# Briefing on Clients with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Asperger Syndrome

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# **OVERVIEW**

# **Terminology**

The terms 'Specific Learning Difficulties' or 'Specific Learning Differences' (SpLDs) used to be used to refer to a group of conditions in which the problem areas are 'specific', while other areas of functioning are unaffected. Dyslexia is the best known; other specific conditions are Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Dyscalculia. Research has established that people often show signs of more than one SpLD. There may be an overlap with Asperger Syndrome.

This group contrasts with 'Learning Disabilities' which are associated with impaired intelligence and social skills, often leading to major challenges with independent living.

Nowadays 'Neurodiversity' (sometimes 'neurodivergence') is the favoured term for those with this non-typical skillset.

An alphabetical listing follows, highlighting typical features.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is typified by distractibility, lack of focus, impulsivity and disorganisation. Those with hyperactivity may also be accident- and addiction-prone and have little awareness of the consequences of their actions. They do not usually learn from their mistakes or from feedback. Appearing not to pay attention, they are actually paying attention indiscriminately to all stimuli of the moment, so become overloaded and can easily miss key pieces of information.

**Autistic Spectrum Disorder** (ASD) is in a category of its own. It is included here because aspects of ASD can co-exist with Specific Learning Difficulties.

**Autistic Spectrum Disorder** refers to a family of developmental conditions which impede the ability to communicate and relate socially. Usually accompanied by unusual behaviours, inflexible thinking and generalised learning disabilities. Autistic Spectrum Disorder includes **Asperger Syndrome**, in which intelligence is unaffected, and may be in the superior range – as seen in some juvenile computer hackers.

Asperger traits include inflexibility and over-reliance on routines, great difficulty seeing other people's points of view, awkward social skills, inappropriate behaviour, slow processing of information together with a panic reaction when pushed. People with this condition will take things literally and may have obsessive interests in certain areas.

**Dyscalculia** comprises an inability to understand simple number concepts and to gain basic number skills. For example, dates represented by numbers rather than words are hard to decipher. There are likely to be difficulties learning number facts and procedures, telling the time, understanding prices and dealing with money and financial matters. Dyscalculia may exist independently as a specific cognitive deficit, or it may co-exist with other 'specific' conditions such as Dyslexia and Dyspraxia.

**Dyslexia** initially manifests itself as a difficulty with reading, writing and spelling. Even where literacy skills have been mastered, problems remain with skimming or scanning over text and retaining what has been read. Spelling is likely to remain erratic. The core challenge, however, is inefficient processing of language-based information, along with weaknesses in the short-term and working memory – all relevant to courtroom experience. Associated problem areas include organisation, time management, accurate sequencing(of number strings, events etc.), word retrieval and concentration.

Dyslexia is also linked to a range of skills including innovative thinking, entrepreneurship, creativity and high-level visual spatial abilities. People with Dyslexia often rely on technology and find it hard to function when deprived of it (for instance, in the courts).

**Dyspraxia / Developmental Co-ordination Disorder** is typified by poor co-ordination and motor skill difficulties which can affect movement, posture, speech and handwriting. Clumsiness could come across as being under the influence of drink or drugs. Working at speed is difficult. Other areas affected include organisation, orientation, social skills, time management and the ability to manage change, along with high levels of anxiety and suggestibility.

**Visual Stress** has been described as an 'inefficiency in reading' often associated with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, migraines and epilepsy. Symptoms include sensitivity to bright light leading to a glare from white paper, the blurring or apparent movement of print, headaches, frequently losing the place and fatigue when reading.

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The above neurodiverse conditions (apart from Dyscalculia) have all been included in the Equal Treatment Bench Book since 2008.

https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Equal-Treatment-Bench-Book-February-2021-1.pdf

Locate APPENDIX B, and scroll down to Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Visual Stress etc. to read how people are affected, and what reasonable adjustments are considered appropriate. Chapter 3: Physical Disability contains useful extracts on disability in general.

An earlier edition of the Equal Treatment Bench Book stresses that it is inadvisable for neurodiverse people to be unrepresented / litigants-in person, due to inherent difficulties.

