



Dyslexia
Scotland

Helpline report 2023

About the Dyslexia Scotland Helpline

Dyslexia Scotland aims to inspire and enable everyone to reach their full potential. This is achieved through a range of support and services, one of which is its flagship service, the Dyslexia Helpline.

Dyslexia Scotland's Helpline service is a signposting service. It provides advice and guidance to empower people to break down barriers, manage their challenging circumstances and have their voices heard. We can offer help by signposting to a wide range of existing services including advocacy and mediation agencies.

Limitations

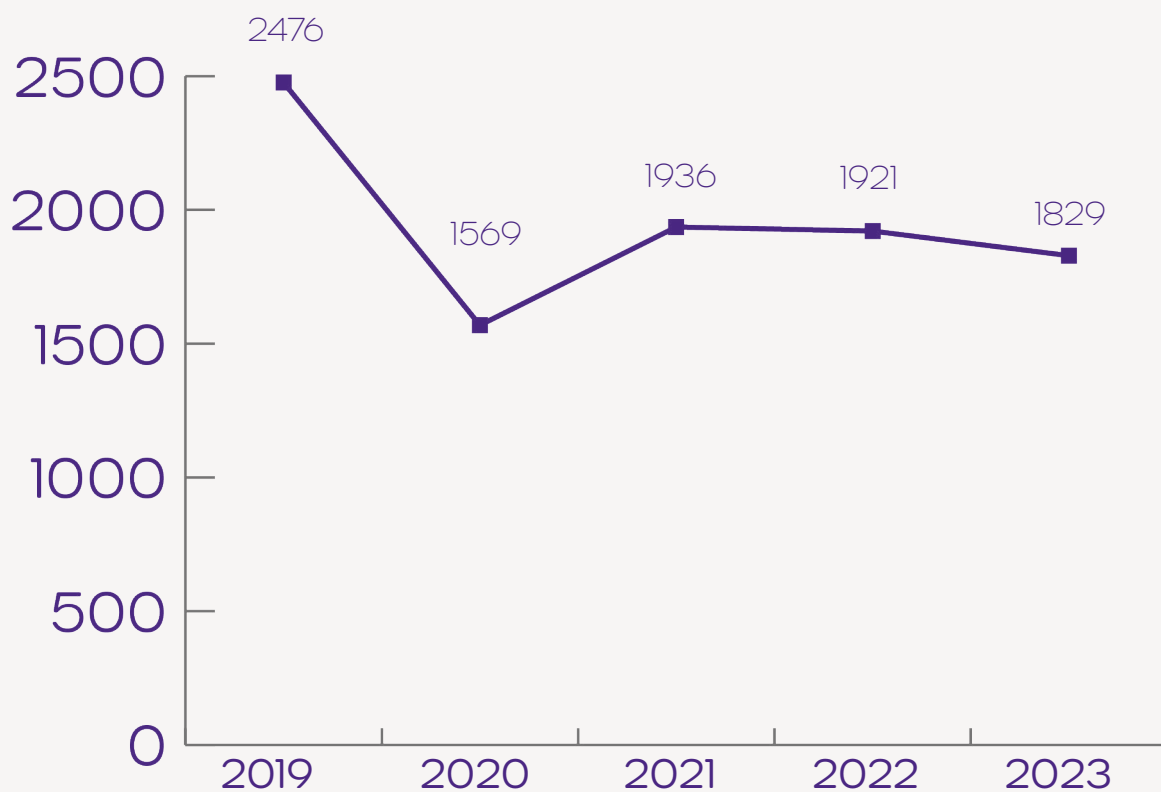
The Helpline service doesn't have capacity to get directly involved in individual cases. This can be frustrating for the enquirers who may have an expectation that Advisors will do just that: intervene and get involved in their personal situations. However, we reiterate our aim to empower enquirers and we encourage them to share forward their new-found knowledge. For example, enquirers can use the advice given to them to support another parent who is struggling getting the help they need or a fellow worker experiencing a challenging workplace.

Our expert area of advice is dyslexia, however, we do have enquiries about many other types of co-occurring challenges. Our trained staff and volunteers don't have the answer to every question, but are skilled at listening, empathising. The service provides brief positive, problem-solving interventions with individuals experiencing barriers to with dyslexia.

The following statistics, feedback and analysis capture one year of service delivery.

