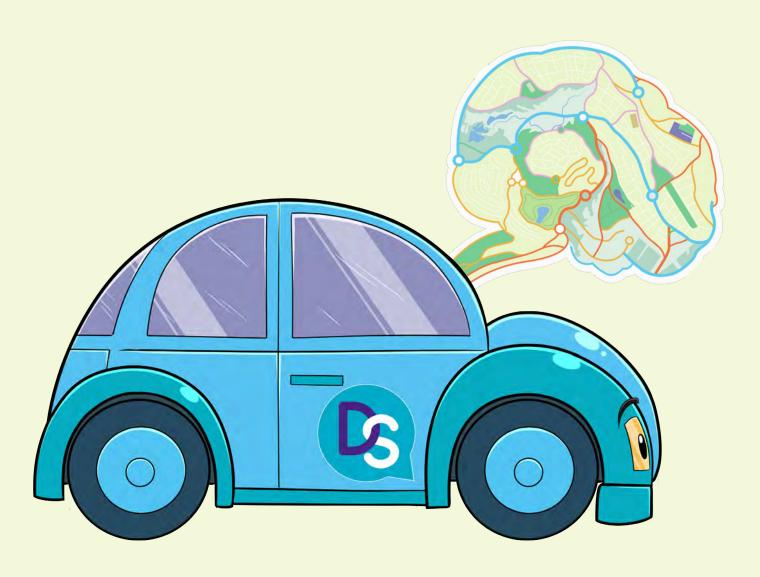


# The journey to a dyslexia-friendly Scotland



Our strategy **2022-2025** 

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## The next leg of the journey



## **Chief Executive's reflection**

This strategy sets our plan for the next leg of our journey to a dyslexia-friendly Scotland. We want society to be welcoming and inclusive for everyone - but of course our particular focus is dyslexia and neurodiversity. We've already travelled a great distance but there's still a long way to go. If Dyslexia Scotland was a vehicle, we like to think it would have the following features: we're reliable, practical, trusted and safe, as well as being progressive, versatile and adaptable - and well equipped for the road ahead.

### The rear view mirror: looking back over the last leg of the journey

We successfully accomplished the majority of our key objectives in our 2018 - 21 Strategic plan. Here are some of our highlights:

- we moved to larger premises within Stirling's 'Third Sector Hub' in order to develop and grow our services
- in March 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic meant we had to postpone some events and adapt services and plans accordingly. In response to the requirements of lockdown and beyond, the staff team successfully rose to the challenges of adapting our services online, including the 2020 and 2021 Education Conferences
- we established a Tutor Bursary Fund to support dyslexic children and young people affected by the school closures. In 2021 we secured further funding from the Sir Sean Connery family philanthropy to continue this work
- we renewed our Investing in Volunteers award in 2021; this accolade recognises our management and expertise in supporting over 160 volunteers who provide vital help and contribute to the work of the organisation.



The demand for our services continues to increase. For example:

- more Helpline enquiries each year
- increasingly popular and varied events such as those for young people, Parent and Adult Masterclasses and Dyslexia Festivals
- high uptake of our online resources such as our modules for teachers, resources for careers advisers, websites and social media channels
- professional learning opportunities for teachers in Dyslexia and inclusive practice: following a successful pilot in 2019, we successfully applied for accreditation and became a GTCS Professional Recognition provider in 2021
- ongoing demand for dyslexia training from a wide range of sectors and organisations.

#### What we've learned

- we need to clearly communicate what we already do to our members, followers and volunteers, Ambassadors and Young Ambassadors. This means sharing the right information to the right people at the right time, in a range of different ways
- it is important to share a range of different perspectives of dyslexia. We need to highlight positive, constructive and solution-focused messages about dyslexia and its strengths, whilst also representing the daily challenges many dyslexic people experience
- we must continue to raise awareness about dyslexia, what it means and where people can go for information and support
- we have a key role in influencing changes that will make a difference to people with dyslexia over time.

### Looking ahead to the next leg of the journey

Undoubtedly, the coming three years will be dominated by recovery from the impact of the pandemic. As we embrace a post-Covid world, Dyslexia Scotland will actively represent the views and interests of Scotland's dyslexic community in the development of post-pandemic education, employment and wellbeing matters wherever possible. In the process, we must be flexible and ready to adapt to the changing needs and opportunities for the dyslexic community in life, learning and work. The pandemic has also highlighted that digital information, resources and services can help us deliver our work innovatively, creatively, efficiently and effectively. The next three years will see us enhance our digital engagement and this will be a thread running throughout all of our work. An important element of this thread will be to strive for digital inclusion for those who currently cannot access the digital world.