#### **FURTHER FACTORS**

- **1.** The difficulties associated with Neurodiversity **vary from person to person** and range from the mild to the severe, as does the individual's ability to implement coping strategies. Several symptoms are associated with more than one condition.
- **2.** Particular susceptibility to the **effects of stress** is well documented in dyslexia literature. This can further exacerbate areas of difficulty and undermine coping strategies.
- 3. Prevalence of neurodiversity within the offender population

Research commissioned by the (former) Learning & Skills Council, which encompassed a range of custodial establishments, concluded:

- Just over half of those surveyed (52%) had literacy difficulties.
- 19% had a 'hidden disability' affecting learning and employment, such as ADHD. This high prevalence has been attributed to unaddressed educational difficulties (both in mainstream schools and pupil referral units) leading to marginalisation and poor employment prospects. The high incidence compares with around 4% severely affected within the general population.
- **4.** Forensic psychologists, probation staff etc. may lack information on neurodiversity. Their **reports and risk assessments** could therefore contain misinterpretations of neurodiverse factors. Special care is needed in child custody cases where a parent is neurodiverse.
- **5.** Many clients / court-users will be **unaware that they are affected** by Dyslexia etc. or not wish to reveal it. Observed difficulties could lead to an approach of 'How can I help?'

# COMMUNICATION WITH NEURODIVERSE CLIENTS

## 1a Written Communications: letters, official leaflets and websites

The following features promote accessibility and aid comprehension:

- aim for a clear text, laid out in a consistent fashion, well-spaced between paragraphs
- use short sentences; boxed summaries are useful
- incorporate headings and sub-headings
- only use graphics if these support the meaning of the text
- □ where appropriate, include icons and pictograms as markers to enable readers to locate information more easily
- if shading is used, keep it pale and overprint THE text in black, never in a colour
- diagrams are more accessible than long sections of writing; flow-charts are ideal to explain procedures
- ALWAYS provide a full glossary of terminology and abbreviations

**1b Visual Stress**. Since Visual Stress can be exacerbated by the physical features of text, it is important to take account of good practice when preparing written communications. This could make the difference between inaccessibility and effective communication.

DO use the following, where possible:	DO NOT use the following:
adequate spacing	small fonts (below size 12)
• justify left (leave a ragged right margin)	a justified right-hand margin
off-white or tinted paper	bright white or shiny paper
diagrams or charts rather than large blocks of text (where appropriate)	WORDS / PHRASES IN CAPITALS this disadvantages 'whole word' readers
clear fonts without unusual features	'fancy' or unusual fonts and italics
<ul> <li>consistent system of pictograms and graphics</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>printing or shading in either red or green (also bad for colour-blind readers)</li> </ul>
illustrations which enhance meaning	distracting visuals
Aim for a clear uncluttered appearance	Avoid a busy, over-crowded page

- **2. Form filling:** this is a challenge and a cause of anxiety for most dyslexic people.
  - People with Dyslexia should never be expected to fill in a form in front of others.
  - □ Provide a sample form with details filled in for MR/MRS/MS SMITH.
  - □ Ensure your client knows where to find help if they need to complete a form.

## 3. Spoken communications: general guidelines

- Give an overview of the topic before going into details
- Break the information into logical sections, with pauses
- □ Think carefully about how your questions are phrased in order to reduce ambiguity
- Avoid acronyms, jargon and metaphorical language
- Be aware of client's limited attention span and the risk of mental overload
- □ A poor working memory causes difficulty retaining information during interviews etc.
- Ask the client to feed back key points, in order to check for misunderstandings

## 4. Reducing Levels of Stress

- Offer to help accommodate any needs e.g. enquire whether a break is needed
- Reassure individuals that they can interrupt to check their understanding
- □ Let them know that they can take their time to consider responses
- Can the environment be modified if the client suffers from sensory sensitivity?

