

# NAPLIC

Professionals supporting language  
and communication development

## What is DLD?

DLD stands for **Developmental Language Disorder**. DLD is the term used to describe children and adults who have persisting difficulties understanding or using spoken language. DLD replaces many different terms previously used including Specific Language Impairment (SLI) and Language Learning Impairment (LLI). In 2017, there was an international consensus exercise and it was agreed that DLD should be used.

## What causes DLD?

DLD can be hard to understand as there is no known cause. It is **not** caused by emotional difficulties or by parents not talking enough to their children. People with DLD can have co-occurring difficulties such as dyslexia, ADHD and speech sound difficulties.

## What are the signs and symptoms of DLD?

DLD affects approximately 2-3 children in every classroom and can be difficult to spot. It is often described as a 'hidden' disability. DLD affects and impacts on different people in different ways. Some of the things that people with DLD might find difficult include:

- Understanding instructions and remembering information
- Organising ideas so that they are able to verbally express what they want to say
- Finding the right words (vocabulary) to say at the right times.
- Having difficulties learning to read and write

## What is the impact of DLD?

DLD affects all areas of life; including learning, developing literacy skills, making and keeping friends and having a healthy mental and emotional well-being. Children with DLD may find it hard to achieve academic success at school. Sometimes difficulties and anxieties linked to DLD can be wrongly interpreted as misbehaviour. DLD is a long-term condition and difficulties can persist into and throughout adulthood.

Find out more at [www.naplic.org.uk/dld](http://www.naplic.org.uk/dld)