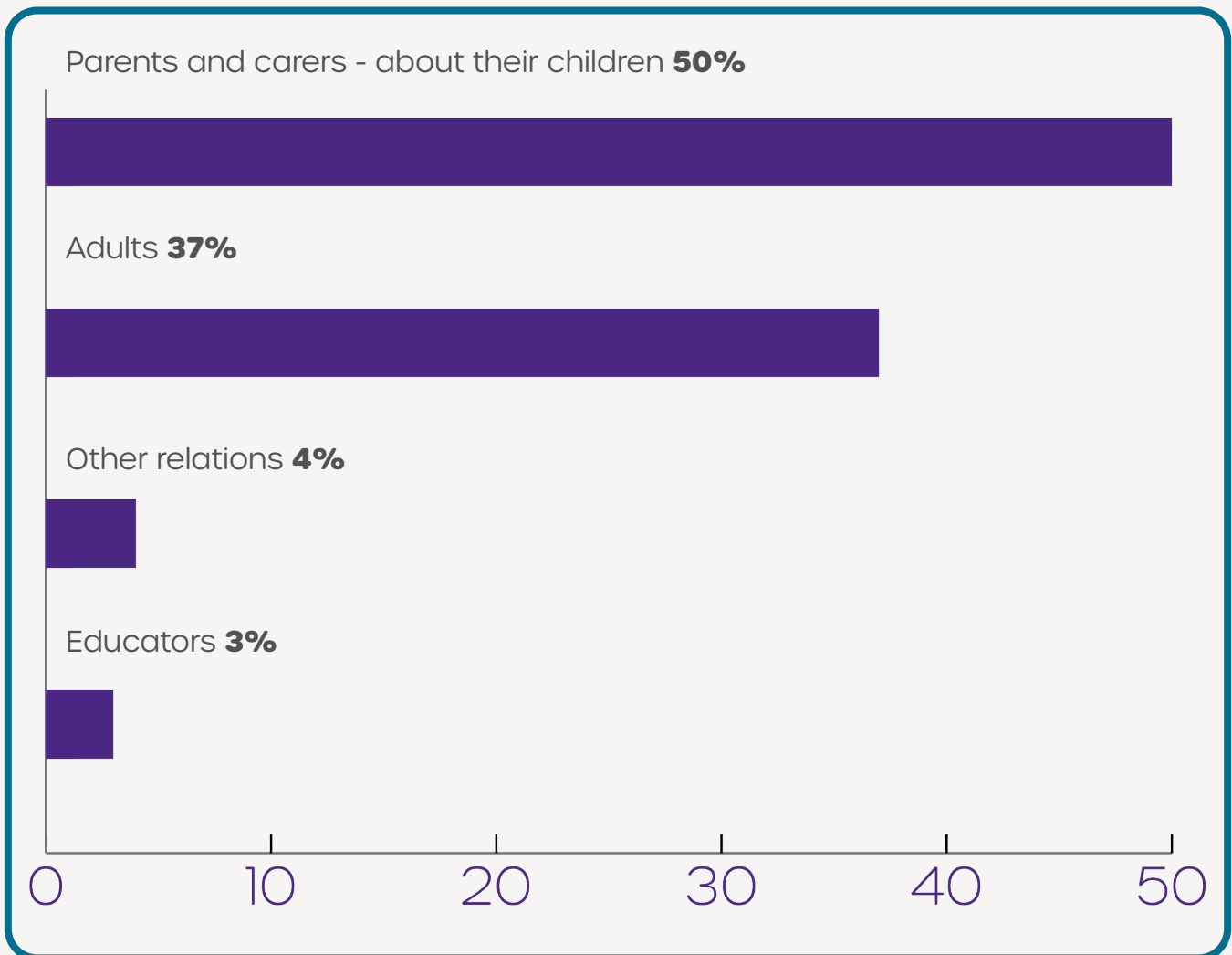
Number of enquiries

In 2023, the Helpline handled 1829 enquiries. Of these, 60% were telephone calls and 40% were email enquiries.



A gradual decrease in calls since 2019 could be attributed to meeting need through other Dyslexia Scotland provision, for example, Parent Masterclasses, online training and informative web content, and potentially through improved awareness in education, thanks to our teacher training programmes. In 2020-2021 we experienced an uptick in enquiries from parents who were observing their childrens' learning during lockdown periods.

Who calls us?



Above, the chart indicates that most enquiries are from parents and carers, 50% share of the total number of calls. Of the 50%, 8% represents parents who enquire about their adult children (aged 18 and over). Adult enquiries have dipped again in comparison to last year (37% compared to 38% in 2022).

Enquiries by Local Authority

Local Authority	Number of enquiries where the location was disclosed (2021)	Number of enquiries where the location was disclosed (2022)	Number of enquiries where the location was disclosed (2023)
Aberdeen City	3	23	16
Aberdeenshire	60	72	37
Angus	12	9	16
Argyll and Bute	16	12	12
Clackmannanshire	9	8	9
Dumfries and Galloway	17	20	15
Dundee City	23	25	20
East Ayrshire	11	11	15
East Dunbartonshire	14	16	12
East Lothian	27	27	25
East Renfrewshire	20	19	16
City of Edinburgh	136	144	129
Falkirk	23	34	20
Fife	40	37	36
Glasgow City	164	130	128
Highland	35	45	32
Inverclyde	16	16	15
Midlothian	21	10	18
Moray	12	5	8
North Ayrshire	14	12	15
North Lanarkshire	58	39	36
Orkney	2	4	2
Perth and Kinross	23	26	26
Renfrewshire	26	22	17
Scottish Borders	15	18	17
Shetland Islands	3	2	4
South Ayrshire	16	10	9
South Lanarkshire	38	36	26
Stirling	25	31	19
West Dunbartonshire	3	10	3
Western Isles	3	7	4
West Lothian	34	27	28
Outwith Scotland	13	13	7

Expectations

These are typical examples of the expectations callers said they had before contacting the Helpline

"Give me advice and support to help me know what was or wasn't a reasonable request towards school, and for advice re college."

