

Vulnerable Customers - Dyslexia & Dyscalculia Help-Sheet

Dyslexia affects 10% of the population and dyscalculia 6%. Both are protected under the Equality Act and therefore you must make 'reasonable adjustments' to help these customers. Making things easy for customers with dyslexia and dyscalculia will also make things easier for all customers, so there is a good argument for making it a priority.

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010. It is a combination of abilities as well as difficulties relating to the way an individual processes information that occurs to different degrees and in different forms, right across the population and regardless of socio-economic background.

What impact does it have?

It impacts each individual differently. Commonly, it is a literacy difficulty that affects reading speed and comprehension, writing and spelling; words on documents may appear blurry, or float and distort. It can also impair numeracy and money management, organisational skills such as time management and juggling tasks, memory, and speed of visual or auditory processing.

What is Dyscalculia?

Another learning difficulty which commonly occurs is dyscalculia, which is characterised by impairments to learning arithmetical facts, processing numbers and performing calculations. Research suggests that dyscalculia may affect some 5% of the population.

What can I do to help customers with Dyslexia?

- Provide documents in advance, and not expecting information to be absorbed 'on the spot'.
- Prioritise and highlight information that a customer needs to understand to take action.
- Use reminders about key issues and decisions and set clear time frames.
- Use the (free) Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide across all channels.
- Follow telephone conversations up in writing to help memory.
- Ensure meetings are in a quiet area, free of distractions – avoid glass walls.
- Offer additional time for digesting information and completing paperwork.
- Ensure all correspondence is clear and jargon free.
- Be explicit about any action needed and the implications of action/inaction.
- Build rapport and a customer culture to avoid individuals being fearful of interacting.
- Ensure all web offerings are screen reader compatible.
- Offer alternative documentation formats – different fonts, text and paper colours can help.
- Offer to repeat or highlight key information.

What can I do to help customers with Dyscalculia?

- Be explicit with figures.
- Set out affordability, percentages and rates in real terms.
- Educate and make them aware of the long-term effects of a decision.

Where can I get further information?

The British Dyslexia Association website is www.bdadyslexia.org.uk. The BDA's style guide gives information on how to design documents and communications. It can be found at: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/employer/dyslexia-style-guide-2018-creating-dyslexia-friendly-content