

October 21st 2021

Dear friends

I hope this letter finds you well, and as we approach winter and the days become shorter, I am pleased to bring you news from Dyspraxia Foundation. I am particularly keen to share with you how, despite the challenges around us – both within our voluntary and social sector, as well as across the world with the pandemic, your support has enabled us to continue making a real impact on the lives of people affected by dyspraxia. We really do want to thank you and your trustees.

Dyspraxia Youth supporting Emerging Minds & CoRAY Project

Earlier in the year, volunteers from Dyspraxia Youth Group and our membership took part in an exciting project to help inform future resources for young people. The CoRAY



project focus brings together and uses research that has already taken place into how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the mental health and wellbeing of 11 – 16 year olds in the UK. CoRAY want to ensure that these findings are translated into evidence that generates informed resources that will be helpful to support the mental health and wellbeing of 11 – 16 year olds in the UK. Continuing our involvement with the Co-RAY Project Molly Keefe, a member of Dyspraxia Youth went on to take part in a live webinar that focused on the impact Covid has had on young people's mental health and well-being, Molly describes her involvement in the project here:

'On the 20th July I took part in a webinar about how the coronavirus pandemic has affected young people's mental health. This followed on from a project I was involved in as well as 3 other young people from the dyspraxia youth group previously where I volunteered to share my experiences of lockdown and what helped me. I also voiced what I thought adults should do to support us. A main thing that helped me was joining the Dyspraxia Youth Facebook group chat as it helped me find likeminded people with the same condition as me. It also helped me get to grips with my diagnosis and learn more about it as I am newly diagnosed' -Molly.

Dyspraxia Foundation Youth –Reach Out Survey

Dyspraxia Foundation is always keen to listen to its members and beneficiaries. During the pandemic this has been even more vital. A recent survey was circulated throughout our young people's groups - asking 13-16 year olds and their parents and carers what sort of activities either on-line or in person they would be interested in attending – mindful of the real difference between face to face and online services.

The survey results highlighted that young people would prefer to have a getting to know one another session on-line first (81%) before meeting face to face. And in regards to workshop options the preference would be to participate in a developmental workshop focussing on gaining knowledge or skills. This was the preferred workshop if offered on-line (77%) or in person (70%.) It was closely followed by relaxation/mindfulness workshops or a practical cooking session.

Amendments to Memorandum and Articles

During our October AGM, members voted wholeheartedly for an amendment to the M & A which would promote diversity within our charity's board. Our aim was to ensure our co-opted trustees include an adult and one young adult (18-25) who identify with having dyspraxia. In addition, we proposed and agreed the creation of an Adult Panel of Advisors with a Chairperson or nominated lead who would report to the Board of Trustees and vice versa. The panel would work alongside our other advisory panels operating to the same terms of reference and will be made up and representative of adults (over 18) with dyspraxia- or identify as such- of all ages, experiences, and interests.

New group launches in North London

Since March 2020 the charity has been able to support volunteers to start or continue with 7 new regional dyspraxia support groups, meeting at local level. This brings our total group number up to 27 across the UK. We are so grateful to new volunteering coming on board, for example, Isabel Janner, in North London who told us the following:



“I’m very excited to be part of Dyspraxia Foundation. My son, age six, was diagnosed with dyspraxia last year and my daughter, age three, has verbal dyspraxia. I’m dyslexic. So we truly are a neurodiverse family. I believe that a neurodiverse person, with the right support, can achieve whatever they set their mind to. We are resilient, determined and approach life from a different perspective. This is something to be celebrated.

For me, Dyspraxia Foundation is so important because I don’t know any other neurodiverse families. I can’t wait to get to know other parents and carers in the North London area who’ve had similar experiences so that we can laugh together, cry together and ultimately support each other through the obstacles of schooling and life in general! This is why I’m setting up a Zoom parent/ carer group to meet on the first Thursday of every month and I hope that we will be able to meet in person soon.



Virtual Employment Event

One of our recent successes at Dyspraxia Foundation was to host a weeklong series of events as part of Virtual Employment Week from Monday, 28th June – Friday, 2nd July. We delivered 5 Facebook Live Events, 3 Streamed Videos and 2 dedicated closed Zoom meetings specifically for those with dyspraxia aged 16 – 25. Facebook Live Events were open to anyone with an interest in the condition and covered Disclosure, CV Writing Tips, Interview Skills, The Equality Act, Access to Work and lived experiences. We had 6,680 views during the week and reached 23,137 people.

Dyspraxia Week, October 11th 2021

This year's Dyspraxia Week saw the charity host a wide range of live, on-line activities, events, training opportunities and shared learning – all aimed at improving the educational experience for young people with dyspraxia at primary and secondary school. Parents, educators and young people were invited to take part, share their experiences, and help raise awareness of this vital issue.

Live events included the following:

- a session on practical hints and tips for primary and secondary school aged children;
- a session for educators and parents, focusing on some of the developmental differences and characteristics of Dyspraxia / Developmental Co-Ordination Disorder that teachers may notice in the students they teach. It also explored some practical, achievable intervention strategies teachers can use in their own classrooms.
- a session on the concept of unconscious bias, supporting our community to understand how bias can impact inclusion and how to overcome personal implicit biases.

