

INTRODUCTION

Developmental Language Difficulties (DLD) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) is an umbrella term used to refer to the many types of speech, language and communication difficulties that children and young people might face.

It includes conditions such as:

- Stammering/stuttering
- Speech sound disorder
- Language 'difficulties' perhaps due to lack of communication-supportive experiences in early childhood (for example, children living in areas of high social disadvantage)

Within the group of children and young people with SLCN, there are some who will have lifelong language difficulties. Speech Language and Communication Difficulties: What is Typical Talk at Primary and Secondary School? – they are not going to 'grow out of it' or 'catch up' to their peers. This is known as 'language disorder'. Sometimes, a language disorder is associated with another biomedical condition, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), sensorineural hearing loss, acquired brain injury, intellectual disability or a known genetic condition (such as Down's syndrome, Klinefelter syndrome).

However, some children and young people have a language disorder but not a biomedical condition – and this is known as Developmental Language Disorder (DLD).

DLD can also co-occur with some conditions, such as Dyslexia, ADHD or speech sound disorder. In this case, a child or young person may be given two (or more) diagnoses, but it is recognised that these are distinct from each other (rather than the language difficulties being associated with another condition).

