



# Employer Toolkit

Inclusive support strategies for students with disability, difficulty or inclusion need



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# Introduction

We are committed to ensure our students with learning difficulty, difference or inclusion need have their needs met and can achieve their aspirations and full potential by thriving independently in their community, moving on to further or higher study, an apprenticeship or into the world of work.

We model values and expectations, creating a culture that promotes equality of opportunity and continuously strive for excellence to provide an aspirational inclusive environment.

This toolkit has been developed to explain different types of inclusion needs and to give practice approaches and solutions.

As a college we pride ourselves on outstanding teaching learning and assessment, having high expectations of our inclusive approaches ensures equality and diversity is at the forefront of our practice.

All students are likely to learn at different rates and to require different levels and types of support. Seeking to understand the differences, including the different levels of prior knowledge and potential barriers to learning, inclusive differentiated approaches to students with a disability / difficulty or inclusion needs, is an essential part of successful intergration into the workplace.

## **This toolkit will explore:**

- developing an inclusive approach.
- how all staff within an organisation has responsibility to take an inclusive approach.
- practical approaches how to support a student with disability or difficulty.
- strategies for staff to use and develop.

## Using the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to create a culture of inclusivity in the classroom and across your organisation.

It will help inform the different types of disability / difficulties, inclusion needs and more importantly how to support them.

It will give a number of different strategies to support the learners in the working and inform approaches to support.

# Inclusive Approaches

## Creating an Inclusive working environment

Creating an inclusive working environment requires deliberate effort and commitment from all members of the organisation. Firstly, leadership must set the tone by actively promoting diversity and inclusion initiatives and ensuring they are embedded in company policies and practices. This involves establishing clear goals, fostering open communication channels, and providing resources for diversity training and education. Additionally, it's crucial to actively recruit and retain employees from diverse backgrounds, ensuring that the workforce reflects the broader community. Encouraging collaboration and teamwork across different departments and levels of the organisation helps break down barriers and promotes understanding. Providing opportunities for all employees to contribute ideas and participate in decision-making processes fosters a sense of belonging and ownership. Regularly evaluating and addressing biases in policies and practices also plays a significant role in creating an inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and respected. Ultimately, creating an inclusive working environment requires ongoing dedication, empathy, and a willingness to embrace and celebrate differences.

## Using Resources and Information Technology

You will do this by:

- providing materials (session plans, documents, PowerPoints etc) in advance will enable students to have an opportunity to become familiar with the materials, reduce anxieties about content and make the most of the information.
- providing materials online so that students can access them using appropriate software and adjusted settings to remove barriers to learning. Our inhouse virtual learning environment is a useful tool for this as it also gives students 24/7 access to learning materials, so students can revisit and take their time to learn.
- using accessible text size 12+ point font for handouts and 28+ for PowerPoints (Arial or similar Sans Serif recommended), left aligned with capitals not used for entire words for easy reading. Enlarge photocopies and articles that are to be read. Pictures and diagrams need to be clear and readable.
- the benefits of this will also be that our students with inclusion needs will be catered for by our usual working methods and will avoid any feelings of being singled out or an inconvenience, and what works well for a student with disabilities difference or inclusion needs, will likely work well for all.

## Creating an Inclusive working environment

- Introduce flexible working arrangements and schedules to cater to diverse needs.
- Deliver training and awareness programmes for all staff members to understand and support colleagues with additional needs.
- Establish transparent communication channels for learners to voice their needs and concerns without the fear of discrimination.
- Foster peer support and collaboration among learners to nurture a sense of belonging and inclusivity.
- Regularly review and adapt teaching methods and materials to suit various learning styles and abilities.
- Collaborate with external support services or experts to offer specialised assistance when necessary.
- Embrace diversity and cultivate a culture of respect and acceptance across the organisation.

## Inclusive Physical environment

The physical environment of a workplace should be flexible to accommodate the variety of diverse needs, in creating physical spaces that inspire, engage and encourage all students to reach their full potential.

You will do this by:

- Ensure facilities and resources are accessible, including wheelchair ramps, braille materials, and assistive technologies.
- thinking about the lighting, windows, heating and ventilation as this can be very disruptive.
- what students wear as this can help with sensory management such as wearing a hood, cap or headphones.

## Inclusive practice

Maximise clarity of instructions and deliver information in manageable sections. Avoid jargon, ambiguous statements ('get on with your work', 'behave') or abbreviations unless they are explained.

You will do this by:

- allowing enough time and pace verbal instruction concisely.
- consider repeating any instructions and check understanding regularly.
- providing advanced notice of a change of tasks or meetings.
- providing structured choice within the work you do.
- providing frequent feedback on work tasks.
- providing structured choice within the work learners do.
- being proactive in seeking feedback from the student on how included they feel and how the working environment could be improved.
- assuming you know what the implications of a difficulty and disability are; ask the student themselves what they find challenging and their strengths or goals. Especially as new elements arise, e.g. visits etc. Listen to what they say, they are the experts on the effects of learning difficulty and will be able to support you with what they need.
- support the use of technology in the workplace. For example, digital voice recorders allow the student to reflect, revisit content and independently take slower-paced informed notes after the event. For some work you do of significance (visitors, important concepts being introduced, etc.) consider a single recording made available to all.
- allowing the student to process information by taking notes.
- assessing the strengths and interests of the student and build on them by giving them tasks that make them feel valued and hold their attention. Reduce the opportunity for any disruption or confusion.
- being aware of and manage the physical environment – accessible spaces, sensory stimulus and distractions.
- using clear ground rules as a tool for a safe working environment, revisit them when necessary. Add to them if more specific guidance is needed.

## Support in the workplace

- Provide reasonable adjustments tailored to individual needs, such as assistive technologies or modified workstations.
- Offer additional training or mentoring to help learners with specific challenges or disabilities overcome barriers.
- Foster a supportive and inclusive work culture where colleagues understand and respect each other's differences.
- Ensure clear communication channels are in place for learners to express their needs and concerns without fear of judgment or discrimination. • Assign mentors or buddies to provide ongoing support and guidance for learners with additional needs.
- Encourage open dialogue and feedback sessions to continuously improve support mechanisms in the workplace.
- Collaborate with external organisations or experts to access specialised support services or resources when needed.
- Regularly review policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive and accommodate the needs of all learners.



## Things to consider - Workplace Adaptations

- Installing wheelchair ramps and accessible entrances to accommodate employees with mobility impairments.
- Providing adjustable desks and chairs to cater to varying physical requirements.
- Offering ergonomic keyboards, mice, and other assistive devices for employees with dexterity limitations.
- Implementing screen readers, braille materials, or magnification software for employees with visual impairments.
- Creating quiet spaces or designated areas for employees who may require sensory accommodations.
- Offering flexible work schedules or remote work options to accommodate individuals with chronic illnesses or mental health conditions.
- Providing captioning or sign language interpretation services for employees who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Ensuring all communication materials are available in accessible formats, such as large print or easy-to-read versions.
- Conducting regular accessibility audits and seeking feedback from employees to continuously improve workplace adaptations.

# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder



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# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

## My disability

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is characterised by three core behaviours; inattentiveness, impulsiveness and over-activity, which are at a level inappropriate for the person's expected development.

It is the medical term used when they effect the person's development, behaviour and performance, family relationships or social interaction. ADHD is not a learning disability; most people with this condition are extremely intelligent, however it can affect other areas which can have an impact on learning.

Medication does not cure ADHD; it is like wearing glasses, it alleviates the symptoms while present. Medication can also have unwanted side-affects. A multi-faceted approach, including various talking therapies in the most effective way to manage the condition.

## How it might affect me

A person with ADHD may have difficulties with the following areas:

- Executive Functioning Tasks (organisation, planning, maintaining attention, focusing, concentration, making good decisions, impulse control, learning and remembering what has been learned).
- Inhibitory Mechanisms (keeping us from being hyperactive, saying things 'out of turn', self-regulating emotional responses).
- Limbic System (responsible for emotional changes, energy levels, sleep routines, memory and coping with stress).

This can impact on their personal and social life too, leading to poor self-esteem, high levels of frustration and inappropriate social skills. Negative patterns of behaviour can build up leading to some people also developing mood and conduct disorders.

## How you can help

Small adjustments in approach can have a significant effect on a student with ADHD.

- Try to keep clear and consistently applied rules within the team.
- Give the student frequent and immediate feedback or consequences about behaviours, so they can more easily link this with the act which caused this.

## Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- Praise 'wanted' behaviour frequently to encourage it and provide positive reinforcement. Try not to react to 'unwanted' behaviour, instead, where it does not impact on other young person, or involve risk, ignore it to disempower it and divert the conversation. All behaviour is the student communicating a feeling, try to look and react to the feeling not the behaviour (bored, frustrated, anxious, trying to make friends etc).
- If a student regularly interrupts, you could agree a discreet gesture or word to let them know they are interrupting and support them to self-manage.
- If a student cannot be motivated to concentrate for the length of the meetings, allow them a break so that they have an agreed exit process and return time. They will diffuse the tension and minimise opportunities for confrontation, supporting the student to learn to self-manage.
- Allow some restlessness at work area. Sensory distractions like tactile manipulations (stress ball) and physical breaks to move around, can help maintain focus.
- Give clear step-by-step instructions with visual organisational aids, breaking down tasks into manageable pieces.

Encouraging the student to write down important information in a designated place.

