

Dyscalculia factsheet



Challenges with understanding maths, and achieving the GCSE/Functional skills level are experienced by 1 in 4 people in the UK. This may be caused by a wide range of factors, including how they were taught, the pace of the maths curriculum, the perception that maths is too difficult and that it is ok to not be good at maths.

What is a SpLD in maths / dyscalculia?



A lifelong condition that is highly debilitating, making it much harder for a person to work confidently and flexibly with numbers and number information. While the underlying cause of these are different they both have a significant impact on education, work and daily life of people with them.



People with a SpLD in maths, have a cognitive underpinning reason for their difficulties, such as: having another SpLD that in turn affects their ability to learn maths (dyslexia, DCD/dyspraxia, ADHD, autism); challenges with processing information (verbal, visual or spatial); challenges with working memory.



People with dyscalculia have a more specific numeric processing difficulty causing challenges with number awareness - understanding the quantities that numbers represent, understanding what is a reasonable answer, estimate or value, the relative value of numbers.

Difficulties that people with SpLD in maths / dyscalculia face include:

- Remembering and/or retrieving from memory simple maths facts, (number bonds, times tables).
- Understanding how the four arithmetic operations work and the links between them – (add, subtract, multiply and divide).
- Understanding that numbers can be broken down into smaller parts to make calculations easier.
- Understanding the structure and organisation of the spoken and written number systems.
- Understanding and remembering maths specific language.
- Remembering how to do calculations and procedures.
- Accurately and quickly reading and writing numbers.
- Comparing numbers and values in different forms – decimals, fractions, percentages.
- Getting lost part-way through a calculation/ procedure.



The following may be signs that an adult has a SpLD in maths or dyscalculia:

- Has a history of difficulty with maths and numbers but not with other subjects.
- Can follow a process for a calculation, but can't explain what they are doing or apply the same calculation in a different context.
- Can do geometry or algebra but find arithmetic and numbers hard.
- Struggle to use an analogue clock and understand terms such as "5 past" when the hand is pointing to the number 1.
- Can't work out travel times, distances or read timetables (this could present as always being late or early, difficulty in planning timings).
- Struggle to make sense of big numbers. Matching money to an item does not come automatically.
- Struggle to understand a restaurant bill, or check a till receipt is correct.
- Never check their bank account, and struggle to manage a budget.
- Can't remember pin numbers or telephone numbers.
- Can't work out travel times, distances or read timetables.
- Numbers can make them feel anxious. Avoids numbers wherever possible.

Statistics



1 in 4 people experience challenges understanding maths and achieving the GCSE/Functional skills level.



60% of dyslexic people have difficulties with maths.