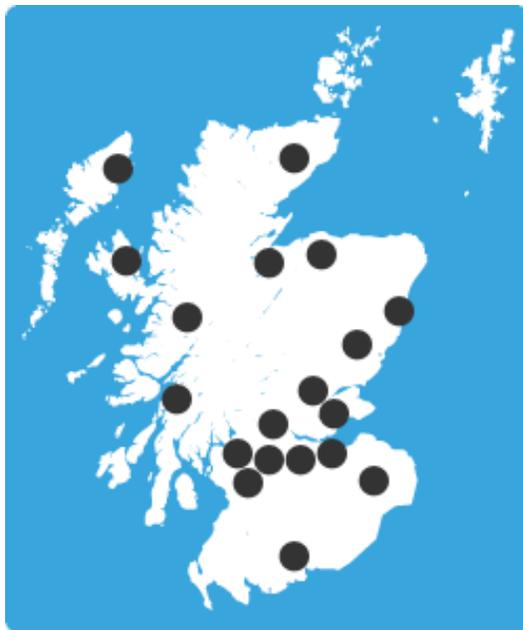




**Dyslexia
Scotland**

Branch Handbook



**Everything you need to know about
running a branch of Dyslexia Scotland**

Dyslexia Scotland

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Introduction

This handbook has been produced as a guide to help committee members start up and run local branches of Dyslexia Scotland. It is a large document but it is not necessary to read it all the way through. The handbook has been designed so that you can select and look at sections that are relevant. Dyslexia Scotland's National Development Officer can advise you about anything in this handbook.

Copies for Branches

Copies of the handbook are available by email and hard copy. Alternative written formats of the handbook, such as larger font, can be arranged on request.

Starting a branch of Dyslexia Scotland

There are 5 steps involved in starting a branch:

1. **Find at least three people to form a 'steering committee' (the minimum you need is a Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer).** All committee members of the branch must be members of Dyslexia Scotland.
2. **Get in touch with the National Development Officer** to talk about your thoughts and plans for your area. We may have other contacts that are looking to support groups in the same area. The National Development Officer will advise on how to take things forward and will meet with the group to help you decide if you want to form a branch.
3. **Head Office will send you 2 copies of Dyslexia Scotland's constitution for branches.** You can ask the National Development Officer any questions you have about it. Your committee should have a meeting where 2 office

bearers sign the constitution. The branch should keep one copy of the signed constitution and send one back to Head Office. Your steering committee is now your branch committee. You can use Dyslexia Scotland's company and charity number on your materials.

4. **Open a bank account.** See 'Banking and accounts' on page 22.
5. **Pass the bank details to Head Office.** Dyslexia Scotland will send each new branch £100 to help with start up costs.

Communication with Head Office

The steering committee should inform Dyslexia Scotland of:

- the name of the new branch
- the names, emails and addresses of committee members
- a branch email address
- any changes to committee members and contact details as they happen

Head Office will send all correspondence to the Branch Chairperson unless you ask for it to be sent to other committee members.

It is important that the committee keeps in regular contact with the National Development Officer in order to get the support required. This includes informing the main Office of:

- any documents including information for our website for public circulation (e.g. posters, flyers, press releases)
- dates of future open meetings, their location, speaker and timings (so that we can advertise the events on our website)
- numbers of people who came to meetings

Please check with Head Office if your branch is thinking of making its own leaflets/starting new projects so that we can check that there is nothing similar available and that the activity is covered by Dyslexia Scotland's insurance.

Most branches set up a branch email address. This is quite simple to do and instructions on how to do this are available on request.

Branches have tried to choose names that are as clear as possible, for example:

ds.lanarkshire@gmail.com or dyslexiafife@gmail.com

This email address will be made publicly available so it is very important that emails are checked regularly, either by one person or by rota. Emails don't need to be checked every day but at least once a week is recommended. Everyone who has access to the branch email account should agree to Dyslexia Scotland's 'Branch Guidance for email use' which covers data protection and privacy. Please see 'Data protection' on page x.

Current Branches

Contact details and information about all of our branches can be found on Dyslexia Scotland's website. Go to www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/our-branches to see a list of all of our branches. You should feel free to speak to any branches to share ideas about activities and running a committee. If there is a branch near you, you may even want to think about having some joint events to increase numbers and share information. The annual Branch residential is also an excellent opportunity to meet other branch volunteers and share good practice.