"I wasn't too sure, I'm a student so I had the fear on costs, how long it would take for my assessment, if i would have my certificate in time for my exams, etc."

"Help me get my son formally assessed."

"I was looking for an assessor for an adult."

"Help with the school."

"Give me advice about how I could help my son access the curriculum with his literacy challenges."

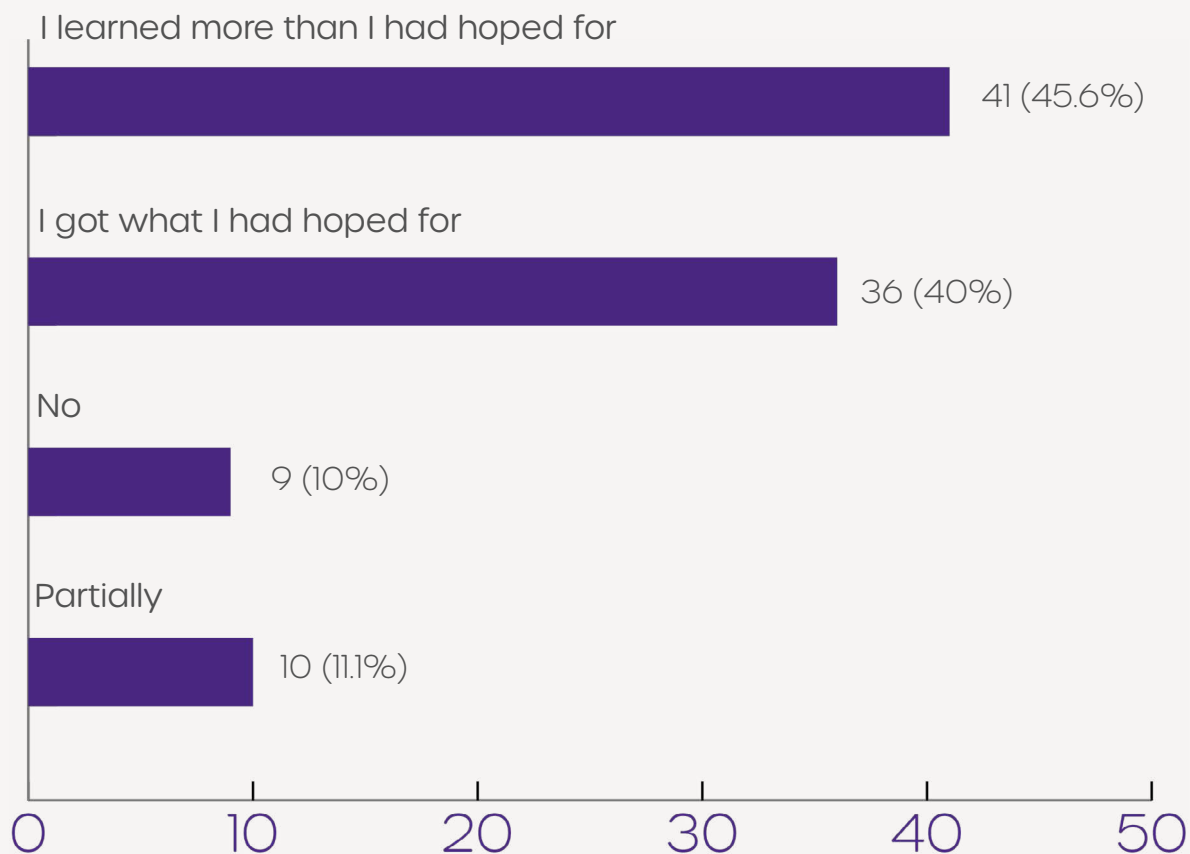
"Hopefully confirm if I was dyslexic and if so, be able to provide advice/techniques to makes things easier/less time consuming for me at my work. Making my job less stressful/frustrating, and hopefully freeing up more time for the important, caring/contact with the residents' side of my job. I think a diagnosis would also help with my low self-esteem about not being able to work as quickly as everyone else. I how it works make me less embarrassed when reading back anything I have handwritten, as it's full of spelling mistakes."

"I was looking for a tutor that specialises in dyslexia and asked about access to the Sean Connery Tutor Bursary fund."

"I needed advice on how schools identify/support children with dyslexic characteristics and a list of approved assessors."

"I hoped they could give me advice on how to progress an assessment request with my daughter's school, and where to turn to if the school were not able to do so as there was a possibility they had already sent the maximum number of pupils for assessment that they were able to."

Which of the following best describes how well your expectations were met?



These are typical examples of ways the Helpline meets - and exceeds - callers' expectations

"I applied for a free assessment for dyslexia and in the space of a week or less I was awarded one, which relieved me as I had student expenses to pay. My examiner educated me on what my rights are and which benefits I needed and why - it helped me a lot! I was extremely grateful and after my assessment my certificate came within 1-2 weeks which was more than enough time to put in place for my support for my exams. Dyslexia Scotland has helped me get through my education and helped me get the right help for me to learn!"