Encourage the student to use visual strategies, for example:

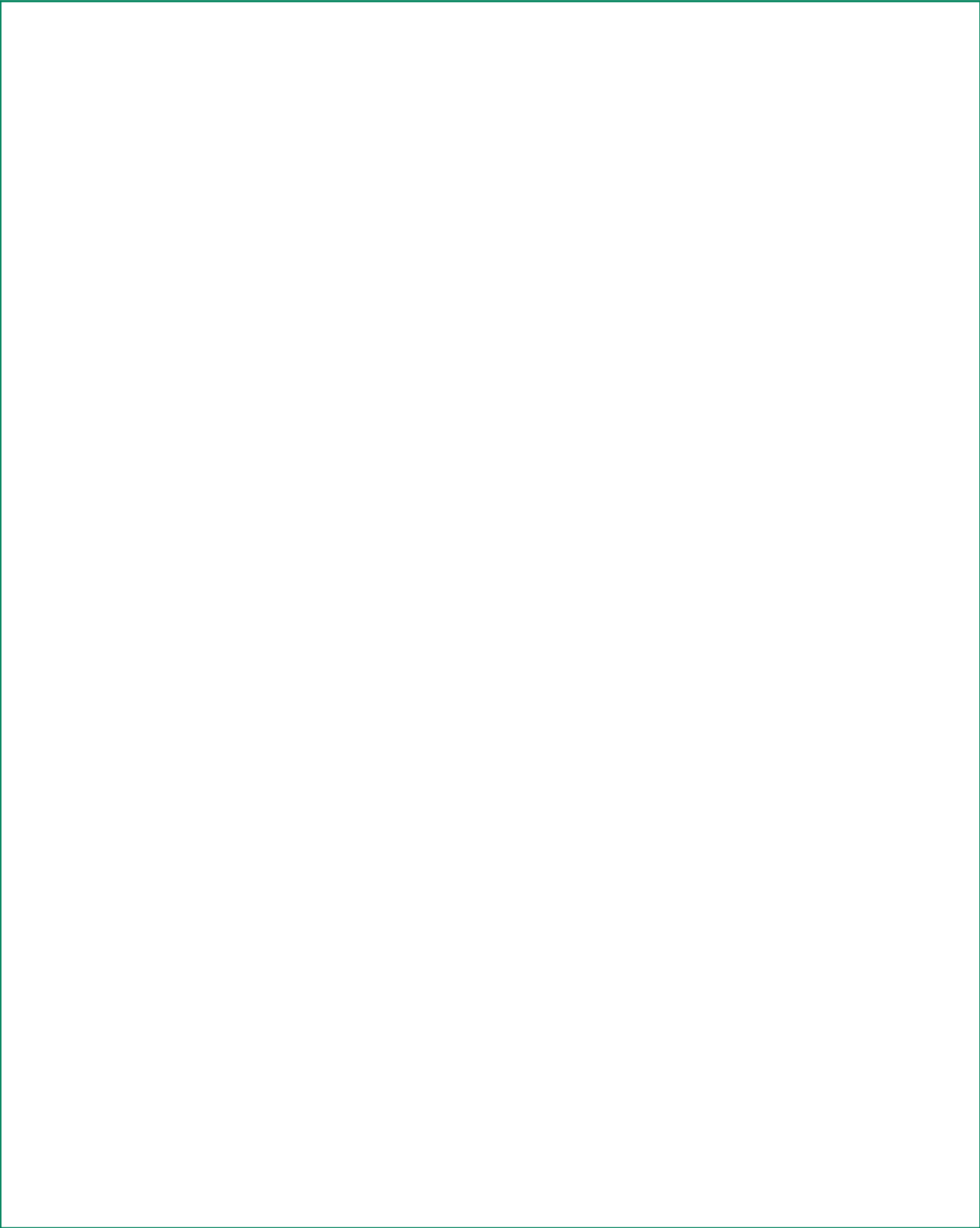
- Planners, organisers, timers and "to do" lists.
- Visual calendars or wall planners.
- Assistive technology such as smart phone planning applications.

# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Strategies

- Signal the start of a lesson with an agreed and consistently used cue and outline your learning and behaviour expectations.
- List the activities of the lesson on the board and return to the learning outcomes in mini plenaries, throughout the lesson.
- Tell students exactly what materials they'll need for each task.
- Establish eye contact with students when sharing key information or giving instructions.
- Keep instructions simple and structured. Reinforce verbal instructions with written bullet points.
- Vary the work pace and include different kinds of activities.
- Break longer tasks up into smaller steps and give frequent reminders about the expected working outcomes. (Chunking).
- Have an unobtrusive cue set up with the student who has ADD/ADHD, such as a hand signal to remind the student to stay on task.
- Allow a student with ADD/ADHD frequent breaks.
- Let the student with ADHD squeeze a stress ball, play with blu-tack or tap something that doesn't make noise as a physical outlet.
- Students with ADD/ADHD may benefit from being away from windows, the doors and sources of distraction, with their back against a wall.
- Create outlines for note-taking and extended writing that organise the information for the student.

# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Note your own strategies:



# Autistic Spectrum Disorder



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# Autistic Spectrum Disorder

## My disability

A student with Autistic Spectrum Disorder will likely experience difficulties in all the identified areas: communication, social understanding, interests and information processing, and sensory processing. However, this will be on a spectrum, so each area will be affected by individuals in different ways.

Also, many young people will have strategies in place to support themselves or be experienced in masking the challenges they face whilst at work and only reveal these at home, or when it is unavoidable.

All areas of difficulty will likely be exacerbated when a student is feeling anxious, stressed and/or in unfamiliar environments.

## How it might affect me

Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder; it is a lifelong developmental condition that affects:

**Communication:** Differences in understanding and expressing communication and language. A person with Autism may be nonverbal or highly articulate, their use of language may mask their level of understanding.

**Social understanding:** Differences in understanding social behaviour and the feelings of others and self-management of emotions.

**Interests and information processing:** Differences in understanding concepts, generalising and managing transitions and passions for specific areas of interest and the ability to absorb auditory information.

**Sensory processing:** Differences in how they experience sensory information heightened and lowered, including: touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste, vestibular (balance) and proprioceptive (body awareness).

**Asperger's Syndrome:** A form of Autism, indicating difficulties in all of the above areas and characterised by an average or above average intelligence.



## How you can help

The most help for a student with Autistic Spectrum Disorder is going to be talking to them and finding out how they are affected by their condition.

By identifying what they find challenging and what their strengths are, all employers can adjust their approach.

## Generic strategies to support Autistic Spectrum Disorder include:

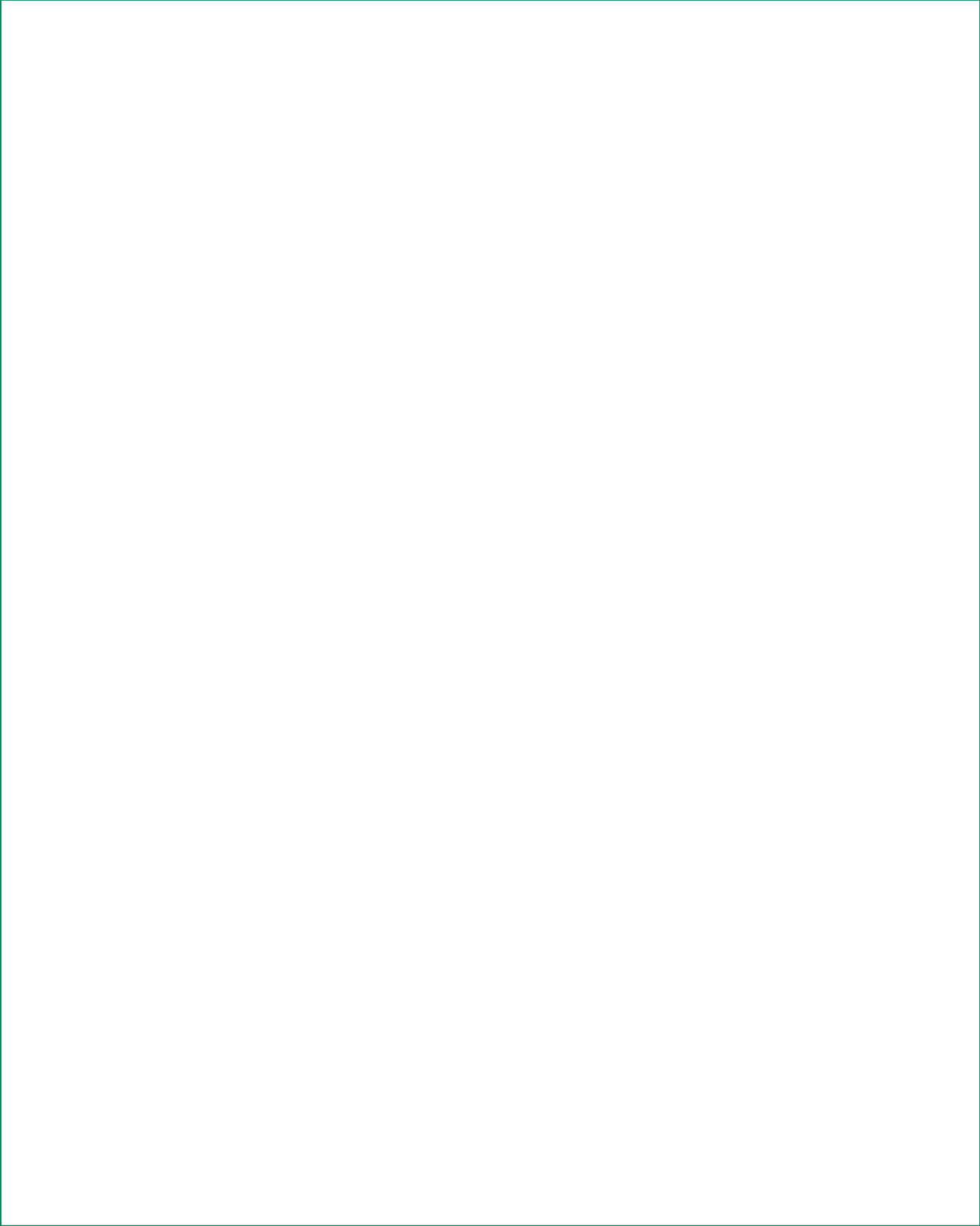
- Work with the student to find the most effective way to communicate with them. Some may prefer a written dialogue that gives them time for processing information and less social elements to navigate.
- Give clear and precise information in manageable chunks.
- Young people may have difficulty in initiating conversations, asking for help or problem solving so keep an eye out and check understanding.
- If a student has challenges with frustrations or anxieties, agree a time out process, this could help diffuse tension and support the student to learn to self-manage.
- Give young person's time to adjust to transitions (e.g. team to team, task to task).
- Give clear guidance on appropriate times to discuss 'special interests' if these are dominating or distracting from work. Or use it as a tool to engage students and encourage them to engage with peers.
- Make allowances, where possible, for routines and rituals that work to ease the young person's anxieties (e.g. lining up pens on a desk).
- Be understanding that socially 'inappropriate' actions are unlikely to be deliberate. Eye contact, body language, proximity, voice volume and intonation can be difficult to use and understand.
- Try and avoid figures of speech or sarcasm that might confuse young persons.
- Allow additional time for the student to process verbal instructions/questions.

# Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategies

- Make social expectations explicit and use visual systems to communicate these, for example, posters, information sheets for planning.
- Make any exceptions to rules clear – for example a change in daily working routine etc.
- Communicate social routines clearly using visual prompts as needed.
- Support understanding by highlighting relevant and key points using visual systems such as, sticky notes, colour coding and highlighting, mind maps.
- Ensure the nature and demands of a task are clearly understood, for example, with tasks give approximate timings for each task and what needs to be covered in each, necessary equipment/tools for the activity.
- Use checklists to support the completion of longer tasks and develop predictable routines for each type of learning activity.
- Use routines to support independence and provide emotional ‘anchor points’, for example predictable start and end routines.
- Create a predictable and consistent environment within the classroom and use signals and preparation for changes and transitions.
- Think about the skill to be taught and break it down into small, logical and sequential elements - teach one element at a time and link each new step to the previous steps.
- Consider using peer reinforcement to extend skill acquisition.
- Make learning as concrete as possible and eliminate any superfluous detail or confusing elements.
- Consider incorporating any interests that the student may have.
- Find relevant ways of extending/generalising skills – make skills explicit and name them and explore how they may be used in different situations.
- Make learning meaningful by making comparisons and connecting ideas and events.

# Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Note your own strategies:



# Dyslexia

# Dyslexia

## My disability

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that mostly affects the skills involved in accurate and confident word reading and spelling. Dyslexia can also occur alongside other learning difficulties. It's estimated that up to 1 in every 10 to 20 people in the UK has some degree of Dyslexia.

People with Dyslexia are usually of average or above average intelligence, but tend to have specific learning difficulties with reading, spelling and writing. Math and musical notation may also be affected.

A person with Dyslexia may have a range of underlying difficulties, not immediately associated with reading and writing, including perceptual problems.

## How it might affect me

Features of dyslexia can be:

- Difficulties with blending sounds to read, say and spell words.
- Reading things wrong and then not fully understanding.
- Difficulties with remembering more than one thing at a time.
- Difficulties constructing written sentences.
- Difficulties finding words when talking to someone.
- Difficulties with organisation and time-management.
- Slower speed of information processing (need longer to think what to say, have difficulty with 'word retrieval'). Slower reading speed, especially if sensitive to light – may benefit from using a coloured overlay and changing screen background.
- Time management and organisation, including completing activities.
- Frustration at own difficulties which do not reflect their ability.
- Difficulties with concentration.

## How can you help

- Give students time to read things properly and check that they have understood.
- Offer reading support if needed, including technology if they prefer this support.
- Providing dyslexia-friendly fonts and formatting in written materials, such as documents, emails, and presentations.
- Offering dyslexia-friendly software tools that assist with spelling, grammar, and reading comprehension.
- Allowing extra time for tasks that involve reading or writing, such as completing reports or filling out forms.
- Providing audio recordings or voice-to-text technology options for individuals who struggle with reading.
- Encouraging the use of mind mapping or visual aids to help with organising thoughts and ideas.
- Offering training sessions or workshops to raise awareness about dyslexia and provide strategies for support.
- Creating a supportive environment where employees feel comfortable disclosing their dyslexia and requesting necessary accommodations.
- Establishing clear communication channels for employees to seek assistance or clarification when needed.
- Offering mentoring or buddy support systems to provide additional guidance and encouragement.
- Ensure access arrangements are sorted out in good time, if the student is eligible.
- Spatial orientation (knowing left from right, working out how a map relates to a picture).
- Sequencing and other organisational skills (how to put an assignment together logically and organise study time effectively).
- Fine motor control and co-ordination (legibility of handwriting).

# Dyslexia Strategies

- Present new information in small chunks and allow plenty of time for recall.
- Ensure that targets are limited in number but challenging.
- Allow for frequent practice using rhyme, rhythm, games and songs etc.
- Encourage the use of spellcheckers.
- Use memory strategies such as mnemonics.
- Allow extra time for processing information by slowing down presentation and allow response time.
- Allow extra time to answer questions and complete work, particularly in assessment tasks.
- Make use of picture cards for association.
- Use colour highlighting for word patterns, prefixes and suffixes etc.
- Provide text and sound together, exaggerate word separation at first and then as it would be spoken normally.
- Introduce new material in a multi-sensory way – show it, listen to it, look at it, hear it, say it, and write it.
- Only ask a student to read aloud if they volunteer.
- Use tapes to accompany printed materials.
- Pair the student with a good reader where possible.
- Be explicit about the style of reading required for different tasks and teach the skills explicitly, for example, exam questions, reading for information and reading for an overview.
- Use ICT to support reading.
- Consider the use of line markers to help keep place, for example, a ruler.
- Use calendars and checklists to structure tasks and meet deadlines.

# Dyslexia Strategies continued

## Writing and Grammar

- Allow the use of ICT to overcome handwriting difficulties.
- Provide written notes to present key information.
- Allow the use of other formats to present information, for example, ICT or verbal accounts.
- Teach new vocabulary explicitly.
- Use diagrams and cards to show sequences and patterns of language.
- Try drawing grammar concepts, for example, draw what a paragraph looks like.

## Supporting spelling difficulties

- Encourage the use of dictionaries and keyword lists.
- Encourage the use of spelling strategies, for example, mnemonics, words within words, base words and suffixes etc.
- Try not to correct every spelling mistake – focus on high frequency or key words.



# Dyslexia

**Note your own strategies:**



# Dyscalculia

# Dyscalculia

## My disability

Dyscalculia is often associated with dyslexia and other learning difficulties. It is identified as a specific difficulty with learning and retaining basic math skills and manipulating numbers or completing mathematical tasks. Because math is developmental, basic math skills need to be regularly reinforced.

A person with Dyscalculia may have a range of underlying difficulties such as:

- Spatial orientation (knowing left from right, working out how a map relates to a picture).
- Sequencing and other organisational skills (how to put an assignment together logically and organise study time effectively).
- Fine motor control and co-ordination (legibility of handwriting).

## How it might affect me

Typical symptoms of dyscalculia can be:

- Difficulties with learning and retaining basic math methods.
- A reliance on counting and defaulting to addition when presented with a sum or calculation.
- Difficulties with navigation and orientation.
- Difficulties with money and budgeting.
- Difficulties with estimating, counting backwards and sequencing numbers.
- Difficulties with telling the time and time management.
- High levels of anxiety associated with math and number.

## How you can help

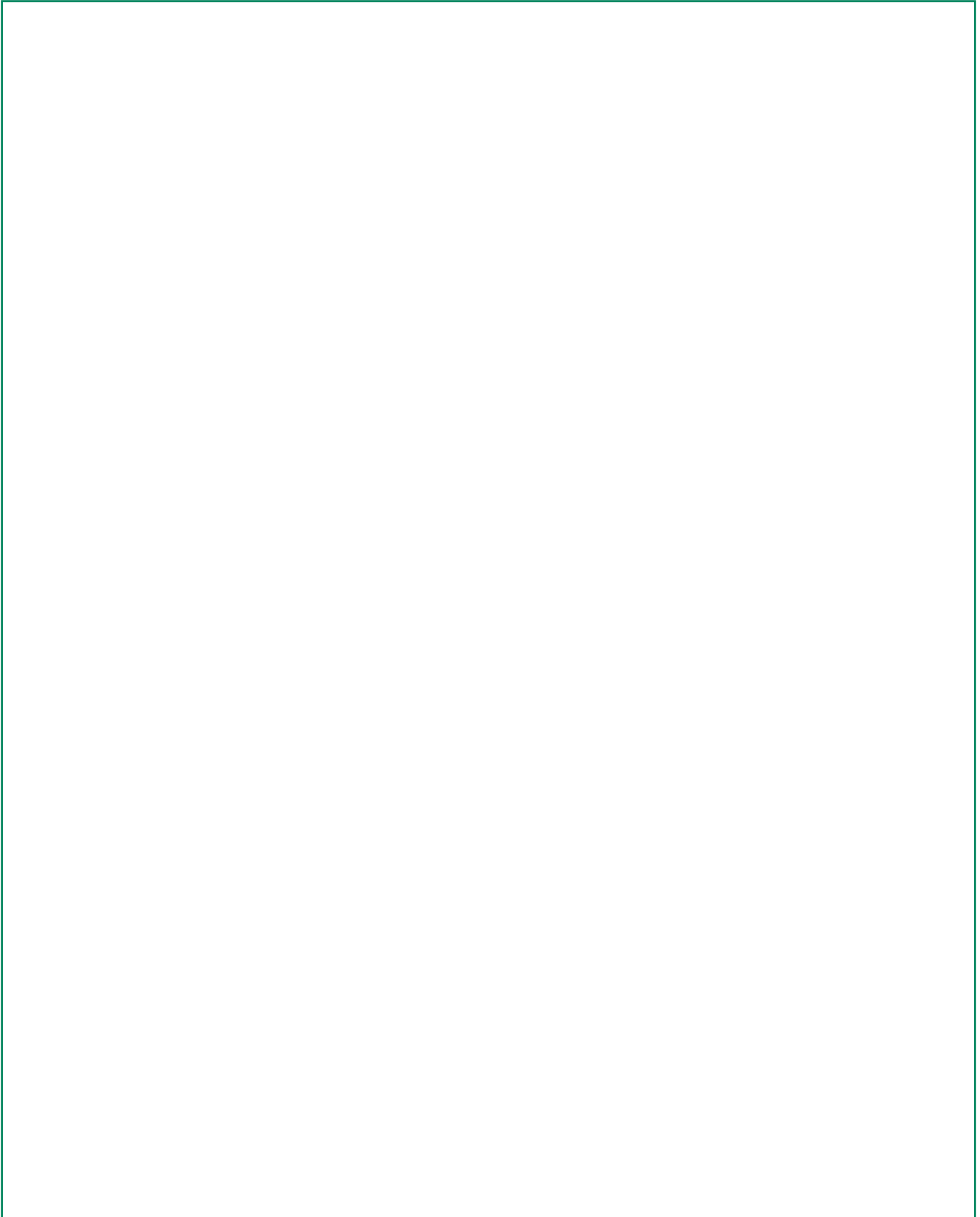
- Providing assistive technology tools for calculations and numerical tasks.
- Offering additional time or breaks for tasks involving numbers and calculations.
- Simplifying complex numerical instructions and breaking them down into smaller steps.
- Providing written instructions and visual aids to supplement verbal explanations.
- Offering alternative methods for problem-solving, such as using diagrams or practical examples.
- Providing access to calculators or other tools to aid with arithmetic tasks.
- Offering support from colleagues or mentors for complex numerical tasks.
- Creating an inclusive environment where employees feel comfortable disclosing dyscalculia and requesting necessary accommodations.
- Regularly reviewing and adjusting workplace arrangements based.

## Dyscalculia Strategies

- Try to avoid worksheet activities.
- Encourage the use of more efficient calculating strategies, such as counting on rather than counting everything.
- Encourage visuals by drawing math diagrams.
- Use real life examples.
- Talk or write / draw out the problem.
- Use visual and verbal cues/ physical props.
- Break the tasks into subsets.
- Short and frequent reviews.
- Keep information fresh and applicable.