Committee roles

How many committee members do you need?

In accordance with the Dyslexia Scotland Branch constitution, you need at least three people to take on the roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. There is no

limit to how many additional committee members there can be and these do not need to have a specified role. All committee members must be members of Dyslexia Scotland (see 'Membership of Dyslexia Scotland and branches' on page 11).

Time commitment

People can often feel intimidated about taking on committee roles due to time commitments and responsibility, but the work should be able to be shared out across the committee; so the more people involved the easier it is.

Support

Support can be provided from the National Development Officer to help with committee roles and training can be provided if necessary (for example IT training, group facilitation for chairs, committee skills). The National Development Officer can also provide a basic reference for committee members who have been volunteering for over 6 months.

Branch roles

The Chairperson leads the committee and makes sure that it fulfils its responsibilities as a branch of Dyslexia Scotland.

Key tasks:

- Chairs committee meetings and provides leadership to the committee
- Introduces speakers at open meetings
- Works with the Secretary to prepare meeting agendas
- Prepares annual Chair's report
- Represents the branch as appropriate
- Attends Dyslexia Scotland Council meetings 4 times a year (or allocates this role to another committee member)

The Secretary makes sure the branch runs smoothly and oversees the administrative matters for the branch.

Key tasks:

- Does meeting minutes and sends them out
- Sends out information about meetings
- Keeps a note of new people who want to be on a branch mailing list
- Sends branch minutes and other information to Head Office
- Oversees arrangements for committee meetings
- Convenes the branch's Annual General Meeting

Ideally the Secretary should be used to using a computer and emails. This role can be split among 2 or 3 people - for example someone does the minutes, someone checks the branch emails and someone sends out information about meetings.

The Treasurer keeps a record of financial information for the branch.

Key tasks:

- Keeps a record of branch accounts
- Is a signatory with others for the branch cheque book and bank account
- Makes sure the branch has enough money to carry out its activities
- Sends an annual statement of accounts to Dyslexia Scotland
- Prepares an annual statement of accounts for the branch AGM

Accountancy experience is not needed for this role as tasks are relatively straightforward. As with all roles, support from Head Office is available.

Additional committee members

Most branches have additional committee members. This is a good idea, as it lessens the pressure on the Office bearers. Sometimes these members do not have specified roles but if the branch chooses additional roles these could include the following:

- Vice Chair (to act for the Chair when they cannot be present, or carry out other responsibilities of the Chair)
- Minute Secretary (to relieve some of the pressure on the Secretary)
- Events Organiser
- Fundraiser
- Membership and Enquiries secretary
- Youth Club Leader
- Email list co-ordinator
- Social media co-ordinator
- Mailing Lead
- Dyslexia Scotland Council representative (someone to feed branch news to meetings at Head Office in Stirling)
- Speaker and flyer Coordinator
- Library and Resource Officer
- Tea and Coffee organiser (if your committee chooses to do this)

The committee can co-opt members of the branch to perform specific roles for the committee if and when required. The positions above are not compulsory and will depend on the size of the committee and the branch activities.

Membership of Dyslexia Scotland and branches

Dyslexia Scotland values the role played by branches and the volunteers who run them. We want to make sure that volunteers are protected as they carry out duties on behalf of a branch.

Dyslexia Scotland's insurance covers all branch committee members against any claims that may arise in the course of branch activities. This means that **all committee members** of local branches must be members of Dyslexia Scotland. (Please see page 27 of this handbook for detail about what our insurance does and does not cover.)

If a committee member is unable to pay for their membership, the branch may wish to fund it themselves. Alternatively, branches should speak to the National Development Officer who can provide details of a small fund we have to cover such memberships.

Some branches have told us that they also have people who help at their meetings e.g. with teas and coffees who would not become members. In this instance we would ask branches to keep a record of these people. These people cannot be committee members. They will be called 'non-voting members' and they will not be able to vote at branch or other meetings. It is not anticipated that your branch will have a high number of (or any) non-voting members – it is really just to protect those people who help out at your branch but do not wish to become members. A list of non-voting members' names and addresses and signatures should be kept by the Branch Chairperson or Secretary.

Attendance at open meetings is open to anyone and membership is not required – although it is of course in the interest of branches to encourage more take-up of membership as they will receive £6 per year from every local membership fee.