Feedback included

"Dyslexia Scotland was the first place I reached out to when I suspected my son may have dyslexia. They gave me information to help communicate with his school and also pointed me in the direct of people closer to me that could help."

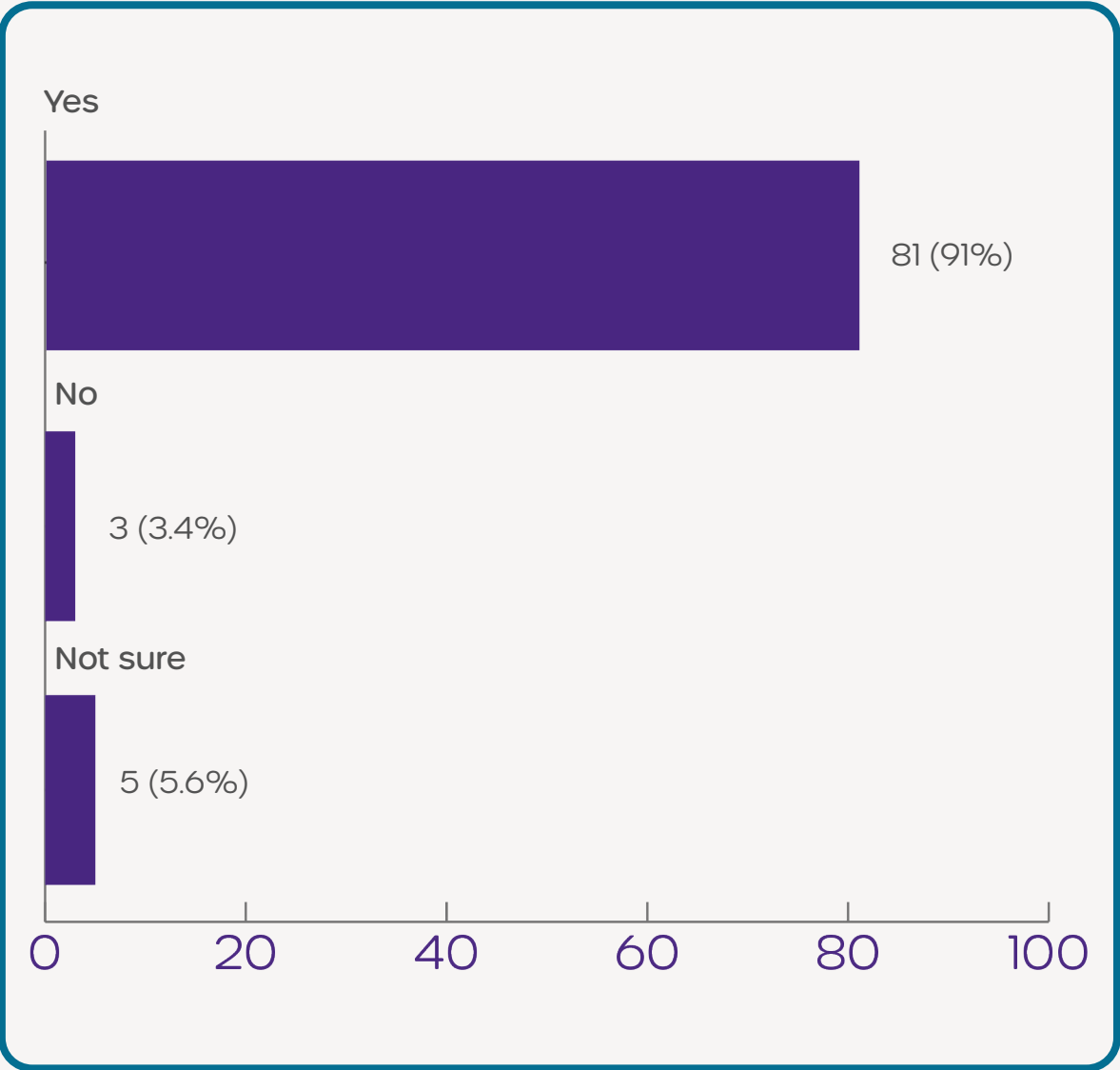
"It helped me to understand a lot about dyslexia as its not just about struggling to write or understand, it's so much more than that. It's helped me become more open to talk about it as before I wouldn't and would shy away from it."

"They were fantastic. Supportive, empathetic and lots of solid clear advice."

"I was sent the exact information that I was hoping for which exceeded my expectations in speed of delivery, details of information and organisation of information."

"I got a comprehensive list of dyslexia assessors which I could not find elsewhere. Nowhere else would give me a steer on where to go due to fears of 'favouring' providers which left me stuck not knowing who they would recognise. Dyslexia Scotland's support made me find the right one for me."

Did you feel that the Advisor who dealt with your call or email, listened and understood what you were trying to say?



“The Advisor listened to me and picked out from my, probably over detailed explanation, main issues and tackled them clearly. I felt listened to and understood and they emailed me with a summary for me to refer to on the points covered.”