10 tips to help with organisational skills

1. **Prioritise** - think about what are your greatest organisational challenges and start by focusing on these. Don't try to change everything at once.
2. **Use a diary system** on the phone and on computer and put in all deadlines/appointments/social events as soon as you know them and set up alerts to remind you.
3. **Use colour coding** to separate items and subjects so can easily be seen e.g. clothing, different documents
4. **Use audio reminders** e.g. alarms on phones/computers/ timers/clocks/ watch alarms as prompts to do things.
5. **Use visual reminders** as prompts such as Post- It notes on your laptop/ or bedroom wall.
6. **Get into a habit** of placing items such as phone/keys always in the same place when coming home - a coloured bowl makes it easier to see.
7. **Pack bags the night before** school or college or when going away so you are in less of a rush. Place them where you can find them e.g. by front door.
8. **Ask for a template** or an example of an assignment, essay or report you need to do so you know what to aim for.
9. **Start each day with a to-do list.** At the end of the day write down anything you need to carry over.
10. **It takes a lot of time to automate actions** so don't give up.



See www.doitprofiler.com to learn about your own strengths and challenges and gain personalised guidance with the Neurodiversity Profiler

A Grandparental Cry for Help - an example of comments received in Dyspraxia Week. "Pleeeeeease can you go into schools to champion this condition? They really really need to learn about it. My Grandson is having a torrid time right now despite assurances of help and understanding... Thank you all for highlighting Dyspraxia!"

From our social media analysis so far, we can see that over 11,600 viewers on Facebook were reached through our live events and campaign messages. We had interactions and comments from 350 live participants and our messages shared 2,873 times.

In addition, we published a press release and had supportive blogs and vlogs published on our website and social media pages by many people – young people, as well as adults, sharing their experiences and raising awareness. Here is an example, from Jake Borrett, a member of our community:

I was diagnosed with dyspraxia at the age of eighteen by an educational psychologist whilst studying English Literature and Creative Writing at University of Hertfordshire. I have faced many challenges including relating to co-ordination; language, writing and speaking skills; memory and organisation; and anxiety when dealing with new and unpredictable social situations. I was also bullied in secondary school because I was 'different'. However, I also believe dyspraxia has made me a more determined, empathetic, passionate and creative individual.

This creativity is a common trait in those living with dyspraxia. They are often artists, musicians, actors, fashion designers, as they often think 'outside the box' with initiative ways to bring into work, social and home life. I believe my dyspraxia has had an influence on my creativity as a writer. I write poetry, short stories and I am working on a couple of middle-grade and young adult fiction novels, which I hope to get published. I often share this writing on the radio too in order to raise awareness of hidden disabilities and mental health conditions. If one person who reads or listens to my words feels less embarrassed, ashamed, or alone while going through hard times I know it is worth it and I will keep on writing.

I am very proud to be part of the dyspraxia community as they prove to me every day they are kind, funny, inspirational people with so much determination and heart.

Jake Borrett, October 16th, 2021

Collaborations

Dyspraxia Foundation are delighted to work with other organisations to spread awareness, information and educate about dyspraxia. Two new developments this year include the following:

i) the creation of a Dypraxia / Development Co-ordination Disorder short animation, by the DCD Project at The University of Exeter which explains Dyspraxia perfectly.

<https://www.facebook.com/100006441697992/videos/905546060358656>

ii) a new quick guide for occupational therapists working with children and adults with developmental coordination disorder from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT). Commenting on the new quick guide, RCOT Professional Adviser for Children, Young People and Families, Dr Sally Payne said:

“Many people – adults and parents – say that a diagnosis of developmental coordination disorder (or dyspraxia) helps by providing an explanation for a person’s difficulties and enables them to access information, intervention and support.

Dyspraxia Foundation Youth Roadshow

Thanks to support from our funders, from the end of October, we are heading out on the road, to meet community members and hosting a series of events up and down the country in partnership with our local groups and volunteers. The first of these events will be taking place in the West Midlands and will be open to anyone aged 13 to 16 living in the area. We are organising three activities in total, one virtual and two in person where young people can meet others and find out more about Dyspraxia Youth and what we are all about. We will be kicking things off with a fun on-line quiz followed by a cooking workshop and a self-development workshop after that. All the events will be free and we hope to meet many new faces.

And Finally, a Few Stories from Dyspraxia Foundation Friends:

Bill runs for Dyspraxia! *“Five years ago I decided that I wanted to understand some of the challenges that I had faced since I was a child without really knowing the reason why there were things I found difficult. As an adult the diagnosis of Dyspraxia has made a huge difference to my understanding of myself. The Dyspraxia Foundation provides invaluable support and information to people like*



myself and it has made me feel less alone in dealing with some of the challenges in everyday life caused by my Dyspraxia.”



Imogen Rowe, known to us as Immie, was one of our very first Youth Champions appointed in 2019. Immie is a keen singer as well as loving running, walking and baking.

Immie was diagnosed with verbal dyspraxia at 2 and although much improved her verbal communications and anxiety around her speech remains. Immie is an amazing fundraiser and networks for the charity, gaining much needed awareness and spreading the word about dyspraxia. She has given talks to Driving Instructors, presented cheques, helped at youth workshops and raised funds at

Christmas and by running the London 10K. Immie who is now at University is Joint Local Coordinator for the West Midlands Group. Being a Youth Champion and a very valued part of our community has made a real difference to her life.

Finally, I would like to just close with another reference to your kind support towards our work. We really couldn't achieve all of this progress without you. Although much of society seems to have returned to 'normal life', like many vulnerable groups, we know that our community remains apprehensive about these turbulent times and Dyspraxia Foundation continues to work hard to understand how we can continue to best support our community's needs, both now and in the coming months ahead.

I for one, am getting excited about being back in the office during October and November, and getting the team together again, albeit in a 'hybrid' fashion and on a rota system. I will look forward to bringing you news about our progress again in a few months to come.

Kind regards



Eleanor Howes

CEO