

Helpline Volunteer

Role Description



The British Dyslexia Association Helpline is a national free helpline service for people with dyslexia and those who support them. It offers confidential, impartial advice and information. We are contacted every day by people in need of help or advice, including parents looking for information and advice on support in school, or employees looking to understand how to request reasonable adjustments in the workplace as well as students, adults with dyslexia, teachers and employers. We offer advice, empathy, information and guidance, to help our callers access the support they need.

If you have a good knowledge and understanding of dyslexia, excellent listening skills and a friendly telephone manner, we'd love to hear from you.

To apply

Please view the Role Description for full details and to help you decide whether this role is for you.

Please complete the accompanying application form and email it to:

volunteer@bdadyslexia.org.uk

For further information, please email volunteer@bdadyslexia.org.uk



Helpline Volunteer ROLE DESCRIPTION

Please note: this role can be office-based at the BDA offices in Bracknell or home-based. Due to local Covid-19 restrictions the role is currently home-based

Reports to: Helpline Managers

Purpose of Role: To assist the Helpline Managers to provide an effective day-to-day Helpline operation by responding to both phone and email queries.

Hours of work: This role requires one 3-hour session per week during the helpline opening hours: **Tuesday 10.00am – 1.00pm; Wednesday 10.00am – 1.00pm; Thursday 1.00pm – 3.00pm**

Please note that you must be over the age of 18 and eligible to volunteer in the UK. Unfortunately, we are currently only able to offer this role to people living in the UK.

We do not ask for a minimum length of commitment for this role, but our aim is to develop a long-standing relationship between the British Dyslexia Association and our volunteers to help us to provide continuity of advice and expertise. A review will take place after 3 months.

Knowledge

As a Helpline Volunteer you would need:

- A good knowledge and understanding of the challenges of living with dyslexia ideally across a range of settings e.g. educational, the workplace and in daily life.
- An understanding of specific learning difficulties and the co-occurring conditions such as dyscalculia, dyspraxia and ADHD.

- An understanding of the education systems from Key Stage 1 through to Higher Education and the various statutory examinations (SATs, GCSEs, BTEC).
- To learn and advise about:
 - Learning techniques for parents and students
 - Reasonable adjustments at work
 - Exam access arrangements for GCSEs through to degree level studies

Skills and Experience

- Good standard of written and spoken English (*essential*)
- Excellent listening skills (*essential*)
- Competent use of Microsoft desktop products, e-mail, the internet
- Caring, non-judgmental, impartial, supportive and respectful
- Reliable, punctual and trustworthy
- Ability to use own initiative to identify and access relevant information and resources
- Ability to deal with sensitive and confidential information

Principal Responsibilities

1. Ensure that calls are answered promptly and efficiently using the standard BDA greeting. (All helpline emails and calls are monitored for quality control purposes.)
2. Ensure that difficult or at-risk calls/emails are passed to the BDA Helpline Manager and callers under the age of 16 are advised to speak with a parent or teacher.
3. Keep updated in changes in legislation/regulations/A.T (Assistive Technology). In-house training and updates will be given.
4. Maintain confidentiality at all times and adhere to the BDA's code of conduct policy. (No personal details such as names and contact details should be shared by the volunteer with the caller/emailer as per GDPR.)

5. Agree to attend training sessions wherever possible and participate in regular support sessions / groups.

Training and support

- Full training will be given on the use of our soft-phone system, internal email and OneDrive system.
- Training and support is ongoing where required.
- Volunteers will have access to British Dyslexia Association webinars and a range of free e-learning sessions.
- Optional, regular (8-12 per year) helpline volunteer meetings including short training sessions.
- We will reimburse reasonable travel costs for those that volunteer at our office in Bracknell. Our Volunteer Policy provides further information.

Please note that for this role, a basic DBS check must be completed and you must provide two references.