# Dyscalculia

**Note your own strategies:**



# Dyspraxia

# Dyspraxia

## My disability

Dyspraxia is a development co-ordination disorder (DCD) which affects movement and coordination. It affects the way the brain processes information and the way messages in the brain are transmitted.

Emotional problems, immaturity and/or obsessive behaviour are also associated with Dyspraxia.

## How it might affect me

The features of DCD can be:

- Difficulties with gross and fine motor skills, e.g. climbing stairs, catching or kicking balls, handwriting, using scissors, doing up buttons, etc.
- Appearing clumsy or difficulties with coordination.
- Motor skills may be difficult to learn and retain.
- Impaired or delayed speech.
- Difficulty in planning and organising thoughts and ideas.
- Appearing disorientated in the physical environment.
- Difficulties with memory function, e.g. remembering where they left their keys, recalling or retaining information.
- Difficulties with attention and concentration.

**Reading and Writing:** Inaccuracy when copying words and/or numbers, listening to or reading instructions, understanding or making sense of information, decoding maps and charts, spelling and cohesion when writing assignments.

**Multitasking:** Listening and taking notes at the same time.

**Emotional and Sensory:** Some people may have phobias, obsessive or immature behaviour, be sensitive to external stimulation, e.g. different levels of light, sound and heat intensity and or experience extremes of emotions.

## How can you help

- Get to know the individual support needs of young persons.
- Give a student praise and don't compare them with others.
- Allow them extra time to process information and complete tasks.
- Prompt them to stay on track, as they may lose concentration easily.
- Consider that students may need adaptations to equipment or their working environment, e.g. pen—grips, use of technology or different seating arrangements.
- Teach organisational skills, diary and folder management.
- Ensure that where required assistance is given to the student to find his/her way around, they may forget where they are supposed to be.

**Allow access to word processors/laptop/voice recorders etc.**

## Dyspraxia Strategies

- Provide modified equipment where appropriate, for example, pencil grips, adapted pens and scissors, highlighted texts and alternative methods of recording such as use of ICT.
- Make allowances for set tasks and support organisational skills by using task planners or checklists.
- Model and coach language skills and develop spoken language through planned activities.
- Offering alternative methods for demonstrating knowledge or skills, such as verbal presentations or practical demonstrations.
- Use structure, routines and consistency and reinforce with visual cues.
- Allow additional time to complete tasks and build in assistance for written tasks, for example, use of ICT or technological aids.
- Use simple, short instructions which are repeated and reinforced by visual prompts.
- Use a multi-sensory approach to build kinaesthetic skills.



# Dyspraxia

**Note your own strategies:**



# Physical Disability



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# Physical Disability

## My disability

The term Physical Disability indicates a limitation of a person's physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina.

This can include:

- Permanent disabilities.
- Temporary illnesses.
- A range of medical conditions.

All of which will impact individuals differently and potentially fluctuate in different environments.

Some disabilities have a name such as Cerebral Palsy or Muscular Dystrophy. This is a generic term and everyone's experience of this will be vastly different. It's important to work with each young person/employee appropriately for their specific needs.

In the workplace, a physical disability could affect a person's ability to:

- Communicate as well as have some speech and language difficulties.
- Take notes or undertake practical tasks, as they may have limitations in their strength and/or dexterity.
- Travel short or long distances, they may use manual or power wheelchairs, crutches, walking frames or may just need extra time and to use the lifts when moving around the workplace.

## How it might affect me

As all students will have differing needs, the most important thing is to communicate with the student as they are the best judge of how they are affected and what they need in terms of support.

### A physical disability could affect a person's ability to:

- Process information – for example Cerebral Palsy or a stroke (Cerebral vascular accident).
- Speech and ability to communicate.
- Move joints, limbs etc that will impact their ability to take notes or undertake physical tasks in the workplace.
- Travel short or long distances, they may use manual or power wheelchairs, crutches, walking frames or may just need extra time and to use the lifts when moving around the campus.
- To meet their own personal daily independent needs.

## How you can help

- Be aware of the young person's needs and if they have a note taker, use a laptop or DVR (digital voice recorder) in class to capture notes.
- Be aware of any access arrangements in place to ensure these are the young person's normal way of working.
- Always address the student and not the person with them if they are accompanied by a support worker.
- Always position yourself in front of the student when speaking and try not to have long conversations when pushing a manual wheelchair where you are behind the young person.
- Consider the access issues for your student– if you are not based on the ground floor – is there lift access?
- Can they safely evacuate the building in an emergency?
- Consider the working environment, does the student require a height adjustable table and alternative seating.

## How you can help continued

- If supporting a student to complete practical elements of employment work because they physically cannot, always ensure you communicate effectively with them so that they are in control of the work that is produced and it is completed to their specification.
- Try not to make too many assumptions before you have discussed an individual's condition.
- Patience is the key word. If you can create and maintain a relaxed atmosphere, many problems will not even arise.
- For Cerebral Palsy, people should be aware of any repeated involuntary movements.
- If regular exercise is part of the normal routine, you may have to plan this into activities.
- If you are planning a visit outside of the normal workplace, forward plan with your student to ensure they have the same opportunities and access as the rest of the staff and take advice on risk assessments if necessary.
- If students have a condition/disability that affects their speech, always ask if the student to repeat what they have said, or re-frame the question if you have not understood. Never pretend. Don't be embarrassed, they will likely be used to the situation and their speech pattern will become more familiar in time.
- Students may not require more time to answer questions or contribute in department debates.
- Students may become more tired in the afternoons due to their condition and need to be aware of how to 'pace' their days at the workplace.
- Please always ask and be discreet in your approach initially.

# Physical Disability Strategies

- Encourage Independence.
- Remove obstacles so the student can move freely within the classroom.
- Encourage support from the students' classmates.
- Ensure physical access to the workplace where there are ramps, toilets and lifts.
- Be aware of specialist equipment such as adaptive keyboards and riser desks.
- Table-type desks with adequate leg space will need to be considered.
- If students use wheelchairs, where possible place yourself at their eye level when talking to them. A common mistake is to talk to the person pushing the wheelchair.
- Specialised equipment may also be necessary.
- If writing is difficult, consider using a digital voice recorder or student's phone.
- Encourage communication to prevent isolation.
- Encourage social activity if necessary.
- Allow students extra time to complete tasks.
- If working in a physical environment, note that slower-paced activities are better than those requiring a fast response.
- Ensure the student feels included and is encouraged and praised as they may have a low self-image.

# Physical Disability

**Note your own strategies:**



# Epilepsy



# Epilepsy

## My disability

Epilepsy is a neurological condition that affects about 1 person in every 200 and causes recurrent seizures that originate in the brain.

People can experience many different types of epileptic seizures, and you will need to find out what is normal for each individual.

Seizures can last for different amounts of time. Once a seizure is over, the individual will need to recover, and this can take much longer than the seizure itself.

The majority of people with epilepsy respond well to treatment and can get on with their lives. However, some people with frequent seizures, of any type, may need constant supervision and support.

Students with Epilepsy will usually have an individualised Care Plan.

## How it might affect me

The term Physical Disability indicates a limitation of a person's physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina.

This can include, permanent disabilities, temporary illnesses and a range of medical conditions, all of which will impact individuals differently and potentially fluctuate in different environments.

There are three main types of seizures, which are:

- Primary generalised seizures
- Partial (focal) seizures
- Secondarily generalised seizures

Primary generalised seizures – the whole brain is affected by the disruption to its usual activity and consciousness is lost. Seizures in the category include:

**Absences:** The person looks blank for a few seconds and may not respond when spoken to or realise they have had a seizure. This type of seizure can happen repeatedly and can be mistaken for daydreaming.

## How it might affect me ...continued

**Tonic-clonic:** The person stiffens, loses consciousness, convulses and may fall. Irregular breathing and/or incontinence may happen. Tonic and atonic seizures or drop attacks – the person may stiffen, fall heavily, lose muscle tone and crumple to the ground.

**Myoclonic:** rhythmic, shock-like muscle jerks that can affect the whole body and can be strong enough to throw the person to the ground.

**Partial (focal) seizures – only part of the brain is affected, and consciousness may be altered but not lost. Seizures in this category include:**

- **Simple partial seizure:** the person may experience unusual sensations and/or movement in one part of the body, e.g. tingling or twitching.
- **Complex partial seizures:** awareness is disturbed or lost and the person may experience unusual feelings. They may be unaware of their surroundings and unable to respond when spoken to and their behaviour may appear strange.

**Secondarily generalised seizures – the disruption starts in one part of the brain and spreads to the whole brain.**

Status epilepticus is a condition in which seizures persist for 30 minutes or more. It can occur with all types of seizure but with tonic clonic seizures, it is a medical emergency requiring immediate medical treatment.

If a tonic clonic seizure lasts more than 5 minutes, or if a second seizure occurs before the person has recovered, call for medical help.

## How you can help

Get to know the student and how their epilepsy does or doesn't affect them and how they'd like to manage it.

Be aware of their care plan and if you have any responsibilities within it.

Know a young person's triggers and ensure they are supported to avoid them as much as possible at the workplace e.g. missed meals, response to stress or anxiety, illness and flashing lights.

If students are missing everything you do due to their epilepsy, support with providing catch up work and helping them feel comfortable returning to the workplace.

If a student has a seizure at the workplace, work with them to ensure they feel comfortable returning to the workplace.

### Further support:

The college will be able to advise all involved of any care plan requirement. Further training in Epilepsy is also available.

