taking telephone numbers or messages.
 - Forgetting some of a series of instructions or carrying them out in the wrong order.
 - A tendency to talk rather than listen as a strategy for restricting the input of information.
- 39 Note that these characteristics do not necessarily indicate dyslexia, nor would a person with dyslexia necessarily display all of the above.
- 40 With the growing focus on dyslexia it has become evident that a number of symptoms are most prevalent organisationally; these include:
- Difficulty in following instructions from managers
 - Difficulty in learning information/procedures rapidly
 - Difficulty in multi-tasking across a number of activities

**WARNING – If you are viewing a printed copy of this document it may not be current.
Refer to SharePoint for the latest version.**

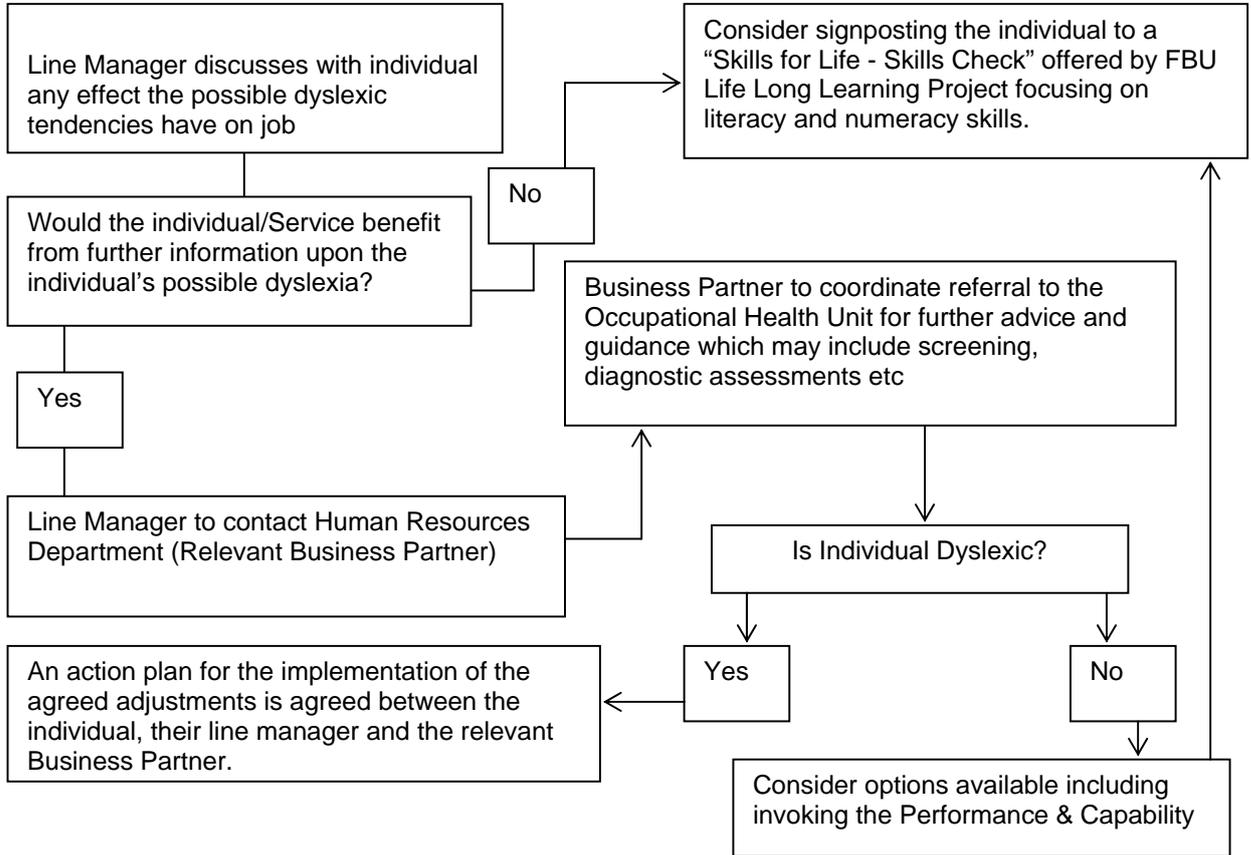
- Difficulty in responding under pressure
- Having to work/study harder than colleagues
- Needing to practice more than colleagues
- Organisational problems in terms of managing deadlines/appointments
- Interpersonal issues in terms of effective management of relations

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

- 41 Additional support may be accessed through Skills for Life – A skills check which operates under the Life Long Learning, Union Learning Fund banner, in the East Midlands Region. This check refers to literacy and numeracy skills and offers specific support in this area. Contact should be made with the Area Lead for Skills for Life for further guidance.
- 42 The Access to Work programme may be available. This is a Job Centre Plus grant scheme, run by the Department for Work and Pensions, which assists disabled people who are in paid employment, or with Job/Work Trial, by providing practical support in overcoming work related obstacles resulting from their disability.
- 43 Access to Work grants will contribute to the additional employment costs resulting from disability that an employer would not normally be expected to fund. In some cases, this may involve an arrangement where DWP and the employer share costs.

