

Enhancing Language and Communication in Children and Young People with
Developmental/Language Disorder across Levels of Service provision: Specialist,
Targeted and Universal.

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There is strong evidence for the pervasiveness of Developmental/Language Disorder (D/LD), its wide-ranging effects on all aspects of child development and its long-term impact on academic performance, employment, socialisation and broader health and wellbeing. These difficulties persist over time and can increase during adolescence and adulthood.

Evidence for the effectiveness of speech, language and communication interventions across the three levels of service provision (specialist, targeted and universal) is growing, however inconsistencies continue to exist in the identification and diagnosis of the disorder, and in the nature, type and duration of the service provision. Inequalities of care with this group remain a common feature and impact adversely on life skills and life chances of individuals with these difficulties.

This workshop will focus on interventions and service provision with children and young people with D/LD, exploring the emerging evidence base for enriching speech, language and communication in this group, across the three levels of service provision: universal, targeted, and specialist. The workshop will describe these different service delivery models, providing evidence for the effectiveness of interventions in syntax, semantics and pragmatics, with a focus on working in mainstream schools. The role of the classroom teacher, teaching assistant and speech and language therapist within the collaborative team will be discussed.

Consideration will be given to the factors that contribute to the selection of service provision, including severity of the disorder, school setting, staff expertise, resource allocation and staff and client perspectives. The importance of collaboration in working in schools and colleges across all three levels of service provision: universal, targeted, and specialist, will be emphasised, and the role of the parent, carer and family highlighted. The importance of listening to the voices of the children and young people, their families and professionals, and the integration of their perspectives into the therapy model will be underlined.

Delegates will have the opportunity to share their own experiences working with clients, ask questions and work with other colleagues, drawing on case studies as exemplars. The workshop will provide opportunities to discuss and explore practice, sharing ideas and problem solving collectively. Workshop discussions will lead to clear implications and reflections on best practice for developing a needs-led provision to enhance long term outcomes for children and young people with D/LD.