## 5. Assistance if there are orientation difficulties

- □ Provide a map of the area, highlighting landmarks, along with a written description
- Provide a plan of the building, marking the entrance and relevant rooms
- Arrange that the client is met or can access help, on arrival in an unfamiliar building

# 6. Issues relating to people with Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder

- Recognise that inattention, distractibility, interruptions and impulsivity are all part of their condition and increase the client's vulnerability
- □ Do not be put off by fidgeting, signs of restlessness or apparent inattention
- Distractibility might lessen if they are allowed to doodle or jot during the session
- □ Allow for regular breaks, to restore concentration. Also vital for Asperger Syndrome

# 7. Issues relating to people with Asperger Syndrome

- Since these clients live with high levels of stress/anxiety, mental overload arises easily
- Poor social interaction can lead to great difficulty answering questions
- An over-literal response appears inappropriate or insolent
- They often have their own idiosyncratic understanding of the world around them and are inflexible in their thinking
- There is usually a marked difference between high level intellectual functioning and poor social/emotional intelligence
- They may lack awareness of the consequences of their actions and have trouble showing empathy for others - even family members, let alone victims
- There is a limited grasp of body language, verbal cues and unwritten social rules
- They can find it hard to sustain eye contact and may suffer acute sensory sensitivity
- Whereas some people with Aspergers lack insight into their condition, others are worried they are getting the interaction wrong but have little idea how to 'do it right'
- Inability to cope with unplanned change is part of Asperger Syndrome
- There may be a small range of obsessive interests that (unwittingly) include a criminal element e.g. fascination with fire
- An inability to cope may manifest as verbal or physical outbursts this an instinctive attempt at self-protection

**The challenge**: can the necessary information be obtained without a face-to-face interview, which people with Asperger Syndrome find very stressful?

**Possible solutions:** could questions be submitted to the client in advance? Since open questions are harder to manage, is a multi-choice format possible?

"Answering questions is the most stressful thing of all" Student with Asperger Syndrome

#### NEURODIVERSITY AND THE 'PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC' OF DISABILITY

Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, ADHD, Asperger Syndrome, or a combination of these, can amount to a Disability, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Those affected are therefore entitled to have their needs considered and their difficulties accommodated, insofar as this is reasonable, leading to possible 'reasonable adjustments'.

Whether or not Disability is established, it is by accommodating the difficulties that the lawyer and the court have the best chance of facilitating reliable evidence.

# **ISSUES IN COURT SETTINGS: Difficulties and Accommodations**

Since areas of difficulty vary considerably from person to person, individuals should be given the opportunity to explain their particular needs and preferences. The difficulties itemised below are an amalgamation of the challenges that neurodiverse people experience in court or tribunal hearings (elicited through assessments and interviews).

# Information Processing.

- Difficulties with taking in information efficiently (this could be written or auditory)
- Slow speed of information processing, such as a 'penny dropping' delay between hearing something and understanding and responding to it

#### <u>Memory</u>

- Poor short-term memory for facts, events, times, dates (appears unreliable)
- Problems with remembering names (this could apply to people, places or items such as drugs or medication) and mistakes with routine information
- Inability to retain information without referring to notes or using of technology

# Communication Skills

- Lack of verbal fluency, lack of precision in speech (appears evasive)
- Inability to work out what to say quickly enough, word-finding problems
- Misunderstandings or misinterpretations during oral exchanges
- Difficulty in judging or modulating tone of delivery, often either too loud or too quiet
- Sometimes mispronunciations or a speech impediment may be evident
- Sudden verbal outburst due to frustration or a panic reaction

# <u>Literacy</u>

- Erratic spelling and/or awkward or illegible handwriting
- Even if reading skills are adequate, 'digesting' written material, skimming through documentation or locating a piece of information in a court bundle is very challenging
- Particular difficulty with unfamiliar types of language (legal terminology, acronyms)
- Difficulty with reading because of Visual Stress

Visual stress is exacerbated by fluorescent lighting, cramped text and/or bright white paper

# Sequencing, Organisation and Time Management

- Difficulty presenting a sequence of events in a logical, structured way
- Incorrect sequencing of number and letter strings
- Tendency to misplace items, chronic disorganisation, muddling dates or times
- Poor time management and particular difficulties in estimating the passage of time

## Orientation

Difficulty in finding the way to venues or in navigating unfamiliar buildings

## Concentration

- Weak listening skills, a limited attention span, inability to remain focused
- A tendency to be easily distracted
- Sensations of mental overload and 'switching off'

# Sensory Sensitivity

- A heightened sensitivity to noise and visual stimuli
- Impaired ability to screen out background noise or movement

# Lack of awareness

- Failure to realise the consequences of a remark or of actions
- Failure to take account of body language and non-verbal cues
- Missing the implications of what they are told or interpreting it over-literally

## The effects of stress

Heightened susceptibility to the effects of stress is a documented feature of Dyslexia and related conditions: SEE *Dyslexia and Stress 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* TR Miles et al (2004) Whurr Publishers. Individuals may come across as completely dysfunctional until they have had time out to recover.

