

‘SPECIFIC’ LEARNING DIFFICULTIES in PRISONS

Melanie Jameson
Dyslexia Consultancy Malvern
© 2019

BOOKLET 1 INTRODUCTION and RESOURCES for SpLDs

The full set of BOOKLETS comprises

1. Introduction and Resources for Specific Learning Difficulties
2. Overview of Specific Learning Difficulties
3. Principles of Support for Specific Learning Difficulties
4. Support for English/Literacy and Maths/Numeracy
5. Support for ICT and Virtual Campus
6. Support for Foreign Nationals who may have Specific Learning Difficulties
7. Specific Learning Difficulties in the contexts of Disability / Equality / Diversity / Accessibility
8. Work Preparation and Resettlement

The term ‘Specific Learning Difficulties’ refers to a family of conditions, namely Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Dyscalculia

ALL 8 BOOKLETS are available on www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk

INTRODUCTION to the BOOKLETS

Research* indicates that almost a fifth of the UK prison population faces difficulties due to Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) and are unlikely to make sustained progress without appropriate support.

Now that 'Specific' Learning Difficulties are included within the Prison Education Framework and must be identified beyond the remit of Education, this is the ideal time to disseminate a more in-depth knowledge of these common conditions, namely **Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Dyscalculia**. In addition, **Asperger Syndrome** is often referred to in these Booklets, due to its overlap with SpLDs.

An understanding of how these conditions affect adults in education, training and resettlement, together with some knowledge of which methodologies are most effective, will enable staff and management to help this population tackle their difficulties, value their abilities and develop coping strategies – all of which lead to better chances of rehabilitation.

Fortunately an approach that works for SpLDs is also beneficial for other people who have missed out on education or failed to make progress.

This series of Booklets, based on my earlier guide *Releasing Potential of Offenders with Dyslexia* (2014) and considerably updated, explores a number of areas. Some of these fall within Education while others have wider implications, such as disability issues. Since users of this resource may read Booklets in isolation, some key points may be repeated.

Unless otherwise stated, initiatives, tools and materials relate to practice in England, but the good practice encapsulated is universal.

This Booklet contains a list of Resources but opens with the Context of prison reform.

Research Study* showing prevalence of Specific Learning Difficulties in Offenders

The Incidence of Hidden Disabilities in the Prison Population (2005)

This study (by the Learning & Skills Council and Dyslexia Action) investigated Dyslexia and related conditions in a number of prisons .

Conclusion: 52% have literacy difficulties, just under 20% have a hidden disability (i.e. Specific Learning Difficulty) affecting learning & employment.

Author Profile

Melanie Jameson is a freelance consultant, trainer and assessor. She works across the criminal justice system, conveying the impact of dyslexia and related conditions through awareness training, materials development and committee work with government agencies and departments.

The resources developed in the course of her work are freely available via the website www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk

Readers are encouraged to feed back suggestions for inclusion in later revisions, via the Dyslexia Malvern website.

RESOURCES for Specific Learning Difficulties

1. The Context
2. Publications on Aspects of Specific Learning Difficulties
3. Specific Learning Difficulties and Disability Networks
4. Further Organisations and Courses referred to in these Booklets
5. Screening Tools
6. Promoting Accessibility – a wider perspective

1. The Context

The key Ministry of Justice document on the new Prison Education System for Adults in England (2018) refers to **12 mandatory requirements** that prison governors will need to ensure are delivered, either by prison staff or education service providers

These are described as falling '*into two broad categories:*

- 1) *a minimum bar for education provision we expect to be delivered and*
- 2) *actions that will ensure the coherence of the system*'.

A number of these requirements, quoted below, relate to (Specific) Learning Difficulties

1) **Minimum delivery expectations include:**

- screening of sentenced prisoners' learning difficulties and/or disabilities on first reception or other occasion where one has not been undertaken
- education providers' staff, and those prison staff who deliver learning, to be appropriately trained and qualified to develop and meet the additional support needs of prisoners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD);
- all prison information, forms and digital systems to be available and/or designed with suitable to support those with dyslexia.

2) **Our system coherence requirements are:**

- recording of maths and English assessment results, LDD screening, and all education-related inputs and outcomes

*Quoted sections follow subheading **Protecting and advancing the principles of justice***

2. Publications on Aspects of Specific Learning Difficulties

Autism: A Guide for Criminal Justice Professionals, (2011) National Autistic Society

www.autism.org.uk

Conduct Disorder & Offending Behaviour in Young People Liabo & Richardson (2007)

Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Coping with Courts & Tribunals: A Guide for People with SpLDs, M Jameson (2014)

[www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Coping With Courts & Tribunals.pdf](http://www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Coping%20With%20Courts%20&%20Tribunals.pdf)

Dyslexia and the Bilingual Learner H Sunderland et al (1997) Avanti Books

Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Mathematics D Yeo (2003) Whurr Publishers

