



Dyslexia Rooms, Moulsham Mill,  
Parkway, Chelmsford, CM2 7PX

Tel: 07919 405 501 / 07901 824 678

[www.dyslexiarooms.co.uk](http://www.dyslexiarooms.co.uk)

Supporting people in education, the workplace and everyday life

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Mr S Burns, MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

7 October 2011

Dear Mr Burns

As our local Member of Parliament, Dyslexia Rooms would like to raise concern with you for the continuing lack of recognition of dyslexia, especially as Dyslexia Awareness week approaches (Monday, 31 October to Sunday, 6 November 2011).

We urge politicians to revisit the importance of early assessment, the need for teachers to receive specialist training and for public funding to be made available for assessment and support for children and adults who have been previously failed by the education system.

One in every ten children is likely to experience dyslexia, yet most teachers have not received training to recognise or support appropriately. A newly qualified teacher explained that her course included an optional module to cover all learning difficulties. In addition, many schools do not appear to have funding for specialist support or equipment, and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators may not have received specific training.

Whilst recognition of dyslexia has been promoted through legislation, adults in employment can apply for support through the Access to Work Scheme and higher education students through the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), early recognition continues to be denied to many thousands of children.

Many desperately concerned adults and parents of children experiencing dyslexia contact our company, enquiring about assessment and support. Unfortunately, as with most other dyslexia centres, there is no Government funding available to assist with costs.

Dyslexia Rooms support the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) in their vision of a dyslexia friendly society that enables dyslexic people of all ages to reach their full potential. Whilst at least 10 percent of the population experience dyslexia, many of whom are unable to afford private assessment and support; other disabilities are addressed and funded through the NHS.

When children consistently fail in education, effects frequently include low self-esteem, poor motivation and behavioural issues, which may lead to depression and poor job prospects. The high prevalence of offenders who have literacy difficulties is also well documented, and another good reason for early identification and support. For people seeking work, interview processes often preclude dyslexic applicants, often leading to long term unemployment. In addition, when employees are promoted or take on a new role, they can find themselves unable to cope with new tasks, being fearful of disclosure.

We are keen to hear your views and whether this matter can be raised in Parliament. To promote awareness, we also ask for permission to publish your response on our website.

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Yours sincerely