## **Use of Assistive Technology**

Some neurodiverse people rely heavily on various items of technology to function effectively. Denying the use of these in Hearings is depriving them of their disability aids; this leaves them struggling to retrieve information and to provide basic facts which may count against them (e.g. a failure to recall children's birthdays in a child custody hearing).

# An amalgamation of possible Accommodations / Reasonable Adjustments

# When delivering spoken information

- When providing complex information (such as explaining a person's rights) first introduce the topic, then give the details, then summarise if necessary
- Try to deal with issues in chronological order
- Allow the client to ask for questions to be repeated or re-phrased without censure or (implied) criticism. They may need to check their understanding in this way
- When reading information out to a client, insert pauses after each section to allow the information to be absorbed. Check back to ensure understanding (as necessary)
- Make allowances for slow processing of information, misunderstandings and partial answers – the latter is likely to occur in response to compound questions
- Allow thinking time before prompting a response
- Be aware of a probable limited attention span and the likelihood of mental overload

# When referring to written information

- Be aware that some dyslexic people have considerable difficulty comprehending and retaining written material, despite being able to read adequately
- Since the effort required to decode text impairs overall comprehension, some clients will
  fare better if text is read to them. They may need a helper to find the place when
  extracts from particular documents have to be located 'on the spot'

## When requesting information

- Take account of likely difficulty with recalling / reciting strings of numbers or letters (number plates, addresses etc.)
- Be aware that, in a stressful situation, recall of times, places and events may not be accurate. Comprehension will become increasingly impaired

# Facilitating reliable evidence

- In many cases, rest breaks will be necessary to restore concentration (at least ten minutes for every fifty minutes of the proceedings). Many neurodiverse people will have reached 'mental overload' long before this time
- Is it 'reasonable' to ensure that the neurodiverse court-user has a support worker, assistant, or <u>trained</u> appropriate adult / Mackenzie Friend?

#### NEURODIVERSE PEOPLE PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON THEIR COURT EXPERIENCES

# A neurodiverse focus group describe their experiences of the courts as follows:

- anxiety about finding the building, finding the right room and being on time
- a build-up of stress, due to long waits for hearings
- the experience of sensory overload from fluorescent lighting, bustle etc
- coping with a room full of strangers in unfamiliar settings
- following the cut and thrust of court exchanges / knowing what answer is expected
- producing precise unambiguous answers
- providing consistent information
- finding the place in the avalanche of documentation
- maintaining concentration and focus without becoming overloaded.



#### THEIR CONCLUSIONS

"Our credibility is in doubt because we cannot 'perform' as expected"

"The system seems almost designed to entrap us because lawyers seize on just those things that we routinely do (hesitate, produce inconsistencies etc.) to discredit us".

Source: Disability Rights Commission focus group, March 2007

## HOW THE BEHAVIOUR OF NEURODIVERSE PEOPLE LEADS TO MISPERCEPTIONS

- inconsistencies could be interpreted as untruthfulness
- failure to grasp the point of the question comes across as 'evasive'
- hesitancy can suggest you are 'unsure about your evidence'
- a lack of eye contact can be mis-interpreted as being 'shifty'
- an over-loud voice can be mis-interpreted as 'aggression'
- sudden verbal abuse could be the panic reaction of someone with Aspergers

Workplace Consultants and Expert Witness session, led by M Jameson, November 2006

#### CONCLUSIONS

Given the prevalence of neurodiversity amongst the general population, and the much higher incidence amongst those who offend, it is important that information on Neurodiversity is included in training or compulsory CPD in the justice sector.

The consequences of not taking account of the needs of neurodiverse court-users are brought out in the Case Studies in the Appendix, which draw on real situations.