Our strategy to develop a dyslexia-friendly Scotland is two-fold. We'll focus resources directly on the dyslexic community and indirectly on the 'changemakers' who can help us widen our reach. Parents, volunteers, Ambassadors, Mission Superheroes Champions, educators, employers, decision-makers and others are key to helping us connect with and make a meaningful difference to the lives of many people with dyslexia in Scotland.

While there are significant new developments included in our three-year plan, much of the work outlined in this plan is familiar ground. We know that a great deal of what we do is making a difference. Therefore, we are continuously striving to improve all that Dyslexia Scotland does in order to do the best we can for Scotland's dyslexic community.



## What is dyslexia?

Finding a definition of dyslexia is simple. Finding one we all can agree on is challenging.

In January 2009, the Scottish Government, Dyslexia Scotland and the Cross-Party Group on Dyslexia in the Scottish Parliament agreed on the following working definition:

'Dyslexia can be described as a continuum of difficulties in learning to read, write and/ or spell, which persist despite the provision of appropriate learning opportunities. These difficulties often do not reflect an individual's cognitive abilities and may not be typical of performance in other areas.

The impact of dyslexia as a barrier to learning varies in degree according to the learning [and working] environment, as there are often associated difficulties such as:

- auditory and /or visual processing of language-based information
- phonological awareness
- oral language skills and reading fluency
- short-term and working memory
- sequencing and directionality
- number skills
- organisational ability.



Dyslexia exists in all cultures and across the range of abilities and socio-economic backgrounds. It is a hereditary, life-long, neurodevelopmental condition.

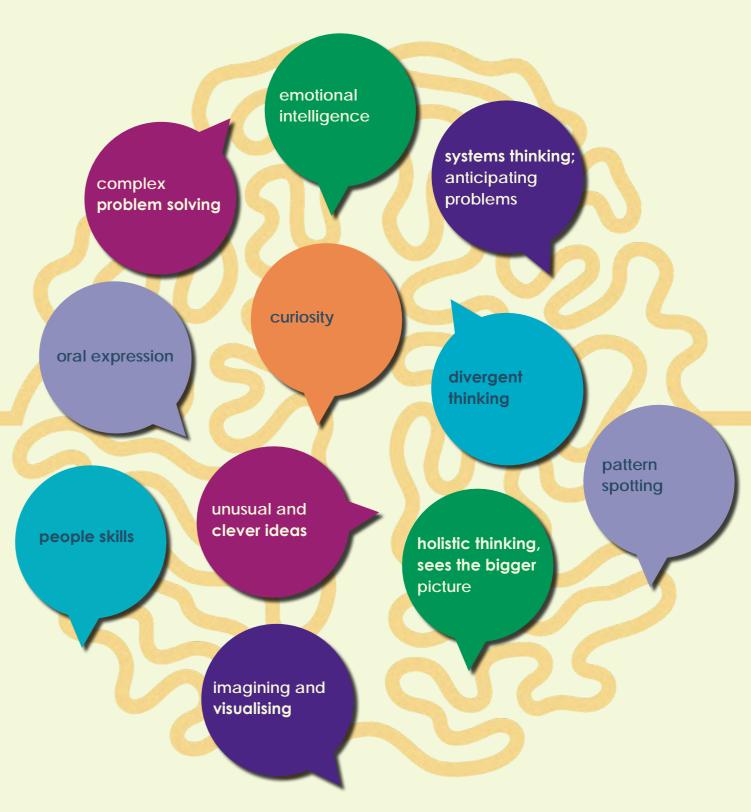
People with dyslexia will benefit from early identification, appropriate intervention and targeted effective teaching, enabling them to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.'



Though this definition focuses on the difficulties associated with being dyslexic, there are as many, if not more, associated strengths.

These include visual-spatial, or 3D thinking, imagination, visualising, making connections, storytelling using words and pictures, curiousity, self-understanding, problem solving, and divergent and holistic thinking.

## **Dyslexic strengths**



Sources:

The Value of Dyslexia (Ernst & Young, 2018)
The Dyslexic Advantage (Eide and Eide, 2011)
The Dyslexic Adult (McLoughlin and Leather, 2013)

## Who are we making this journey for?

#### Dyslexic adults like Ani

"After leaving Armenia as a teenager, I grew up in Holland with my family then moved to Scotland completely by myself. I always knew I learned differently from the other children in my school, struggling with language and reading.

