



**Dyslexia
Scotland**

**Working towards
a dyslexia-friendly
Scotland**

Strategic plan 2026 to 2031





Working towards a dyslexia-friendly Scotland

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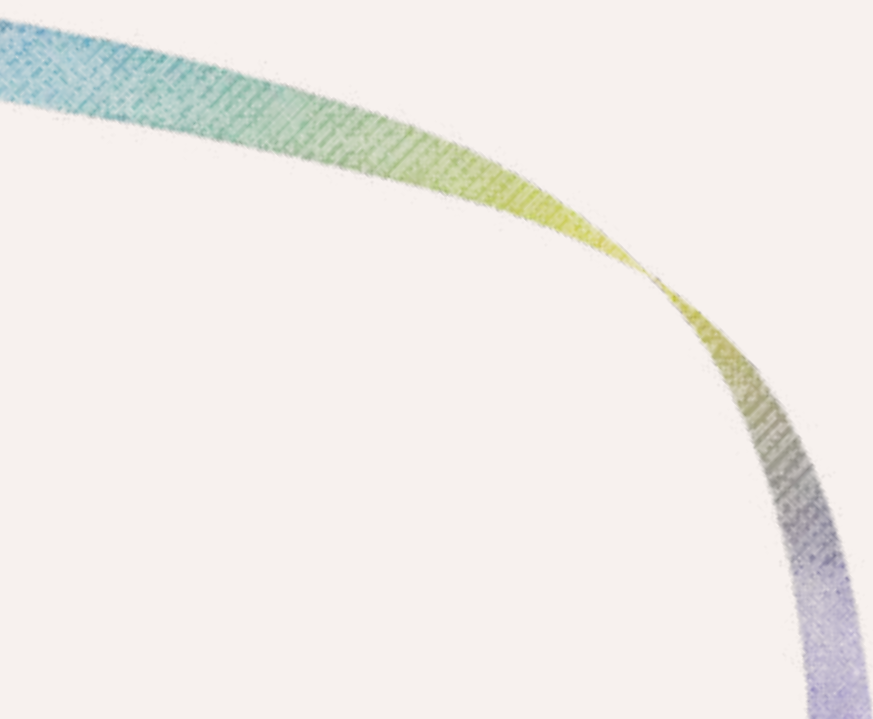
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Forewords



Peter Lederer CBE

Chair of Dyslexia Scotland

Dyslexia Scotland is a charity very close to my heart, and I am honoured to take on the role of Chair as we begin this ambitious new strategy cycle.

I was 42 when I first discovered that I was dyslexic. My wife had noticed that our son was suddenly struggling at school and that his confidence and demeanour had changed. I will never forget the day I came home from work and read his assessment. Had you changed the name at the top of the report to mine, it would have described my own school experience exactly. I finally understood why I had spent so many years feeling stupid, inadequate, anxious, withdrawn and confused.

That realisation is what drives me now. Like many adults with dyslexia, I am still reckoning with difficult experiences from my past, even as I continue to embrace my strengths. As Chair of Dyslexia Scotland, I am also looking outward, scanning the strategic landscape and the horizon ahead to anticipate the challenges and opportunities we will face over the next five years.

It is a great privilege to take on this leadership role at such a critical moment. The dyslexia community in Scotland can be confident that Dyslexia Scotland's CEO, Board of Directors, President, Vice Presidents, Ambassadors and staff team are united in steering our organisation towards a more dyslexia-friendly society - one where, I hope, no child has to experience the feelings I carried with me throughout my own school days.

Cathy Magee OBE

Chief Executive of Dyslexia Scotland



Our vision is for a dyslexia-friendly Scotland where every child and young person with dyslexia grows up having their rights met and is enabled to achieve their full, amazing potential. And where workers with dyslexia are accepted, respected, supported and enabled to do their jobs in the way they work best.

But we aren't there yet. Children are not all being identified early enough; too many adults are being denied fair support at work and too many people are still lost in the margins. We must do better as a nation. But it's not just up to Dyslexia Scotland. Our vision depends on the contributions of many Changemakers - educators, employers, policymakers, families, communities, neighbours, influencers, leaders and the media - weaving change across the nation.

We will do everything in our power to deliver the goals set out in this strategy. But success depends on collective action.

Be part of the mission. Join us on the journey to a dyslexia-friendly Scotland.

Overview

Dyslexia Scotland has 3 overarching strategic outcomes:

- People with dyslexia are empowered and make informed choices.
- Dyslexic adults and children have their rights met and are able to reach their full potential.
- There is greater public understanding and awareness of dyslexia.