Benefits of membership are:

- Quarterly magazines and related information
- A proportion of the annual membership fee goes towards local branch activity in the area
- Discounts on annual conferences and other seminars, training opportunities and resources
- Open invitation to adult network meetings (you can attend one or two before joining as a member)
- Access to the 'members' area' ('Message Boards') on Dyslexia Scotland's website
- Free downloads of Supporting Dyslexic Pupils booklets – Primary and Secondary
- Chance to influence the direction of Dyslexia Scotland through a variety of internal groups and forums

As well as providing the above benefits, membership makes a real contribution to Dyslexia Scotland's ability to represent the needs of people with dyslexia in Scotland.

Membership updates and resources.

Membership of Dyslexia Scotland is £20 or £10 for concessionary membership (students/unemployed/concessionary).

Dyslexia Scotland branches receive a portion of memberships taken up in their area. For every £20 membership we receive from your area, the branch will receive £6. For every £10 membership we receive the branch will receive £3. Dyslexia Scotland's Membership Secretary will send out payments to branches from local memberships and an update on local members on request.

Membership leaflets for display at branch are available from Head Office and can also be downloaded from the [membership section](#) of Dyslexia Scotland's website. Payment can be taken in a variety of methods, all of which are detailed on the

application form. People can also join or renew their membership of Dyslexia Scotland [online](#).

Committee meetings

There are lots of different activities that branches can run for people in their local communities. Our branches vary quite a lot in size and in the things they organise – most branches start with one or two things and build up over time.

Dyslexia Scotland branches need to have committee meetings to discuss branch business and plan events. Some committees prefer a fairly formal structure for committee meetings with motions, proposers and seconders, while others prefer an informal style of decision making.

Whatever your preference as a group, it is recommended that the meetings are structured carefully with an agenda and someone to act as chair. The committee should make sure that meetings are:

Effective: decisions taken at the meeting are carried out

Efficient: the whole of the agenda is covered in a reasonable time

Democratic: everybody's view is heard and decisions are taken by a vote if the whole group is not in agreement

Enjoyable: properly planned and managed meetings which achieve the above are more likely to be enjoyable

Frequency According to the Dyslexia Scotland branch constitution, the committee should meet when they feel it necessary. There is no minimum requirement, but holding regular meetings can make it easier for committee members to attend, e.g. the third Wednesday in each month.

Venues Local community centres, churches, colleges, or other charities may offer a room at no or little cost. A quiet local café may also work, but the important thing is to be able to hold meetings without distractions or interruptions.

Attendance All committee members should be encouraged to attend as regularly as possible. Distance or travel cost may make it difficult to come to all meetings. Alternatives to this are using a conference phone call or Skype.

According to the Dyslexia Scotland Branch Constitution, branches need a minimum of three committee members present at a meeting in order to make decisions.

Agenda The agenda should reflect the issues that the branch is dealing with. The agenda should be sent out in advance of every meeting.

Minutes This is the official record of what has happened at a meeting and what decisions have been taken. They are a useful source of information for those who were at the meeting, those who were not present, and a reminder of actions with names against them.

They don't have to be long; a bullet point format is fine. A copy of all branch minutes should be sent to the all of the branch committee and the National Development Officer.

Branch open meetings – speaker ideas

Dyslexia Scotland branches all run open meetings for their members and the general public who may be interested in finding out about dyslexia. Quite often, open meetings will have an external speaker on a topic related to dyslexia.

Who could you ask to be a speaker?

People with dyslexia or parents of dyslexic children.

Adults with dyslexia can make great speakers if they can talk about the difficulties they have faced and show how they managed to overcome them.

Parents of dyslexic children can also be popular speakers. Pulling together parents who have had different experiences and who have used different methods to support their children may be of interest.

Local authority speakers

Education services – having someone along to talk about the local authority's policies and approaches can often be popular among parents. This could include a Support for Learning Teacher, Education Support Officer or Quality Improvement Officer. Whilst this can be an opportunity for a frank discussion, these meetings may need to be carefully managed to make sure that there is a positive outcome and negative attitudes do not take over.

Teachers – asking teachers to share practical strategies and tips for dyslexic pupils in the classroom can be popular among parents and teachers. Dyslexia Scotland might know some teachers in your area who could come and showcase examples of good practice.

Speakers for Adults

Supported Employment Team – it may be beneficial to identify what services are available in your local area to support people to gain employment and support when they are in the workplace.