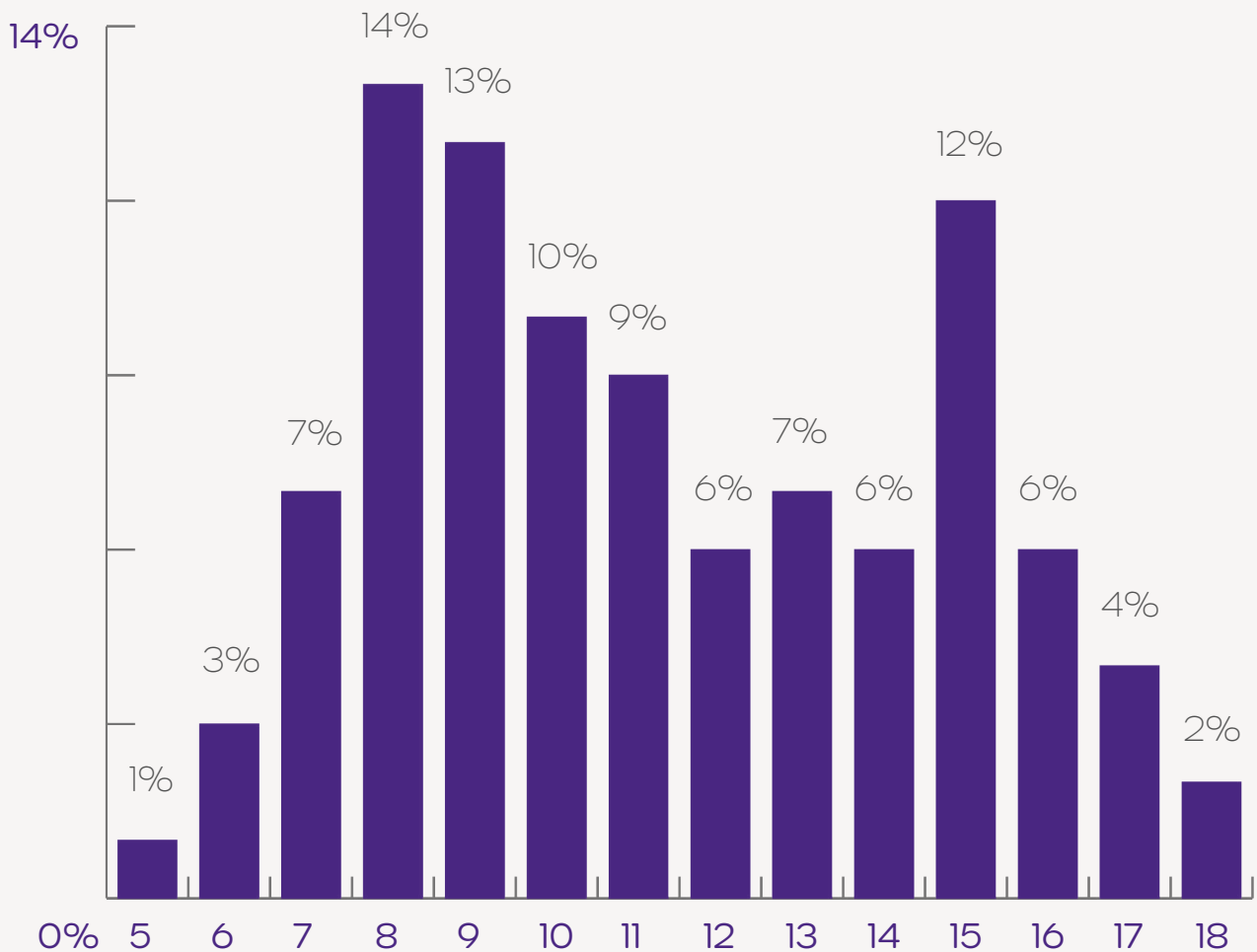
"Sharon was fantastic. She understood how overwhelming it can be for a parent just starting this journey. She was really reassuring. "

"I felt that Susan knew exactly what i was going through and had a very broad knowledge of subject matter."

"100%. I had called to ask for recommendations of where to go for help with a diagnosis as school said son didn't have a problem reading as no teacher had identified it. Got a list of psychologists and was recommended not to just go for the most expensive. Got my son tested and diagnosed within a few weeks, turns out his reading ability was 7% for his age. Was able to get support for his higher exams that was failed for National 5s."

"Beyond helpful. The volunteer was experienced, knowledgeable and empathetic of our new situation."