Dyslexia in the Workplace Bartlett & Moody (2nd edition 2010) Whurr Publishers

E-guidelines series NIACE publications www.niace.org.uk/publications, in particular:
E-guidelines 3: *Developing e-learning materials*
E-guidelines 7: *Attracting and Motivating new learners with ICT*
E-guidelines 9: *Supporting adult learners with dyslexia: Harnessing the power of technology*

Education and Training for Offenders T Uden (2003) NIACE

How to Succeed in Employment with Specific Learning Difficulties Amanda Kirby (2013) Souvenir Press Ltd

Identification & management of ADHD offenders: BMC Psychiatry. 2011 Feb
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21332994

Improving the literacy and numeracy of disaffected young people in custody and the community National Research and Development Centre (2010)
https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/21954/1/doc_4688.pdf

'KIWI' Resources for Justice Staff M Jameson (2018)
[www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Resources for justice sector staff - Kiwis.pdf](http://www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Resources_for_justice_sector_staff_-_Kiwis.pdf)

Living with Dyspraxia M Colley (2006) Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Making the Curriculum Work for Dyslexic Learners J Lee (2002)

Nobody Made the Connection: Neurodisability in the youth justice system Hughes et al (2012) Office of the Children's Commissioner for England.
www.yjlc.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Neurodisability_Report_FINAL_UPDATED_01_11_12.pdf

On-line learning and social exclusion A Clarke (2002) NIACE

Opening Doors to Employment: Neurodiverse voices (2018)
Report of the Westminster AchieveAbility Commission on Recruitment and Dyslexia/ND
[http://www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/dan/Opening Doors to Employment.pdf](http://www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/dan/Opening_Doors_to_Employment.pdf)

Practical Solutions Series: J Proustie (2000) Next Generation UK **series includes:**
Mathematics Solutions: An intro to Dyscalculia/Planning & Organising Solutions/Life Skills

Psychology at Work: Improving Wellbeing & Productivity Doyle, (2017)

Sentence Trouble The Communication Trust www.sentencetrouble.info

The International Book of Dyslexia Smythe, Everatt & Salter (2004) Wiley-Blackwell

The Tipping Points, (Impact of ADHD). P Anderton (2007) ADDISS

Working with Dyspraxia – a Hidden Asset: Dyspraxia Foundation Guide for Employers (2012) Dyspraxia Foundation

Interactive resources on Literacy, Numeracy, ESOL & IT are available from the Excellence Gateway archive www.excellencegateway.org.uk/interactive-resources
AND **Education and Training Foundation** www.etfoundation.co.uk

3. Specific Learning Difficulties and Disability Networks

a) Specific Learning Difficulties

Autism / Asperger Syndrome

National Autistic Society www.autism.org.uk

Attention Hyperactivity Deficit Disorder

Adult Attention Deficit Disorder–UK (AADD-UK) www.aadduk.org

Attention Deficit Disorder Information Services: ADDISS www.addiss.co.uk

ADHD Solutions www.adhdsolutions.org.uk/

Dyscalculia

www.aboutdyscalculia.org

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexic/maths-difficulties-dyscalculia

Dyslexia

British Dyslexia Association www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Dyslexia Assessment & Consultancy www.workingwithdyslexia.com

Dyslexia Foundation (North West) www.dyslexia-help.org

Dyslexia Scotland www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

The Cascade Foundation www.thecascadefoundation.org

Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia Foundation www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

Dyspraxia UK www.dyspraxiauk.com

Specific Learning Difficulties (overall)

AchieveAbility www.achieveability.org.uk

Dyscovery Centre (resources / research & training on a range of SpLDs)
www.dyscovery.info/

'Resources section' of Dyslexia Consultancy Malvern includes relevant materials under the following headings: Adults (including *Ten Tips*, *Ten Steps*), Tutors, Employment, Justice and Vision www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/resources

SpLD Workplace Strategy Coaching

Genius Within <https://www.geniuswithin.co.uk/>

Lexxic Ltd www.lexxic.com On-line coaching sessions - *Neurotalent Unlocked*

Communication Issues

The Communication Trust www.communicationtrust

Visual Stress

Cerium Visual Technologies www.ceriumoptical.com

Society For Coloured Lens Practitioners www.s4clp.org

Assistive technology

www.dyslexic.com www.bdatech.org www.microlinkpc.com www.emptech.info/

Learning Disabilities: Positive Practice, Positive Outcomes DoH (2011)

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216318/dh_124744.pdf

Guide Supporting People with Learning Disability & Learning Challenges (LDC)

Powerpoint Toolkit: Making services work for people with LDC (both HMPPS, 2019)

b) Disability Networks and Support

Business Disability Forum <https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/>

Disability Rights UK www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Disability Law Service www.dls.org.uk

Dyslexia Box (Assistive Technology and disability support specialists)

