

## **SPELLING IT OUT: THE COSTS OF DELAYING COMPREHENSIVE DYSLEXIA TRAINING FOR TEACHERS**

*"We are unlocking the talent of the people of this country, and if anything motivates me in politics it's this. When I see potential unrealised and talent unfulfilled, and opportunity denied, that's where we've got to be and it's the right economic future as well as the right way of dealing with opportunity in our society."*

**Gordon Brown, May 2008<sup>1</sup>**

*"In this new world of freedom nothing matters more in terms of opportunity and our economy and our future than education."*

**David Cameron, October 2007<sup>2</sup>**

*"All parents want the very best for their children, and they have a right to expect their local schools to provide that."*

**Nick Clegg, April 2008<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> 31 October 2007, Speech on Education <http://www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page13675.asp>

<sup>2</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/7026435.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7026435.stm)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/588911/clegg-responds-part-i.shtml>

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The Government's delay in providing comprehensive dyslexia training for teachers is costing the UK over £1.8bn a year.

This equates to over £5.5bn for the duration of the Government's proposed three year pilot.

This report shows these hard costs for one year broken down as follows:

<b>Pupil Referral Units:</b>	<b>£64 million</b>
<b>Exclusion from school:</b>	<b>£16 million</b>
<b>Prisons:</b>	<b>£280 million</b>
<b>Drug dependence:</b>	<b>£266 million</b>
<b>Failing students:</b>	<b>£1.2 billion</b>

There are also wider 'soft' costs which cannot be quantified including costs caused by mental health, bullying, unemployment benefit, drug and alcohol dependence.

There is a significant loss to the nation in entrepreneurial and creative potential.

With £40 million from the Government – which is just 4% of the £990 million that Government has already allocated for personalised learning – every state school could have a teacher trained to become a specialist dyslexia teacher. This is something already available in almost nine out of ten independent schools.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> XP Good Schools Guide research found this was available in 87% of independent schools

## 1. Introduction

### What is the current situation?

A recent Government-funded study<sup>5</sup> has shown that 55% of pupils failing SATs at Key Stage 1 and 2 are at risk of dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD). This indicates that unidentified dyslexia/SpLD is a major cause of educational failure that could be remedied but which is at present largely ignored.

This educational failure leads to long term economic costs to the UK, with the likelihood of an under-educated workforce. This places additional strains on the public purse, because dyslexic children who receive inappropriate teaching are considerably more likely to end up in Pupil Referral Units or prisons, receiving benefits or using NHS services.

In line with international estimates<sup>6</sup>, the recent study also found that overall 1 in 5 pupils were at risk of dyslexia/SpLD, equating to around 2 million children in the UK. Government Special Educational Needs (SEN) census figures have only recorded 78,000 children either stated or on school action plus for dyslexia/SpLD.

Few teachers are trained to either recognise or support these children effectively. Recent National Union of Teachers (NUT) research shows that less than 14% of teachers are confident that they can recognise a dyslexic child and under 9% feel confident that they could teach one. They also found that over two thirds of teachers identify a lack of professional development as the greatest barrier to dealing with dyslexic pupils and 77% of teachers would like extra training to cope with dyslexic pupils.<sup>7</sup>

### Why is specialist help needed?

Dyslexic children are usually of average or above average intelligence and have a combination of abilities and difficulties. Unless identified and supported by specialist teachers their difficulties can seriously affect all aspects of learning from reading and writing, to maths, memory and concentration; they can also lead to heightened frustration and potentially disruptive behaviour. This specialist intervention is widely available from private schools, dyslexia centres and specialist teachers nationally.<sup>8</sup> For many years dyslexic children have flourished in the private sector, their difficulties 'diagnosed' and supported properly, and their strengths and talents recognised and nurtured, thus enabling them to fulfil their potential and succeed academically.

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<sup>5</sup> No To Failure interim report, *Screening for Dyslexia / Specific Learning Difficulties*, March 2008

<sup>6</sup> International Dyslexia Association (2007) *Dyslexia basics*. IDA Fact sheet 62

<http://www.interdys.org/FactSheets.htm>

<sup>7</sup> [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qn4158/is\\_20070110/ai\\_n17110527](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20070110/ai_n17110527)

<sup>8</sup> See Xtraordinary People's recent research into Independent School provision for Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties supported by the Good Schools Guide and the Independent Association of Prep Schools which found that 87% of schools had a dyslexia specialist teacher, with a British Dyslexia Association accredited qualification, on their staff

**What is the Government doing about it?**

The Government has gone some way to recognising the importance of dyslexia/SpLD training by developing basic awareness training courses for existing teachers; the Inclusion Development Programme is delivered to existing teachers through National Strategies, and pilot modules in Initial Teacher Training for new teachers. However, neither module is mandatory. Currently, Government has no plans to provide dyslexia specialist training despite the new research showing that dyslexia/SpLD is a major cause of educational failure.

