

# Trade unions and dyslexia support: The case of Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA)

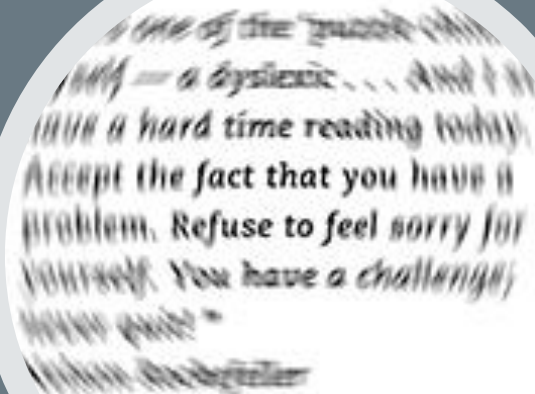
Dr. James Richards

*Edinburgh Business School*

*Associate Professor in Human Resource Management*

*Contact: [j.richards@hw.ac.uk](mailto:j.richards@hw.ac.uk)*

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The logo for the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) is displayed in a red circle. It features the lowercase letters 'tssa' in a white, sans-serif font, with a white wavy line underneath.The logo for Heriot Watt University is shown in a white circle. It consists of a crest on the left and the text 'HERIOT WATT UNIVERSITY' on the right. The crest depicts a building and a tree. The text is in a serif font, with 'HERIOT' and 'WATT' in larger letters and 'UNIVERSITY' in smaller letters below.A circular graphic containing a quote about dyslexia. The text is written in a cursive, handwritten style. The quote reads: "I am one of the 'quack' children - a dyslexic... And I will have a hard time reading today. Accept the fact that you have a problem. Refuse to feel sorry for yourself. You have a challenge; never quit!" The name 'William Shakespeare' is written at the bottom.

# Trade unions and dyslexia: An overview

Prospect

Scottish Union Learning

TUC

GMB

Unison

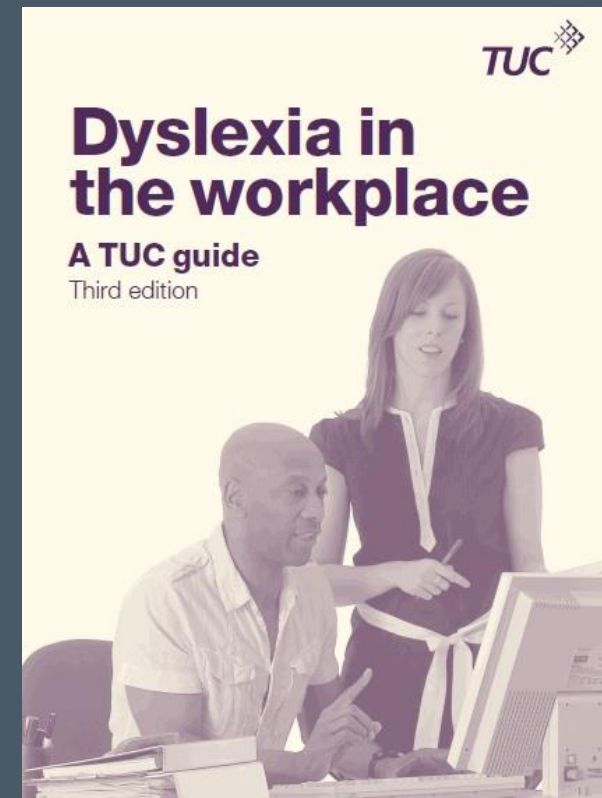
PCS

TSSA – sector leaders

Trade union/TSSA approach to dyslexia and neurodiversity:

Equality Act 2010

Social Model of Disability



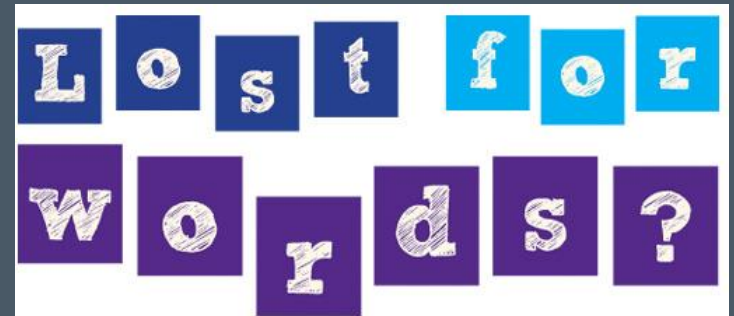
# Case of TSSA – the beginnings

TSSA represent professional white-collar workers employed by transport industry

TSSA recognised by UK transport employers, e.g. TfL, Network Rail, etc.

TSSA reps and members increased reportage of problems related to dyslexia and other neurodivergent conditions – advice and expertise needed

In 2009 applied for Union Modernisation Fund for specific project on dyslexia – also see TUC Equality Audit report



# Case of TSSA – Neurodiversity Programme

Programme funded by Union Learning Fund

Part of TSSA Equalities Agenda

Neurodiversity Organisers

Neurodiversity Champions



# Case of TSSA – Heriot-Watt University research

Two research projects – 2012-2013 and 2016-2017

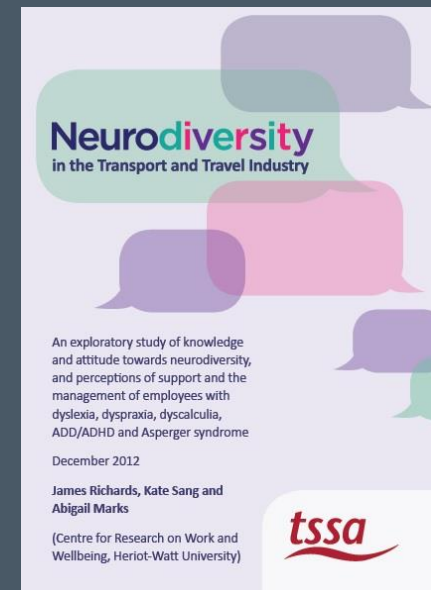
Involved 103 transport employees/TSSA reps/organisers  
(approx. 40 dyslexic)

Launched at House of Commons (2012) and TUC  
Conference (2013)

3 academic papers (see References)

2 reports (see References)

Main TSSA output: “Bargaining Standards”



# Case of TSSA – changing employer practice related to dyslexia

Bargaining Standards - secure equality and diversity outcomes through collective bargaining, that benefit members/potential members

Partnered with Dyslexia Action

Rep training on dyslexia initial screening

Hidden disability questionnaires

Adjustment to performance and disciplinary policies

Lunch and Learn sessions

Further key research findings

- Trade unions seen as key to equality
- Helped with stigma
- Improved information and training
- Recognition of changing nature of work
- Supporting line manager and HR/E&D professionals



## Summary – a collective approach to dyslexia

Trade union approach different/distinct from HR and medical approaches, i.e. mainly based on collective bargaining and informed by Social Model of Disability

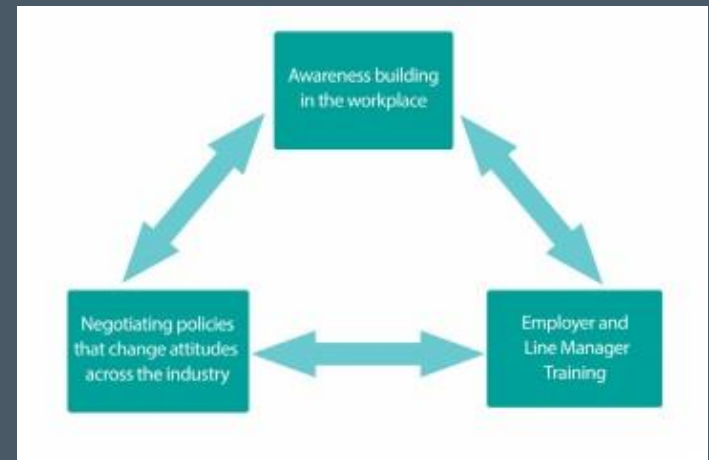
Raising awareness – move towards anticipating and *not* reacting to dyslexia

Train reps with expertise – “safe space”

Building actions into everyday organisational policy/practice and day-to-day HR practice

Support for employees, but also line managers and HR/E&D practitioners

Potential use in non-union workplaces?