<https://dyslexibox.co.uk/> and <https://dyslexibox.co.uk/pages/workplace>

Equality & Human Rights Commission - Advisory Service: www.equalityhumanrights.com

Mental Health Foundation www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Mind www.mind.org.uk

The Care and Treatment of Offenders with a Learning Disability network

www.ldoffenders.co.uk

The Centre for Mental Health www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk

4. Organisations, Materials & Courses referred to in these BOOKLETS

Access to Work www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Change, Grow, Live www.changegrowlive.org

Crossbow reading rulers www.crossboweducation.com

Get Set For Success, Learning & Work Institute (developed in 2014)

Language Behind Bars www.LBB-Project.eu

http://lbb-project.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/End_Materials/EN/Languages_Behind_Bars.pdf

London Shakespeare Workout www.lswproductions.co.uk

Mindmapping www.mindmapping.com and www.thinkbuzan.com/

Prison Phoenix Trust www.prisonphoenixtrust.org.uk

Reading Pen www.readerpen.com/

Shannon Trust www.shannontrust.org.uk

Stretch Charity (Digital Storytelling) www.stretch-charity.org

Touch-type, Read & Spell www.readandspell.com

Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Alliance . www.t2a.org.uk

Unlock www.unlock.org.uk

Wayout TV www.wayout.tv/brochure.pdf

Women in Prison www.womeninprison.org.uk

Prisoner Learning Alliance: <https://prisonerlearningalliance.org.uk>

Theory of Change Report <https://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Theory-of-Change-Report.pdf>

European Prison Education Association www.epea.org *now extends beyond Europe*

5. Screening Tools

Autism Quotient Test (on-line) <https://www.wired.com/2001/12/aqtest/>

Information on assessment of autism / Asperger Syndrome from www.autism.org.uk

Do-IT Profiler www.doitprofiler.com

Dyscalculia on-line screener and checklist:

<http://dyscalculia-screener.co.uk/> discounts for multiple screenings

<http://www1.lpssonline.com/uploads/DyscalculiaChecklist.pdf>

Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST) The Psychological Corporation

www.pearsonclinical.co.uk

LADs Plus (Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening)

<https://www.gi-assessment.co.uk/products/lucid-lads-plus/>

QUICKSCAN <https://qsdyslexiatest.com/>

Spot Your Potential British Dyslexia Association www.spot-your-potential.com

Visual Stress <http://www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/visualstress>

6. Promoting Accessibility – a wider perspective


Moving beyond the support needs of people with Specific Learning Difficulties, there is the wider consideration of how to enable prisoners who are disadvantaged in various ways to cope better. This could entail modifying certain procedures, better sharing of information, improved communication and encouraging prisoners to articulate their needs. Assisting 'way-finding' through colour-coded strips along the corridors has been implemented at HMP Whatton, and found to be helpful.

Prisoners with Learning Disabilities, head injuries, lack of education and/or limited English would all benefit from these approaches. Building on work by the HMPPS Evidence and Service Improvement Team, I have devised a self-assessment audit checklist along with supporting information (omitting ergonomic and physical factors which are beyond my expertise). Having presented this approach at the 2019 European Prison Education Association conference, I am now disseminating it in the UK.

The self-assessment audit is reproduced overleaf. This document, and a powerpoint sequence with examples and further details, can be downloaded freely from www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk

The purpose of completing the audit is to identify what staff are already doing well and where attention is needed. The overall aim is the promotion of 'enabling accessible environments', leading to better outcomes.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AUDIT OF <ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL> IN OUR PRISONS

<p>Please complete this Audit with colleagues from different departments in your establishment</p> <p>This exercise will help identify what you are already doing well and where further attention may be needed</p> <p>AIMS: <u>To promote 'enabling, accessible environments'</u> ~ <u>To identify & share Good Practice</u></p>	Y E S	N O	I N P A R T	 I N F O R M A T I O N N E E D E D
1. Screening and Assessment processes (Education, Healthcare, Resettlement) highlight support needs of prisoners				
2. This information is readily available to all staff who need to access it				
3. We have a clear referral route for further specialist assessment and know what to do				
4. We record, share, monitor and update information on prisoner support needs				
5. Staff are aware of good practice in Mental Health; Learning Disabilities; Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties; Language and Communication issues				
6. Staff have flexibility to offer differentiated learning, in order to accommodate difficulties				
7. Formal processes / disciplinary procedures etc. take account of support needs				
8. It is easy for prisoners to find their way around our buildings				
9. Notices and learning materials are written in an accessible way (and backed up by images)				
10. We take care that our spoken communications are clear and unambiguous				
11. Prisoners are encouraged to share their skills and develop their expertise				
12. We work well with partners and senior management to improve outcomes for prisoners				
13. We encourage prisoners to articulate their needs and take account of their feedback				
14. Our establishment allows time and opportunity to share 'what works' across the prison				
15. Our culture supports us when we try new ways of doing things				