In December 2007, Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Education, announced £3 million to pilot specialist support for dyslexic children. This pilot is to be evaluated over the next three years. The Government has also allocated £990 million to personalised learning. £144 million is being spent on Every Child a Reader, Every Child a Writer or Every Child Counts, programmes which aim to support children falling behind in these areas. None of these programmes provide training for dyslexia specialists, even though dyslexic children struggle in all three areas.

On 6 May 2008 the DCSF announced that Sir Jim Rose's independent review of the primary curriculum will make recommendations on the identification and teaching of children with dyslexia.<sup>9</sup> Xtraordinary People and other leading dyslexia charities welcomed the Government's interest but still question the need for another review when the expertise and methodology to support children with dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties is not in question. Each review and pilot adds to the delay in implementing a simple system where each school would have one teacher trained as a dyslexia specialist who can recognise and support children with dyslexia/SpLD.

**What more can be done?**

An investment of £40 million (4% of the personalised learning budget) would give £1,500 to every school in England to spend on training one of their current teachers to be a dyslexia/SpLD specialist.

Xtraordinary People supported by other leading dyslexia organisations, is calling for:

- Mandatory awareness training for all existing and new teachers
- One existing teacher in every school to be trained as a dyslexia/SpLD specialist

This report details the cost of delaying this mandatory teacher training by three years, i.e. until the end of the pilot phase, and by one year.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn\\_id=2008\\_0078](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0078)

## 2. Methodology

This report is focussed on locating the *avoidable* costs generated when dyslexic pupils are not given appropriate support for their needs. As the recent XP No To Failure (NTF) report found that 21% of pupils were at risk of dyslexia/SpLD, all calculations in this report use this figure. The 'avoidable' costs of dyslexia have therefore been found by locating the overall 'cost of dyslexia' in each scenario and then removing 21% from this number. In this way, the figures in this report have been kept as conservative as possible. Each section we have looked at considers the proportion of dyslexic people who end up in X situation as opposed to the national average (with the view that the proportion of dyslexic people in X situation should be representative of the proportion in society as a whole).

The figures used are based on an assumption that all other factors remain equal and that the occurrence of dyslexia should affect all members of society equally, regardless of social groupings. We acknowledge that cohorts can never be perfect, but our economic data is based on 'best methodology' figures available.

## 3. 'Hard' costs

This section of the report deals with 'hard' costs; those that can be directly linked to the economy.

The frustration and lack of progress caused by unrecognised dyslexia can lead to numerous difficulties and burdens in later life for the individual. School exclusion and/ or a lack of qualifications can lead in turn to a number of hard economic burdens on society including a dependence on unemployment benefit, depression and mental health, crime, and bullying, all of which are detailed below. It is well-documented that leaving school with little or no education means a person is less likely to get a good job, more likely to commit a crime and more likely to rely on the state to support them.<sup>10</sup> Hard costs of this delay are triggered by educational underachievement, unemployment, crime, depression and, ultimately, a dependence upon the state.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/Main%20Site%20v2/headline%20news/whats%20in%20your%20region/CoE%20cost%20of%20educational%20underachievement.asp>

### 3.1 Pupil Referral Units

A recent study found that 65% of pupils at a London Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) were dyslexic.<sup>11</sup> It costs on average £9,900 per year to look after one child in a PRU. Figures from the then Department for Education (DfES) show that in 2007, the overall number of children educated in PRUs was approximately 14,710.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore in PRUs, the current cost of teaching dyslexic children is £94,663,800. Theoretically, the proportion of dyslexic children in PRUs should reflect the proportion at risk in society as a whole (21%). The avoidable cost is £64,082,700.

The avoidable cost of dyslexia in PRUS is over **£64 million** per year.

### 3.2 Underachievement and exclusion from school

The KPMG Foundation's 2006 report for Every Child A Reader showed that literacy difficulties cost the nation £2.05bn a year.<sup>13</sup> The report concluded:

*literacy difficulties are linked to costly special educational needs provision, to truancy, exclusion from school, reduced employment opportunities, increased health risks and a greatly increased risk of involvement with the criminal justice system.*<sup>14</sup>

The study showed that 25% of juveniles in custody have a reading age below that of an average seven year old<sup>15</sup>. (See also section 3.6 of this report).