Within this context, the Dyslexia Scotland 5-year strategy for 2026 to 2031 centres around addressing the challenges the dyslexia community in Scotland currently faces. To identify what these challenges are, we drew on the most recent in-depth research: a national survey of dyslexic adults; a survey of the general population; and reviews of other national sources of data and equality monitoring reports. The results of this research highlighted 5 key issues that have an impact on the lives of many of the 555,000 dyslexic people in Scotland:

1. late identification (which is even later for girls and women)
2. costly adult assessments
3. inequalities in educational attainment and wellbeing
4. ineffective workplace support
5. persistent public misconceptions.

We're committed to addressing these five inequities as our priorities. At the same time, we have also looked inwards. As we need to sustain our organisation to be able to address these, we have a sixth key priority:

6. Maintain the financial sustainability of Dyslexia Scotland.

Policy context

Our work for a dyslexia-friendly Scotland is interdependent with other national and international goals and aspirations.

To achieve our goals, our strategic approach to each priority will align with policy and legal frameworks such as:

- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
- Additional Support for Learning Review 2020
- Additional Support for Learning Action Plan (updated November 2024)
- Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland 2022-2027
- National Youth Work strategy
- Equalities Act (2010)
- Fair Work Action Plan
- Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
- The UN Sustainable Development Goals.



Our theory of change

Pathway 1: support to people with dyslexia and their families

What we do

- We provide advice, help and support to people with dyslexia and their families.
- We provide resources, information and training on dyslexia.

Who with

- People with dyslexia and their families.

How they feel

- Valued, understood and listened to.
- A sense of trust in Dyslexia Scotland.

What they learn and gain

- People with dyslexia and their families gain increased confidence and understand that they are not alone.
- Knowledge, information and resources about dyslexia and how best to support people with dyslexia.

What they do differently

- People advocate for best support within education and employment and are better equipped to challenge systems.
- Individuals access longer-term support if needed.

What difference this makes

- People are empowered and make informed choices.
- Dyslexic children, young people and adults have their rights met and are able to reach their potential.

Pathway 2: provide advice and information, and create the conditions for change

What we do

- We provide resources, information and training on dyslexia.
- We host events, webinars, develop networks and facilitate forums.
- We participate in campaigns which increase awareness and prompt action.

Who with

- Educators, employers, other professionals and organisations.
- Volunteers.
- Decision makers.

How they feel

- Motivated and inspired.
- Part of a wider community driving change which recognises the need to take responsibility.

What they learn and gain

- Knowledge, information and resources about dyslexia and how best to support people.
- Professional recognition and accreditation.
- Volunteers feel valued, able to gain skills and part of a community.

What they do differently

- Teachers, employers and other professionals support people with dyslexia more effectively.
- Greater numbers of changemakers make a positive contribution.