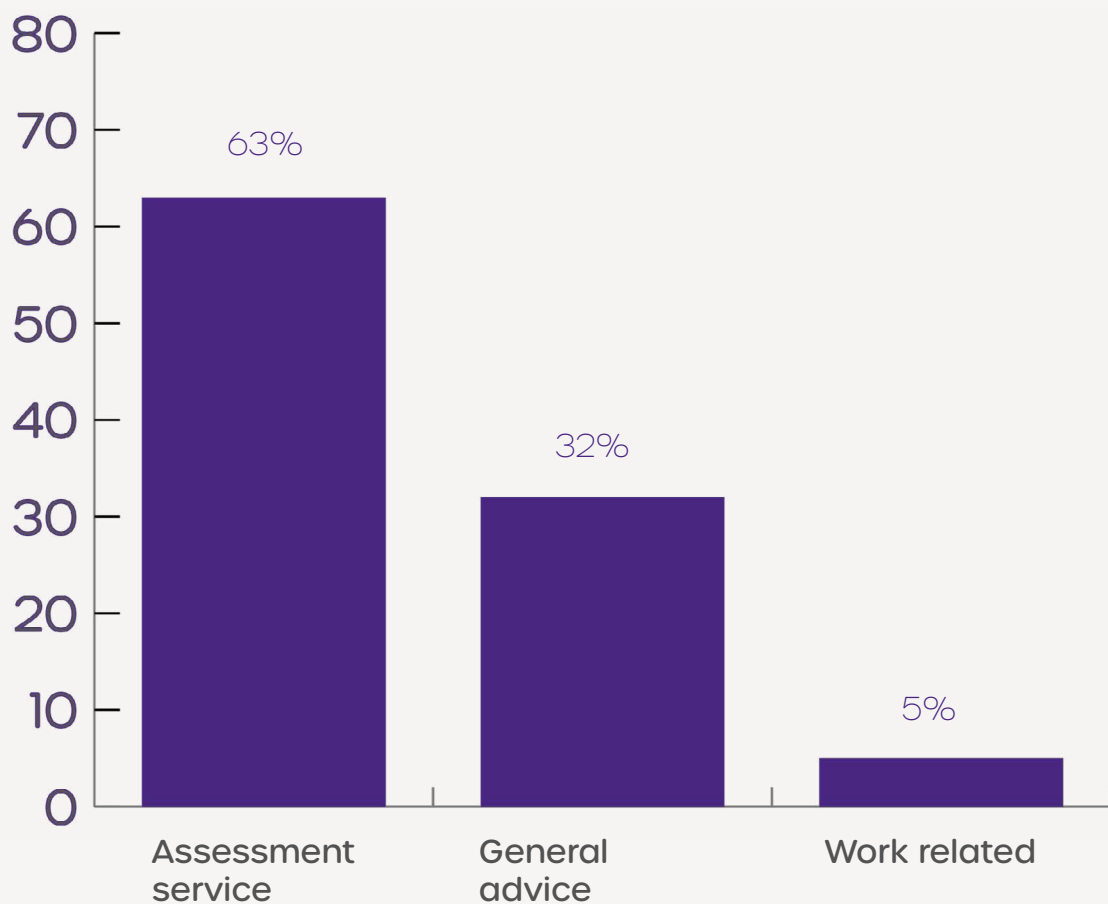
What age is most asked about?



In 2023 the most common age of the young person being discussed was 8 years old (14%) compared with age 10 in 2022. We have also recorded a spike at age 15. We normally see a slight rise at age 15 but a 1 or 2% rise compared with age 14 and 16. However, in 2023 that percentage doubles. Analysing the nature of the enquiries for that age range reveals that it is fairly evenly split between enquiries about independent assessments and enquiries about support in exams.

When we look at the number of enquiries from parents about their children, we have noted that 28% requested Dyslexia Scotland's template letter. This is down from 30% in the previous year. This template letter help parents to formally request the school to begin the assessment process.

