

**Minutes of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG)**  
**Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties**  
**Wednesday 16 March 2022 (4pm – 6pm)**  
**Subject: Dyscalculia**

In Attendance:

Sharon Hodgson MP – Chair  
Lord Addington – Vice Chair  
British Dyslexia Association - Secretariat

The meeting was chaired by Sharon Hodgson, MP who opened the meeting and welcomed the speakers.

The first speaker was **Matt Hancock, MP for West Sussex** who thanked Sharon for inviting him to briefly join the meeting to launch his dyslexia campaign, and to discuss his Private Members Bill. The Bill requires universal screening for dyslexia in primary school. Matt explained that the Bill seeks to address the large gap in outcomes between the dyslexics who are identified and subsequently receive the support that they need, and those who slip through the cracks. Matt highlighted that estimates suggest that 10% of people are dyslexic, but dyslexia is significantly overrepresented in certain segments of society. 40% of successful entrepreneurs are dyslexic, while it is also estimated that over half the prison population is dyslexic. It is clear then that dyslexic people, when given the proper support to reach their full potential face a very different set of experiences than those who go undiagnosed.

The discussion on dyscalculia was opened by **Professor Steve Chinn**. In 1981 Steve moved from a successful teaching career in mainstream education to work with students who had severe specific learning difficulties. Little was known back then about dyscalculia and mathematical learning difficulties, so Steve became a pioneer teacher and researcher in the field. He has written award winning books and resources, founded an award-winning specialist school and lectured/trained teachers in 30 countries. His methods are pragmatic, successful, and based on research and vast experience. Steve says that it has been the research, teaching and listening experiences with students who have difficulties with learning maths that has convinced him that by working with them we can discover so much about how all children can learn maths more effectively.

Steve's presentation focused on explaining dyscalculia and how it sits on a spectrum of maths learning difficulties. It is estimated that around 5% of the population have dyscalculia, but as many as 25% have some form of maths learning difficulty. Steve's observation was that teaching that works for those with maths learning difficulties and dyscalculia works for all students learning maths. He concluded by saying that the focus needs to be upon early intervention, as all learners need to understand the basics before they can progress with maths learning; and upon training teachers to teach maths in a way that enables learners to learn.

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President: **Lord Addington**

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The second speaker was **Adelle Tracey**. Adelle was born in the USA and spent her early years in Jamaica, before coming to the UK at the age of seven. Adelle is a talented GB athlete and has represented Great Britain at different age levels for more than a decade and finished 4th in the 800m final at the 2018 European Championships and is a past British 800m indoor champion. Adelle is an ambassador for the British Dyslexia Association.

Adelle spoke about her own experience of growing up with dyslexia and dyscalculia and the particular challenges this has presented. She explained that she had an early diagnosis of dyslexia, but it took much longer before dyscalculia was also confirmed. Adelle has developed good coping strategies but explained that her role as an athlete often requires her to use numerical skills such as time-keeping, estimating journey times etc and that these tasks require a great deal of thought and planning, in order to ensure that she can be a successful athlete.

The final speaker was **Pete Jarrett**. Pete is a specialist teacher and assessor of learners with SpLD and an experienced maths teacher. Pete uses these two strands of educational practice to work with learners who struggle to engage with mathematics, and to support teachers to be more effective in their practice. Pete is the Chair of the BDA Dyscalculia Committee and the MD of Tutorum Technologies. Pete's presentation focused on dyscalculia as part of the bigger picture, highlighting that the cost of low numeracy is around £20 billion per annum; impacts lifetime earnings and the likelihood of achieving 5 or more passes at GCSE. He called for universal screening in primary schools to include screening for maths learning difficulties as well as dyslexia. He also called for better awareness and training for all teachers to be able to recognise and support learners. Pete also emphasised the importance of considering dyscalculia when developing initiatives around adult numeracy, financial literacy, and skills development.

The meeting closed at 6pm

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