Further and Higher Education - Disability Advisors from local colleges or researchers from Universities may be able to talk at your meetings.

Adult Literacy/The Big Plus – Staff from these teams may be able to provide information with regards to the sort of service they provide and what the referral process is to becoming involved.

Other topics

Other suggestions for topics include:

- The Online Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit
- Exam Arrangements
- Identification of Dyslexia
- Maths, Study Skills, What is dyslexia?
- Dyslexia in the workplace
- Hints and Tips for Parents
- Visual Stress
- Assistive Technology
- Film screenings (Dyslexia Scotland has films that branches can borrow)

It is always a good idea to ask people who come to meetings if they have ideas of topics or speakers they would find useful.

If the speaker is not someone who normally works with a dyslexic audience they may not be aware of how to make their talk dyslexia friendly. It is worth discussing

this with them before the meeting. Information on Dyslexia-Friendly talks is available from Head office about this.

The National Development Officer can advise and help find speakers for branches.

Resources from Dyslexia Scotland

Dyslexia Scotland can provide branches with a variety of resources such as:

- Our leaflets on a variety of topics around dyslexia and laminated packs of our leaflets for display
- Membership forms
- Helpline cards
- Dyslexia and Us books (branches can sell this for £2.99)
- Signs for meetings
- Collecting cans
- Purchase of branch banners

For any other requirements for meetings or events, contact the National Development Officer.

Checklist for open meetings

Before the meeting:

- Decide on a topic and speaker and book the venue
- Create a poster to publicise the event (Head Office can help with this)
- Email / write to members and others on your mailing list
- Contact local press
- Pass details of the event to Dyslexia Scotland Head Office - Dyslexia Scotland promotes branch events on its website and social media.

Things you might want to have during the meeting:

- Tea/coffee or other refreshments
- A collecting can for donations (this can cover the tea/coffee costs)
- A sign-in sheet and pens
- Puzzles or comics for any children who come to the meetings
- Information leaflets and membership forms
- An evaluation/feedback sheet to give out at the end. Some branches now send a Survey Monkey online questionnaire to people who attend their meetings. The National Development Officer can help with this.

After the meeting:

- Update the branch mailing list from the sign-in sheet
- Follow up any actions or allocate tasks to committee members
- Arrange next committee meeting to plan future open meetings
- Inform the National Development Officer how many people attended and pass on any feedback, in particular quotes we can use for monitoring reports and funding applications.

Setting up and running a youth group

A couple of our Branches have their own youth groups. Some branches may want to set up a youth group if they feel there is a need in the area and provided they have a sufficient number of volunteers to support this. Dyslexia Scotland has a Youth Group Handbook - please speak to the National Development Officer if you are interested in this.

Branch publicity

Publicity is important for branches in order to let people know about open meetings, find new committee members and perhaps attract local funders. It can include anything from putting up and handing out posters in the area to contacting the local press.

Dyslexia Scotland puts all branch events on its events calendar on the website and shares information on social media.

Branches are free to set up Facebook and Twitter accounts but it is important to remember that these must be monitored and updated regularly. This can be very time consuming, so branches should take time to consider if they have the capacity to maintain this as well as whether there is a need, given that Dyslexia Scotland has active Facebook and Twitter pages. Dyslexia Scotland is very happy to share branch events on its Facebook and Twitter pages.

Producing your own publicity

Events and general awareness about the branch can be promoted using posters and flyers. Dyslexia Scotland can help provide a template poster for your branch. The branch name and Dyslexia Scotland's charity and registration numbers must be on all publicity that the group produces. (Charity No: SC 000951 Reg No: SC 153321).

Local radio and local press

To contact local press you can simply email or post a press release to the paper of your choice; but it is normally more effective if you can find a contact in the relevant department to speak to. This approach might help to ensure that the press release actually ends up in the paper. The press will also be more likely to pick up an article if there is a story attached to it, rather than just information

about your event. The National Development Officer can help with press releases.

Don't forget any free local newsletters which might also include information about your branch in general or about an event for free or for a small fee.

Local radio can also be a good way of publicising your branch if anyone is willing to be interviewed!