Illiteracy is linked closely to exclusion: 70% of pupils permanently excluded from school have difficulties in basic literacy skills.<sup>16</sup> Almost half a million pupils every day are truanting from school, costing the taxpayer £1.6 billion a year, according to a 2005 National Audit Office report.<sup>17</sup>

Pupils with statements of SEN are over three times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than the rest of the school population.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Xtraordinary People research, Pupil Referral Units, Southwark, 2007

<sup>12</sup> Table 7, school census figures from the DfES: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000726/SFR16-2007Tables.xls>

<sup>13</sup> KPMG Foundation report <http://www.everychildareader.org/pubs/ECRcosts2006.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid p.3

<sup>15</sup> KPMG Foundation report, 2006, p.15

<sup>16</sup> Every Child a Reader statistics: <http://www.everychildareader.org/background/index.cfm>

<sup>17</sup> NAO report, *Improving school attendance in England*, February 2005

[http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao\\_reports/04-05/0405212.pdf](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/04-05/0405212.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> National Statistics, 2005-06 <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000733/SFR21-2007.pdf>

There were 9,170 permanent exclusions from all primary, secondary and special schools in 2005/06 which represents 0.12% of the number of pupils in schools (12 pupils in every 10,000).<sup>19</sup> The cost of excluding one child from school is £5,507.03 a year.<sup>20</sup> DSCF figures show that in the school year 2005-06 6160 SEN pupils were expelled from schools in Britain.<sup>21</sup> No figures in Britain show how many SEN children are dyslexic but we can use American figures, which state that 80% of SEN pupils are dyslexic.<sup>22</sup> This represents 4928 dyslexic pupils, meaning that 53.7% of all excluded pupils in 2006 were dyslexic. The avoidable cost of the balance of these dyslexic pupils is £16,532,104.

There is an avoidable annual cost of exclusion in schools of over **£16 million**.

### 3.3 Crime and prison

As above, a lack of dyslexia provision at school can lead to frustration, poor results and sometimes, exclusion, all of which can in turn lead to criminal activity. For example, figures show that 22% of regular school pupils admitted to committing a crime in the previous 12 months, but this figure rose to 72% among pupils who had been excluded.<sup>23</sup> A report published by the Prince's Trust in April 2007, 'Counting the cost of youth disadvantage in the UK' argues that a "*jobless generation of young people is costing the UK economy billions in lost productivity and crime.*"<sup>24</sup>

This section highlights the cost of recorded crime that leads to conviction. There is of course also a separate, unquantifiable cost of crime to society for those crimes where there is no conviction (and indeed crimes that aren't even reported). A 2005 report calculated that a 1% increase in basic national qualifications would give a predicted benefit, on property crime alone, of between £10 million and £320 million a year.<sup>25</sup>

In a recent study, 53% of inmates in Chelmsford Prison were found to be dyslexic.<sup>26</sup> This is clearly significantly higher than the incidence reported for the nation as a whole. It costs £38,000 to keep one prisoner in jail for one year.<sup>27</sup> Using Chelmsford prison, which has

<sup>19</sup> National Statistics, 2005-06 <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000733/SFR21-2007.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> This cost is worked out using the New Policy Institute report from 1996, placing the cost at £4,300. See: <http://www.npi.org.uk/summaries%20htm/school%20exclusions.htm> Using the GDP deflator from the Treasury, the rough cost for 2006 would be £5,507.31. See [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/6/8/GDP\\_Deflators\\_20071220\\_NA\\_update\\_circ.xls](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/6/8/GDP_Deflators_20071220_NA_update_circ.xls)

<sup>21</sup> National Statistics, 2005-06 <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000733/SFR21-2007.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.oksenate.gov/news/press\\_releases/press\\_releases\\_2004/pr20040120.html](http://www.oksenate.gov/news/press_releases/press_releases_2004/pr20040120.html)

<sup>23</sup> Literacy Trust, March 2000 <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/database/Truancyupdate.html#blights>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/main%20site%20v2/downloads/Cost%20of%20Exclusion%20apr07.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Leon Feinstein, January 2005, Education and Youth Crime, <http://www.learningbenefits.net/Publications/ResReps/ResRep14.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/prisoninformation/prisonerservice/magazine/index.asp?id=6679,18,3,18,0,0>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/index.php?id=80>

695 inmates<sup>28</sup>, as an example, the cost of dyslexic prisoners to this prison alone is £13,984,000. The unnecessary cost – based on the figure that 21% of people are at risk of dyslexia – in this prison alone is £8,436,000 per year.