Watch the video below to learn what to do if a person is having a seizure and you do not have a care plan:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MPJauo4DdY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MPJauo4DdY)

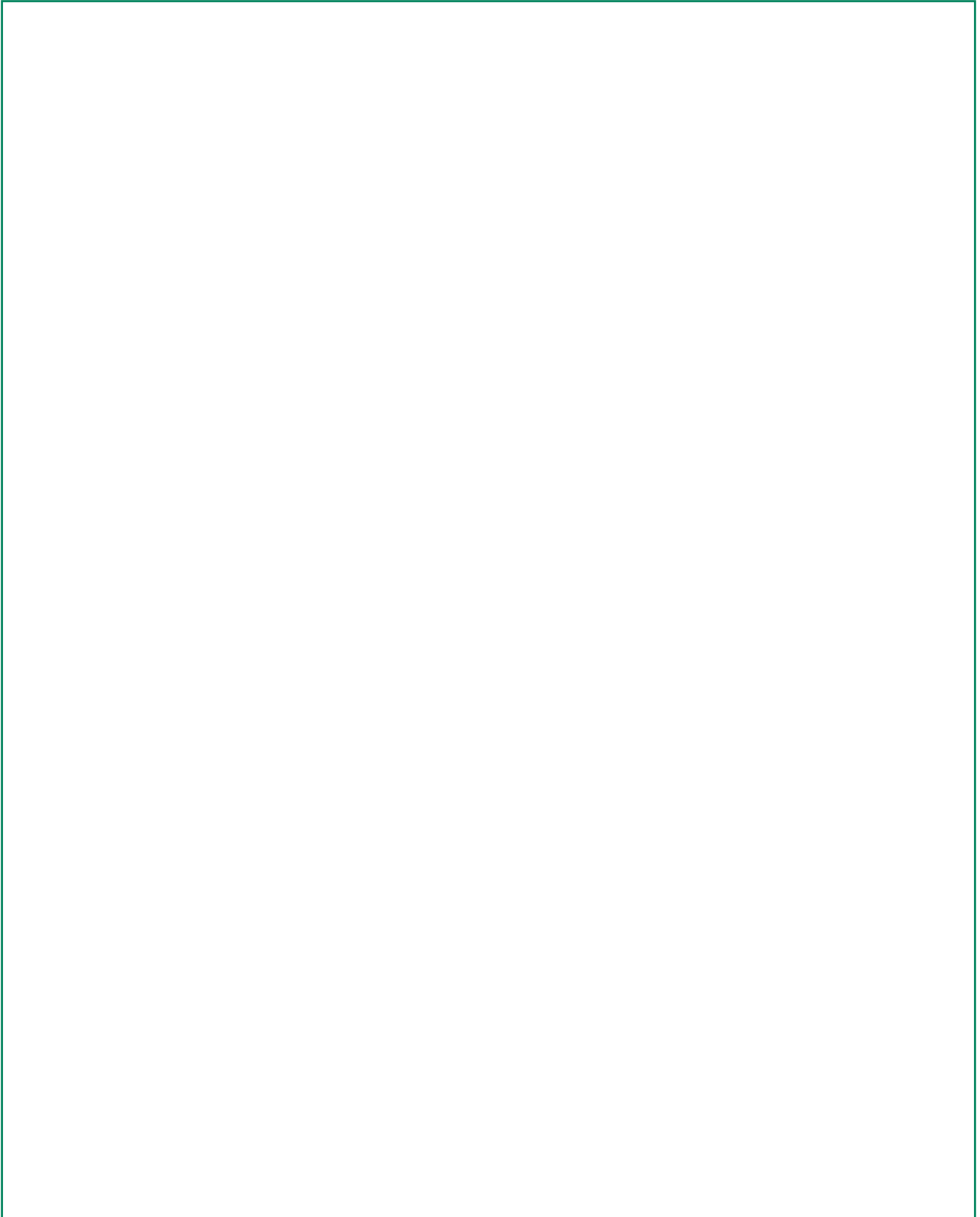
If it is a medical emergency, you need to dial 999.

## Epilepsy Strategies

- Supervised rest breaks.
- Breaks to take medication.
- Opt-out options that could trigger seizure.
- A quiet place to study or go to, if there is trigger alert.
- Frequent progress monitoring to help and address effect.
- Area to rest after a seizure.
- Effect epilepsy is having on students learning.

# Epilepsy

**Note your own strategies:**



# Diabetes

# Diabetes

## My disability

Diabetes is a fairly common health condition, where a person's pancreas does not produce any insulin, or not enough, or where the insulin that is produced does not work properly. This causes the amount of glucose in your blood (blood sugar level) to be too high, because the body cannot use it properly.

There are two types of diabetes:

**Type 1 diabetes:** Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body is unable to produce any insulin. Usually, it occurs before the age of 40, and especially in childhood. A common way of treating Type 1 diabetes is through daily insulin injections.

**Type 2 diabetes:** Type 2 diabetes develops when the body can still make some insulin, but it is either not enough or does not work properly. It is usually controlled with a healthy diet and exercise and, in some cases, insulin.

**Type 2 diabetes is far more common than Type 1. In the UK, around 90% of all adults with diabetes have Type 2.**

During pregnancy, some women have such high levels of blood glucose that their body is unable to produce enough insulin to absorb it all. This is known as gestational diabetes.

People with diabetes will be advised to eat healthy, exercise regularly and carry out regularly blood tests to check blood glucose.

Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to damage to the heart, eyes, feet and kidney.

## How it might affect me

A person with Diabetes may experience:

- Excessive thirst.
- Needing the toilet frequently.
- Tiredness.
- Wounds that don't heal very quickly.
- Weight loss.

To manage their condition a person with Diabetes will need to:

- Have regular meals.
- Exercise.
- Treat hypos quickly by providing a sugary drink as food can take too long to absorb. How can it affect me?

Diabetes cannot be cured but you can control the symptoms in order to prevent health problems developing later on in life. Glucose or blood sugar levels need to be regularly checked in diabetes. If glucose levels get too low, a person could experience hypoglycaemia, or a hypo. Signs that someone is having a hypo could be hunger, shakiness, irritability or blurred vision.

A change in blood glucose could also trigger:

- **Hypoglycaemia** (hypos) when their blood glucose level is too low and they experience sweating, anxiety/irritability, hunger, difficulty concentrating, blurred sight, and feeling shaky.
- **Hyperglucaemia** (hyper) when their blood sugar is too high, and they experience feeling very thirsty, needing the toilet more, tiredness, weight loss, blurred vision and fruity-smelling breath. This can be triggered by stress, illness, and being less active or diet. This can be life threatening and develop quickly over a few hours.

## How you can help and strategies

If the signs are spotted quickly enough, the hypo can be treated by taking something high in sugar, such as a non-diet fizzy drink. If the person is unable to swallow, seek medical help quickly, rather than trying to force them.

**Insulin cannot be taken by the mouth, but rather has to be injected. Two of the ways of taking it are:**

**Insulin pens:** small needles in the form of a pen that can be carried around with you, to inject insulin at appropriate times, such as after eating.

**Insulin pumps:** a device that is attached to your body, via a small plastic tube that usually sits under your body. This provides continuous insulin and should not be disconnected for long periods of time.

There is no special 'diabetic diet' although a healthy diet is important in controlling both forms of diabetes.



# Diabetes

**Note your own strategies:**



# Chronic Fatigue Syndrome



**SKILLS**  
WEST MIDLANDS  
+ WARWICKSHIRE

# Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

## My disability

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is a debilitating disorder characterised by extreme fatigue or tiredness that doesn't go away with rest and can't be explained by an underlying medical condition.

CFS can also be referred to as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) or systemic exertion intolerance disease (SEID).

## How it might affect me

A person with CFS may experience the following symptoms:

- Fatigue after physical or mental activities. This can last for more than 24 hours after the activity and is severe enough to interfere with daily activities.
- Loss of memory or concentration.
- Chronic insomnia (and other sleep disorders, therefore feeling unrefreshed after a night's sleep).
- Muscle pain.
- Frequent headaches.
- Multi-joint without redness or swelling. Frequent sore throat.
- Tender and swollen lymph nodes in your neck and armpits.

**People are sometimes affected by CFS in cycles, with periods of feeling worse and then better again.**

To manage their condition a person with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome will need to manage their exertion (physical and mental) throughout the day and week to ensure they rest accordingly and respond to how they are feeling.

## How you can help

- Be aware of the person's syndrome and make allowances, where possible for attendance, no completion of work and fatigue in class.
- Plan for rest periods during the day or plan the day to fit with the person's support needs. A person with CFS may find mornings or long days more challenging.
- Be open to the idea of combining the workplace and home learning and alternative delivery methods, so the student can access in their own time when they are feeling well.
- Offer and encourage the use of organisers, and other tools for time management and organisation, especially if a student isn't attending everything you do and need to keep up with work.
- Allow for extended time assignments (special allowances) and ensure access arrangements are in place for exams.

## Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Strategies

- Good planning of the student day with agreed breaks.
- Resting time between college and working days.
- Encourage the student to keep a fatigue diary.
- Enjoyable low-level activities.
- The use of energy saving devices.

# Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

**Note your own strategies:**



# Anxiety and Mental Health



**SKILLS**  
WEST MIDLANDS  
+ WARWICKSHIRE

# Anxiety and Mental Health

## My disability

Mental health encompasses a whole range of UNSEEN difficulties from mild anxiety, known to us all, to more serious and enduring conditions, managed by medication & therapy.

Some are temporary, triggered by the external circumstances including Stress, Anxiety & Depression.

Others are Genetic such as Psychosis (which leads to a temporary altered perception of reality).

Others include Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Paranoia, Phobias, Eating Disorders & Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

However, a lack of understanding leads to prejudice and fear, which is a huge hurdle, leading to isolation and rejection, compounding the problem.

## How might it affect me

As an employer, you are not responsible for diagnosing mental health problems or expected to be a mental health expert but you might notice behaviours or signs that a student is struggling.

These might include:

- Tearful or frequently upset.
- Avoiding friends or social events.
- Not enjoying activities they enjoyed before.
- Unable to carry out normal tasks or handle daily stresses.
- Restless.
- Changing their eating habits.
- Abusing alcohol or drugs.
- Angry for prolonged periods of time.
- Having paranoid thoughts.
- Self-harming.
- Talking about suicide.

Mental health refers to the way we think, feel and act. Everybody has mental health, the same way everybody has physical health and we need to look after it.

If you go through a period of poor mental health, you might find that the ways you're frequently thinking, feeling or reacting can become difficult, or even impossible to cope with.

**1 in 4 adults and 1 in 8 people experience a mental health problem.**

If you are concerned about a young person's wellbeing, try to stay calm and have a conversation with them, or where appropriate their parent/carer.



## How you can help me

- Facilitate TRUST in your working relationship.
- Be patient and demonstrate empathy: lack of understanding can lead to prejudice, resulting in isolation & compounding the problem.
- Encourage realistic individual steps to build self esteem.
- Use mind mapping to set small long-term goals.
- Weekly Diary Management.
- Allow 'Time Out' option to self-manage mood and anxiety.
- Do not put under the spotlight.
- Allow presentations in small departments.
- Negotiate deadlines.
- Be alert to individual strengths and capitalise on them to build confidence.
- Be consistent and resilient.
- Constantly reinforce a positive vision of their future.
- Be aware of professional boundaries.
- The one to watch: destructive behaviours. The result of low self-esteem, can lead to sabotage of opportunities for success because it is unknown territory.

### Create a safe space for them to open up

This should be somewhere they feel comfortable and you are unlikely to be distracted.

#### Listen

Let them know that this time is for them to talk, and you are there for them. Try not to offer solutions right away and ask what they think could help.

#### Be open

Some people find it difficult to talk about mental health and wellbeing. Being open and gently encouraging conversations helps mental health to become an everyday topic that people are more comfortable to talk about.