Who to contact with event information:

- Schools, colleges and universities (note it is good practice and more effective to send them to more than one contact in places within establishments – for example School Head Teachers, School Support for Learning Departments, School Library Services)
- Adult Literacy Departments/Community Learning and Development
- Job Centres
- Libraries
- Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Local Press and Radio
- Branch mailing list
- Medical practices, opticians
- Workplace notice boards
- Supermarkets (often have community notice board) and other local shops
- Churches
- Other local charities working in a similar field
- Free booklets/local newsletters posted to all houses in area
- Dyslexia Scotland Head Office

Annual General Meetings

Dyslexia Scotland branches need to hold an AGM each year. If it is your branch's first AGM then it can be held anytime up to eighteen months after the branch constitution was signed. Dyslexia Scotland branch AGMs should be held between November and March.

What to do before the AGM:

- Prepare a short Chair's report of the branch activities during the year.
- Email a notice to people on your mailing list with the date, time and place of the meeting and an agenda (see below).
- Notice of the meeting should be sent out no later than 21 before the date it will take place.
- Inform Dyslexia Scotland of the meeting details.

Sample AGM agenda:

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Election/re-election of members to serve on the committee
3. Minutes of the previous AGM
4. Report on the activities of the branch during the year (normally the Chairperson)
5. Presentation of annual accounts for approval (normally the Treasurer)
6. Any other business
7. Close of AGM

A copy of the Chair's report, minutes of previous AGM and accounts should be available at the meeting – these can also be emailed before the meeting if they are ready.

You must send a copy of minutes of the AGM to Dyslexia Scotland within three months of the meeting taking place.

Dyslexia Scotland can provide advice and support on all aspects of your branch's AGM.

Banking and Accounts

Branches of Dyslexia Scotland need a dedicated bank account for the branch. It is relatively simple to set up a bank account for your branch.

1. Take a signed copy of the branch's constitution to the bank
2. Fill in all the necessary forms (you will need to provide at least one form of identification such as a passport, or possibly more if you are not an account holder in that bank)
3. The bank will send a confirmation letter with account details (sometimes this can take a few weeks)
4. Send Dyslexia Scotland a copy of the account details and your branch will receive a transfer or cheque as start-up money

Branches should have at least 3 signatories, ideally who are not related to one another. There should be a requirement for a minimum of 2 people to sign a cheque. If any of those who are related need to sign a cheque they should get approval for this from the National Development Officer beforehand for each cheque to be signed.

As each member of the branch joins or renews their membership of Dyslexia Scotland, a percentage of this membership will be sent to the branch. This will be done at regular intervals by cheque or by bank transfer.

Keeping a records of accounts

The accounting process needed for a branch is not very complex and you do not need to have any training in accountancy for this role.

The Treasurer should keep all bank statements and a basic record of all money received and paid out by the branch, with the date of transaction and what it was spent on. A simple cash book showing cash in and cash out is a good way to do this. Receipts should be kept for all items of expenditure.

Annual return

Each year Dyslexia Scotland will ask branches to prepare a short summary of accounts for the previous financial year (1 April to 31 March). This needs to be returned to Dyslexia Scotland by 1 June.

Currently, according to the Office of the Scottish Charity Register (OSCR), if the income or expenditure of the branch does not exceed £100,000 each year, the branch does not need to have its accounts checked by an accountant.

The form on the following page will be sent to your branch each year to make the process as simple as possible. You need to keep a record of the different sources of income (for example donations, grants, bank interest) and expenditure (for example any capital costs).

Bank statements (photocopies are accepted) for the reporting period should be attached and sent to Dyslexia Scotland along with the summary of accounts.

This form will be sent out to all branch Treasurers each year

Dyslexia Scotland _____(name of branch)

Accounts from 1st April 20xx – 31st March 20xx

Opening Balance (01/04/year): £ _____

Income:

Donations: £

Grants: £

Fundraising: £

Bank interest: £

Other: £

Total: £

Expenditure:

Capital costs: £

Other: £

Total: £

Closing Balance (31/03/year): £ _____

Branch funding

Every new branch is given £100 by Dyslexia Scotland when it starts up. Branches can try to get things for free or at low cost e.g. meeting venues or publicity, but they often need more funds to allow them to run the activities that they would like to do.

External Funding

There are several external funds that will accept applications but Dyslexia Scotland must be told about all applications to external funders to make sure that two branches are not applying for the same funds. The National Development Officer can assist branches with any aspect of external funding – either helping to identify appropriate funders or with making the actual application.

