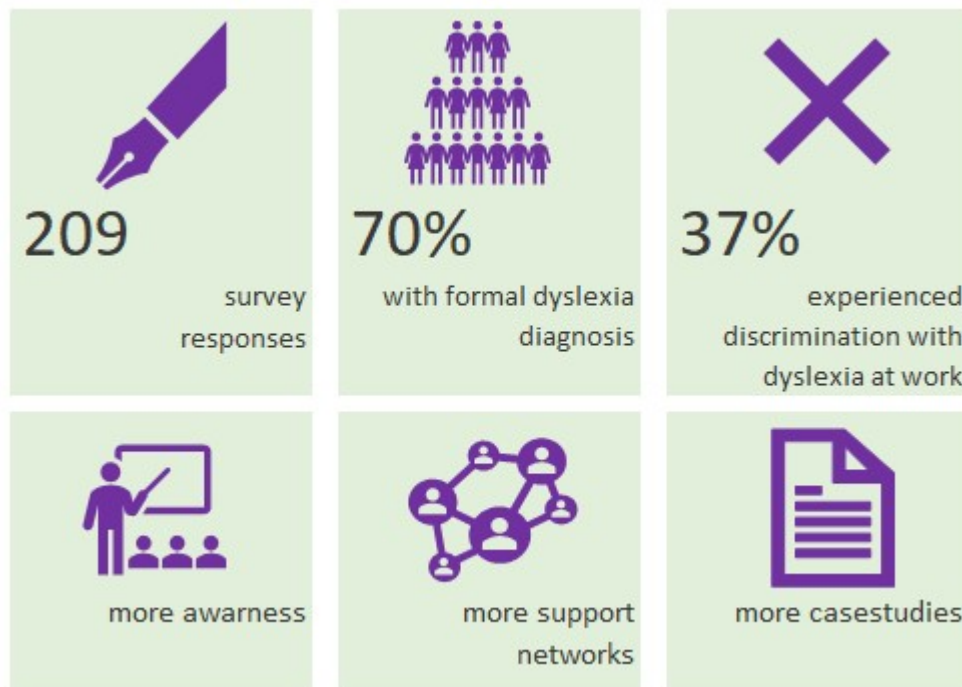


## Dyslexia in archaeology survey summary



CIfA and Mentoring for Women in Archaeology and Heritage (MWAH) are exploring the potential impacts that dyslexia and other neurodiverse conditions have upon archaeologists, from those who are diagnosed, or feel they are a candidate for the conditions, and from those who work with these individuals.

Last month we sent out surveys (one for employers and one for individuals) focusing on dyslexia, to help identify issues across the sector and inform actions that we can all take to support our neurodiverse colleagues.

We had 209 replies to the surveys; 192 from individuals and 17 from employers.

### Demographics

There was a wide age range from individual respondents, from 16-19 through to 70+. The majority (53%) were aged between 20 and 39.

75% were members of CIfA, with the most (60%) having been through the accreditation process for Practitioner, Associate or Member.

Organisations ranged from having 1-200 to 500+ employees, with the majority (12 responses in total) having 50 or less employees.

### Declaring dyslexia

70% of the 192 individuals have had a formal dyslexia diagnosis. A further 14.5% have dyslexia but have not been formally diagnosed.



From the employer responses, 14 organisations had employees who were registered as dyslexic or had declared they were dyslexic. All but one of the organisations responding to the survey were aware of the requirements for employers under the Equality Act if an employee has declared they are dyslexic.

Generally, all the employers suggested that it is up to the employees to disclose their dyslexia. Of those who had received a formal diagnosis, 26% had **not** informed their employer. A few individuals had not done this as it was not relevant or they had put in their own coping strategies, however a lot of the responses included concerns about

- being less likely to be chosen for certain tasks such as report writing or complex office-based tasks
- being singled out as needing extra time or resources or not being capable to undertake tasks they know they can accomplish
- not being listened to when discussing their needs or any adjustments needed to undertake their employment
- there were significant concerns raised about preconceptions of dyslexia and how there is a prevalent lack of understanding about dyslexia and cognitive variability. Many individuals noted they were concerned about stigma.

With those who had informed their employers, half had not received any problems after informing them of their dyslexia diagnosis. However, others had received negative responses such as

