

AN APPROACH TO RESOLVING WORKPLACE DIFFICULTIES

This correspondence demonstrates an approach to resolving difficulties that can arise for an employee with SpLDs. The example can be adapted to reflect individual situations.

A) Letter from an employee with dyspraxia and dyslexia (Mr Y) who has been absent due to work related stress and may be facing disciplinary procedures.

B) Support letter from Melanie Jameson, in her (former) role as Adviser to DANDA

A) Letter from employee with SpLDs (Mr Y) to Mrs X (line manager)

Dear Mrs X

I was assessed as dyslexic as a teenager. A more recent assessment (copy available) highlighted on-going difficulties with short-term memory and difficulties working under pressure caused by excessive volume of work. An unmanageable workload appears to be an inevitable part of the Z Section; this has led to a period off work due to stress.

I am keen to return to work but feel I shall only be able to perform effectively in a quieter section and if I can employ certain strategies.

I have highlighted a number of **Issues** (in bold) and identified helpful *Strategies* (in italics). In this way I believe that the difficulties can be resolved and I will be enabled to work effectively.

ISSUE Coping with huge and unpredictable volumes of work under strict time constraints exacerbated by staff shortages

STRATEGY - placement in a less busy section.

ISSUE Working in a noisy open-planned environment

STRATEGY – relocation to a smaller office (ideally) or to a corner of the room, away from the photocopier and the main door

ISSUE Working with constant interruptions

STRATEGY - I work best when I can prioritise and plan my tasks, ten minutes at the start of the morning and afternoon would help.

ISSUE Weak short-term memory, further undermined by ‘overload’

STRATEGY – a dictaphone and customised proformas would facilitate effective communication.

ISSUE Dealing with customers without time to do follow-up documentation

STRATEGY - it is impossible for me to work effectively when customer numbers are excessive. I need time to dictate a few notes after each client.

These strategies are along the lines of ‘reasonable adjustments’ under the 2010 Equality Act. I fit within the description of a person with a disability as defined by this Act.

Since my health has now recovered this is an ideal time to resolve these issues so that I can return to work as an effective and competent employee as soon as possible.

Regards,

Signed by Mr Y

B) Letter on behalf of an SpLD organisation, in support of an employee with SpLDs

Run by and for people with Specific Learning & Processing Differences (SpLD)



Mrs X
Z section

Dear Mrs X

Re Mr Y

Mr Y made an appointment to see me last week, in my capacity as Justice Adviser to DANDA, in order to discuss his return to work following a period of illness attributed to working in the Z section, which proved to be too stressful. (He can provide information from his GP.)

As you know, Mr Y is dyspraxic and dyslexic but, under normal circumstances, is able to compensate effectively for his difficulties. He feels that he could cope in a quieter section, given certain 'reasonable adjustments' as understood by the 2010 Equality Act. These have been laid out in his communication (enclosed) and take the form of **Issues** (areas of difficulty) and **Strategies** (ways round the 'Issues').

Having discussed the ways in which dyspraxia and dyslexia affect him and looked through the most recent assessment, I would regard Mr Y as fitting the definition of 'disability' as described in that Act. He would therefore be entitled to support through the Access to Work programme.

The former Disability Discrimination Act actually refers to the case of stress 'suspending' the coping strategies of a person with dyslexia in guidance notes accompanying the Act: *In some cases people have 'coping strategies' which cease to work in some circumstances (for example, where someone who stutters or has dyslexia is placed under stress). If it is possible that a person's ability to manage the effects of an impairment will break down so that the effects will sometimes occur, this possibility must be taken into account when assessing the effects of their impairment. Section A8*

The current Equality Act (2010) continues the promotion of *Reasonable Adjustments* to offset areas of difficulty for people with disabilities. Mr Y fits the definition of someone with a disability and is therefore entitled to these accommodations.

DANDA would like to offer any support we can both to Mr Y and your office in bringing this matter to a successful conclusion as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Jameson
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Please Note DANDA's national role has now been subsumed into the Dyspraxia Foundation