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) found that over 30% of juveniles held at Wetherby Young Offenders' Institution (YOI) were dyslexic. The BDA agrees that the percentage of prisoners with dyslexia is somewhere between 30% and 50%. Morgan and Klein (2000) write:

*Studies from England, the USA and Sweden all suggest that between 30 and 52 per cent of the prison population in all three countries may be dyslexic, depending on how narrowly dyslexia is defined. These figures are a shocking contrast to the accepted estimates of the general population who are believed to be dyslexic.*<sup>29</sup>

In order to keep our figures as robust and conservative as possible, we have used the figure of 30% in our calculations.

Recent figures show the number of prisoners in England and Wales to be approximately 82,000 people<sup>30</sup>. We estimate therefore that 7,380 dyslexic prisoners are causing avoidable costs to the Prison Service. The avoidable cost is £280,440,000.

The avoidable cost of dyslexia to the Prison Service is estimated at **£280 million** per year.

### 3.4 Drug abuse and NHS costs

A Stirling University 2006 study into the relationship between dyslexia and drug dependence found that 40% of drug dependents were dyslexic.<sup>31</sup> A 2003 report by the Royal College of Psychiatrists estimated that the NHS spends £1.4 billion on drug-related problems each year.<sup>32</sup>

Of this 40%, it is likely that a considerable proportion of dependents could have avoided this outcome with a better start in life. Using the approach that the occurrence of dyslexia should affect all members of society proportionately, we can estimate that this leads to an avoidable cost of £266 million.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/prisoninformation/locateaprisons/prison.asp?id=262.15.2.15.262.0>

<sup>29</sup> Morgan and Klein (2000) *The Dyslexic Adult in a Non-dyslexic World*, (also quoted in the Cass Business School report)

<sup>30</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7053535.stm>

<sup>31</sup> Study by P.R.Yates, University of Stirling, *Bad Mouthing, Bad habits & Bad Bad boys: an exploration of the relationship between dyslexia and drug dependence*

<http://www.druglibrary.stir.ac.uk/documents/dyslexiastudy.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> *Drugs and alcohol – whose problem is it anyway?* Sep 2003, <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/whocares.pdf>

The avoidable cost of dyslexia to the NHS due to drug dependents is  
**£266 million** per year.

**3.5 The economic cost of failing students**

Recent studies show that 55% of children failing at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 SATs are at risk of dyslexia/SpLD. Recent BBC research found that 60% of teachers thought that if children had failed their SATs at age 11, they would continue to fail throughout the rest of their education.<sup>33</sup>

In 2005, 12.6% of people in England aged 16 to 24 had no qualifications.<sup>34</sup> Young people in this age bracket are twice as likely to have no qualifications if they have SEN.<sup>35</sup>

Many studies show a direct link between A-Level results and future earnings. The then DfES figures from 2003 show that employees with a Level 3 qualification (equivalent of two A levels) earn £100 - £200 more per week than those with no qualifications.

The below chart shows DfES figures for the percentage of households with an income of over £20,000, linked to level of qualification. This clearly shows that earning potential increases with qualifications:

<i>Level of qualification</i>	<i>Percentage of households with an annual income of over £20,000</i>
Level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at A* to C)	57%
Level 3 (equivalent to 2 A-Levels)	65%
Level 4-5	75%

Lower earnings lead to a lower tax revenue and linked to this is an unquantifiable economic effect of reduced spending power.

The Prince’s Trust report states that £70million is lost to the economy per week due to educational underachievement in terms of productivity loss from foregone income. Using the approach that 55% of failing students are dyslexic (compared with the 21% of all students who are at risk) the avoidable cost of failing students is £1,237,600,000 a year.

The avoidable cost of dyslexia on the economy caused by unnecessary educational underachievement is **£1.2 billion** per year.