#### Be Honest

They may have questions about mental health and wellbeing, and you may not have all of the answers. Be honest about not knowing and agree how you will follow up.

### If a student is in crisis:

- Suicide risk assessment.
- Mental Health Assessment under 25:  
call Point **0800 977 4077** / email: **help@point-1.org.uk**
- Give them The Samaritans number. Call 116 123 24 hrs a day.

### Encourage them to seek help

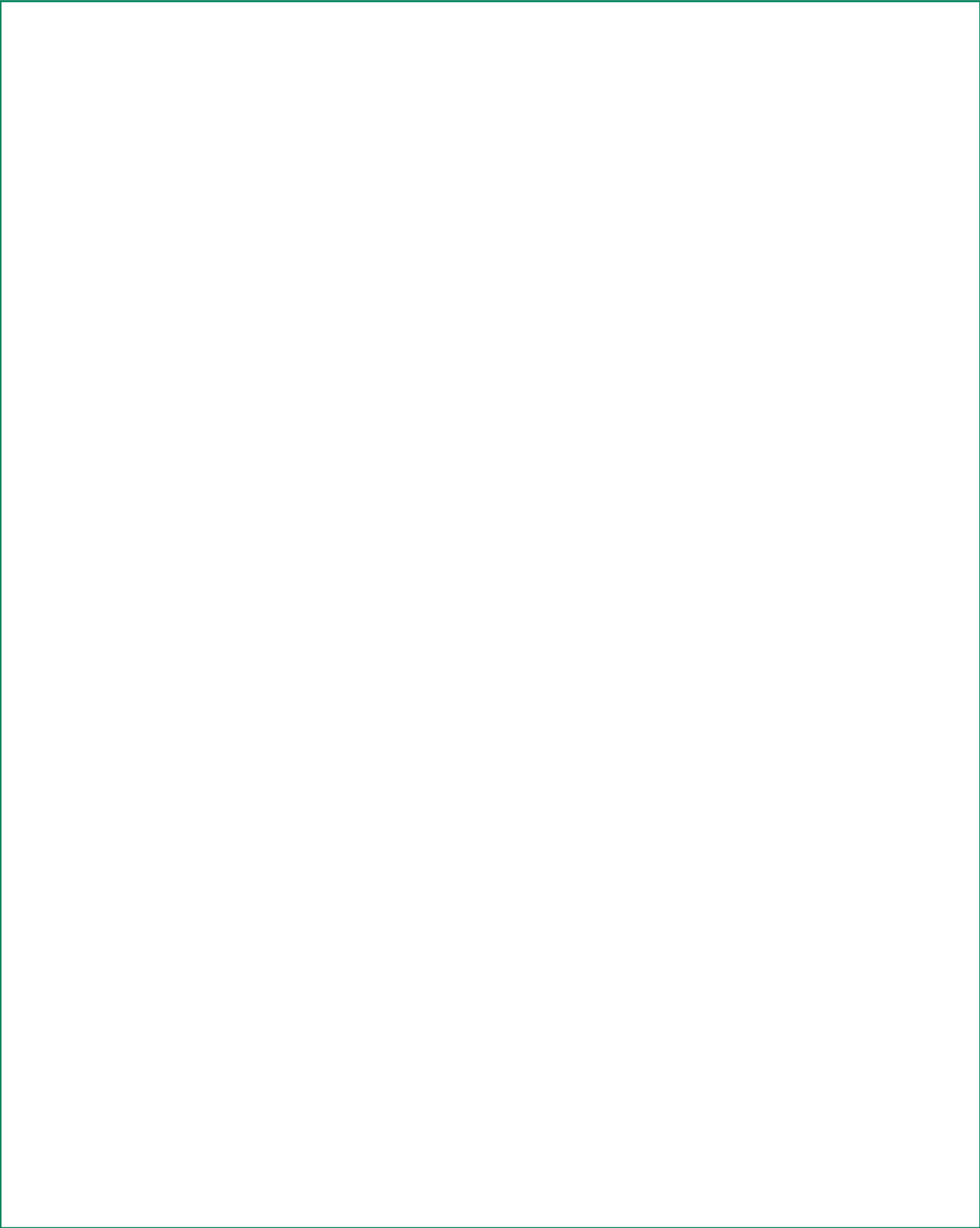
Encourage the student to speak to their parents or carers, or to a GP, about how they are feeling. You might also signpost them to support in your local area. Inform the student where possible that you are required to pass any concerns on.

# Anxiety and Mental Health Strategies

- Students with severe anxiety will often feel very negative about themselves – remind them of their good points and give targeted, skill-specific praise.
- Provide support for students to prioritise and organise their workload to avoid them feeling overwhelmed.
- Encourage students to practice self-management strategies that they have been taught by CAMHs professionals, for example, grounding and relaxation techniques, mantras and positive thinking approaches.
- If appropriate, provide a quiet area or space within your workplace area for time-limited withdrawal and respite.
- Try to encourage the student to develop a problem-solving approach to their anxiety and maintain a supportive dialogue on how you can help.
- Students with severe anxiety often rely on routines to predict what is required of them. Try to give notice of any significant changes or events so that they can feel prepared.
- Try to negotiate and be flexible around deadlines for homework and be aware that students may spend an inordinate amount of time checking and rechecking their work.
- Students with social anxiety may be reluctant to contribute to class discussion or performances – try to accommodate this whilst developing their resilience and confidence.

# Anxiety and Mental Health

Note your own strategies:



# Moderate Learning Disability



**SKILLS**  
WEST MIDLANDS  
+ WARWICKSHIRE

# Moderate Learning Difficulty

## My disability

Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) can also be known as GLD – a global learning delay or difference. This is not a specific but a generic learning difficulty which relates to a general delay in learning, it can affect everyone in a number of different ways.

A moderate learning difficulty is not a medical diagnosis, but a range of assessments can be carried out to determine whether a learning difficulty is present, such as literacy/numeracy diagnostics or tests, psychometric testing, IQ tests, and educational psychology assessments.

It can be difficult to recognise someone with MLD, as its presentation can be confused with 'bad' behaviour, autism, or Specific Learning Differences. MLD can also be diagnosed alongside other INCLUSIVE's.

## How it might affect me

- Poor understanding of words and pictures and word association.
- Low confidence/self-esteem.
- Lacking appropriate or immature social skills, or completely the opposite.
- May find it easier to 'show' rather than 'tell'.
- May struggle with cognitive processes - such as memory, keeping attention, decision making and understanding language.
- May not understand levels of seriousness, consequences or not responding well to instructions. E.g. looking both ways when crossing the road.
- Individuals may have heightened phobias or anxieties.
- May appear immature for age.
- May struggle with organisation.
- May have slow speech or poor vocabulary.

## How can you help me

### Strategies for working with students with MLD:

- Speak to the student and listen to their needs. They probably have their own strategies and are aware of what their strengths and weaknesses are.
- Encourage independence at all opportunities and avoid over dependence on support.
- Provide clear concise instruction when assigning tasks.
- Break tasks down into manageable sections, 1 or 2 instructions at a time.
- Give full explanations using simple language.
- Praise effort and reassure.
- Allow extra time for tasks, assessments if necessary.
- Revisit and recap prior work regularly, to allow extra opportunities to reinforce learning.

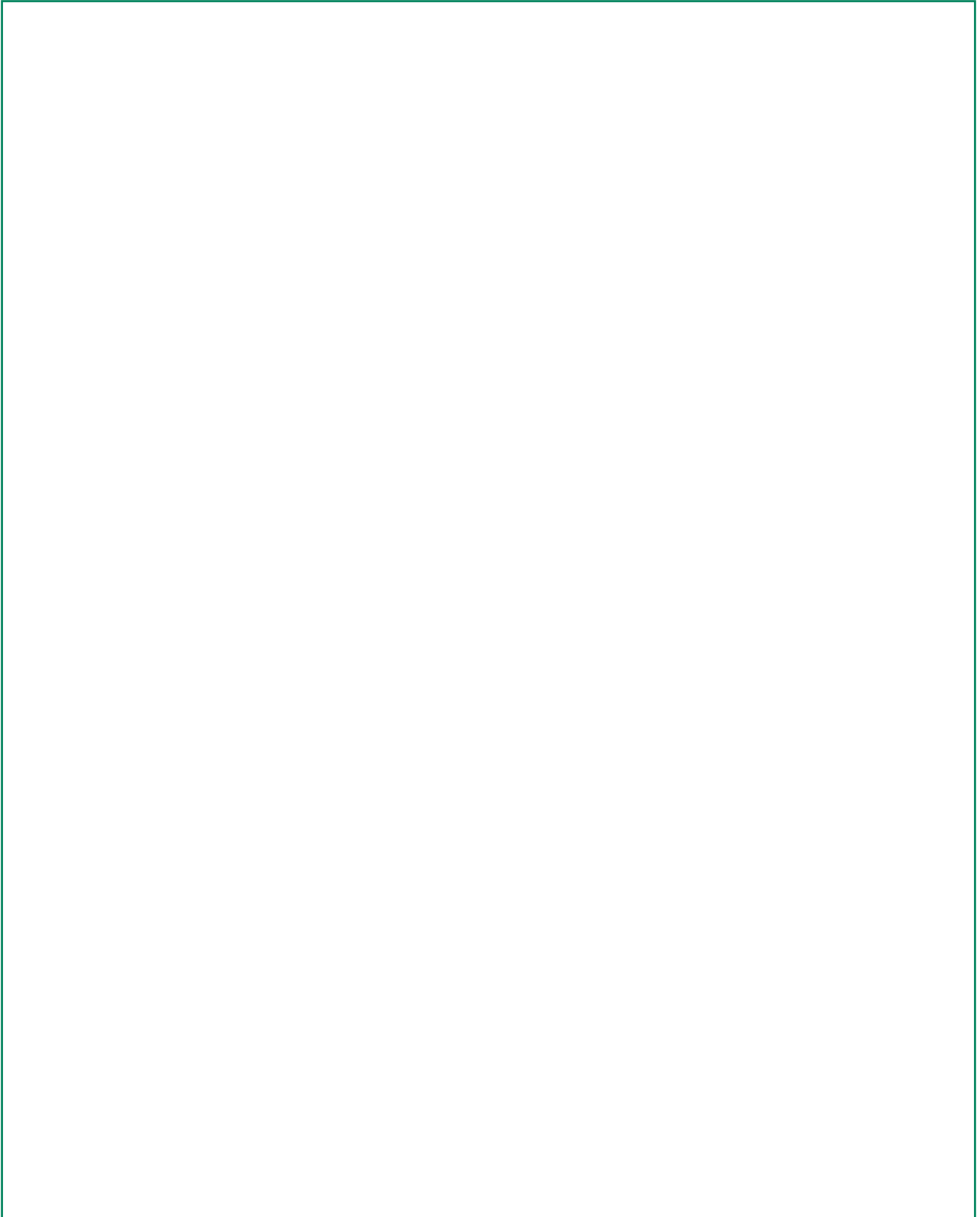
# Moderate Learning Difficulty Strategies

