



Specific Learning Difficulties Network

# SLDN Newsletter

The latest news, updates and announcements

## ISSUE 10

August 2026

### New findings on dyslexia and mental health presented

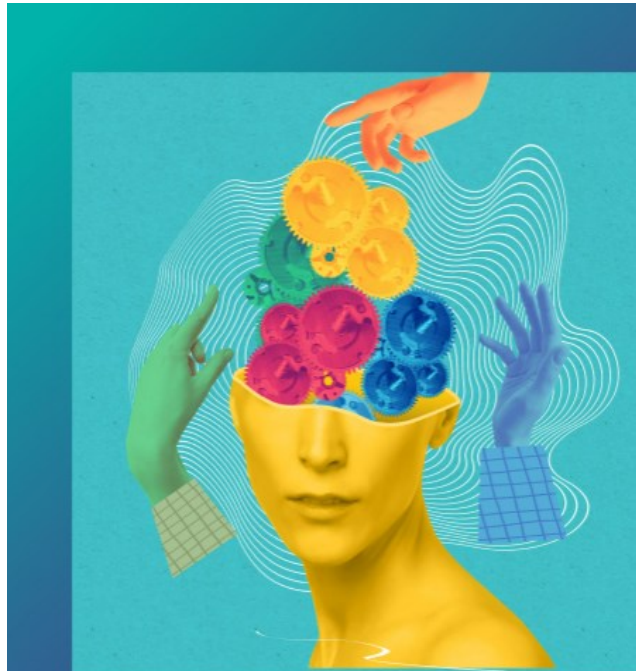
SLD a significant factor in NEET risk

### Numeracy evidence for House of Lords

Conference round up

### Professional accreditation programme doubles

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



We've got an event at Scotland's festival of knowledge...

# curious

Big ideas from Scotland's leading minds

**RSE** The Royal Society of Edinburgh  
RSCOTT 2026.09.05.000001

## Dyslexia as a mental health story - new study findings to be revealed next month

Researchers from the University of St Andrews have been exploring the relationship between dyslexia, dyscalculia and mental health, interrogating data from Dyslexia Scotland's major 2024 survey.

The project examines how experiences of dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and other specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) shape people's wellbeing across different stages of life. It also asks if and how earlier identification and support could make a difference.

In this talk at the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Curious festival on 5 September, the audience will hear how Dyslexia Scotland's nationwide survey of dyslexic adults recorded some of the common mental health challenges faced every day by people living with SpLDs. People will also learn more about how people with SpLDs face a higher risk of experiencing mental illness.

Starting with a short 'fly-by' presentation of the report's results, the bulk of the session will involve a panel discussion sharing perspectives from 'the science', from policy makers, including filmmaker Trevor Thomson who will share the trailer to his latest documentary exploring life with dyslexia. Themes may include what day-to-day life currently looks like, what it should look like, and what we can do at each level to make it better for everyone. The session will end with a Q&A from audiences in person and online.

Whether you're an educator, researcher, practitioner, student, parent, or someone with an SpLD, come and [join the talk](#) and put forward your questions with some of Scotland's leading experts.

## Jo van Herwegen provides expert evidence to House of Lords on numeracy

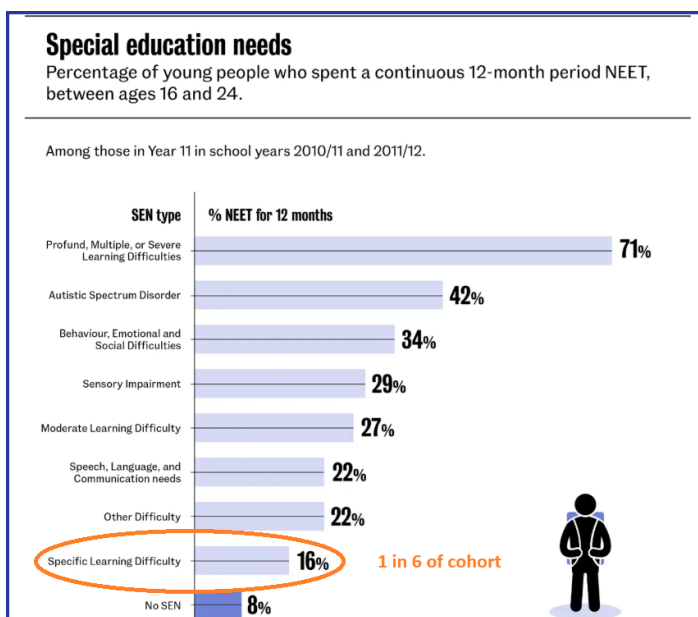
UCL researcher and co-director of the newly established [Educational Neuroscience Policy Research Centre \(ENPRC\)](#) Prof Jo van Herwegen, gave evidence to the Numeracy for Life Committee at the House of Lords in June.