In 2014, the last straw came. I was fired from my job in a busy sollicitor's office because I was always forgetting things. It was becoming apparent that I was probably dyslexic. I had no money, was on my own and no idea what to do without a job. Mostly I was feeling upset about what it might mean to be dyslexic.

When I called Dyslexia Scotland, the Helpline listened to me, calmed me down and talked me through practical steps for managing after being fired. Once I was sorted for money, the adviser helped me arrange an assessment for dyslexia. It was so difficult to hear the identification but after getting help from the career and adult network services in Dyslexia Scotland, I learned to understand and accept myself. With help from the career coach, I figured out my strengths. I had been working for a while in retail and cleaning jobs but the service helped me to go to college to study counselling and to get a job as a classroom assistant helping young people engage in learning. It has been a hard but amazing journey. This organisation has changed my life and I couldn't be more grateful."

#### Changemakers like teacher Debbie

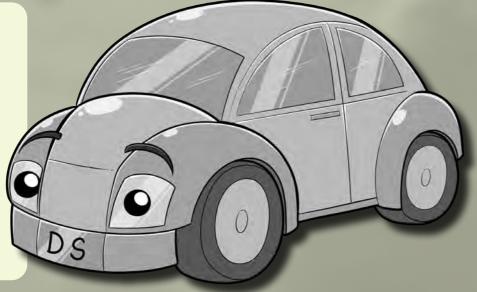
- "As a result of the knowledge, skills and confidence gained by Debbie's involvement in GTCS Professional Recognition, Debbie has been given a central role in the roll out and support of East Ayrshire Inclusive Practice Pathway. Her work, along with a small central team of colleagues, has supported school communities to embed key areas of Inclusive Practice within our schools. This not only helps us to meet our statutory duties but it also delivers the following in our school communities:
- an empowered and connected pathway
   participation and improved quality of
  educational outcomes for learners with
  additional support needs
  This is achieved through
  collaborative enquiry and effective self-

I hope from my brief testimonial you can see the weight and value the authority has given to Debbie being given her GTC recognition in Dyslexia as we strive to become an Inclusive Practice Authority."

**Local Authority Manager** 

## Dyslexic young people like Sarah

"If it wasn't for Dyslexia
Scotland, I'd be lacking in
confidence, less aware of
what I could do or be when I
grow up."



#### Changemakers like parent Jill

"Dyslexia Scotland is a brilliant organisation, I will always be so grateful for the information and advice we have been given....especially that first phone call, when I called looking for help and your volunteer was so lovely and understood - I burst into tears because it was the first person who actually was getting what I was saying about my son and pointing me in the right direction....three years on and we have everything in place for transitioning to high school and he's so confident about his dyslexia and sees it as a super power!"

Dyslexia Scotland | Strategic Plan 2022-2025

## The high road Our mission Our vision To inspire and enable dyslexic people to reach their potential Scotland is a dyslexiain life, learning and work friendly country that values the skills and talents of dyslexic people Playground Camb Our values • inclusion empowerment collaboration Railway social justice innovation • continuous improvement DS Dyslexia Scotland | Strategic Plan 2022-2025

Where are we going?

**Our vision** 



What will a dyslexia-friendly Scotland be like when we get there? What will make Scotland the best place for dyslexic people to live, learn, work and grow up in?

We will have arrived at a dyslexia-friendly nation when:

- all people in Scotland know what dyslexia is and isn't
- · dyslexia is identified early; everyone can access formal identification easily and at no cost at any time in their lives
- all information is easily accessible to people with dyslexia in whatever format
- dyslexic people have opportunities to communicate and express themselves in ways that work for them in all aspects of life, learning and work
- neurodiversity is celebrated and recognised as advantageous
- dyslexic people can learn, work and play to their strengths, in all areas of their life and at any age
- dyslexic people have opportunities to personalise their learning and working conditions so that they can flourish in all areas of life, learning and work
- support for dyslexic difficulties of all kinds is available, encouraged and promoted openly
- the principles and recommendations of the Equality Act (2010) are fully implemented.

## The policy landscape

Dyslexia Scotland's own journey, while focussed on the rights, needs and development of the dyslexic community, interweaves with those of many others. The planned route to a dyslexia-friendly Scotland is interdependent with other national strategic plans and priorities.