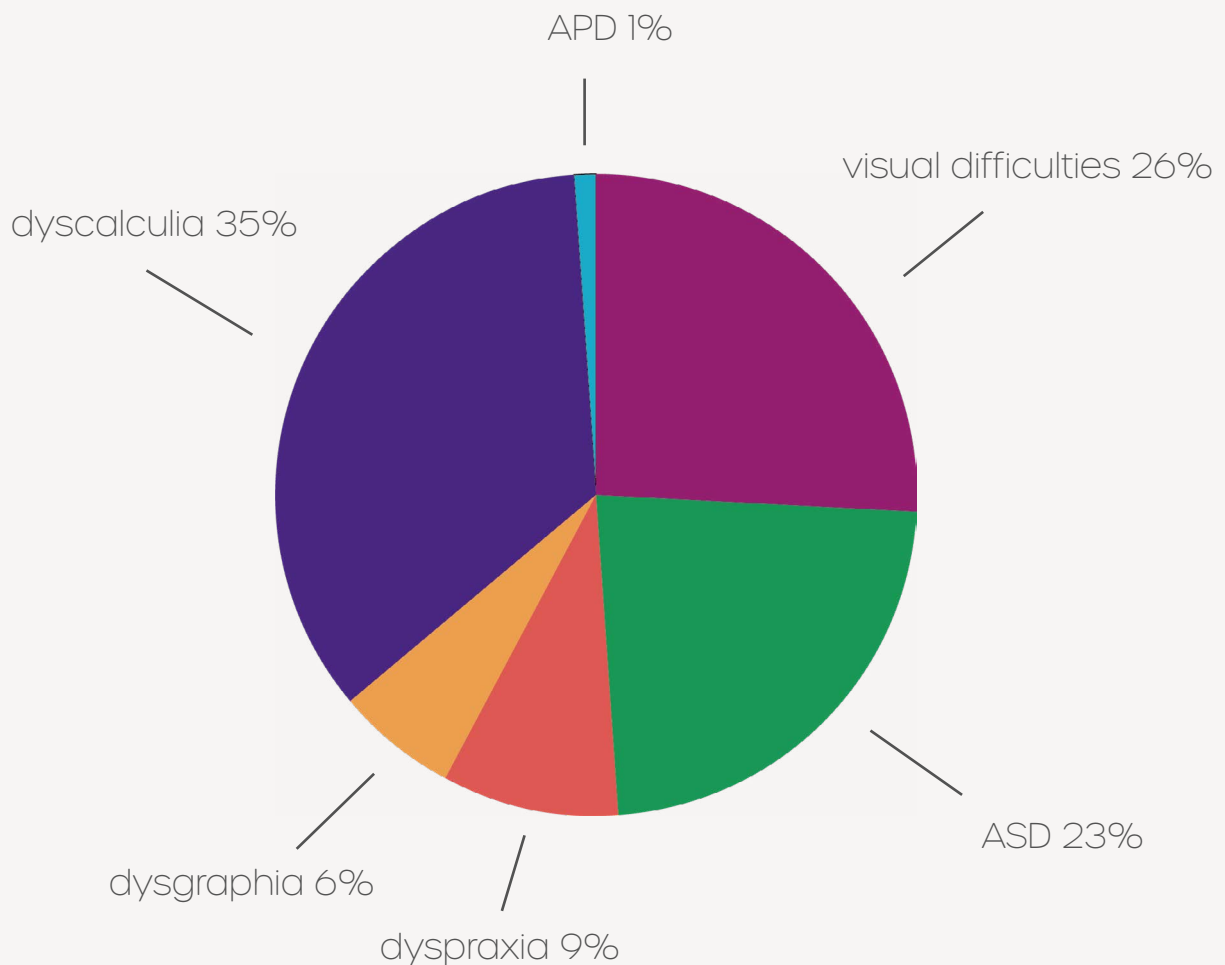
The nature of the enquiry



Assessment Service – indicates the number of requests for Dyslexia Scotland’s list of assessors from people wishing to book appointments. The number of requests has been increasing year on year (2021 = 59%, 2022 = 61%, 2023 = 63%).

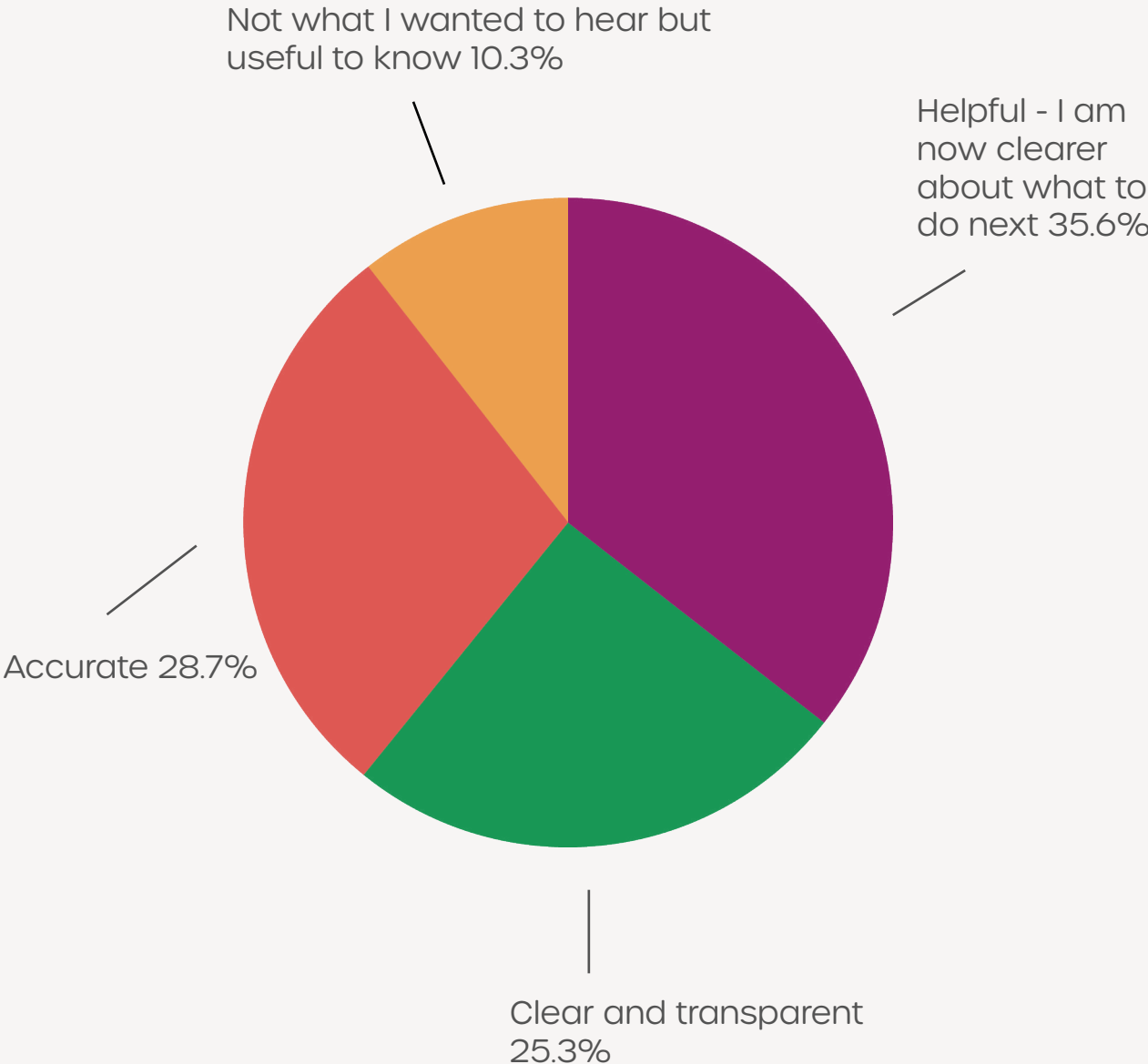
Reasons discussed with Advisors for the independent dyslexia assessment include schools saying they no longer carry out dyslexia assessments, won’t assess until a particular age or school year (anywhere from primary 4 onwards), or suggesting that it will take a year+ to carry out the full pathway process of assessment.

