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## Features For People With A Formal Diagnosis

Seeking a formal diagnosis for a specific learning difficulty is essential if the individual wants to know if the difficulties they are experiencing with learning are due to them having dyslexia or one of the other spLDs. A formal diagnosis will also be able to analyse the impact that any weaknesses that they have intellectually, cognitively and strategically may have on their studying. The individual will want to be in a position to be able to find out what their current needs are and to make sure that they and their family get and can access the available individualized support and services that they need, which will improve their quality of life as well as equip them with better coping and study skills. Which would help the individual to be able to lead a more successful, satisfying and independent life which will make a significant difference to their future outcomes particularly securing employment as well as helping them to transition to adult life.

Without a documented condition or difficulty, the individual will not get the help and support that they need and require without the diagnosis because the written diagnosis is an explanation to those who need to know that the person is struggling in some areas and may need the use of technological aids/and or access arrangements. A school will not take any action until a detailed report or assessment is put in front of them. A formal assessment is also required if the individual wishes to apply for a "disabled students allowance" (DSA) which will help with some of the extra study related costs that the individual will occur with their specific impairment and any specialist equipment that the individual needs in order to help them with their studies or they will need written evidence if they need and require special examination concessions (access arrangements). Unless the individual has a formal diagnosis they will not be taken seriously and will continue to be fobbed off "that their child will grow out of their difficulties". The earlier the difficulties can be formally diagnosed the better the condition can be managed and that any problems can be picked up before the student starts to fall further behind their peers in their education. It also enables everyone involved to be able to plan ahead properly and find out what the individual is entitled to.

A formal diagnosis can tell the parents/carers and anyone else who works with the individual where their difficulties lie and what their strengths are, making it much easier to understand the individual and to know how best to help them. The earlier it is diagnosed the earlier intervention can begin and help prevent more severe symptoms from developing in the individual. It will help the reduce the individual from experiencing failure in school because they will get the right educational support and SEN services which may also reduce in them requiring less long-term time-consuming expensive specialized educational services as well as knowing how to transition into adult services. Identification will ensure every individual with a SLD will receive the correct care and medication and personalized support that they may require throughout their life. A formal diagnosis may also be of benefit if the individual decides to continue their education post 16 years and go onto university where they will also be able to access additional help if they require it.

Also, if the individual wants to get a job a formal diagnosis will also entitle them to adjustments being made to their working environment so that they would be able to carry out their job role more efficiently. Also, they are more likely to develop secondary conditions such as anxiety,

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depression, epileptic fits, conduct disorder and Opposition defiant disorder and ASD which will also have to be investigated and formally diagnosed. They may also experience difficulties with executive functioning (planning, prioritizing, persisting organizing, doing a complex task, inhibiting) which will also have to be managed. Other issues can also be either ruled out or highlighted. A formal diagnosis can also help parents and carers as well as the individual concerned to be able to understand the symptoms, and the way that the condition progresses, available treatment as well as find ways of coping and coming to terms with the fact that their child's/individual's future will be different to the way that they imagined it would be. It will also help to reduce any fears and confusion because everyone will be better informed about everything. If a person understands more about their specific learning difficulty (SLS's) they will be able to develop suitable coping mechanisms that will enable them to succeed and achieve what they want to achieve. If an adult is diagnosed with a specific learning disability it often makes them feel a sense of relief as their life has probably been fraught with difficulties because they may have thought that they weren't very bright and couldn't understand why they didn't seem to fit in with everyone.

Individuals with differences such as specific learning difficulties are protected in society by legislation such as the Equality Act 2010. Their differences are recognized as a disability because they have the right to the same opportunities as everyone else and should be allowed to lead a fulfilling life and in the last few years legislation has been updated to reflect this which makes sure that individuals with specific learning disabilities are not treated unfavourably and are offered reasonable adjustments by organisations so that the playing field is levelled so that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other people who haven't got those differences. They also have a right to be protected from being discriminated against (especially at work), or from being harassed and victimized by education providers, organisations, local authorities as well as other people. The individual also has a right to get their employer to make changes (reasonable adjustments) to their job due to their disability so that they can carry out their duties more efficiently.