> Scotland's **National Outcomes**

- Getting it Right for Every Child
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- National Youth Work Strategy
- Volunteering for All
- Human Rights
- The UN Rights of the Child
- Fairer Scotland Action Plan
- Equality Act (2010)

#### Learning

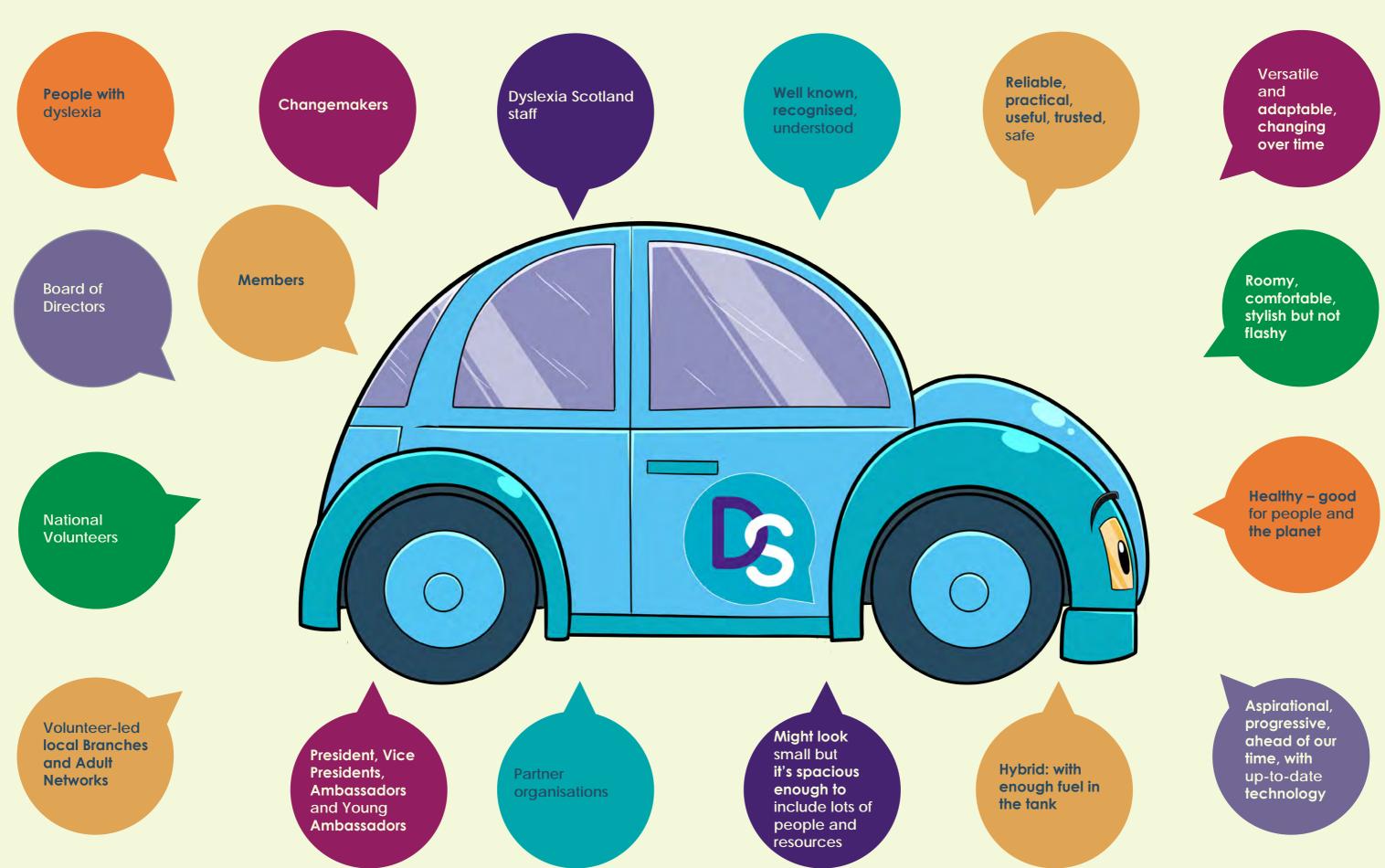
- A Curriculum for Excellence
- Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland 2022-2027
- Additional Support for Learning Act (Scotland)

#### Work

- Scotland's Career Strategy
- A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People employment action plan
- Developing the Young Workforce: youth employment strategy

## Who is on this journey?

## What is our vehicle like?



Dyslexia Scotland | Strategic Plan 2022-2025



## Are we nearly there yet? How will we know when we are?

In our very long-term destination, dyslexic people will be able to participate equally and inclusively in all aspects of life, learning and work. The next 3 year journey will take us closer to this aspiration. By 2025, we will have created more opportunities for dyslexic people to participate, achieve and attain in life, learning and work. As a result of our interventions, we hope to effect the changes they asked us to make.