What difference this makes

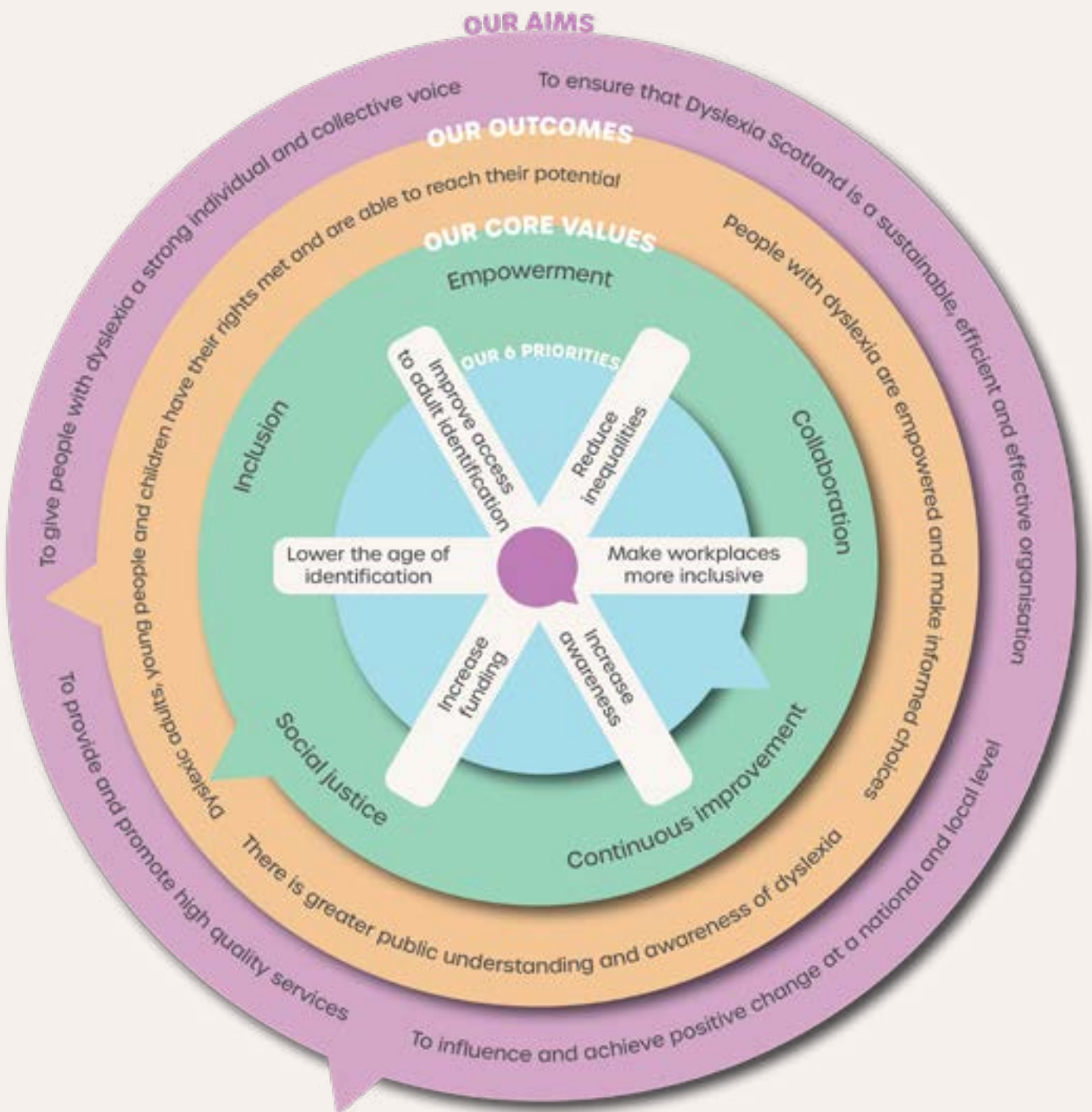
- People are empowered and make informed choices.
- Dyslexic children, young people and adults have their rights met and are able to reach their potential.
- There is greater public awareness and understanding of dyslexia.

Our parameters

Our overall vision is for a dyslexia-friendly Scotland.

Our mission is to ensure that people with dyslexia have their rights met and are able to reach their potential in life, learning and work.

Over the next five years, we are focussing on achieving six key priorities. These are shown below within the context of the aims, outcomes and values in which we work.



Strategic aims

- To provide and promote high quality services.
- To influence and achieve positive change at a national and local level.
- To give people with dyslexia a strong individual and collective voice.
- To ensure that Dyslexia Scotland is a sustainable, efficient and effective organisation.

Our strategic outcomes

- People are empowered and make informed choices.
- Dyslexic children, young people and adults have their rights met and are able to reach their potential.
- There is greater public awareness and understanding of dyslexia.

Our values

- Inclusion
- Empowerment
- Collaboration
- Social justice
- Continuous improvement

Our six priorities for this strategy period

1. Lower the age of identification
2. Improve access to adult identification
3. Reduce inequalities in attainment and wellbeing
4. Improve workplace inclusion
5. Increase awareness of dyslexia
6. Ensure financial sustainability

The context in which we work

A changing world

Our plan sets out what needs to change in Scotland - and how we plan to do it - in relation to each key priority. However, the plan is based on the knowledge we have now, in today's global context.

Many external factors will affect our plans - some will accelerate our efforts, some will work against them: for example, changing governments in Scotland and the UK, funding and the impact of the ongoing financial crisis on our community and world events beyond our control.

That is why we must remain agile in our approach to work, anticipating the challenges and opportunities ahead, adapting flexibly and reacting swiftly if and when we need to change our course.

Using technological advancements

Our plan for change represents evidence-based interventions that will transform outcomes for dyslexic people across Scotland. AI and other technology will contribute to addressing all of our priorities. We recognise that we can achieve wider reach at lower cost this way, supporting more learners, empowering educators and enabling employers to create inclusive workplaces without prohibitive cost barriers.

