



SLDN Newsletter

The latest news, updates and announcements

ISSUE 7

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Mind-mapping app trialled at Strathclyde

New papers on lived
experience survey
results, and priorities

New tools for learners & educators

House of Lords debates
dyscalculia and push
for recognition

Neurodivergence in workplace survey

Tell us your findings,
speak to new people,
have a lightbulb
moment...

NEURODIVERSITY



 Sage Journals

New paper illuminates research priorities from lived experience

A new study by SLDN researchers has been published in *Neurodiversity*. It illuminates the lived experiences of people with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties (SpLDs), revealing - in fact, confirming - significant challenges in identification, support, and mental health outcomes. The UK-based survey of 145 adults and carers of children with SpLDs including dyslexia (119 participants), dyscalculia (14), and dysgraphia (12).

The findings underscore the high co-occurrence of SpLDs with each other and with other neurodevelopmental traits such as ADHD and autism. Notably, 43% of respondents reported mental health issues, primarily anxiety and depression, with higher rates among those with multiple SpLDs. This highlights clearly the need for holistic support targeting both learning and emotional wellbeing.

Despite increased awareness, at least for dyslexia, half the respondents found the diagnostic process as difficult or very difficult, with no significant improvement across generations (comparing adults reporting on their own experiences and adults reporting on their child/young person). Support following diagnosis was also inconsistent, particularly for dyscalculia and dysgraphia. Generally, the findings highlight systemic gaps in identification and provision, especially outside of dyslexia, which remains the most recognised SpLD. Unsurprisingly, therefore, when asked about research priorities, identification and effective support were respondents' top concerns. Those with dyscalculia also emphasized the need for greater public awareness and easier access to identification.

Survey respondents overwhelmingly supported framing SpLDs within the neurodiversity paradigm, and preferred terms like “learning difference” over “disorder.” Views on genetic testing for SpLD predisposition were mixed, however, and reflected both awareness and caution.

The research team advocates co-produced research involving people with lived experience to increase future studies’ relevance and impact. These findings will guide the next phase of SLDN’s work, including focus groups and priority-setting partnerships, to shape a more inclusive and evidence-informed research agenda.

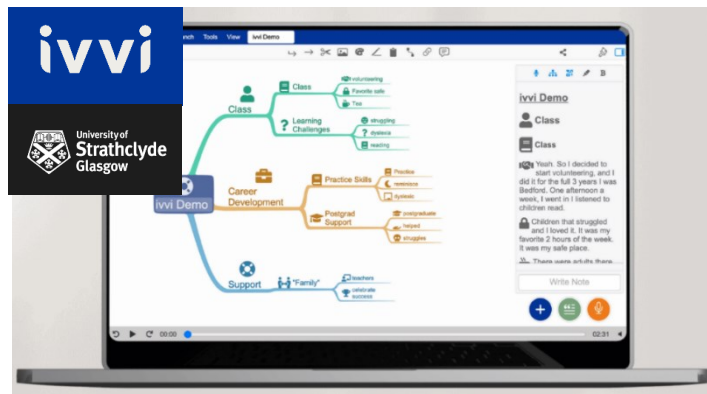
You can find the full article [here](#).

New paper on funding choices

Does research money match people’s priorities?

Dr Cathy Manning (University of Birmingham) and

colleagues have recently published a paper that follows on from their presentation at the first SLDN meeting, in 2022. **‘What are the research priorities for the dyslexia community in the United Kingdom and how do they align with previous research funding?’** appeared in the journal *Dyslexia* and you can access it [here](#)



MINDMAP TECH AND COACHING STUDY TESTED BY STRATHCLYDE STUDENTS

IVVi is an Innovative voice-to-map software designed to support students with dyslexia and ADHD to thrive in their studies (ivvi.app)

To understand how best to serve and equip students the iVVi team recently undertook a ten-week group coaching programme with a cohort of students from the University of Strathclyde. A course license for ivvi was provided alongside the programme.

On the programme, weekly live sessions provided demonstrations, training, and Q&A sessions. Participants had access to recordings of sessions on a Telegram channel created to provide ongoing support.

The course covered visual mind mapping techniques, how to ethically leverage AI assistance for learning, organisation, time management and memory and exam strategies.

Students were surveyed by questionnaire before and after the programme, with those who took part reporting a significant reduction in their anxiety and stress associated with their studies, and a significant increase in their confidence to pass exams and assignments.

One student observed that they “now felt they had the study skills to feel confident in being a college student again.”

IVVi plan to run the group coaching programme again this autumn and to open it up to students from any university or college who identify as having dyslexia and/or ADHD, with or without a formal diagnosis.

For further information about the programme or to discuss potentially offering it to students, please get in touch with Jo Lee at jo@ivvi.app.



Peers push recognition of dyscalculia

Following engagement and campaigning by the Dyscalculia Network and others, on 4 June there was debate on dyscalculia in the House of Lords; the first in either House to focus on dyscalculia. Interestingly, Hansard records show that while 459 MPs and Peers have raised dyslexia, only 13 have ever mentioned dyscalculia.

The nature of the condition, its implications, its low public awareness and the disparity in legal status with that of dyslexia were discussed, and cross bench peer Baroness Bull cited work by SLDN's Jo van Herwegen, Kinga Morsanyi and Brian Butterworth work. She framed her aim in sponsoring this debate as follows: How will the Government review the effectiveness of the framework in delivering for pupils with specific learning difficulties? Will they consider dyscalculia screening alongside the year 1 phonics check to enable early intervention? Will they review the take-up of the relevant CPD and promote the use of educational resources such as UCL's ADD UP toolkit?

While no specific commitments were forthcoming, the tenor from the government side was broadly positive to the need for parity of status and additional profile and support that it would unlock.

You can watch the debate [here](#) (from 20.58) and read the transcript on Hansard [here](#).



Young Academy workplace neurodivergence survey

The [UK Young Academy](#) is a network of early-career researchers, innovators, and professionals from diverse backgrounds across the UK.

As part of their [THRIVE project](#), they've launched a nationwide survey to hear directly from neurodivergent people about their experiences at work. They asked us to share the survey with the Network, and networks beyond.

THRIVE aims to improve workplace culture by promoting neuro-inclusivity, and draws on our members' lived experience and expertise. The more responses they receive, the stronger the evidence base to inform the next project stages.

Neurodivergent in the UK? The UK Young Academy wants your input on how workplaces can better support you.

- No formal diagnosis needed
- All neurotypes welcome

Share your voice: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/THRIVEUKYA/>

UCL's dyscalculia lived experience project is still seeking primary-age participants

Liz Herbert and Jo van Herwegen's HEIF project with the Dyscalculia Network around dyscalculia lived experience is still looking for primary age participants. The £20,000 award will see the creation of short courses and the expansion of the ADDUP toolkit and is expected to conclude in February 2026. If you have contacts who may be willing, or are able to muster some subjects whose profile fits, please do get in touch with [Liz](#) or [Jo](#).

UCL SEND data survey

UCL's Institute of Education doing work right now to understand what data related to SEND students schools are collecting and using in their daily practice. This will allow them to create resources about best practice and support for schools. They're surveying England-based education professionals with least a year's experience, who work with primary or secondary SEN pupils.

If that's you and you could spare the time, please use this QR

code to click into the survey.



SLDN – now on LinkedIn

SLDN is now on LinkedIn as well as X and Bluesky Social. Help grow the Network and increase its connectivity and impact by connecting with it there. Please share this newsletter with colleagues and contacts and follow SLDN (@SLDnetwork).