As we make progress towards a dyslexia-friendly Scotland, these are the specific differences the dyslexic community has asked us to concentrate on:

#### Dyslexic people will:

- have a better understanding of how they think and learn
- be more confident
- feel better supported and valued in their daily life, learning environment, workplace and community
- have opportunities to achieve and attain
- be better equipped to manage key challenges and transitions.

#### Among the non-dyslexic population:

• there will be increased understanding of dyslexia and its impacts and advantages.



## The dashboard: target statistics

#### Our work with the dyslexic community:

Scotland's dyslexic community is estimated to be around **545,400**.

This number does not include the families of those who are dyslexic or those who employ, work with, teach and support dyslexic people. Dyslexia Scotland works with all of these groups, not only those with dyslexia. If we doubled the above numbers, with one person supporting every dyslexic person, the community would be **1,090,800**.

#### Reach

We reach the equivalent of **around a third (29%)** of this group through indirect and digital means. This is around **316,500** interactions per year.

#### **Direct engagement**

We have direct contact with **15%** of the dyslexic community through our services and activities, both on and offline - this total includes workshops, Helpline, careers engagements, Adult Networks, Young Ambassador sessions, and ad hoc events. We reach around **114,000** people directly per year.

#### Upskilling and empowering changemakers

In addition to providing services and information to the dyslexic community, we engage with those who live with, work with and educate dyslexic individuals. These are parents and carers, employers, educators, service providers, volunteers and others striving to make a difference in their setting. In turn, thanks to our input, these changemakers will reach and make a difference to **thousands of dyslexic people**, including those who may not know they are dyslexic.

Annually, we provide learning and development opportunities to **16,700** grassroots changemakers - this number includes those who participate in our Education Conference, Parent Masterclasses, online modules, Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice Professional Recognition programme; Mission Superheroes Champions; online courses, the Specific Learning Difficulties Forum, tutor seminars and training, volunteer training and training of all other kinds including bespoke training.

#### **Brief interventions**

We provide brief information, advice and guidance to around **53,000** people per year. This number includes Helpline enquiries, brief career guidance interventions, campaigns such as Ellie's Blue Dyslexia Ribbon and Branch engagements.

## Aim One:

## To provide and promote high quality services



Our services make a direct difference to dyslexic people, as well as to non-dyslexic individuals who come to us to learn how they can support others in their context (for example in the family, learning environment or workplace). We're here to deliver and champion services that lead to a significant and lasting difference to the dyslexic community.

We will continue to deliver, develop and promote our key services. These include, but are not limited, to:

- Helpline, Adult Networks, Branch meetings and support, career information, advice and guidance, assessment and tutoring services for dyslexic people
- upskilling opportunities for families, educators, employers and other changemakers including seminars, events, conferences and masterclasses
- information, publication and resources including via our websites and social media networks
- promoting other services that benefit dyslexic people.





#### New developments:

- maximising our use of digital technology and tools to deliver and promote services and enable others to do the same
- growing our online presence including upgrading 3 websites. We will use digital technology to reach more people while freeing up time and resources to focus on face to face contact where it is needed most
- enabling dyslexic people to access and use digital technology
- providing 1875 tutoring hours for dyslexic children and young people whose families could not otherwise afford tutoring support through our approved dyslexia tutors and the Tutor Bursary Fund (using Sir Sean Connery family philanthropy and seeking other funders beyond Year 1)
- exploring ways of providing free assessments for adults, securing funding to do so and to measuring the impact of the service
- ensuring focused continuous improvement of our services.



## **Aim Two:**

## To influence and achieve positive change at a national and local level



We're a national organisation and as such, we want to use our strategic partnerships to help us make the greatest changes. We know that the pace of change can feel slow for individuals, so we're also committed to empowering and equipping grassroots services to be changemakers in their own context.