#### **NETWORKS & RESOURCES**

# National Organisations

British Dyslexia Association www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

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

Dyspraxia Foundation www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

Dyslexia Foundation www.dyslexiafoundation.org

Dyslexia Assessment and Consultancy www.workingwithdyslexia.com

#### **RESOURCES**

Equal Treatment Bench Book Judicial College <a href="https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Equal-Treatment-Bench-Book-February-2021-1.pdf">https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Equal-Treatment-Bench-Book-February-2021-1.pdf</a>

Autism: A Guide for Criminal Justice Professionals (revised 2008) National Autistic Society Living with Dyspraxia M Colley (rev 2006) Jessica Kingsley Publishers

The Tipping Points: the impact of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder P.Anderton (2007) ADDISS

No One Knows: Learning Difficulties & Learning Disabilities in CJS Prison Reform Trust. <a href="http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Projectsresearch/Learningdisabilitiesanddifficulties/NoOneKnowspublications">http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Projectsresearch/Learningdisabilitiesanddifficulties/NoOneKnowspublications</a>

# Materials freely available on Dyslexia Consultancy Malvern website

- 1. Coping with Courts & Tribunals: A Guide for People with Specific Learning Differences (rev. 2014) <a href="https://www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/CopingWith Courts & Tribunals.pdf">www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/CopingWith Courts & Tribunals.pdf</a>
- 2. Good Practice Guide for Justice Professionals. Guidelines for supporting users of the Justice System who have Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties (rev 2013) www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Justice guide to SpLDs.pdf
- 3. KIWIs: Resources for Justice Sector Staff on 'Specific' Learning Difficulties KIWIs =
- K Key Facts
- I Impact of the Specific Learning Difficulty
- W Ways of Working
- I Information & Links

www.dyslexia-malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Resources for justice sector staff - Kiwis.pdf

There is also a version for staff working with young people: <a href="www.dyslexia-">www.dyslexia-</a> malvern.co.uk/docs/justice/Resources for justice sector staff - Kiwis for young people.pdf





# CASE STUDY USED ON THE ADVANCED JUDICIAL SKILLS COURSE 2011

# 1. HT struggles in the Civil Courts

HT is representing himself

In the course of the hearing HT is handed a document and asked to read it and comment. He avoids doing this. When challenged he says he has got his wrong glasses and then admits that he cannot read 'on demand'. Although he can read individual words reasonably accurately, he needs a great deal of time to understand the import of what he is reading. HT also explains his difficulties keeping the place and reading under florescent lights (as in the courtroom).

The judge notices that HT is very fidgety and turns round every time there is a noise outside the room or the other party leafs through their stack of papers. He appears no longer to be following the proceedings and increasingly asks for questions and observations to be repeated. The judge asks HT if he is listening – he shrugs, looking exhausted.

Throughout the hearings everyone has had difficulty following HT due to his garrulous delivery, in the course of which it is difficult to identify the point being made. At one stage, when attempting to make his point with reference to various documents, HT 'loses it' and blurts out angrily that he has had enough.

#### **DISCUSSION POINTS**

- a) What difficulties come to light during this hearing?
- b) What conditions could be affecting HT?
- c) What reasonable adjustments might alleviate the difficulties, both in the current situation and in subsequent hearings?

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THE FOLLOWING TWO CASE STUDIES WERE USED DURING ACCREDITED TRAINING FOR A REGIONAL LAWYER NETWORK [LEEDS, 2008]

# 2) DB in the family court

DB worked as specialist engineer but was obliged to retrain in middle age following an injury. He was diagnosed with dyslexia during his OU degree study. Shortly afterwards he became involved in a custody dispute.

He was asked how his dyslexia affected court appearances and court procedures; the latter included a psychological assessment via questionnaire and interview together with observed play interaction with his children. His response was as follows:

I lost a childcare battle this week due to my severe dyslexia. I experienced total disorientation, visual and audio isolation. I could hear things going on but nothing seemed to register or make sense. Important questions were garbled and distorted and in some cases the questions didn't even register.

I was asked (unexpectedly) to recall events of several years ago. The order of how I recalled the events was vital to my case. However, I was unable to access my memories of the events clearly and what I did manage to remember I was unable to express in a chronological order or with any clarity. This was interpreted as an evasiveness and I was criticised heavily for not being able to 'keep to my story'.