- Encourage students to work independently whenever possible and provide environmental cues, for example, keyword lists, dictionaries, reference posters.
- Ensure that learning activities are broken down into small steps and are clearly focused on agreed learning outcomes.
- Explain the context and use questioning and prompts to trigger previous learning.
- Simplify, differentiate or abbreviate learning tasks and provide a multisensory approach to learning.
- Use visual and concrete materials to aid understanding, for example number lines and alphabets.
- Keep language simple and familiar in guided group work.
- Make use of songs, rhymes and rhythm to aid learning sequences, for example, the alphabet and days of the week.
- Keep instructions short and concise and ask the student to repeat instructions, in order to clarify understanding.
- Use writing frames to structure extended writing tasks.
- Provide alternative methods of recording, for example, labelled pictures, diagrams, flow charts and mind maps.
- Ensure repetition and reinforcement within a variety of contexts.
- Allow extra time to complete a task and work out responses.
- Monitor and record progress, so that each small achievement is recognised.
- Organise activities to develop listening and attention skills, for example, sound tapes.
- Practise a range of sequencing activities, for example, pictorial activity or story sequences, word and sentence sequences, days, months and number sequences.
- Model ways of approaching a solution, give initial steps and gradually adding prompts only if necessary.



# Moderate Learning Difficulty

Note your own strategies:



# **Sensory impairment – Hearing loss**



**SKILLS**  
WEST MIDLANDS  
+ WARWICKSHIRE

# Sensory impairment – Hearing loss

## My disability

Hearing loss can be temporary or permanent, present since birth or onset at a later age.

Students who have notified that they have a hearing impairment could range from British Sign Language users, to those who have become deaf and use speech and lip-reading, from profoundly deaf students who do not use hearing aids, to those that have hearing aids or a cochlear implant.

It is vital to understand individual students' needs as different people will be affected in different ways.

## How it might affect me

Students who are Deaf/Hearing impaired will likely have difficulty:

- Participating in department discussions.
- Acquiring subject specific vocabulary.
- English metaphors, jokes etc.
- Difficulties with written English.
- Lip-reading.
- Mixing with their peer department.
- Working in a room with backgroundnoise (for example the 'hum' of a computer and machinery).
- Working in a poorly lit room.
- Hearing the verbal input of the lecture.
- Accessing information/instructions correctly.
- Taking notes while also listening to/ watching other information.

## How you can help me

- Consider a range of ways of explaining activities or giving instructions so that misunderstanding is avoided.
- Ensure the individual can see the person speaking, as they may find it helpful to read lips or body language.
- Some people may become inattentive when others are speaking, owing to a difficulty in following speech. They may have difficulty in noisy conditions e.g. when a lot of people are talking at the same time, or when playing a noisy game.
- During many activities visual clues may be necessary, so you will need to make sure that these are clear and when changing from one speaker to another, that the listener is directed to the face of whoever is talking.
- Some people may need to use other aids such as “signing” to help their communication, for instance, Makaton or British Sign Language. You will need to check with the person concerned, as they may well have developed their own range of signs.
- Depending on the type of hearing loss, speech may be difficult for you to understand. This will become easier as you get to know the person concerned. Don’t forget, that to the individual concerned, what they are saying makes perfect sense.
- Particular attention needs to be paid to safety wherever you are. Remember that warnings that rely on hearing, such as fire alarms, shouted instructions, or car horns, may be ineffective. You may find it useful to pair to person up with a hearing ‘buddy’.
- For lip-reading make sure you have good lighting, avoid putting your hands in front of your face or looking away at a screen and give adequate breaks to enable the deaf student to learn at their best ability.
- Do remember that lip-reading and/or watching the interpreter, is very tiring.

# Sensory impairment – Hearing loss Strategies

- Be aware that hearing aids do not restore hearing to normal.
- Gain the student's attention before speaking.
- Consider the pace at which you speak – allow the student to absorb one piece of information before moving on to the next.
- Let the student sit towards the front and encourage him/her to pick the best place for them.
- Allow the student to see your face, as he/she will need to make use of the extra clues to meaning that are provided by facial expressions and lip patterns.
- Relay contributions from other people, whether right or wrong, as the deaf student may not have realised who was speaking or what they said.
- Give the deaf student time to respond – he/she may need additional listening and thinking time.
- Ask open questions, which allow the student the chance to offer comment, explanation and description.
- Give frequent verbal and non-verbal encouragement.
- Avoid moving around too much or turning away.
- Speak clearly and avoid shouting, whispering and mouthing, which distorts natural rhythm and intonation.
- Bear in mind that recordings on CDs, DVDs and TV use disembodied voices which can be very hard to follow.
- Be aware that darkened rooms can be a problem for lip readers.
- Avoid standing in front of a bright light or window, as your face will be in shadow and lipreading will be difficult.

# Sensory impairment – Hearing loss

**Note your own strategies:**



# **Sensory impairment – Sight loss**



**SKILLS**  
WEST MIDLANDS  
+ WARWICKSHIRE

# Sensory impairment – Sight loss

## My Disability

A visual impairment is an eye-sight difficulty that is not correctable by wearing glasses, contact lenses or surgery.

80% of what we learning is thought to be gained through vision. Vision is the co-ordinating sense, reinforcing information gained from other senses and provides us with a wealth of information instantaneously.

It aids our motivation, memory and concentration, helping us anticipate and reinforce information gained from other senses. Because of the individual nature of impairments, it is vital we communicate with the students so that we can fully understand their challenges and support in the appropriate way.

## How might it affect me

- Reading and writing tasks, e.g. books, hand-outs, signs, proof reading, copying and seeing from the board etc.
- Mobility and orientation around campus and to and from the workplace. For example: difficulties with judging distance, speeds, depth perception, moving in crowds, difficulty reading signage, increasing risk of the falls or bumping into things. Sstudents may use a cane or guide dog for support.
- Social interaction, including department work participation and making friends. For example, difficulties such as recognising non- verbal and visual features, expressions and behaviours, knowing who is in the department, when to speak and turn taking.
- Accessing information, they will likely have a reduced opportunity to access incidental learning.
- Practical tasks for example, travelling and cooking.
- Adapting to the physical environment e.g. changing light and weather conditions, coping in busy chaotic areas.
- Many aspects of day to day life may require more effort, time, planning, concentration, and/or adaptive skills/equipment or technology to undertake safely, therefore increasing the levels of tiredness the student experiences.



## How can you help me

### Support strategies for students with Visual Impairments – Accessing information and communication:

- Always discuss with the young person/employee about the eye condition and the extent to which help is needed. Ask for any advice or practical tips they may have to offer.
- Don't worry about saying 'nice to see you' or 'look', students who are blind and partially sighted and use these phrases too.
- Use lots of verbal descriptions and try to avoid phrases such as 'over there.' Use directional instructions, 'walk to your left', 'towards me' etc.
- Use touch appropriately when you meet and greet someone to let them know you are there. Let them know your name and who you are, so they know you are looking after them. Always verbally 'sign on' when you meet someone and 'sign off' when you leave them.
- Always let them know who else is around and whether they are in a small or large group.
- Arrange a guided walk around your meeting place and any new venues and inform them of any changes.
- When you are leading or guiding, ask the person if they require help and then ask them to grip your arm, just above the elbow. Walk at their pace, tell them where you are going and point out any obstacles or key points on the way.
- There are a variety of aids available, such as magnifying lenses; large print publications; Braille transcriptions; audio descriptions; electronic reading aids and screen readers, all available from RNIB or local societies for the blind.
- During many activities, verbal instructions and a 'running commentary' from a work buddy or instructor, could be helpful.
- Always find out what aids are required for each individual; everyone will have different needs. For example, it is important not to just produce Braille documents when the person requires something in Large Print or audible format.
- Some people will use white canes for mobility and orientation, so others need to understand and be aware of them.

