

Dear parents,

We enter 2014 with an air of anticipation and hope for better support and services for our children and young people with literacy difficulties and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

We are approaching the final stages in parliament of the biggest reforms for 30 years for those children with special educational needs in mainstream education. We are proud to be part of these reforms and strive to ensure that all schools and practitioners have access to resources and information to enable them to identify needs early and to provide the most effective support swiftly.

We're delighted to see our Parent Champion numbers growing and are always keen to hear your stories. Let us know what's working well in your area so that we can share your success with others.

We hope you enjoy our new Understanding Dyslexia booklet for older children produced by Cornwall County Council; let us know what else we can do to help.



Mel Byrne
Director,
The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust

IN THIS ISSUE

Director's message	1
How you can help	2
Supporting You	3
Help with Access	3
Ask an expert	4
Spelly Feet	5
Help and Events	6
Parents Survey	7
Get in touch	8



How you can help

We now have a national team of over 450 Parent Champions making a difference in communities across the UK.

By sharing our information, such as the 'Understanding Dyslexia' booklets – and telling parents about the reliable support available through the Dyslexia-SpLD Trust and its partner organisations you are helping us to spread our message. **Thank you.**

Our target is to have over 500 Parent Champions by the end of March 2014. We need your help to make this happen.

We'd like to ask everyone to find just one person to sign up as a Parent Champion and if you can find two or three that would be fantastic.

The more **Parent Champions** we have, the more families we can help and support.



Supporting you on a local level

Local Parent Partnership Services

The National Parent Partnership Network (NPPN) supports and promotes the work of local Parent Partnership Services (PPS) across England.

Parent Partnership Services (PPS) offer advice and support to parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs. They are statutory services and this means there has to be one in every local authority. Funded by the Department for Education, they are free, impartial and confidential services.

To find out where your local PPS service is and what they can do, click [here](#) to search by region.

BDA Local Dyslexia Associations

Local Dyslexia Associations (LDAs) are independently registered charities or groups affiliated to the BDA. They are usually staffed by volunteers who work at grass roots level to support local people through providing a variety of information and support. For example they may; hold meetings with speakers and workshops, run courses, and have literature for sale and for lending, as well as various other specialised events. LDAs know of local facilities for assessment and tuition and are usually able to offer solutions for locally occurring difficulties as well as national issues.

To find your nearest LDA [click here](#).



Help with Access Arrangements

If you are struggling to support your child through school or college based tests and examinations, you may want to know more about what support measures they are entitled to.

[Click here](#) to find information on these from the British Dyslexia Association website.

Ask an Expert

New support coming soon

On the 7th January the Department for Education announced a new Independent Support fund which will be managed by the Council for Disabled Children (CDC).

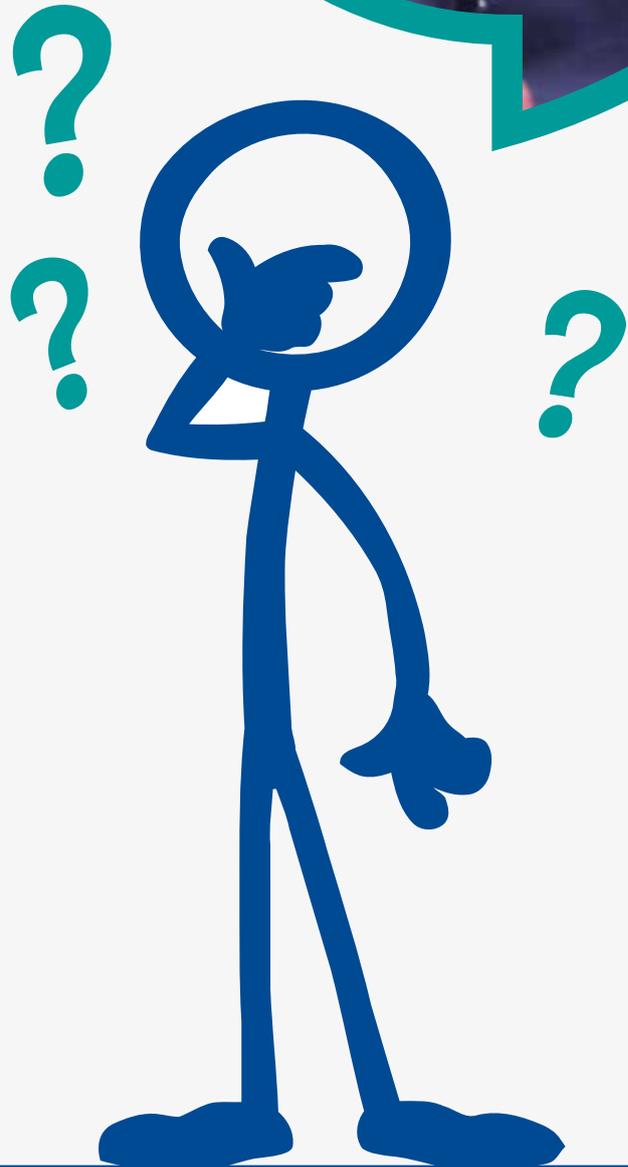
The fund of £30 million will be used to recruit and train a pool of 'independent supporters' – drawn from independent voluntary, community and private organisations, to help the families of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) through the new process following comprehensive reforms to support.

