

## Open Letter to Professor Elliott from the Dyslexia Adult Network

24 September 2015



### Background to 'Resolving the Dyslexia Debate'

Having published *The Dyslexia Debate* last year, Professor Elliott has convened seventeen leading academics in the field of reading disability in children to try to reach a consensus on the use and value of the term 'dyslexia'. After two days of deliberation, the group presented their views at a public presentation in Durham on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> September, entitled *Resolving the Dyslexia Debate*.

### Response from the Dyslexia Adult Network [www.dan-uk.co.uk](http://www.dan-uk.co.uk)

Dear Professor Elliott

The Dyslexia Adult Network is surprised that you are continuing in your efforts to 'resolve the dyslexia debate'. A hundred years of knowledge and research have taught us that the cognitive difference of dyslexia is complex and multi-faceted.

A group of academics specialising in children, however eminent, can only ever consider *some* of the issues associated with dyslexia, principally those relating to the childhood acquisition of literacy. The experience of dyslexic adults – both their struggles and achievements – has greatly enlarged our understanding.

Dyslexia, of course, does not disappear in adulthood. The challenges that adults face are very different from those of children because dyslexia is not just about reading. Dyslexia can leave adults socially excluded, or under-performing at work, where the special abilities they may

bring to the job go unrecognised. For adults, it is working memory, organisation, adapting to change and effective information processing that can cause the most difficulty.

The Dyslexia Adult Network believes that all individuals with any of these difficulties should receive appropriate assessment and support. Whilst we welcome any opportunity for dyslexia to be in the spotlight and wish to encourage sound academic debate, we represent thousands of dyslexic individuals and practitioners who have grave concerns about your approach and the narrow focus on terminology.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Jameson

Chair, Dyslexia Adult Network

**The following organisations are represented in the Dyslexia Adult Network**

Adult Dyslexia Organisation, Adult Dyslexia Support, Birmingham Adult Dyslexia Group, British Dyslexia Association, Dyslexia Action, Dyslexia Assessment & Consultancy, Dyslexia Consultancy Malvern, Dyslexia Foundation, Dyslexia Scotland, Key 4 Learning.

The Dyslexia Adult Network (DAN) has been meeting since December 2012, following a survey of the concerns of adults with dyslexia. It consists of a coalition of the major dyslexia organisations and nationally recognised dyslexia specialists.

A list of DAN members is available on the website [www.dan-uk.co.uk](http://www.dan-uk.co.uk)

Responding to identified needs, DAN is working with government bodies, key individuals and organisations to improve support and accessibility to services for adults with dyslexia and related Specific Learning Differences.