We receive many enquiries to the Helpline about other neurodivergences (149; 8% of the overall number of enquiries we receive). We don’t provide advice about these other learning challenges. The following chart indicates the percentage of enquiries.



The advice given

Callers were asked to choose the statement that best described the advice they had been given on the Helpline



"To be honest wasn't sure what to expect but good advice and helpful links to our services."

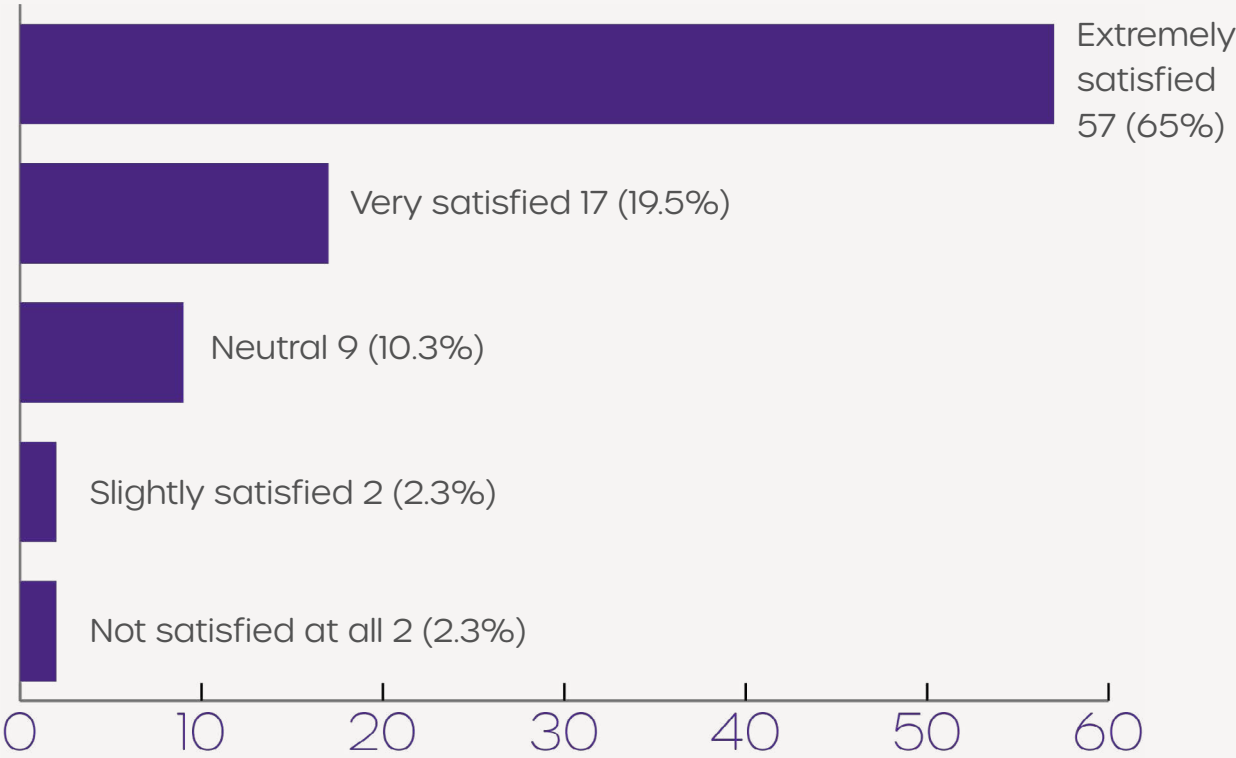
"They explained everything clearly and walked me through what would happen."

"Again the team went above and beyond, gave fully all information available and more."

"I thought dyslexia was one thing for all people and I just needed to know the magical strategies which help dyslexic children improve. I'm now more realistic. I was also heartened to hear that as Scotland is a needs-based system, we shouldn't need a dyslexia identification to get support, if my daughter is struggling."

"I wasn't fully sure what to expect; however, the information I was given was in depth and gave so much information that I wouldn't have even thought to initially ask. Sometimes it can lead to numerous emails going back and forth, but this had everything and was very easy to read and understand."

Overall, what did you think of your experience with Dyslexia Scotland's Helpline Service?





Dyslexia Scotland

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