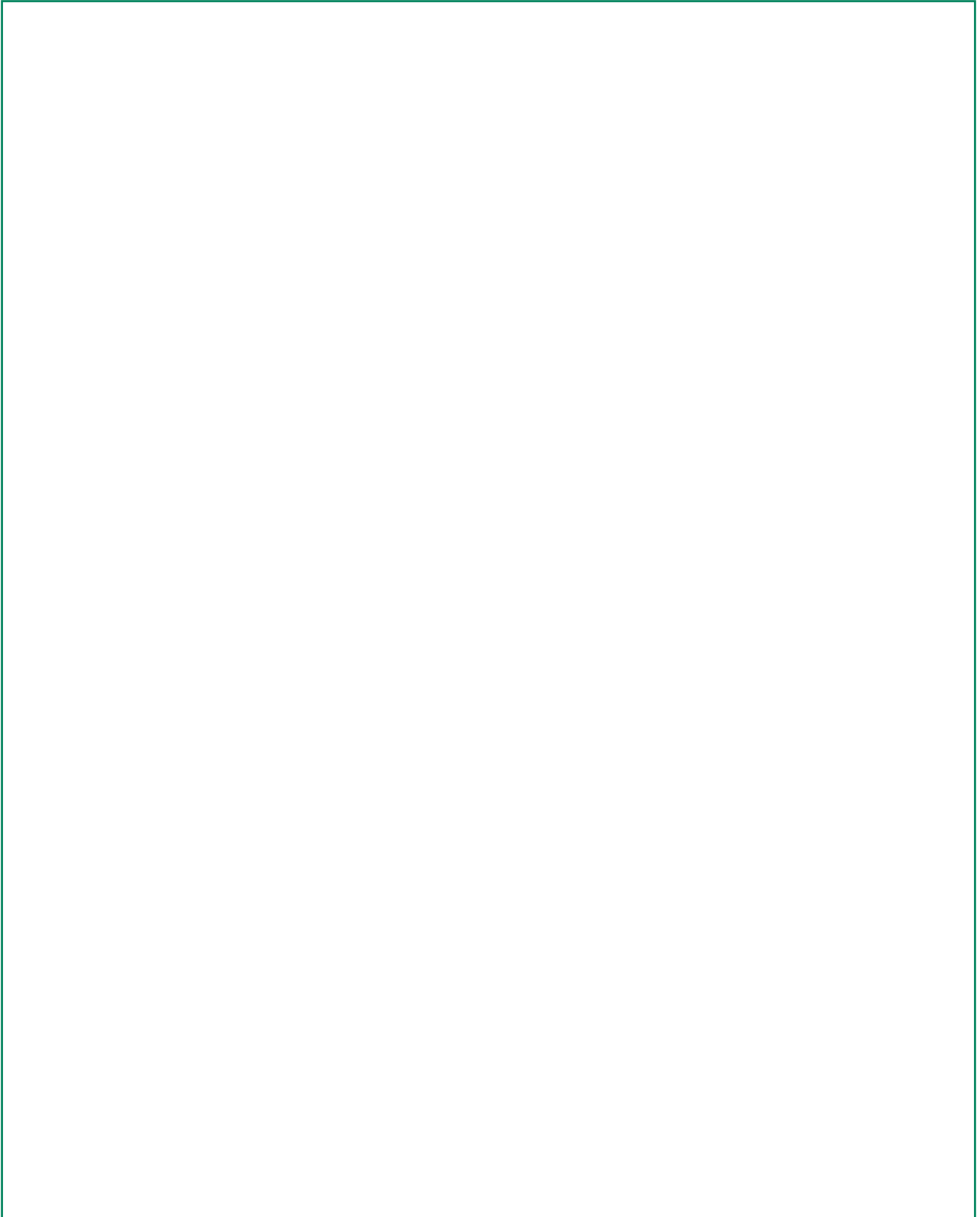
# Sensory impairment – Sight loss

## Strategies

- Ensure students are wearing prescription glasses.
- Have the use of magnifiers and big-print books, etc.
- Make sure lighting is suitable. Make efforts to eliminate the risk of glare.
- Don't gesture always verbalise.
- Ensure there is good contrast. Use bold colours.
- Avoid standing in front of a window when talking to students.

# Sensory impairment – Sight loss

**Note your own strategies:**



# Speech and Language



**SKILLS**  
WEST MIDLANDS  
+ WARWICKSHIRE

# Speech and Language

## My disability

Speech and language and communication SLCN needs, means having difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because of a difficulty in saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every student with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.

## How it affects me

### Attention and listening

Difficulty in paying attention during a shared activity, to an activity for an appropriate length of time and listening to instructions whilst busy doing something else. Can be easily distracted and tends to prefer activities of their own choosing. Finds tasks with spoken instructions harder to complete than tasks where listening is not required.

### Understanding

- The understanding of abstract concepts and more complex spoken language.
- Difficulty in understanding appropriate spoken instructions or carrying out multiple instructions.
- Difficulty in remembering spoken information long enough to use it.

### Spoken language

- Will use a smaller range of words and shorter sentences, wrong words for things and/or uses general words such as 'thingy' 'that' 'put' and 'get'.
- Misses out the small words and/or tends to repeat back what has been said. Sounds can be muddled or disorganised when talking in longer sentences.
- Will have difficulty describing events in a way that is easy for the listener to understand, as well as difficulty in structuring sentences and expressing thoughts, opinions and knowledge clearly. Unable to use spoken language to convey their thoughts, feelings and wishes.
- For those with a stammer/stutter e.g. lengthens or repeats some sounds or words, or gets stuck.

### Social Communication

- Difficulty using language in social interactions and understanding the rules of conversation.
- Difficulties in maintaining a topic of conversation and responding appropriately to non-literal language, irony and jokes.

## How it affects me continued

### Cognition, Learning and Behaviour

- Uneven or spiky learning profile (may have particular strengths and difficulties) or slower processing speeds (for example taking longer to read and understand questions) with a noticeable gap between attainment and ability.
- Difficulty in making connections, generalising skills and responding to tutor direction.
- Poor understanding of social conventions (e.g. personal space) and expectations, leading to possible social isolation. May show literal interpretation of things.
- Difficulty showing empathy, predicting own response and those of others.
- Resistance to change and exhibits sign of distress (this could be due to sensory overload e.g. being overwhelmed by visual, auditory and/or physical stimulation), intense special interests and obsessive behaviour.

### How you can help

- Prepare the work environment so it is communication friendly, think about seating plan, visual timetable, visual cues/symbols, prompt cards and timings for breaks.
- Try to use simple instructions, breaking these down with the use of visual aids.
- Use effective communication to transition / with routines from tasks and activities throughout session / week. Prepare for any changes of routine well in advance and prepare for the session by outlining what it will be about.
- Be aware that certain types of humour may not be understood and make take things literally.
- Be aware that facial expressions may not reflect true feelings.

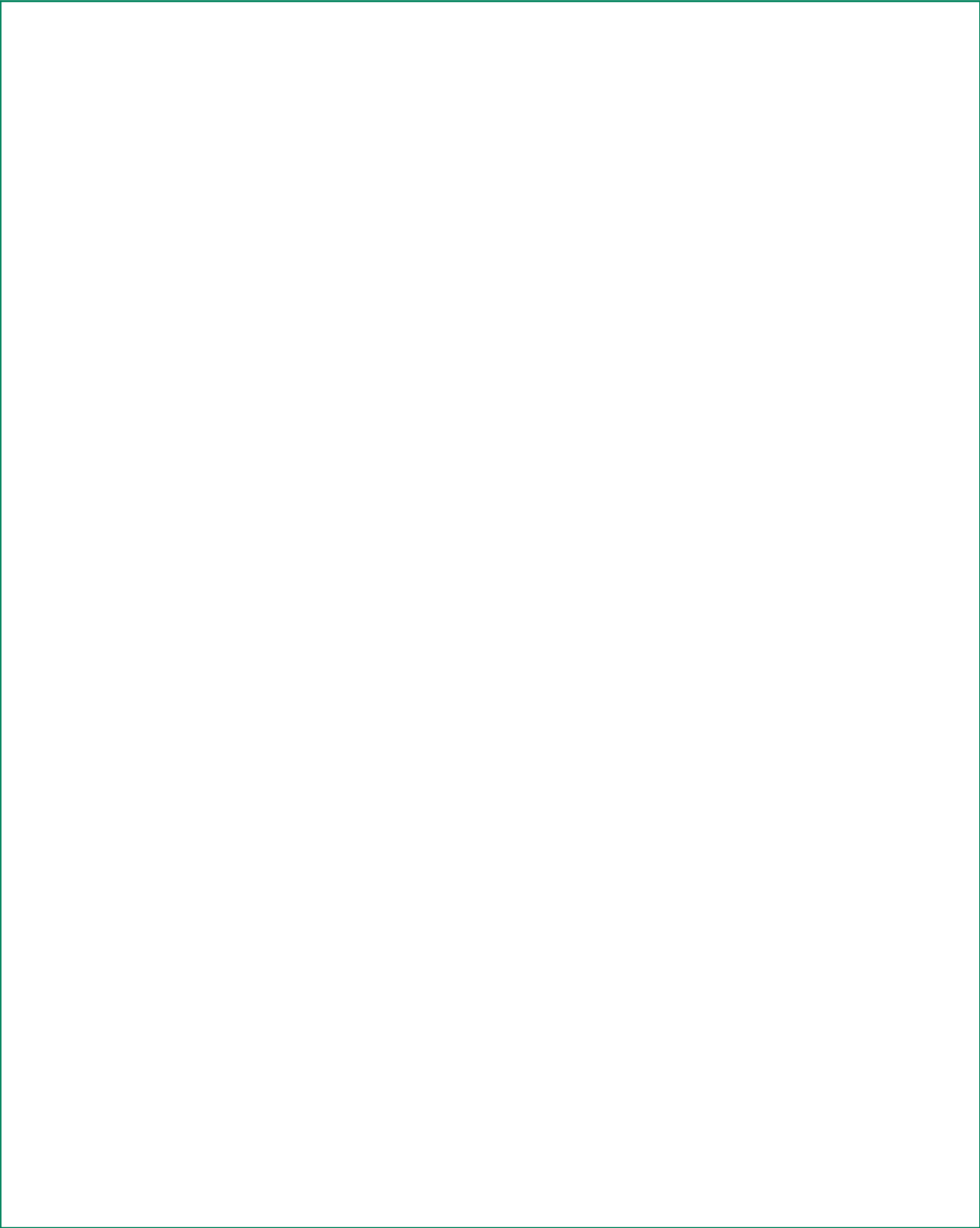
# Speech and Language Strategies

- Whenever possible, try to ensure that students have direct experience of a concept before you use it.
- Use non-verbal clues if you are using more challenging language to develop students' understanding.
- Validate appropriate behaviour by describing it and rewarding it, perhaps through actions rather than direct verbal praise.
- Ensure that students know that you are talking to them – don't include a question in the middle of a string of less relevant talk.
- Don't assume that 1:1 listening will generalise to listening to whole- class listening – use prompts and check on understanding individually.
- If a student makes a linguistic error, give feedback in the correct form without pointing out the mistake.
- Use feedback to encourage students that it is alright to make mistakes, for example, 'a good try' or 'can you tell me more about..?' Follow by further questions and prompts to support the student in understanding the error and moving towards a correct answer.
- Use a hierarchy of questions to encourage talk – start with an open question to allow for extended responses. If they need some support, move to closed questions or forced alternative questions. Use a prompt for the right answer, for example, a sign, gesture or picture cue.
- Allow response time – let students know that you are going to be asking questions and encourage them to use thinking time to formulate their answer.
- Develop social communication skills e.g. small group work, negotiating activities, turn-taking/sharing and role-play/social stories as appropriate.



# Speech and Language

Note your own strategies:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin green border, intended for the user to write their own strategies.



# MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

**HIDDEN**  
disabilities 

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower was created in 2016 when Gatwick airport realised that while they could recognise and support passengers with visible disabilities, what about passengers whose disabilities are not visible? The answer was a Sunflower, on a green background, usually worn in the form of a lanyard and designed to discreetly indicate that the wearer's disability is not visible. People choose to wear the Sunflower to indicate to others that the wearer may need some additional support, patience or understanding.

The Sunflower has rapidly grown to be the globally recognised symbol for invisible disabilities. It is worn by millions of people around the world and supported by thousands of businesses and organisations, both large and small, to support their customers and colleagues alike who choose to wear the Sunflower.

It has been launched locally in the UK, Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, The Netherlands, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Arab Emirates. It is recognised across a broad range of sectors – ranging from retail, financial services, travel and tourism including over 150 global airports, over 450 universities, schools and colleges, all of the UK railway network, supermarkets, leisure facilities, healthcare, emergency services, museums and theatres and over 350 charities. Basically, anywhere people meet, shop, learn, work or travel, the Sunflower has a presence.

Their aim is simply to improve everyday experiences for people with invisible disabilities. In short, to make the invisible, visible.