#### We will continue to influence change in the worlds of learning and work by:

- improving the confidence and skills of teachers by increasing their use of the Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit, Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice modules and other resources and learning opportunities such as our annual Education Conference
- providing learning, development and upskilling opportunities for employers, educators, parents and other changemakers
- delivery of our Mission Superheroes programme in primary schools
- strengthening links with national and grassroots organisations including local authorities and schools, community learning and development and non-school organisations working with harder-to-reach young people, for example youth services, social care, criminal justice
- promoting and enabling access to dyslexia assessment and support for adults
- collaborative meaningful relationships with strategic groups and partners who can help us influence change, such as the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, GTCS, SQA or equivalent, Skills Development Scotland, CALL Scotland, Cross-Party Groups on Dyslexia, Disability and Volunteering, UK Dyslexia Adult Network (DAN), European Dyslexia Association.





#### New developments:

- engagement of national, international and strategic partners we do not yet work with
- research: establishing a dyslexia-friendly Scotland baseline; learning from practice through self-evaluation; securing funds to explore and assess the benefits of free adult assessments in partnership with Universities; developing an evidence base around dyslexia and mental health
- addressing inequality: explore effective ways of capturing, recording and reporting engagements with, and the impact on, those in greatest need.

#### **Education:**

- delivering the Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice professional Recognition Programme as a GTCS accredited provider from June 2021 onwards (30 practitioners per year); promoting the Toolkit and 3 online Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice modules since their refresh in April 2021; building the number of educators who join Dyslexia Scotland's membership; 50% (25,000) of all Scottish primary and secondary teachers including newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to complete at least 1 of our modules by 2025
- Sir Sean Connery family philanthropy Dyslexia Teacher programme: working in close collaboration with the City of Edinburgh Council to deliver enhanced dyslexia services for children and young people in schools, with a view to extending the learning to other local authorities beyond the 3 years
- Sir Sean Connery family philanthropy Dyslexia Teacher scholarship programme: offering supported funding opportunities in Year 1 for up to 20 teachers to build their knowledge and skills in supporting children and young people with dyslexia in their classrooms
- awareness/media: Increasing confidence and skills of designated staff and volunteers to speak to the media
- a dyslexia-friendly Scotland campaign promoting inclusion and understanding
- raising dyslexia awareness in dyslexia-prominent sectors that have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic such as hospitality and the arts
- further promotion of resources and awareness for children and young people including marking the 10th anniversary of Ellie's Blue Dyslexia Ribbon campaign and Mission Superheroes – training up to 20 young dissemination champions (P5/P6) per year to help deliver workshops in their own schools
- delivery of a capacity-building programme for our community-based Branch volunteers.

## **Aim Three:**

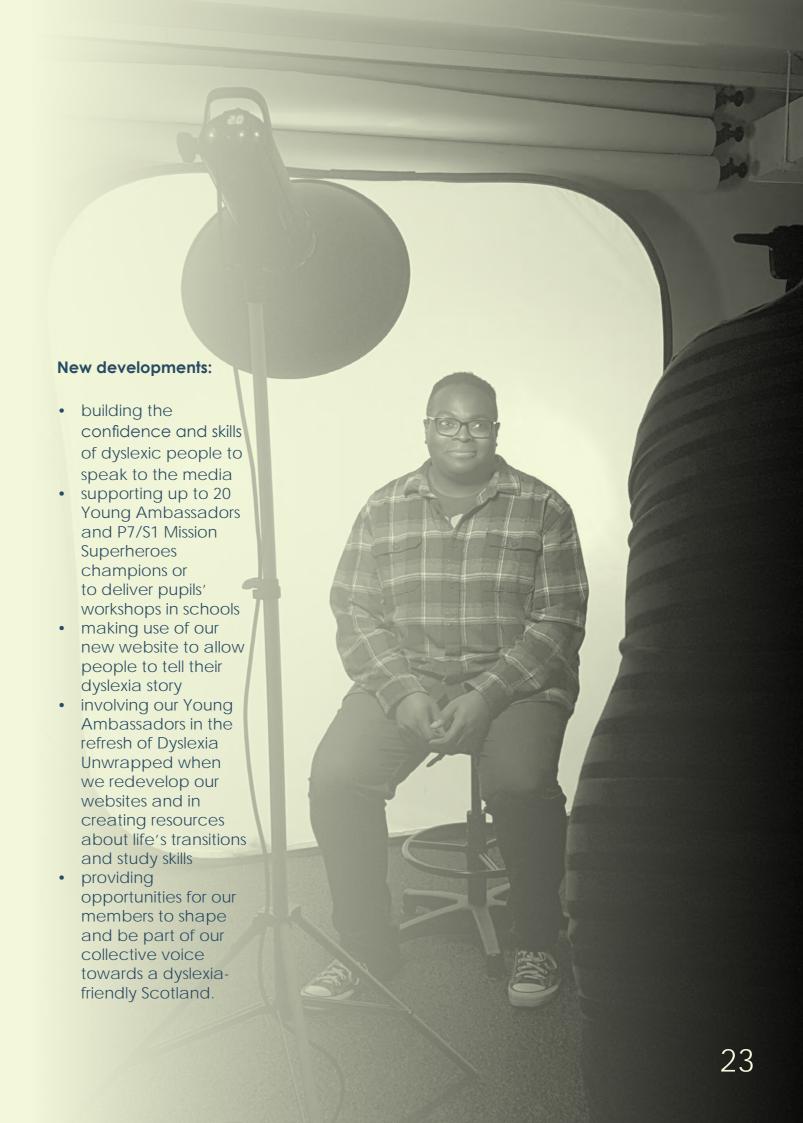
## To give people with dyslexia an effective individual and collective voice