Key points for fundraising:

- Decide what you need money for and prioritise the most important areas
- Agree who could take a lead on fundraising projects
- Remember that fundraising can be a time consuming activity and is not generally a priority for Dyslexia Scotland branches.

Ideas for fundraising

- **Bag packing** in supermarkets (also good to raise awareness of the branch)
- **Special events** like fashion shows, ceilidhs, quiz nights
- **Car boot sales** or **tombolas**
- **Collection cans** can be left in supermarkets or local businesses and should be out at all branch meetings
- **Donations** – rather than asking for money you could ask local businesses for donations of equipment or to **sponsor** a mailing or other activity (e.g. venue hire for 6 months, tea and coffee costs for 3 open meetings)
- Sometimes, employers will agree to **match fund** what is raised by their employees

- Encourage colleagues or others to do **sponsored events** and donate the proceeds to branches (e.g. sponsored walks, dress down at work days)
- Encourage parents of dyslexic children to try to organise **fundraising events at schools**. Often schools will donate proceeds of non-uniform days to local charities
- You can promote these events using websites like **Just Giving** and **Facebook**

Dyslexia Scotland Council Meetings

The Members' Representative Council of Dyslexia Scotland is normally referred to as Council. Council acts as an advisory body to Dyslexia Scotland's Board of Directors and is a channel for branch chairs to represent the views of their members. The Board of Directors, Branches, and the Adult Network are all represented on Council.

Why should branches come to meetings?

Attendance at Council gives branches an opportunity to feed back the views and needs of members in their area and to be involved in the way that Dyslexia Scotland works. Dyslexia Scotland encourages Branch representatives to take part but we understand that time and distance can make this more difficult. Travel costs are available.

Who can come?

Up to two representatives from each Branch can come to each meeting, although only one has voting rights. Branch committees decide who will represent them at Council meetings. This does not have to be the chair, and if no committee members are able to attend, a member of the branch can go as a substitute, although they will not have voting rights.

Council meets three to four times a year, usually on a Saturday at Dyslexia Scotland's Offices in Stirling. Once a year we have a branch residential which is on a Saturday to a Sunday. Travel and accommodation costs are covered for two members of each branch. We do have facilities for branch representatives to take part in Council meetings from another location using Skype. .

Insurance for branches

Dyslexia Scotland and its branches need professional indemnity insurance because they might provide information or advice (or signpost people to other services) on which someone might rely to make significant decisions. If a decision made gives rise to expense or distress, the individual might want to recover damages.

Professional Indemnity Insurance protects the company against compensation sought by someone if Dyslexia Scotland, or any of its branches, make mistakes or are found to have been negligent in providing information or advice. It also covers legal costs.

Dyslexia Scotland provides Professional Indemnity Insurance for branches at no cost to the branch. Branches are covered under Dyslexia Scotland's Professional Indemnity Insurance for the following activities:

Answering questions

Branches can provide advice and answer any questions verbally, by telephone or email about:

- dyslexia
- the education of dyslexic children and adults
- guidance on the Scottish Education system

- guidance on disability issues
- workplace dyslexia issues
- other dyslexia related conditions

Printed materials

Branches can provide guides or leaflets available from Dyslexia Scotland or any of their own branch materials provided that Dyslexia Scotland has seen and approved a current copy.

Meetings and events

Dyslexia Scotland's branches are covered to provide information and advice at the following events:

- open events and meetings
- workshops
- roadshows
- conferences

This also includes providing advice and information at events which are held by other organisations.

Supporting adults or parents at meetings:

- with education services
- at local authority level
- at meetings in the workplace
- in advocacy situations

Other activities

Branches can explain what is contained within legal documents, education and disability acts and signpost people to where they can access this information.

Branches can help people fill in formal documents and/or forms.

If a branch wants to do any activities not outlined above, they need to seek additional insurance.

Branches are NOT covered by Dyslexia Scotland's insurance to do any of the following:

Provide legal advice in any form

Any legal enquiries should be passed to Dyslexia Scotland where they can be signposted to relevant solicitors. Branches must make sure that their activities and literature do not make any claims or comments that they cannot substantiate.

Influence people around using or buying any specific commercial dyslexia treatment, product or therapy

Branch members can talk about their own experience of using a product, and it is acceptable to invite speakers to talk about their products but we are always careful not to endorse any particular product. What works for one person may not work for someone else.