<sup>33</sup> BBC documentary: *The Teacher Squad*, broadcast on BBC 1 on 13 December, 2007

<sup>34</sup> Prince’s Trust report p.52

<sup>35</sup> Special Educational Needs (Information) Bill, second reading, Hansard 1 Feb 2008

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080201/debtext/80201-0002.htm>

**Hard costs: conclusion**

**Cost of the delay**

This report has found that there are considerable costs associated with the Government's delay of comprehensive dyslexia training for teachers in state schools. The Government's review and pilot schemes are delaying the implementation of policies, which are already in place in independent schools, by three years. During these three years, the cost of the delay to the economy grows. These specific and avoidable costs are outlined below;

For one year the 'hard' costs to the economy are:

Pupil Referral Units:	£64,082,700
Exclusion from school:	£16,532,104
<i>Prisons:</i>	£280,440,000
<i>Drug dependence:</i>	£266,000,000
<i>Failing students:</i>	£1,237,600,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£1,864,654,804 (£1.8bn)</b>
<b>Cost of three year delay:</b>	<b>£5,593,964,412 (£5.5bn)</b>

Note that the cost over three years is a conservative estimate, made up of using lower-level estimates where possible and not taking into account inflation.

**4. 'Soft' costs**

The hard costs are important but this delay is also causing 'softer' costs; these are not financial penalties but social, psychological and human costs to individuals, families, communities and the social landscape of the country itself.

**4.1 Wasted potential**

If dyslexia remains unrecognised and specialist help isn't given to all pupils, the UK economy will be wasting the potential of over a fifth of our future population. The waste of potential cannot be quantified but is no less important than those harder costs discussed above.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown has spoken many times of his desire to unlock previously untapped talent. In a recent speech on education, the Prime Minister made the following comments:

*What this government is trying to do...(is) to unlock the potential of every child and young person and help every young person in this country make the most of their talents for the future... the Britain I want to strive for is a Britain with no cap on ambition, no ceiling on hope, no limit to where your potential will take you, how far you can rise, a Britain where the talents of each of us can contribute to the well being and prosperity of all...*

The Prime Minister has also acknowledged the economic consequences that are caused by failing pupils, saying:

*This idea of excellence in education is not just a noble ideal... it is also an economic imperative too. ... it is time to say not just that we will aim high but that we can no longer tolerate failure, that it will no longer be acceptable for any child to fall behind, no longer acceptable for any school to fail its pupils, no longer acceptable for young people to drop out of education without good qualifications without us acting... no child should be left out or lose out... every child should be given the best chance to progress as far and as fast as they can.<sup>36</sup>*

It is impossible to quantify the cost of this wasted potential, but clearly a failure to ensure that many dyslexic children are able to unlock their talents is leading to the Prime Minister's admirable goal remaining unfulfilled.

The car, the telephone, electricity and the aeroplane were all invented by dyslexic people. There are numerous world-famous British figures with dyslexia, from Jamie Oliver and Sir Steve Redgrave to Richard Branson and Winston Churchill. What such people bring – and have brought – to Britain and our economy through their talent is unquantifiable but hugely significant.

Two and a half years ago, Gordon Brown urged his party to:

*Reflect for a moment on the talent wasted, the loss of what might have been, the great music never composed, the great art never created, the great science never invented, the great books never written. And if, in this generation, we neglect the potential of still too many of our children, if we do not learn from past mistakes and again write off the talents of still too many young people, think of the individual dreams unfulfilled, the hopes dashed, the ambitions crushed, the potential wasted.<sup>37</sup>*

<sup>36</sup> 31 October 2007, Gordon Brown Speech on Education at Greenwich University  
<http://www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page13675.asp>

<sup>37</sup> Gordon Brown, Labour Party Conference speech 26 September 2005,  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2005/sep/26/speeches.labourconference>

The Cass Business School recently produced a paper which studied dyslexia and entrepreneurship, entitled '*Analysis of the incidence of dyslexia in entrepreneurs and its implications*'. The paper concluded that there is a "*much higher incidence of dyslexia in entrepreneurs than in the normal corporate management population*" and that the incidence of dyslexia in entrepreneurs is much higher than the incidence in the population as a whole. The paper ends by asking: "*If many potential entrepreneurs are dyslexic are we using the best techniques to help them create their new ventures?*" It is impossible to state the losses of future Sir Richard Bransons unable to fulfil their potential, and unable to give back to the British economy.

