

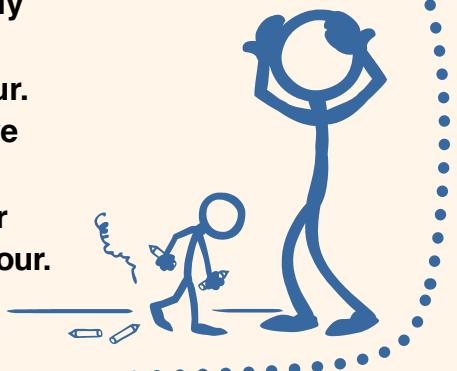
# Youth Intervention Programme – Youth Offending Service



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**It is now widely accepted that there is a disproportionately high incidence of unidentified dyslexia amongst those young people who have spiralled into offending behaviour. Although this is not an excuse for offending behaviour we are increasingly aware that unidentified dyslexia and its subsequent lack of support may be a contributory factor for some young people who have drifted into offending behaviour.**



**The following therefore is a basic Road Map on how a Youth Offending Team (YOT) may become more dyslexia aware and assist those young people who have dyslexia.**

### **Staff awareness**

- Train all staff in 'Dyslexia Friendly' awareness and good practice; staff's understanding and knowledge of dyslexia will inform their practice.
- Training also provided on co-occurring specific learning difficulties eg. ADHD which can often be an additional part of a young person's profile.
- Attitude of staff - the team takes a positive and supportive approach to a young person's needs.
- Identify a dyslexia core team and a 'Dyslexia Mentor' who will go on to have advanced training eg. Open College Network (OCN) training and will become the YOT's 'specialist' on dyslexia.
- Dyslexia awareness targets will be built into staff appraisal reviews and staff will be encouraged to reflect on their own practice with their line-managers on how Dyslexia Friendly they are and areas for further development.

### **YOT Policy**

- Build into the team's policy a commitment to become Dyslexia Friendly with associated targets – this will then be reviewed on a yearly basis and the team's progress measured.

- The team may therefore wish to apply for the British Dyslexia Association's 'Quality Mark' in recognition of their commitment.

### **Induction**

- Screening questionnaire – a basic screening questionnaire is devised (around 20 questions) based on dyslexic characteristics. This will be a dynamic 'thumbnail' screener to ascertain whether the young person needs to go on to be assessed in a more detailed way.
- Learning style questionnaire – to give an overview of the young person's learning needs.
- Discuss at induction interview the young person's school experiences – being mindful of classic 'dyslexia traits'.
- Enhanced computer screening for those whose initial screening results suggest dyslexic tendencies. The results of which will be shared with the young person, their family (if appropriate), school/college/training provider and multi-disciplinary colleagues.

## Partnerships

- Ensure screening information is shared with sister teams within the service and if the young person is of school age, the school will be contacted to share information.
- A proforma is created with information from screening/interview, in order for this information to be easily accessed in the future.
- Liaise with police and criminal justice team to ensure that there is awareness of young person's needs.

## Support

- Provide help and advice to the young person as they begin to understand their dyslexia and needs, enabling them to get ownership of their learning differences.
- Signpost to get help, act as a conduit to enable young person to get additional help eg Local Dyslexia Association, SENCo, etc.
- Play an advocate role if necessary in school on behalf of the young person.



## Communication

- Letters/Court Orders – written communication needs to follow the BDA's style guide; that is use of cream paper, minimum text size 12 point, in a font style such as Arial (further information can be found at [www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)). Coloured overlays may be purchased and offered to the young person (selecting their preferred colour).
- Verbal communication to be clear and mindful of the listener's needs – giving regular recaps on information if necessary.
- Community languages – have interpreters available if necessary for those who speak English as an additional language and if possible have written information in the young person's heritage language also.
- Signage around the building is clear and if possible in a Dyslexia Friendly design.
- Resources from the team budget to be made available to purchase assistive technology to share, if possible with a young person whilst at YOT. Inform the school or other learning establishments if a piece of technology proves to be a particularly effective aid for an individual.



**Contact us:**

[www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk](http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk)

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