Provide youth group activities without additional insurance

A youth group would be people under the age of 18 not accompanied by their parents. In order to run a youth group, extra insurance has to be sought. The easiest way to do this is to register as a youth group with Youthlink Scotland, who will also assist with other necessary procedures.

Extra note - our insurance does not include 'abuse cover'

This means that branch members are not covered if they are accused of abuse (physical or verbal) or if they want to claim that someone has abused them.

Example - If a branch committee member agrees to meet someone in their house they should be aware that the insurance will not cover them if they are accused of anything, or if abuse should happen to them. If they choose to engage in these activities the branch committee member needs to understand that it is at their own risk. Dyslexia Scotland recommends that one to one meetings do not take place.

If you are meeting someone to talk about dyslexia, it is safer to do this in a public place and to ask another branch committee member to attend. **Please note that there is no expectation that branch committee members will undertake to meet with people outside meetings but from time to time this does happen.**

Special care should be taken if the meeting involves unsupervised contact with a child under the age of 18; a vulnerable adult; or if the meeting does not take place in a public location. Branch members should not put themselves in any situations where they feel that they may be at risk.

We don't expect any of our branch committee members to be experts on dyslexia. If in doubt, refer an enquiry to Dyslexia Scotland's Helpline or speak to the National Development Officer.

Dyslexia Scotland holds a Gambling License which covers our branches to run fundraising events such as raffles. Branches should contact Dyslexia Scotland if they have any doubts or concerns about insurance cover.

Dyslexia Scotland complaints procedures

Dyslexia Scotland responds positively to complaints: we welcome and value feedback to ensure continual improvement. Complaints can be made against:

- a member of staff
- a member of the Board
- a member of the Council
- a branch member
- a volunteer
- a branch

Dyslexia Scotland has a staged complaints procedure which is designed to be fair, transparent and objective. It outlines the process which is followed when a

complaint is received. For a copy of the procedure, please contact the National Development Officer.

Closing a branch of Dyslexia Scotland

From time to time, a local branch may consider closing. This could be for a number of reasons such as lack of interest in the activities provided, or lack of committee members willing to run the branch. The National Development Officer can provide some support to help when a branch is having difficulties like this but in some cases this is not enough.

To close a branch, there needs to be a meeting with 21 days notice to all members. There should be a proposal to close the branch followed by a vote. At least two thirds of the members who attend the meeting need to agree to close down the branch.

The committee then needs to submit a resolution (written statement) with the minutes of the meeting to the Council of Dyslexia Scotland. This request should be submitted three weeks before a Council meeting.

If Council agrees then Dyslexia Scotland can dissolve the branch by writing to the members of the branch advising them of the decision. Any assets held by the branch go to Dyslexia Scotland.

According to the Dyslexia Scotland Branch constitution, the committee is responsible for the actions of the branch until it is closed down.

Any money or assets held by the branch will be given to Dyslexia Scotland who will keep the money or assets for 3 years in case another group wishes to start up a branch in the same area.

Full details can be found in the Dyslexia Scotland Branch Constitution.

Basic health and safety

Basic safety checks should be carried out in the venue before meetings. This could include looking for sharp objects, tripping hazards including steps, wires from laptops or projectors. Locations of fire exits etc should also be known and explained to people attending meetings.

Basic health and safety should be observed at all times to protect branch members as well as the public who may be attending meetings and other events. This is still important if a branch committee meeting is being held in someone's house.

Risk Assessments

Branches may occasionally be asked by a venue to carry out a formal risk assessment before a meeting e.g. many local authority properties require this. Support can be given by the National Development Officer if required.

Public entertainment licenses

Some local authorities require organisations to apply for public entertainment licences in order to hold events. Please ask the National Development Officer if you need help with this.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme

Dyslexia Scotland is registered with Disclosure Scotland to carry out checks on all regulated work that takes place by staff or volunteers. Dyslexia Scotland has compiled a list of roles which have been agreed as regulated work, some of which are roles carried out by branches. Dyslexia Scotland will inform branches when there is a need to have a role checked and will oversee the application process. All checks for volunteers are free. Since November 2012, existing roles can be retrospectively checked. Dyslexia Scotland has a policy on PVG scheme

membership and a list of roles that have been agreed as regulated work. These are available on request.