During the hearing, I was expected to read many documents indexed by numbers and letters in a thick court bundle. I was expected to respond rapidly to constant questions with my only reference to said court bundle. All this material spanned many years of events and I not only found it difficult to find each page, but to read it and interpret the difficult language and comment in my response was, needless to say impossible to achieve.

They made no provisions for my dyslexia in court or during the psychological assessment. On the day of the hearing I was expected to read **new** documents that I had never seen before and to immediately give an accurate response to questions about its content.

A psychological report was done on me and my family under extremely stressful conditions in a hospital. I was put into a situation completely foreign to me and expected to deal with two children who were, at the time, very disturbed and distressed.

I was also given a questionnaire style series of psychological assessments which used words taken out of context and not in my usual vocabulary. In fact my wife assisted me by reading the questions. This took several hours to complete sitting in the busy waiting room area of the hospital, surrounded by the comings and goings of patients and staff.

After suffering the embarrassment of having the questionnaire read aloud to him in a public space, the effort of concentrating in this noisy environment and the difficulties caused by the abstract nature of the task, DB was interviewed by the psychologist:

After the testing he made me talk about my childhood which was bad and very painful this upset me. He continued to push me harder and harder until I broke down and cried. I got confused within minutes of this questioning. I was unable to understand his questions and they were quick and fast and on very painful subjects. I felt unwell for the rest of the day – my mind was unable to function, it had not recovered the next day.

## **DISCUSSION POINTS**

- a) Identify DB's difficulties in court and during the assessment ordered by the courts.
- b) How could these difficulties have been accommodated in the courtroom?
- c) How could these difficulties have been accommodated during the assessment?

# 3) TW prepares for an Employment Tribunal

TW (diagnosed as dyslexic) decided to take her employer to an employment tribunal when he refused to make adjustments to her work practices following an injury, suggesting she should leave. She engaged a solicitor and was asked to undertake further medical examinations. Ensuing meetings with solicitors and medical experts caused TW unexpected problems, which she documented below.

"I have found the whole legal & medical process in connection with my accident and unfair dismissal claims extremely complex and stressful. This has been compounded by my dyslexia, and I am now suffering from bouts of depression. I have tried to make my solicitor aware of dyslexia and how it affects me, but I have found that my dealings with her, and especially the medical examinations and interviews by specialists (on both sides) extremely distressing.

Attempts to explain my dyslexia have often been met with examples of successful celebrity dyslexics such as Duncan Goodhew or Richard Branson - look how well they've done! The suggestion is that I am a failure. Consequently, I feel I have not been able to give a clear account of the events and their impact on my life, and I am very aware that those I'm dealing with have little or no understanding of, and respect for my disability. I find the whole process both exhausting and dispiriting".

TW started to get the impression that it was thought she was using dyslexia as an excuse. At one stage she had sight of a report on her which read: During the interview with Ms W it was often impossible to obtain a clear history. She seemed extremely anxious ... (she) gave a history which was extremely confusing and often blamed this on the dyslexia and short term memory.

TW continued: "There seems to be little or no recognition that the stress of the legal & medical process due to the difficulties engaging in the process stemming from my dyslexia (especially overload, memory, putting myself over, low self-esteem and lack of confidence), affect my ability to make my case.

I have found the manner of some of the specialists at times both unprofessional and patronising. They have shown a complete lack of sensitivity."

Form-filling was an inherent part of the pre-tribunal information gathering process. Although TW pointed out on several occasions that she found forms intimidating and difficult to follow she received no official assistance with this task. Having struggled to supply the necessary details she began to worry that some of her responses might be inaccurate because she had misunderstood questions which seemed to be ambiguous. When it became clear that the employer would not co-operate with the Dispute Resolution Procedures, an employment tribunal hearing was arranged. A dyslexia specialist met TW to draw up reasonable adjustments for the hearing, which were forwarded to her solicitor.

Unfortunately it was too late to rescue the situation. TW gave up her case. She explained: "My confidence in the whole process and in particular in the individuals involved, has disintegrated. I am very concerned that I will not be able to put myself over as I would wish in the forthcoming hearing. I am afraid that I will be unable to grasp what the questions are seeking to establish and will do myself down."

## **DISCUSSION POINT**

How should TW have been supported to pursue her grievance?