We already see how AI-powered tools have the potential to handle screening, monitoring and routine tasks that support individuals, freeing up specialist professionals to focus on more complex support and personalised intervention. Technology is not about replacing human support, but enabling it.

This approach will deliver better outcomes for individuals in a financially sustainable and scalable way.



PRIORITY 1

Lower the age of identification

What needs to change?

- All local authorities and teachers should consistently use the national Dyslexia Identification Pathway.
- There needs to be increased awareness of the signs of dyslexia earlier in life.
- The gap needs to be reduced between girls/young women and boys/young men for the average age of identification by one year
- Parents need to be able to recognise signs of dyslexia and build collaborative relationships with schools.

Goals

- Reduce the average age of identification by two years from 13 to 11 by 2031.
- Reduce the gap between girls/young women and boys/young men for the average age of identification by one year. In the 16 to 25 grouping of our research, boys were identified aged 12 on average, while girls were 14.



We plan to achieve change by:

- Incorporating early identification training and research into our teacher education programmes, including for trainee teachers, newly qualified and qualified teachers with little or no knowledge of dyslexia.
- Encouraging all local authorities to use the Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit, Identification Pathway, Scottish definition of dyslexia and other resources on the toolkit.
- Encouraging all local authorities to make it mandatory for Newly Qualified Teachers to complete Module 1 on the Toolkit.
- Reviewing/undertaking research into indicators of dyslexia in girls and women.
- Ensuring briefing materials and training content for educators and parents/carers are informed by research and good practice.
- Delivering our family education programmes Dyslexia Parent Masterclass and Dyslexia and the Classroom for teachers.
- Promoting all of our Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice online modules for teachers.
- Awareness campaigning such as building on the Busting Dyslexia Myths campaign.



PRIORITY 2

Access to adult identification

What needs to change?

Scotland needs free assessments and a greater understanding of how important identification of dyslexia is for adults.

Goals

- Address the financial barrier to adult assessment: by 2031, more adults will have had access to free or subsidised assessment.
- Have a passport in place so that school leavers have an understanding of, and evidence of, dyslexia that is fit for purpose for their adult life.
- Increase awareness of the value of a dyslexia identification to the individual.

We plan to achieve change by:

- Lobbying the Scottish Government to provide access to low-cost or free dyslexia assessments.
- Developing a 'school leavers passport' for young people with dyslexia.
- Developing a qualification for teachers on assessment of dyslexia (and co-occurring difficulties).
- Seeking funding for academic research that investigates the psychological and occupational impacts of unidentified dyslexia in adults.

In the interim, we will continue to:

- Seek donor funding for free assessments for 50 adults by 2031.
- Seek solutions with policy makers, employers and providers such as Access to Work on what is required as evidence of dyslexia.

PRIORITY 3

Inequalities in attainment and wellbeing

What needs to change?

- Teachers need to be able to identify signs of dyslexia earlier in a child's life.
- There need to be effective educational strategies, such as structured literacy programmes, to help learners with their difficulties.
- Educational accommodations need to be more available - including assistive technology and AI.
- We need an understanding of why some people aren't affected by mental health difficulties despite poor experiences connected to their dyslexia.

Goals

- By 2031, remove the dyslexia attainment inequality between pupils with and without additional support needs.
- Increase awareness and use of approaches that promote resilience and wellbeing of dyslexic learners.

We plan to achieve change by:

- Focusing on earlier identification in our teacher and parent education programmes.
- Promoting strengths-based approaches that focus on unique talents and abilities to educators and parents/carers.
- Promoting our online training modules to teachers and other educators.
- Promoting the need for earlier identification and evidence-based interventions across all our services, including our Helpline, assessment advice, tutoring, events, education conference, training and information.
- Providing 10 hours of free tutoring to 175 children and young people per year through our Tutor Bursary Fund with the support of the Sean Connery Foundation, then seeking more funding to extend the initiative thereafter.



PRIORITY 4

Inclusive workplaces

What needs to change?

- Employers need to be aware of their responsibilities and proactively inclusive of dyslexic employees.
- Dyslexic adults need to be confident self-advocates.

Goal

- More adults are receiving helpful reasonable adjustments at work - by 2031, half of dyslexic adults in Scotland are receiving reasonable adjustments at work and at least 50% of these people find them helpful.

We plan to achieve change by:

- Ensuring our Helpline Advisors are equipped to respond to employer and employee enquiries and signpost effectively.
- Designing a dyslexia-friendly employer accreditation scheme and encouraging companies to meet the agreed criteria.
- Delivering employer education programmes and related campaigns.
- Continuing to provide free access for dyslexic employees and employers to basic information and guidance on rights and responsibilities in the workplace.



