



6 July 2020

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson, MP, CBE
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
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Dear Secretary of State

Qualified Tutoring Support for Children with Literacy Difficulties

The organisations which are signatories to this letter welcome the initiative to set up the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) as part of the Government's response to the effects of Covid-19. They wish to support the NTP by offering access to their joint resources of professionally qualified and experienced specialist teachers and assessors of learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD).

We consider that implementing the NTP is particularly urgent for students with literacy difficulties and specific learning difficulties as they are among those finding it most challenging to engage with remote learning, even when they have appropriate technology to do so. They have individual needs to be met in order to be able to learn. Their processing differences can mean that many of them will also find it particularly difficult to re-engage with school after such a long time. There will be a significant proportion of such children among the students targeted by this fund, many coming from families who cannot source appropriate dyslexia or learning support themselves. The gap between this group and other students will widen unless the catch-up tutoring delivered within this government initiative is effective in meeting the specific needs of students with learning difficulties.

A qualified specialist teacher not only identifies any specific intervention required for a student experiencing specific learning difficulties but also the impact on their curriculum access and therefore their educational progress. Importantly, applying the techniques and strategies involved in teaching literacy to learners with SpLD, the literacy attainments of many other students are significantly improved.

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OF TEACHERS
OF STUDENTS
WITH SPECIFIC
LEARNING
DIFFICULTIES**

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It is therefore essential that fund allocation through any named provider agreement confirmed by the government is flexible enough for schools to be able to choose and fund qualified, dyslexia-trained tutors for the subgroup of their students with processing weaknesses, while using more general, less specifically trained, catch-up tutors through this national scheme for other students where appropriate.

Professionally qualified specialist SpLD teachers have expert knowledge and understanding of the development of the language system and the interrelationship between language, literacy and learning development. This is combined with a deep knowledge of dyslexia and other SpLDs and how they can affect language, learning and literacy development. They are able to devise and implement teaching and support plans for themselves and other professionals to follow.

As specialist teachers they have the skills, knowledge, and experience to ensure learning support is efficient and effective for individual learners. They are specifically trained in providing support for students either 1 to 1 or in small groups to develop literacy and learning skills. They can also offer support and advice to classroom and subject teachers.

Where their qualifications are underpinned by professional membership of one of the professional associations Patoss, BDA, Dyslexia Guild, schools can be assured they have completed this specialist training and maintain their CPD. Our organisations' professional memberships represent more than 3500 specialist teachers and hold publicly accessible lists of award holders. In the UK there are thirty providers of British Dyslexia Association (BDA) accredited courses for Approved Teacher Status (ATS) and Associate Membership of the BDA (AMBDA) underpinning professional memberships. These courses meet nationally accepted criteria for content and assessment and are subject to re-accreditation every four years.

Across the country, umbrella charities and organisations already work with these specialist tutors to provide much needed specialist support to schools for students with specific learning difficulties. These organisations will be able to liaise both with schools and government departments or contracted organisations to source such specialist tutors within the remit of this new COVID 19 1-2-1 tuition fund. Similarly, where schools already have direct links with individual specialist teachers but no funds to employ them, they should be able to do so under this agreement.



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For these reasons, we are asking government to make funding arrangements which include flexibility for schools to use our professional associations, specialist tutor organisations and independent qualified specialist dyslexia tutors where necessary, rather than all funding being allocated only for tutors within the remit of a few named national organisations.

All three of the above organisations' professional memberships have actively worked with funding agencies to assure professional qualifications. We urge you to acknowledge our qualified SpLD Specialist Tutors as key contributors to this national initiative.

We are very happy to work collaboratively with your Department to address the issues raised and seek together to ensure that all students are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential. Please contact Lynn Greenwold for any further information and to move this forward. lgreenwold@patoss-dyslexia.org

Yours sincerely

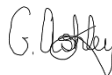
Lynn Greenwold, CEO, Patoss



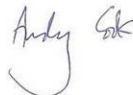
Sir Jim Rose, Chair, The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust



Gillian Ashley, Interim CEO BDA



Andy Cook, CEO Helen Arkell



Dr Mark Turner, Managing Director, Dyslexia Guild and Dyslexia Action (part of Real Group)



Brendan Wignall, Chair CRESTeD



Cc: Vicky Ford, MP, Lord Addington, Sharon Hodgson, MP; Becky Francis, EEF; Kathryn Davies, EEF; Sutton Trust; Impetus; NESTA



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