

Helen Arkell



Dyslexia Charity

Empowering children and adults with dyslexia

Impact Report

2024-2025





Every day, I see the real difference our Charity makes in the lives of people with dyslexia. The impact we create together is truly remarkable.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our Patrons, donors, partners and wider community. Thanks to your support, we reached 5,131 people this year—1,851 through one-to-one help and 3,280 through our courses, training and workshops.

We achieved this during a challenging period for the charity sector, while also managing change within our organisation. I'm incredibly proud of how our team has upheld the Helen Arkell promise throughout.

The year ahead will bring further challenges, but our focus remains clear: to keep the charity financially strong while continuing to meet the needs of everyone who relies on us.

Thank you for standing with us, believing in our mission, and helping us change lives every single day.



Julie Bentley

Julie Bentley
Chief Executive
(Interim)

2025 New definition of dyslexia

The definition of dyslexia hadn't been reviewed since 2002. A new definition was needed to reduce confusion, establish expert consensus, and create a clear, evidence-based standard for identifying dyslexia.

Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity's senior management team collaborated with other leading specialists to meaningfully contribute to the updating of the definition of dyslexia.

The new definition:

- Dyslexia is a set of processing difficulties that affect the acquisition of reading and spelling.
- In dyslexia, some or all aspects of literacy attainment are weak in relation to age, standard teaching and instruction, and level of other attainments.
- Across languages and age groups, difficulties in reading fluency and spelling are a key marker of dyslexia.
- Dyslexic difficulties exist on a continuum and can be experienced to various degrees of severity.
- The nature and developmental trajectory of dyslexia depends on multiple genetic and environmental influences.
- Dyslexia can affect the acquisition of other skills, such as mathematics, reading comprehension or learning another language.
- The most commonly observed cognitive impairment in dyslexia is a difficulty in phonological processing (i.e. in phonological awareness, phonological processing speed or phonological memory). However, phonological difficulties do not fully explain the variability that is observed.
- Working memory, processing speed and orthographic skills can contribute to the impact of dyslexia.
- Dyslexia frequently co-occurs with one or more other developmental difficulties, including developmental language disorder, dyscalculia, ADHD, and developmental coordination disorder.



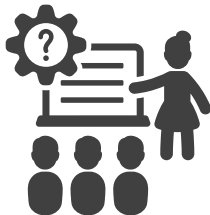
5,131 people helped in total

1,851 people with dyslexia received one to one support including:



- 1,355 assessments
 - 461 people received tuition
 - 98 consultations delivered
 - 5,580 hours of tuition provided
-

3,280 people attended courses, training and workshops including:



- 707 parents/carers
 - 285 workplace employees
 - 49 Diploma Students
 - 1040 teachers/teaching assistants
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Geographic reach

In person and online 1:1 support provided to people in 42 counties of the UK



Helping those most in need

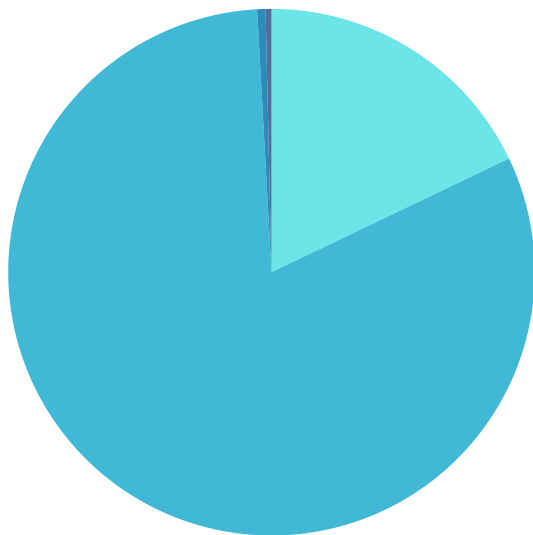
365 people with dyslexia from low-income households received funded 1:1 support

“ It has helped me to understand my strength and weaknesses. **This has helped my mental health and wellbeing massively** as I get less frustrated and upset, but can also embrace things I am stronger at. ”



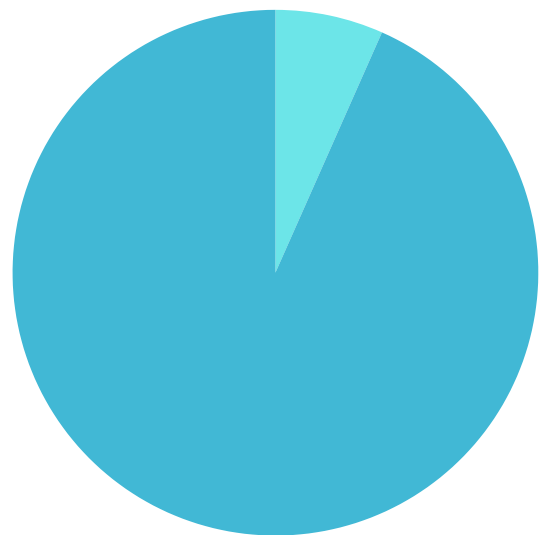
How we raised our income

- Donations and legacies £325,280
- Charitable activities £1,476,689
- Fundraising events £9,320
- Investments £6,533



