

## Resources:

[www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)  
[www.learningdisabilities.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk)  
[www.blid.org.uk](http://www.blid.org.uk)  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Yeovil College

Dorset services for adults with a Learning Disability



# Learning difficulties factsheet

## Definitions of learning difficulties

Learning Difficulties	Is a classification including several disorders in which a person has difficulty learning in a typical manner, usually caused by an unknown factor or factors. It cannot be cured or fixed. With the right support and intervention, however, people with learning disabilities can succeed in school and go on to be successful later in life.
Dyspraxia	Is a motor learning difficulty that can affect planning of movements and co-ordination as a result of brain messages not being accurately transmitted to the body. It may be diagnosed in the absence of other motor or sensory impairments like cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's disease.
Dyslexia	Is a Greek word, meaning 'difficulty with words' – is caused by a weakness in the way the brain processes language information. People with Dyslexia therefore have problems with learning to read, write and spell and some experience difficulties with maths.
Dyscalculia	Is a specific learning disability or difficulty involving innate difficulty in learning or comprehending mathematics. It is akin to dyslexia and can include confusion about maths symbols. Dyscalculia can also occur as the result of some types of brain injury.



Largely based on Paul N Tomlinson's Deafness briefing to the Dorset Equality and Diversity Forum July 2009

## Statistics on learning disabilities in the UK

- About 2% (985,000) of the population in England has a learning disability
- 60% of adults with learning disabilities live with their families
- 17% of people with learning disabilities of a working age have a paid job
- Children and young people with learning disabilities are 6 times more likely to have mental health problems than older people
- Only 20% of adults with a learning disability are known to learning disability services
- Nearly 1 in 3 people with learning disabilities said someone had been rude or offensive to them in the last year

## Statistics on learning disabilities in Dorset

- There are more people with a learning disability living in Weymouth than the next 3 areas combined (Dorchester, Wareham and Christchurch)
- The table overleaf shows the figures for adults with a learning disability by district.

District	Total Population	LD Population
Christchurch	45,600	110
East Dorset	87,700	180
Purbeck	45,500	98
North Dorset	68,600	187
West Dorset	98,700	290
Weymouth and Portland	66,400	365
Campus Residents	142 (inc Poole and Bournemouth)	51
Total	412,500	1,281



### How can we do to help people with?

#### Dyscalculia

- Help the individual
- Ask people what support they require! – Each person is different
- Use consistent colour coding for mathematical symbols, worksheet or board to help with accurate copying
- Develop their vocabulary
- Use repeated reinforcement and specific practice of straightforward ideas to make understanding easier
- Use practical, concrete examples to demonstrate abstract concepts
- Present few problems per page using clear, using a consistent layout
- Allow additional time for working out or provide a fewer problems to solve
- Encourage independence on tasks, reducing the amount of support needed over time.

### How can we do to help people with?

#### Dyspraxia

- Ask people what support they require! – Each person is different
- Ensure adequate space in working area
- Where possible minimise the amount of time needed to stand or engage in physical activity
- Encourage pre-planning of at tasks and movements
- Provide verbal and physical prompts to achieve sequence of movements
- Provide frequent opportunities for success
- Allow extra time for completion of tasks/ assessments or extra support if appropriate.
- Allow time for word-finding and speech

#### Dyslexia

- Ask people what support they require! – Each person is different
- Present handouts in a clear and visual form
- Orally check understanding of written tasks.
- Provide notes from classroom sessions or assign a note-taking buddy within the group
- When copying from the board use different colours to help with tracking. Encourage use of IT or voice activated software to complete work
- Be aware of any sensory sensitivity and keep distractions in the classroom or office to a minimum.



### Employment

Most people with learning disabilities do not find work and so must survive on welfare benefits. Despite government initiatives, informal surveys indicate that only 11% of people with learning disabilities of working age are in employment. This is a big issue for people with learning disabilities, because even those who do have jobs tend to be poorly paid. Source:MIND 2010

### Isolating effects

Learning disabled people may experience

- Being “labelled” by public services or neighbours
- Not speaking out if services are ineffective
- Poor housing

#### Social isolation

Can't seem to go out without feeling they are being labelled, people stare, learning disabled people can be among the most isolated groups in our society; for example, having poor housing and inadequate advocacy services

#### Work place isolation

Learning disabled people may experience

- Being “labelled” at work
- Not being given the chance to tackle some projects
- Isolated
- Not being given opportunities for training or promotion
- Increased stress

### Is there a cure?

Even though learning disabilities can't be cured, there is still a cause for hope. Because certain learning problems reflect delayed development, many children do eventually catch up. Of the speech and language disorders, children who have an articulation or an expressive language disorder are the least likely to have long-term problems. Despite initial delays, most children do learn to speak



### Things that are **not helpful** to people with learning difficulties

- Assuming everyone is the same
- Not asking what help or reasonable adjustments the individual may need
- Pressure to quickly complete a new task or activity
- Failure to offer support if needed

### Things that **are helpful** to people with learning difficulties

- Taking time to understand specific needs and requirements
- Planning and structure of tasks
- Positive support. Consider budding/mentoring/ key worker schemes
- Seeking specialist help if you need it