



## **SOUTH CUMBRIA DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION**

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Registered Charity No 511311

### **SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT SERVICE**

#### **WHY DO PEOPLE COME TO SEE US?**

SCuDA has been offering specialist assessment for individuals of all ages for several years. Children and adults come to us because:

- They recognise that they are better at some skills than others and would like to know why
- They would like to understand why they find aspects of learning, particularly reading, writing and or spelling difficult
- They find aspects of remembering and organisation for study and/or work particularly difficult
- They have had some assessment and/or extra help at school or college and would like a fuller assessment or updated assessment in order to have a better understanding of their difficulties
- Parents would like to understand their children's difficulties and know how best to help them at home
- Adults would like to know how they can improve their literacy skills or bypass their literacy difficulties.
- Employers have requested more information so that they can make reasonable adjustments for an employee with specific difficulties. (Access to Work scheme)
- Schools or other professionals have suggested that families contact SCuDA
- Students require a diagnostic report in order to apply for funded support at university (DSA)

#### **WHO ARE OUR ASSESSORS?**

- A team of experienced assessors work with SCuDA. All of them have qualifications as teachers or speech and language therapists. All have additional post graduate qualifications in assessing and teaching people of all ages with specific learning difficulties including: dyslexia, dyspraxia, speech and language difficulties, auditory processing difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and problems with numeracy. Our assessors also hold nationally recognised Assessment Practicing Certificates.

## **WHERE ARE WE?**

- Most of our assessments take place at SCuDA's office in Stricklandgate House, in the centre of Kendal. We are also able to offer some assessments in Barrow, Penrith, West Cumbria and Lancaster.

## **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?**

- Assessments usually take 3 hours
- The assessment activities are varied and people of all ages find it a positive experience.

## **HOW TO PREPARE FOR ASSESSMENT?**

- It is useful to consider the right time for a dyslexia assessment. You may wish to discuss this with SCuDA and consider other areas to explore first.
- It is important to know that this is not an assessment where you pass or fail. You are coming to see someone who is interested in how people learn. They will help to work out why some learning is, or has been, difficult and what might help to make things easier.
- Parents and adults may like to look at the British Dyslexia Association website for some background information. <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>
- When you request an assessment you will be sent an Assessment Request Form and a pre-assessment Visual Difficulties checklist to complete and return. We may then discuss the need for visual assessment before assessing reading.
- The next step is that you will be sent pre-assessment information questionnaires. If the assessment is for a child there will be one for the parents/carer and one to forward to your child's school. This provides background information in order to plan appropriate assessment activities. We may also ask for examples of unaided writing and typing.
- Once these questionnaires have been returned an assessment date can be planned.
- Children should bring examples of school work and reports with them. We also sometimes ask them to bring a current reading book and short piece of totally independent writing. There are separate requests for older students and adults.
- It is important that assessors have information about any previous assessments and / or study support. It is important for them to see relevant past specialist reports to avoid repetition of tests within too short a time, which may make results invalid.

## **WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN ASSESSMENT?**

Our aim is:

- to assess performance in a range of skills and abilities in order to consider individual strengths and weaknesses, Don't worry – this is not an exam which you pass or fail.
- to collect information about reading, spelling and writing skills.
- to identify whether there is an unexpected difficulty with reading and writing attainment.
- to consider other factors which may be affecting learning such as attention, memory, spoken language and co-ordination.
- up to date tests are used which explore aspects of underlying ability, reading, writing and spelling, handwriting and fine motor skills, underlying learning skills such as phonological awareness, speed of processing and memory, speech and language and auditory processing. Additional checklists and discussion may be appropriate when there are co-occurring difficulties.
- The assessment information is collated in a report which complies with the Specialist Assessment Standards Committee protocol for SpLD report writing ([www.sasc.org.uk](http://www.sasc.org.uk)). The information informs focused individual recommendations.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE ASSESSMENT?**

- Your report will first be emailed to you as a Draft so that you can raise any questions and/or request any amendments.
- We aim for the report to be a document that you are happy to share with family, teachers, tutors, other professionals and employees if you wish.
- A post assessment meeting can be arranged to talk through the report and recommendations.
- If the report is for a specific purpose such as application for Disabled Student Allowance at university, your assessor will explain how to proceed.
- Reports will not be sent until the invoice is settled in order to save administration costs.

## **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?**

Because we are a charitable organisation, our charges are very reasonable compared to many equivalent organisations and individuals. This does not mean that our assessors or procedures are in any way less professional, extensive or thorough.

- Diagnostic assessment and report £400
- Consultation with assessor: £60 per hour

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