How we spent our funds

- Raising funds £129,685
- Charitable activities £1,822,690



Trusts and Foundations

We are profoundly grateful to the many Trusts and Foundations that support our work. In particular, we thank Susan Hampshire MBE for the significant funds she continues to help raise, along with The McGreevy No. 5 Charitable Settlement and The Roger and Jean Jefcoate Trust for their generous support.

We remain grateful for our multi-year partnerships with The Borrowes Trust, The Garfield Weston Foundation, the Hampshire Dyslexia Association, and the Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation, and for the new multi-year grant from the Rotherwick Foundation. We also thank the Norton Rose Fulbright Charitable Foundation and the De Byre Charity Trust.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all donors for enabling us to fulfil our mission.

Reserves

The charity has been significantly affected by demand for our funded services growing faster than anticipated and rising costs. As a result of these pressures, we have utilised unrestricted reserves; meaning we are below our reserves policy.

To begin the process of rebuilding the reserves and returning the charity to a net surplus position which meets the reserves target, the Board has taken actions to reduce the fixed cost base of the Charity by undertaking a redundancy program, restructuring the charity and improving the efficiency of processes.

Our management accounts for the first six months of the new year indicate that the measures taken are beginning to take effect and we are on track to meet our budget for 2026.

Any unrestricted donations to top up our reserves would be greatly appreciated.

Highlights



Providing free training for state schools

125 teaching staff trained this year

Thanks to the continued generosity of the longstanding dyslexia champion Theo Paphitis and Ryman Retail Limited we once again provided training for teachers and teaching assistants from the state school sector.

The Theo Paphitis Dyslexia Bursary was launched in Autumn 2023, from which free training has been provided to teachers and teaching assistants from state schools around the UK,

A total of 125 state school representatives have this year benefitted from this training. All attended the Charity's 6-week online course entitled **"Supporting Learners with Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties"**, which enables them to better support learners with dyslexia back in their classrooms. This course provides 18 hours of training by our expert team and is accredited by the CPD Standards Office.

The fact that it is delivered online, and recorded, means that participants come from across the UK.

Since the partnership began, training has been delivered to:

- 391 teaching staff
- in 365 state schools
- across 52 UK counties

“ We have many children who display dyslexic tendencies. Due to our school being in a deprived area parents are unable to afford a diagnosis. **Supporting them to the best of our abilities would be hugely beneficial.** ”



Support provided to 365 disadvantaged children and adults

We were thrilled to be able to provide bursary-funded support to 365 people in total, despite a more challenging fundraising environment and different profile of donations.

These individuals received services tailored to their specific needs, including dyslexia assessments, coaching and tuition, consultations and attendance on courses.

- 23% of 1:1 supported beneficiaries were adults, typically out of work or on lower incomes
- 77% were children whose families were already struggling to make ends meet financially, and in a majority of cases were part of a single parent family.

The degree of need of each individual, and their financial circumstances, were considered on a case-by-case basis.

Demand for funded dyslexia services has grown rapidly, due to the continuing cost-of-living crisis.

In line with our strategic plans, we aim to continue providing significant amounts of funded support in the coming year.

“ Having an official dyslexia diagnosis has helped me in university, understanding my dyslexia has given me confidence. I wouldn't have been able to afford it without the bursary. **It has changed my life as I wouldn't have had the understanding and confidence to go to university before I was diagnosed.** ”

Highlights



Training the Dyslexia Specialists of the future

Many state schools lack the resources needed to fully support pupils with dyslexia. By equipping teachers with specialist training, the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity helps ensure that far more children and young people receive the expert support they need.

49 teachers, teaching assistants and other interested parties enrolled for our Level 5 and Level 7 diploma courses.

Short courses in dyslexia-related matters

339 people attended short dyslexia and SpLD-related courses in the year, including Study Skills, Touch Typing and Supporting Learners with Dyslexia.

Courses for parents

707 parents accessed our various courses, often online, designed to provide helpful hints and tips for supporting family members.

Dyslexia awareness training to employees

285 employees within the workplace received dyslexia awareness training. This year we worked with companies including the General Medical Council, Novuna, Pinsent Masons LLP, Surrey Care Trust and Wates Construction.