# References

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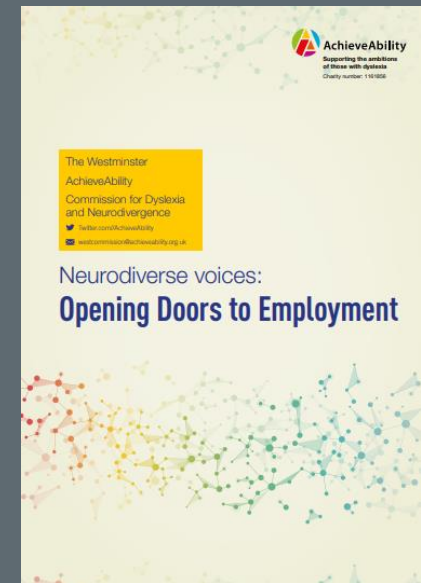
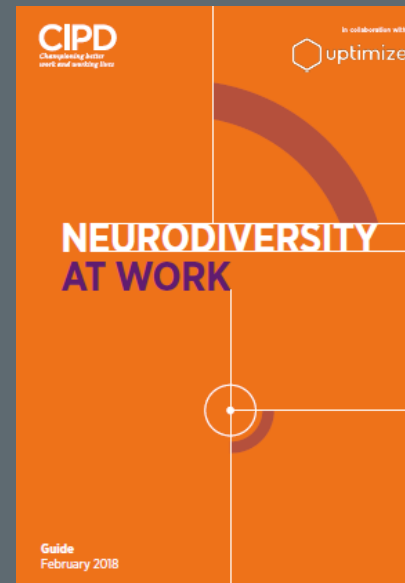
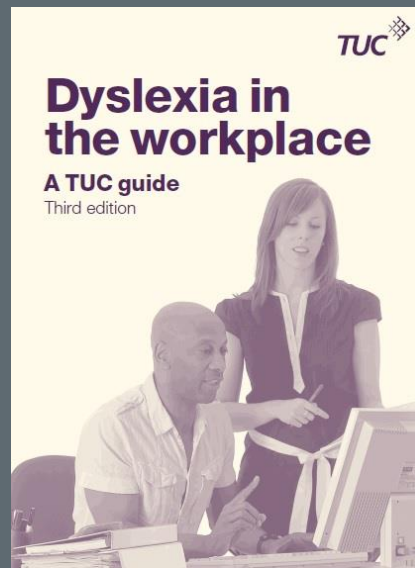
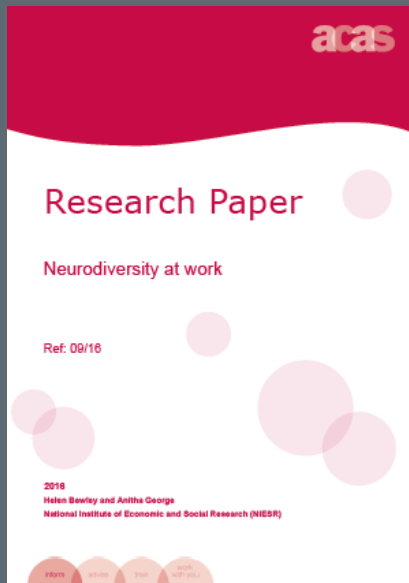
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AchieveAbility (2020), *Neurodiversity voices: Good practice in workplace*, Issue 1, Spring.

CIPD (2018), *Neurodiversity at work*, London: CIPD.

TUC (2014), *Dyslexia in the workplace: A TUC Guide*, London: TUC.

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**Thank you for engaging with my presentation!**

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