Upon leaving Dyslexia Scotland, it is the responsibility of the individual to inform Disclosure Scotland that they no longer work or volunteer with us, otherwise Dyslexia Scotland may continue to receive updates about a person who has left.

Data protection

When a new branch starts up, Dyslexia Scotland will contact any members in the area to ask if they would like their details to be shared with the local branch. If they agree, a list of contact details of members in the area will be shared with the branch.

The branch can use these to inform the members of branch activities.

The contact details should be stored securely, for example on a computer protected by a password, or locked away in a filing cabinet or secure drawer. These details should never be passed on to any third parties without the express permission of the members.

Additional contacts (e.g. from people attending branch meetings), should be kept in the same way. To make sure that they are aware of what is happening to their details it is essential to obtain their permission for this.

The easiest way to do this is by adding a column to a sign-in sheet at open meetings for people to tick. This will show that they are happy for the branch to keep their contact details and use this to inform them of open meetings and other activities of the branch.

Please speak to the National Development Officer for advice about data protection.

Information about Dyslexia Scotland

Based in Stirling with branches across Scotland, Dyslexia Scotland represents the needs and interests of dyslexic people in Scotland.

The organisation was launched in November 2004, following a merger between Dyslexia in Scotland and the Scottish Dyslexia Trust.

Dyslexia Scotland people

- High profile President (Sir Jackie Stewart OBE)
- Dedicated Vice President (Julia Trotter MBE)
- Enthusiastic volunteers - on the Board of Directors, Members' Representative Council, as branch committee members, and helping with other parts of our work
- Approximately 800 members
- Volunteer-led branches across Scotland
- Many valued supporters and donors
- Sub groups to manage different aspects of the strategic plan
- A team of 7 paid staff

What do we do?

Dyslexia Scotland currently delivers a range of support and services as identified by and on behalf of dyslexic children and adults. These include:

- National Helpline
- National tutor list and training for tutors
- A national list of approved Assessors who can carry out assessments to identify dyslexia
- An employment advisory service for adults with dyslexia

- Supporting Projects for the Scottish Government and other partners; for example, Count Me In; Dyslexia at Transition; Supporting Dyslexic Pupils in the Secondary Curriculum, Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit
- Website www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk, Leaflets and guides are available on the website
- Adult Networks in Stirling, Glasgow and Edinburgh
- Annual Conference, Workshops and Training events
- Quarterly Magazine and a range of services for members
- A range of local services provided through the local branches
- A national voice (influencing policy) e.g. Cross Party Group on Dyslexia

Our vision for the future

Dyslexia Scotland's strategic business plan outlines the following four Strategic Aims:

Quality services - To provide high quality information, advice, training and support services that inspire and enable children, young people and adults with dyslexia to reach their potential and to encourage other service providers to do the same.

Achieve change - To work collaboratively as a united specialist support and campaign body for Scotland to achieve positive change. To support and contribute to research, consultations and projects.

Involve dyslexic people - To develop and expand the role of local and national ambassadors. To support and encourage people to tell their story through appropriate public platforms and the media. To support and encourage people to participate in consultations.

Strong organisation - To ensure that the organisation has the governance, capacity, funding and membership support required to achieve the strategic and operational objectives of the plan.

Dyslexia Scotland contact details

Cathy Magee, Chief Executive

Email: cathy@dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Lena Gillies, National Development Officer

Email: lena@dyslexiascotland.org.uk **Mobile:** 07703 183548

For any enquiries about the support and development of branches.

Helen Fleming, Volunteers Manager

Email: helen@dyslexiascotland.org.uk

For any enquiries about volunteering opportunities throughout the organisation.

Katie Carmichael, Career Coach

Email: katie@dyslexiascotland.org.uk

For any enquires about supporting people with dyslexia in work.

Sharon Duncan, Senior Administrator

Email: sharon@dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Sheila McLaughlin, Tutor and Events Administrator

Email: sheila@dyslexiascotland.org.uk

For information about our national tutor list.

Pauline Docherty, Administrator

Email: pauline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk

For all enquiries about membership.

Directors:

Irene Lumsden, Chair of Members Representative Council

For enquiries about Council matters including agenda items and proposals. To contact the Chair of Council please phone Dyslexia Scotland on 01786 446650.

David Shaw, Chair of the Board of Directors

To contact the Chair of the Board please phone the Dyslexia Scotland on 01786 446650.