Spotlight workshop sessions

860 people joined us to improve their knowledge in a whole host of dyslexia-related topics throughout the year. Many participants were our alumni undertaking continuing professional development. We are proud to top up the learning of our alumni, keeping their skills at the cutting edge of the dyslexia world.

In service training to schools

In-service training in dyslexia awareness was provided to 1040 school representatives, through 19 in-service training days.

Specialist in-service training to teachers and teaching assistants gives an understanding of what dyslexia is, how to identify if a child may have dyslexia, what to do if a child is dyslexic and provides practical help for making learning dyslexic friendly.

In-service days enable teaching staff to more effectively support pupils with dyslexia.



We were also fortunate to receive funding from **Tesco's Stronger Starts** scheme which has enabled us to provide a variety of support to 9 state schools, including in-service training for both teaching staff and parents, Supporting Learners course places and HELP! courses for parents.

We are very grateful to Tesco for helping us provide training to state schools where staff may have limited knowledge, time and resources to support children with dyslexia.

“The course has deepened our team’s understanding of dyslexia and its impact on learning, helping us to reflect on and refine our practice so that we can better meet the needs of our pupils...the training has already sparked important conversations about how we can make our classrooms even more inclusive. It has reinforced the importance of early identification, practical classroom strategies, and most importantly, creating a learning environment where children with dyslexia feel understood and supported.

We are incredibly grateful for this opportunity, and we know that the knowledge gained will have a lasting impact on both our teaching and our pupils' learning experiences. ”

How we are making a difference

In a survey to 349 people receiving bursary-funded support, respondents told us:



100%

agreed having a dyslexia assessment helps the person understand themselves better, including their strengths and weaknesses.

98%

agreed a dyslexia assessment helps to access further support.

95%

reported the assessment improved confidence.

86%

reported the assessment led to improved literacy.

88%

reported the assessment reduced frustration and anxiety.



These are some of their comments:

“

I know it will aid her for life, as she will be able to have appropriate support in exams and the workplace. For us, **the biggest impact is that my daughter is now in school full time after a ten month period at home.** ”

“

Without the financial support my daughter would not have had a diagnosis. She has gone from anxious and lacking confidence at school, and being below expected levels in all areas, to feeling like she can achieve. With the suggested support from her report, the school put in extra help and she is now achieving above expected levels in READING! **We are so grateful for the help we had to pay for the assessment. It has truly been life changing.** ”

“

Having an official dyslexia diagnosis has helped me in university, understanding my dyslexia has given me confidence. I wouldn't have been able to afford it without the bursary. **It has changed my life** as I wouldn't have had the understanding and confidence to go to university before I was diagnosed. ”

“

Going forward in my life, I know I have all the things I need to get the support I need and **I am hopeful and looking forward to better things now in the future!** Seriously it has made a massive difference to the way I think and process stuff. ”

Mia's story

Mia, an 11-year-old with a passion for the performing arts, found school challenging due to her dyslexia. Before accessing support from the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity, she often felt overwhelmed and struggled to understand her learning needs.

A specialist assessment funded through our bursary programme proved transformative. It gave Mia and her family vital clarity about her dyslexia and enabled tailored support at school and at home. As a result, Mia's confidence grew rapidly—she became more self-aware, resilient, and proud of who she was. With renewed self-belief and practical strategies in place, she re-engaged with her education and began approaching new challenges with determination.

Empowered by this progress, Mia pursued her passion for performing arts and, in 2025, successfully auditioned for the highly competitive Sylvia Young Theatre School. We are delighted that she was offered a place. This life-changing opportunity reflects both Mia's talent and the powerful impact of timely, specialist support.



“ Thanks to the Helen Arkell funding that made this possible, Mia has the support and confidence to push forward with her studies.

Without it, she would not be in the position she is today or have the opportunities now opening up for her. ”

Mia's mum

Matt's story



Matt came to the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity after years of challenges linked to undiagnosed neurodiversity. Although already identified as autistic and with ADHD, he received a bursary from the charity to access a dyslexia assessment—support he would not otherwise have been able to afford. The assessment provided long-needed clarity, helping Matt to understand both the barriers he faced and the strengths he could build upon.

This new insight significantly increased his confidence and enabled him to communicate his needs more effectively in everyday life.

With improved self-belief and practical strategies, Matt has since gone on to lead a cooking group for autistic individuals—something he would not have felt able to do before.

As Matt says, “From the start, the assessment looked at my strengths, not my weaknesses. It has opened my eyes to how broad and individual dyslexia is, and I now have a much greater appreciation for supporting others. The help I received has been truly life-changing.”