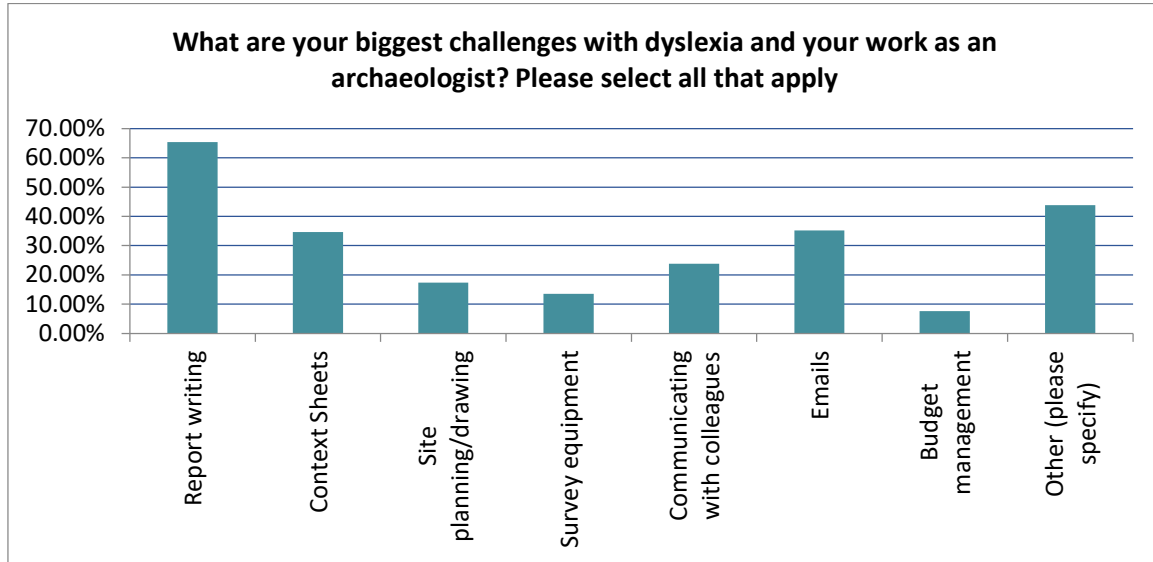
- being targeted and 'bullied', making their role impossible to undertake proficiently.
- not being offered support or listened to when employees would ask for support.
- a feeling that informing their employer had been detrimental to career advancement or found they had been side lined from tasks
- being told to check and re-check grammar and emails. Many felt humiliated because the employees themselves often take extra time and care with grammar and spelling.
- Some employees were told that they wouldn't have been employed if it had been known
- their manager became condescending and would suddenly change to treating the employee with less professional behaviour.
- Some employees were told to 'fix it'

Overall, 37% of respondents had encountered discrimination with dyslexia during work alongside a significant lack of understanding about dyslexia.



**Challenges of dyslexia**

Respondents were asked to identify their biggest challenges with dyslexia and work as an archaeologist

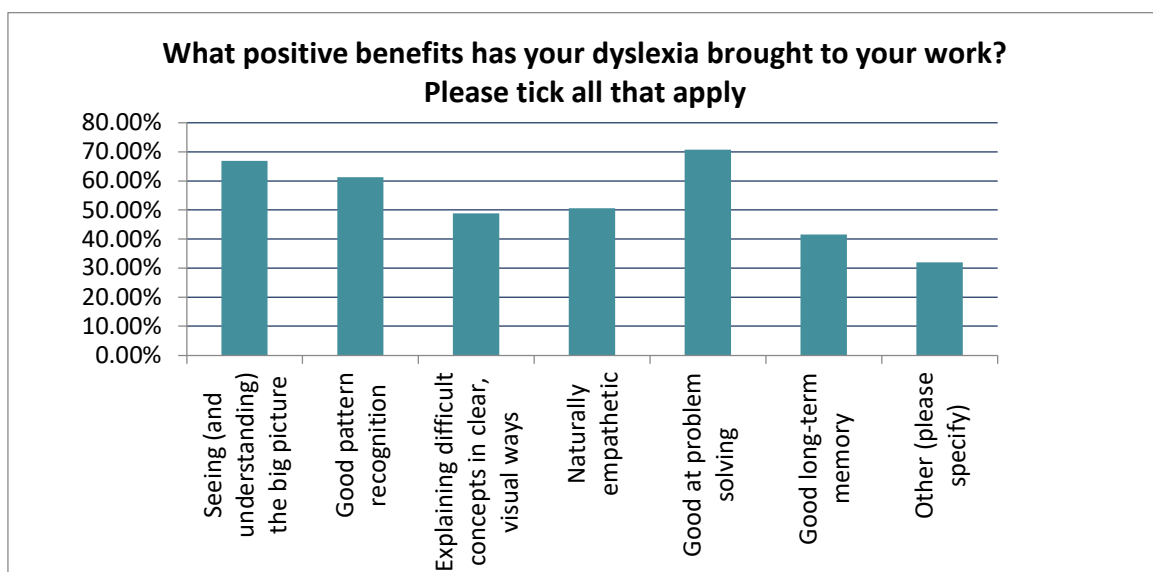


Some of the positive steps employers have taken to help overcome these challenges include

- proofreading reports and providing helpful and constructive comments
- allowing more time to complete some tasks
- taking the time to understand how dyslexia impacts the individual
- making reasonable adjustments by providing IT equipment, voice recognition software, templates, different lighting, coloured screens/filters, noise cancelling headphones etc
- being patient

**Positive benefits of dyslexia**

Respondents were asked to identify what positive benefits dyslexia brings to their work. Being good at problem solving was identified as the most positive benefit.





### **Barriers to applying for CifA accreditation**

Despite 60% of respondents having been through the accreditation process for Practitioner, Associate or Member, nearly 20% of these had experienced barriers when applying for accreditation.

### **What could CifA do to help support people with dyslexia?**

The most popular action to help support people is to provide case studies to show the variety of adjustments that can be made to support dyslexic employees. This was followed by developing a specialist matrix or further information about what to provide in support of an application for CifA accreditation, peer support / mentoring group, and focused accreditation workshops or one-to-one help.

### **Next steps**

MWAH and CifA are very grateful to all the individuals and employers who took the time to complete the survey. There is a lot more detail in the responses than highlighted above and we are taking the time to read these in detail and reflect on what they say. Initially, our next steps will be to

1. Host an informal people led coffee chat for all members and non-members about what they want to see happen
2. Create surgeries where people with dyslexia can talk to others about themed experiences, ie dyslexia with budgets/ dyslexia in the field/ dyslexia in academia
3. Create dyslexia themed resources which will include and links for employers to erase the "dyslexics are stupid" attitude" including more individual case studies – and we'll be contacting those of you who kindly volunteered to help with these
4. Host a dyslexia awareness in archaeology week in October