One of her key points of emphasis was that strong foundations in mathematics matter. She stressed how developing numeracy is about far more than learning procedures, involving building a broad range of mathematical abilities, including reasoning, problem-solving, spatial thinking, and confidence with numbers from an early age.

Jo underscored the need to support parents and early years providers with practical, accessible ways to nurture these skills. Noting that mathematics does not only happen in classrooms, but that it can be embedded in everyday routines, conversations, games, and activities Jo signposted UCL's spin-out [MathsEverywhere](#) product, which contains ideas and resources to help make maths part of daily life for young children.

If we are serious about improving numeracy across society, we need to start by ensuring that all children have rich opportunities to engage with mathematics from the very beginning.



Data source: NatCen analysis of the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) dataset. Standard Extract V2. Analysis draws on two cohorts of children – who were in Year 11 in 2010/11 and 2011/12.

## 'What drives young people to experience NEET?' - New report from National Centre for Social Research

Insightful new work shows that risk of a young person experiencing NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) can emerge as early as age 10 or 11. While socio-economic factors are among the most influential risks, specific learning difficulties are also high on the list, with 16% or one in six people with a SpLD reporting being in NEET over a continuous 12-month period. The study's approach is informed by prior research from the team that showed that people typically experience multiple risk factors. Findings [here](#).

## Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice Professional Recognition programme doubles

The [Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice Professional Recognition programme](#) led by Dyslexia Scotland and Education Scotland has received additional funding to expand the programme for General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) registered teachers in Scotland. This autumn, participant numbers will double to 100. Now hitting its sixth year, since the pilot in 2017-19, 265 practitioners from across Scotland have taken part to date.

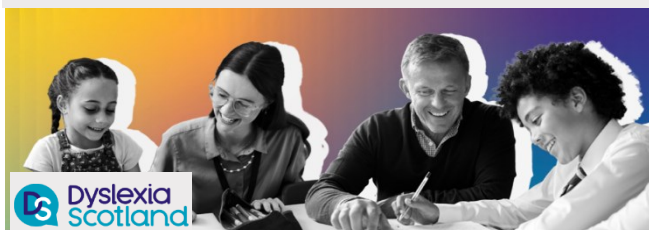
The free professional learning course for educators in Scotland is delivered in partnership by [Dyslexia Scotland](#) and [Education Scotland](#) and accredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland. It develops expert teachers and lecturers with the knowledge and practical skills needed to create dyslexia friendly and inclusive learning environments.

The one-year programme requires participants to engage with professional learning activities including Open University study modules, masterclasses and study days, and practitioner enquiry linked to their learning. Thereafter they apply for Professional Recognition.

The programme is hugely successful, not only because participants expand their own knowledge and expertise, but because they are also encouraged to share their learning throughout their wider school communities. An ASN teacher from cohort one said: "Each session I've learned something new about being an ASN teacher and have been able to take things into my practice and back to my colleagues".

Applications will open in May 2027 for candidates wishing to apply for the intake for September 2027.

### Education Conference | Closing the gap



Dyslexia Scotland run their [Closing the Gap](#) education conference on 31 October in Glasgow.

It's billed as a day of accelerated professional learning, building skills and knowledge to help reduce Scotland's dyslexia attainment gap.

The keynote is Louise Selby and the event features workshops and seminars on dyslexia-focused teaching interventions for primary and secondary settings.



### Michelle Luciano keynote at IWORDD in San Sebastian

SLDN co-chair Professor Michelle Luciano will give a keynote lecture at the International Workshop on Reading and Developmental Dyslexia in the Basque city on 8 October. The title is 'What has genetics done for reading research lately?'



### SLDN on the podium in Gdansk

Dr Sam Warne of the University of St Andrews will present two SLDN research projects at the European Dyslexia Association meeting on 27 and 28 September in Gdansk. New findings from data on dyslexia and mental health will feature, along with earlier, co-produced, qualitative work on research priorities. Sam works with Silvia Paracchini, who will also speak about her genetics work.

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