The dyslexic community, which represents one tenth of Scotland's population, includes many individuals who feel marginalised, invisible and unheard. In stark contrast, there are many successful dyslexic people who learn and work independently and who have the skills and confidence to reach their potential. We're committed to enabling every dyslexic person to tell their story and have their voice heard in all areas of life.

#### We will continue to:

- support people from a wide range of backgrounds to tell their story and be heard through our platforms and others', such as Cross Party Groups
- support and encourage contributions to our communication networks about a range of different topics that interconnect with dyslexia
- support people of all ages and backgrounds to contribute to relevant consultations and research.





## **Aim Four:**

# To ensure that Dyslexia Scotland is a sustainable, efficient and effective organisation



While we're ambitious about pressing ahead and effecting change, we're wise enough to know that we need to pace ourselves, manage our resources carefully and maintain the quality of our work. We are in this for the long haul, so we need to sustain ourselves by adjusting capacity to meet demand for existing and new services. The pursuit of incremental gains is key to making the bigger changes in the long run.

#### We will continue with:

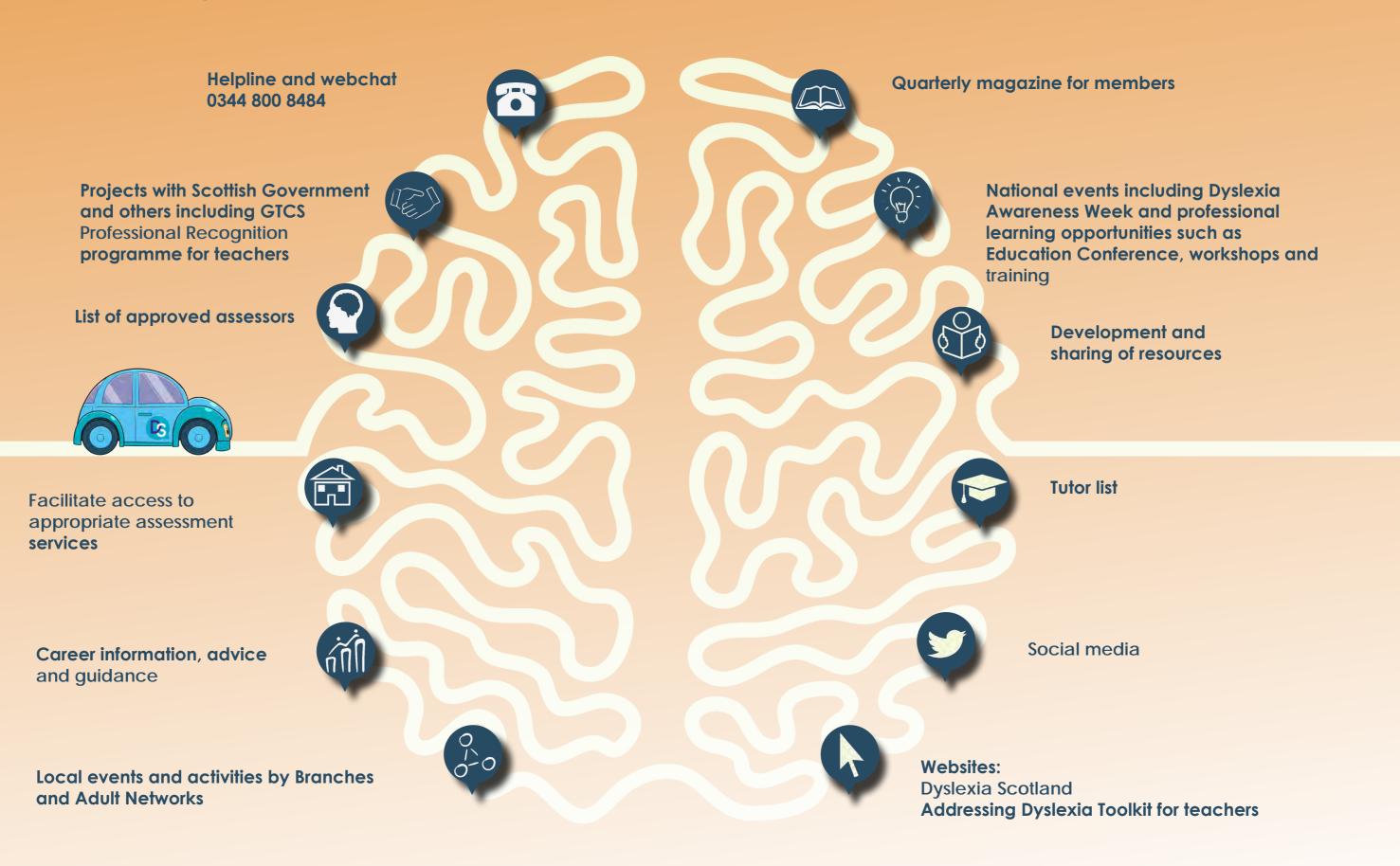
- our network of volunteer-led Branches, supported by our National Development
  Officer regular meetings, risk assessment, ongoing monitoring and communication;
  Annual Branch and Adult Network residential: sharing good practice and considering
  issues such as membership, training needs, and volunteer capacity
- supporting Branches with specific issues like delivering open meetings and providing support in remote areas; liaising with local authorities
- people ongoing support and training of staff team, volunteers, Branches and Adult Networks; ongoing monitoring and development of capacity, knowledge and skills
- membership supporting existing members and promoting membership benefits widely and at every available opportunity. Review membership benefits and costs, including developing an organisational membership scheme