PRIORITY 5

Dyslexia awareness

What needs to change?

- We need to dispel persistent myths about dyslexia.
- We need to ensure our own communications are all truthful, accurate, evidence based and consistent.
- We need to encourage and show others how to change their communication about dyslexia.



Goal

Increase accurate knowledge of dyslexia in the general population and highlight the importance of improvements for dyslexic people by 2031.

We plan to achieve change by:

- Dyslexia awareness campaigning.
- Strategic influence, including lobbying, advocacy and participation in groups such as the Cross-Party Group on Dyslexia and other relevant forums.
- Linking with national communications leads, with a view to cascading dyslexia-accessible communications.
- Improving our content and communications and targeting specific groups and sectors.
- Incorporating learning outcomes on relevant key facts in our training programmes.
- Building on our own knowledge of research in dyslexia and inclusive practice with the support of Research Associates.
- Maintaining and increasing our national media presence.
- Fostering a greater sense of belonging and community through campaigns like our dyslexia-friendly Scotland tartan fundraiser.



PRIORITY 6

Financial sustainability

What needs to change?

Dyslexia Scotland currently operates at a financial deficit and it needs to:

- Secure grants that meet the full cost of delivery, including inflationary pressures.
- Increase income generated from donors, members, charitable activities, trusts and the Scottish Government.
- Diversify funding sources.

Goal

Make sure Dyslexia Scotland stays financially stable so it can keep providing its essential services and carry out the priorities in this plan.



We plan to achieve change by:

- Applying for grants and donations and bringing in revenue through new and existing work and fundraising.
- Investing in additional staff time in order to prioritise fundraising, corporate partnerships and income generation.
- Maximising the potential of AI to assist with funding applications without compromising their quality and integrity.



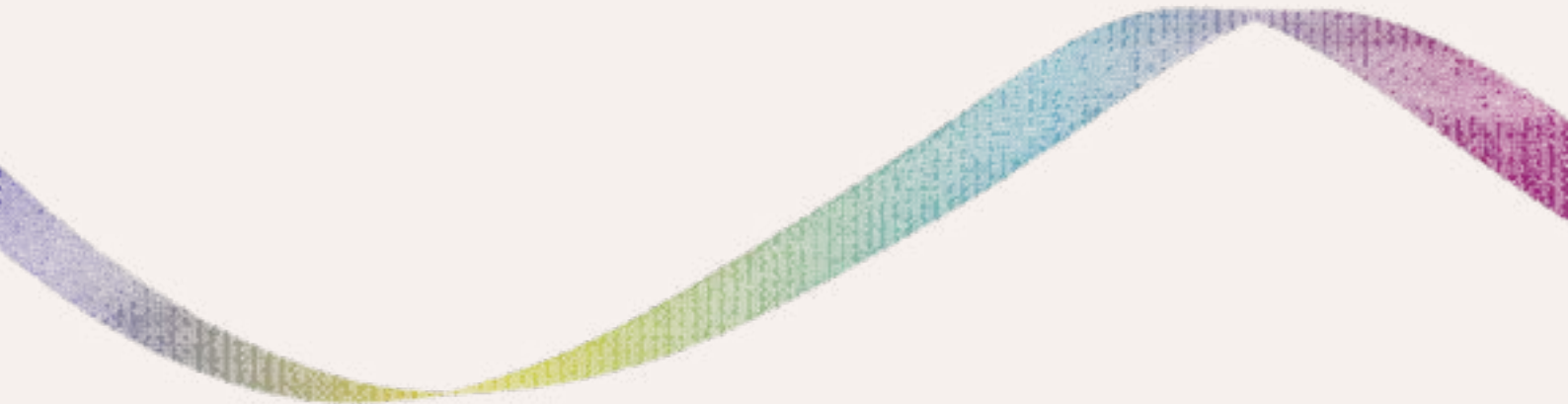
How we'll know we're making a difference

Some of the changes we make will be obvious, for example whether we have increased our income, or influenced a change in policy. Other changes we make will be slower, more gradual and harder to measure, such as whether the teacher training we provide is resulting in children and young people being identified as dyslexic at a younger age than their older peers were.