#### 4.2 Substance abuse and suicide

Recent research in America has directly linked learning disabilities or difficulties (how dyslexia/SpLD is referred to in the USA) with the likelihood of developing alcoholism and other substance abuse habits. A report by American National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse in 2001 concluded that there is a need for "*immediate action to protect children with learning disabilities from falling prey to drug, alcohol and tobacco use.*"<sup>38</sup>

American research has also shown that a significant proportion of youths who commit suicide have learning disabilities or difficulties. Over 50 per cent of all suicides under the age of fifteen in Los Angeles County have been previously been diagnosed as having learning difficulties.<sup>39</sup> A study in Canada in which researchers analysed suicide notes from 267 consecutive adolescent suicides in Ontario. The results showed that 89 per cent had significant problems with spelling and handwriting that were similar to those of adolescents with learning difficulties.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4.3 Educational underachievement, mental health and bullying

Educational underachievement can often lead to bullying and depression. Evidence on the effects of bullying suggests that it causes numerous problems ranging from general unhappiness, poor concentration, low-self esteem, psychosomatic symptoms and anxiety to depression, self-harm or suicide.<sup>41</sup> The Prince's Trust report notes: "*the probability of depression by educational underachievers suggests that 3,602 to 9,005 people could be affected. The cost to the NHS alone is about £139 per person on average which makes the estimated total cost between £500,678 and £1,251,695.*" Adding the indirect costs of this – lost earning due to the inability to work – the report places the total cost of depression caused by underachievement at school could cost the NHS between £11million and £28 million.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> See *Substance Abuse and Learning Disabilities: Peas in a Pod or Apples and Oranges?*, National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University, New York, 2001

<sup>39</sup> Research by M Peck, discussed in *Learning Disabilities and Difficulties: The Emotional Scars*  
[http://www.audiblox.com/learning\\_disabilities.htm](http://www.audiblox.com/learning_disabilities.htm)

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Children Families and Schools select committee report on bullying,

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmmeduski/85/8506.htm#a6>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/main%20site%20v2/downloads/Cost%20of%20Exclusion%20apr07.pdf> page 48

Adults with low literacy levels have twice the normal risk of being diagnosed as depressed; in women with very low literacy the risk increases five-fold. There is, as these figures show, a strong connection between early literacy failure and later social exclusion for individual young people and adults.<sup>43</sup>

From a joint Xtraordinary People-BDA survey in November 2007 of 1000 parents of dyslexic children, 56% said their children suffered from bullying.<sup>44</sup> It is well documented that many dyslexic people suffer from low self-esteem. In a recent study on this issue, Robert Burden, Professor at University of Exeter, noted: *"The overwhelming body of evidence from a considerable range of studies indicates that children faced with specific learning difficulties of a dyslexic nature are most likely to develop low academic self-concepts as a result of these difficulties."*<sup>45</sup>

#### **4.4 Wider educational costs**

The costs affecting the economy around lack of earnings, PRUs and so on have been discussed. However there is also a softer educational cost, including the disruption of those pupils in the class who are not dyslexic. There is also an impact upon the teachers who feel that they are not as qualified as they could and ought to be to deal with all pupils in their class; this will impact on all generations of students under the care and tutelage of those teachers.

#### **4.5 The effect of a disenfranchised group in society**

There is a 'softer' cost to society of an unnecessarily incapacitated cohort of the population, leading to a negative impact on the general wellbeing of British society itself.

Dyslexic people who are excluded from achieving their potential face social and economic marginalisation from society. These poor outcomes for disenfranchised people create a high level of inequity, which in itself is a burden on society.

The exclusion of this group from mainstream society also means that a talented and creative section of society is less likely to participate in public life and institutions, detracting from the richness of social discourse in this country. Therefore fewer voices are being expressed and taken into account in the democratic process and in the creation of the values and norms that shape society, to the detriment of us all.

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<sup>43</sup> Every Child A Reader, <http://www.everychildareader.org/background/why.cfm>

<sup>44</sup> Joint XP / BDA study of 1000 parents of dyslexic children, November 2007

<sup>45</sup> Robert Burden, 'Dyslexia and Self concept', Exeter University

## Soft costs conclusion

### 5.1 Softer costs and unlocking potential

This report has found that, as well as the specific hard costs to the country's economy, there are considerable 'soft cost' burdens, including those caused by mental health and bullying, wider educational costs, the loss of entrepreneurial potential and the creation of an increasingly disenfranchised group from society. These affect individuals, communities and society as a whole.

The loss of human capital and unfulfilled talent is significant. Whilst dyslexics can experience problems at school, they can often have huge strengths. Well known dyslexics include Richard Branson, Bill Gates, Jamie Oliver, Walt Disney, John Lennon, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, and Winston Churchill.

### 5.2 What could be achieved with just £40 million from the Government

Specialist teacher training costs £1,500 per teacher – that's around £40 million for all schools in the country. This could be funded from money already pledged by the DCSF for this area of education as a better use of already existing money, for example, the £144 million already earmarked by the Government for personalised learning. Money already allocated by the Government for this area could be better spent on teacher training.