- funding holding regular funding group meetings; reporting at every Board meeting.
   Submit ongoing funding applications and reports to existing and potential supporters
  (Trusts, companies, private donors, sponsors) to secure/maintain identified priorities.
   Continue to review opportunities to increase income generation and to secure best value for money.

#### New developments:

- succession planning for the Board we'll explore how to increase the diversity of Directors and build on their skills where there are gaps
- review our strategic sub groups and re-align these with the new plan
- take time to review our skills and any gaps across the organisation. Build the capacity
  and skills of our staff and volunteers to increase their confidence and efficacy in their
  roles
- develop a consistent approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement
- explore new avenues for funding (legacy strategy; ensure funding comes from an appropriate range of sources; develop an effective income generation strategy)
- explore the expansion of the staff team, the existing work-to-staff ratio and flexible ways of working post-pandemic (including arranging, protecting and investing time in planning, development and learning)
- increase the capacity of community-based Branch volunteers; measure the impact of a development programme on their skills and impact.



## **Our service map**



Dyslexia Scotland | Strategic Plan 2022-2025

### Where to find us

Dyslexia Scotland Cameron House Forthside Way Stirling FK8 1QZ

www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

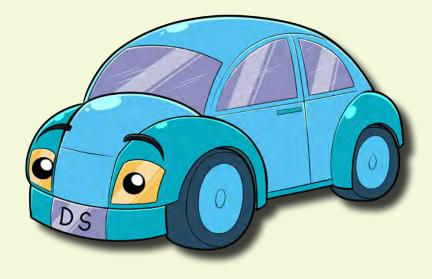
www.addressingdyslexia.org.uk

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube

We aim to make our printed publications as accessible as possible for dyslexic readers by following dyslexia-friendly written communication guidance such as blue text on a cream background, inverted commas instead of italics, limited use of upper case, and plain English phrasing.

Our thanks to The Lasting Difference for their input to this report, and to Dekko Comics for their car illustrations.





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