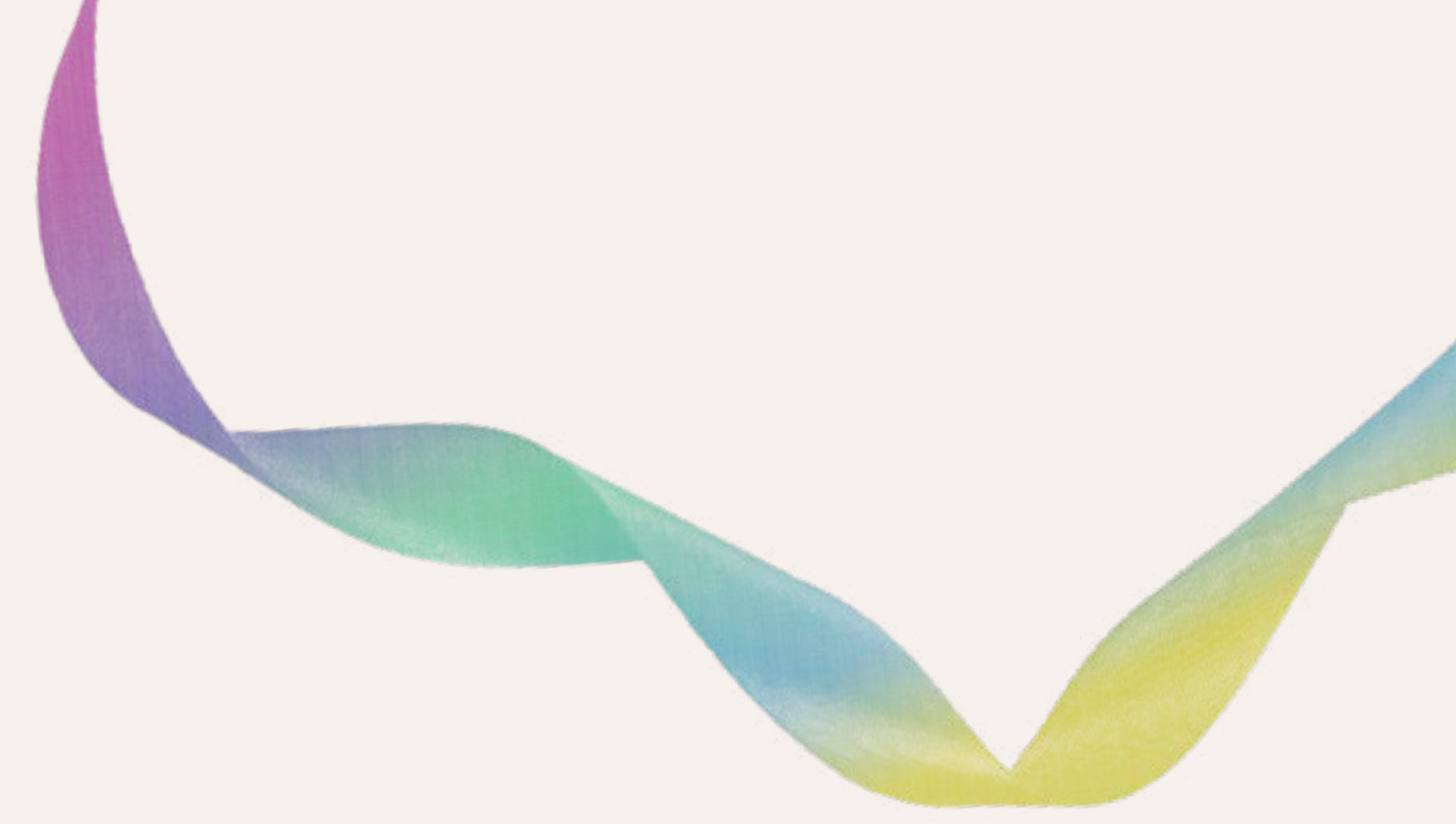
Our detailed operational plans have smaller goals, targets and performance indicators that act as stepping stones towards greater changes in Scottish society.

We will use a range of methods to monitor and evaluate to what extent we are achieving these goals and making a difference. These will include:

- Gathering and analysing data on our community - for example, a repeat of our national survey of dyslexic adults will tell us what has changed in workplace experiences, wellbeing and access to identification. We'll also check the Scottish Pupil Census to monitor the identification and attainment levels of children and young people with dyslexia in schools.
- We'll ask professionals who have used our services what they are doing differently to support people with dyslexia.
- We'll ask people with dyslexia to tell us how they are achieving change for themselves through self-advocacy and support.







Dyslexia Scotland is a national charity. We campaign for a dyslexia-friendly Scotland, seeking to ensure that people with dyslexia have their rights met and can reach their full potential.

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