The aim is to have over 1,800 independent supporters on hand from September to help parents navigate the new special educational needs process. CDC will be overseeing the recruitment and training of the independent supporters in time for the implementation of the Department for Education's SEN reforms.

Edward Timpson, Minister for Children and Families, said:

“I know from speaking to many parents how much they value any support in helping them access the services their children need. Where there is disagreement, independent supporters will also make sure councils understand what families want, and help families to challenge decision making”

The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust will be keeping an eye on developments regarding this and the wider SEN reforms and sharing as much updated information as possible with you, our champions.





Anyone Can Spell It

Anyone Can Spell It is a show-and-tell book of tried-and-tested strategies for making spelling as straightforward, accessible, and memorable as possible.

It is designed for anyone who has difficulties with spelling, but especially for teachers and parents who want a ready-made set of strategies that can be used immediately for teaching. One example of a strategy contained in the book is Spelly Feet. Currently being printed, Anyone Can Spell It will be available soon from Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre.

Spelly feet

Walk it (Movement)

Gross motor movement can often be extremely useful in helping a learner to master a spelling pattern. Getting a learner up from a chair and actively engaging in the process facilitates learning and recall. It is also fun and engaging.

The drill

- 01 Photocopy and cut out as many feet templates as required.
- 02 Write the relevant letters on the feet.
- 03 Lay out the feet on the floor in order of the word spelling.
- 04 Have the learner step on the feet, saying the letter names to spell the word. After the last letter they should say the whole word.

Repeat this several times.

Vary the exercise by changing the placement of the feet

- The feet could contain digraphs as well as single letters (e.g. ar, oy, th).
- Whole word families could be learnt at the same time by having more feet letters available on the floor.
- At a more advanced level, letters could be deliberately omitted or added for decision making purposes.



Good to talk

If you want to talk to an expert,
you can:

- Call the British Dyslexia Association Helpline on **0845 251 9002**.
- Arrange a consultation at one of the Dyslexia Action Centres or at Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre.
- Full contact details are available at www.parentchampions.org.uk.



Events for Parents and Carers

New Parent Courses

If you are in the Buckinghamshire/Berkshire area, Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre will be running new Parent Courses in February to April 2014.

Topics will include; study skills, numeracy, spelling and homework. To find out more, [click here](#).

What's happening locally?

If there is an event happening in your area that you think others should know about and you would like us to promote, please let us know. We can include it in our events calendar.



Parents Survey What happens next?

Big thanks to those who have completed our survey on revising online information for parents.

It's always good to get feedback on what is working well and what needs changing.

We have received some great suggestions on how to improve our online information and will be looking at these going forwards as we strive to improve things for you.

For example:

68%

of you have used our 'Understanding Dyslexia' booklet but many of you have commented that you would like more information for older children.

So we worked with Cornwall LA, to produce a booklet for older children. You should have received your copy in the post recently but if you haven't or you need more, please let us know!

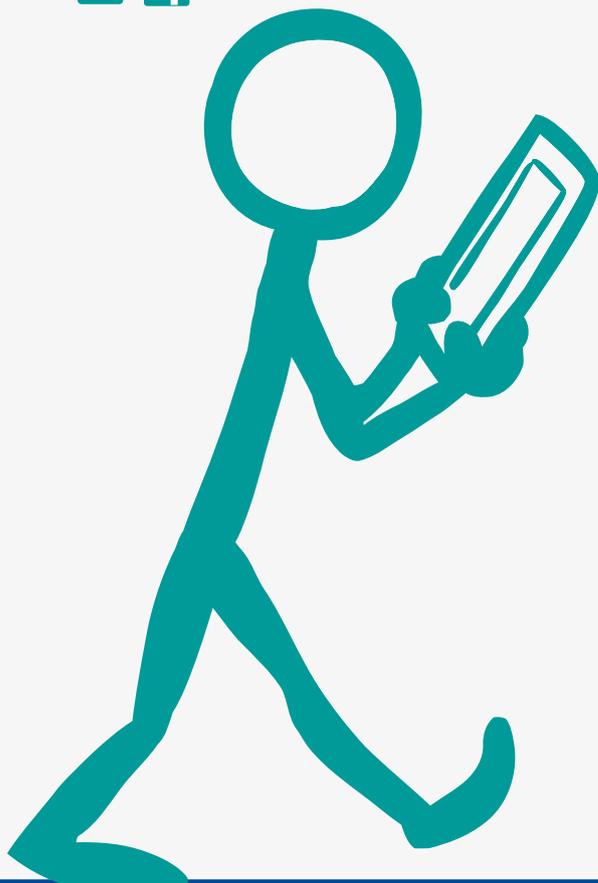
We are very pleased to hear that 70% of you believe having a dedicated site for parents has helped you in getting support for your child. If you haven't had your say yet, [click here](#).



Get in touch

Join us on social

It's a great place to share ideas, get and give support. It's a good way to get in touch with other Parent Champions in your area – and link up with others from across the UK.

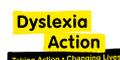


Our new e-newsletter

As you can see, we have revised our newsletter and are now distributing it online. We hope you find the live links useful.

If you prefer to read a hard copy, a printable version is available to download from the website. We'd love to know your feedback on whether this is working for you.

You can email us at social@parentchampions.org.uk.



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