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Dear Mr Javid

I write regarding the Life in the UK Test. It has come to our attention that the testing process may cause significant difficulties for dyslexic/neurodiverse individuals. As dyslexia is classed as a disability and therefore as a 'protected characteristic' under the Equality Act 2010, we are seeking your guidance on what reasonable adjustments a person with dyslexia may access in order to have a fair chance at passing when undertaking the test.

As with any disability, every dyslexic person will experience different challenges and difficulties, so it is not possible for there to be a 'one size fits all' approach. However, we have identified the following potential challenges, although it is important to recognise that individuals may well experience others as well:

The **multiple choice** nature of the test: Multiple choice can be discriminatory for people with dyslexia as it can cause strain on working memory and information processing. **Can a candidate opt to provide their own answer to a question to demonstrate their knowledge? If so, can they give their answer verbally or in another format if required?**

The **timed** nature of the test can put dyslexic candidates under significant pressure, as the time to read, process and answer a question will take longer than non-dyslexic candidates. **Can test centres provide either extra time for the test, and/or options to pause the test and take breaks?**

Reading the questions and answers from a screen can be problematic for dyslexic candidates. Some dyslexic people would benefit from completing a paper-based dyslexia friendly version of the test, or from hearing the questions at the same time as seeing the words. **Are alternative formats of the text available to meet the needs of dyslexic candidates?**

We note that the test can be sat multiple times, at a cost of £50.00 per test. We also note that exemption from the test is possible for those with a long-term physical or mental condition, provided a medical testimony is provided with evidence from a General

Medical Council registered medical practitioner. In some cases, severe dyslexia may prevent candidates from studying for and sitting the test. Whilst dyslexia is not a medical condition, it is a recognised disability and a life-long, neurodevelopmental condition. In such cases, does the Home Office grant exemption with supporting evidence from a suitably qualified professional trained in the identification of specific learning difficulties?

Dyslexia Scotland has been unable to guide enquirers to our Helpline on the aforementioned issues, as guidance on the gov.uk website regarding the test and exemptions does not make reference to dyslexia/neurodiversity.

I would be grateful to you for a response on this matter so that we can advise our callers and members appropriately on this matter.

Please let me know if you would like further information in this connection.

I look forward to hearing from your office.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Magee

Chief Executive
Dyslexia Scotland