**WARNING – If you are viewing a printed copy of this document it may not be current.
Refer to SharePoint for the latest version.**

**APPENDIX A
SUPPORT FLOW CHART**



**APPENDIX B
OTHER SPECIFIC LEARNING
DIFFICULTIES**

The following conditions may also be contributory, overlapping factors or the underlying cause of the dyslexic symptoms:

1. **Auditory processing disorder** is a condition that affects the ability to encode auditory information. It can lead to problems with auditory working memory and auditory sequencing. Many dyslexics have auditory processing problems including history of auditory reversals. Auditory processing disorder is recognised as one of the major causes of dyslexia.
2. **Dyspraxia** is a neurological condition characterised by a marked difficulty in carrying out routine tasks involving balance, fine-motor control, and kinesthetic coordination. Problems with short term memory and organisation skills are typical of dyspraxics. This is most common in dyslexics who also have attention deficit disorder.
3. **Verbal dyspraxia** is a neurological condition characterised by marked difficulty in the use of speech sounds, which is the result of an immaturity in the speech production area of the brain.
4. **Dysgraphia** is a disorder which expresses itself primarily during writing or typing, although in some cases it may also affect eye-hand coordination in such direction or sequence oriented processes as tying knots or carrying out a repetitive task. Dysgraphia is distinct from dyspraxia in that the person may have the word written or the proper order of steps clearly in mind, but carries the sequence out in the wrong order.
5. **Dyscalculia** is a neurological condition characterized by a problem with learning fundamentals and one or more of the basic numerical skills. Often people with this condition can understand very complex mathematical concepts and principles, but have difficulty processing formulas and even basic addition and subtraction.
6. **Scotopic sensitivity syndrome**, also known as Meares - Irlen Syndrome, is a term used to describe sensitivity to certain wavelengths of light which interfere with proper visual processing. This syndrome is particularly prevalent in people with dyslexia.

**APPENDIX C
EXAMPLE OF REASONABLE
ADJUSTMENTS**

1. Provision of training programmes/briefings/presentations

- All training courses, briefings or presentations should be considered in terms of the impact they will have on individuals with dyslexia (though these points may also apply more generally):
- Presentations and instructional methods should incorporate ‘multisensory’ techniques – in other words, diagrams and colour should be used to supplement written or verbal explanations as much as possible; demonstrations (‘of how it should be done’) and practice (to encourage learning and skill development) should also be incorporated.
- As far as possible a person with dyslexia should not be ‘put on the spot’ - whilst they certainly can think on their feet, there is the danger that a ‘classroom’ context encourages any previous feelings of low self-esteem to return.

2. Provision of written materials

Any written materials should be considered in terms of their impact on people with dyslexia (though, again, these points may apply more generally):

- Policy documents, procedures, rules, regulations, etc. all need logical presentation/structuring and good indexation.
- Printed text should not be justified on the right side.
- Important points should be highlighted.
- Summaries should be included.
- Readability levels need consideration and should be relevant to job role.
- Unnecessary jargon or uncommon words should not be used, although it is recognised that technical language may be necessary.

**WARNING – If you are viewing a printed copy of this document it may not be current.
Refer to SharePoint for the latest version.**

- To accommodate possibly limited memory skills, people with dyslexia would benefit from material being as manageable as possible - by, for example, putting information into smaller chunks.
- Provide information on coloured paper (find out which colour helps the person to read best).
- Use speech to text software where possible.

3. Provision of instructions

- Individuals may be assisted in following instructions by:
- Being given instructions one at a time.
- Managers communicating instructions slowly and clearly in, if possible, a quiet location.
- Managers giving concise and direct instructions.
- Having a manager or colleague demonstrate and supervise tasks and projects.
- Taking notes and then checking them.
- Asking instructions to be repeated back, to confirm that the instruction has been understood correctly.
- Writing a memo outlining a plan of action.
- Use a tape recorder or Dictaphone to record important instructions, where appropriate and safe to do so.
- Backing up multiple instructions in writing or with diagrams.

4. Difficulty with reading and writing

- Allow plenty of time to read and complete the task.
- Examine other ways of giving the same information to avoid reading.
- Discuss the material with the employee, giving summaries and/or key points.

**WARNING – If you are viewing a printed copy of this document it may not be current.
Refer to SharePoint for the latest version.**

- Utilise information prepared in other formats for example audio or videotape, drawings, diagrams and flowcharts.
- Use tape recorders.
- Use speech to text or other appropriate software.

5. Selection/promotion assessments

Reasonable adjustments for selection/promotion tests may include the following:

- Wherever possible additional time should be considered for examinations/tests.
- Provide reader if required.
- Re-formatting the exercise or background information to ease usability/understanding.
- Provision of advice on techniques in note taking, revision and sitting exams may also be of assistance through courses/booklets.

6. Organising workflow

Organisation of work may be enhanced in the following ways:

- Using a wall planner.
- Prioritising important tasks.
- Creating a daily dated “**To Do**” list.
- Using diaries.
- Writing a layout for regular tasks with appropriate prompts - for example for meetings or taking notes.
- Allowing extra time for unforeseen occurrences.
- Building planning time into each day.

**WARNING – If you are viewing a printed copy of this document it may not be current.
Refer to SharePoint for the latest version.**

7. Short term memory

Recall of information may be achieved through the following approaches:

- Using diagrams, mind maps and flowcharts.
- Checking back understanding.
- Using mnemonic devices and acronyms.
- Using multi-sensory learning techniques such as reading material onto a tape machine and then playing it back whilst re-reading.
- Using computer software.
- Using a calculator.

8. Spelling capacity

Spelling may be improved in the following ways:

- Proof reading of work.
- Spell checker on computers/portable checker.