



Dorset Children's Services - Statement on Dyslexia

In Dorset Children's Services, the accepted definition for dyslexia comes from Delphi study (2024):

"Dyslexia is primarily a set of processing difficulties that affect the acquisition of reading and spelling. The most commonly observed cognitive impairment in dyslexia is a difficulty in phonological processing"

The complete definition can be found on the PATOSS website Introducing a new definition of dyslexia: bit.ly/new-dyslexia

It is not possible to request a dyslexia assessment directly from a Dorset Council employed Specialist Teacher. The only route to an assessment of literacy and learning is through the school, in the following circumstances:

- The SENCO has concerns about the literacy progress of a pupil, despite evidence of high-quality classroom support and targeted intervention (Dorset Graduated Approach). The pupil should be brought for discussion at the regular planning meetings with Educational Psychologists and Specialist Teachers.
- If the pupil has a significantly low reading attainment, despite evidence of a Graduated Approach, the Specialist Teacher may agree to carry out appropriate individual assessment.
- The purpose of an assessment of literacy and learning would be to identify strengths and needs with regards to literacy attainment, underlying verbal and non-verbal ability and aspects of cognitive processing. Recommendations would be provided to support the development of reading and functional literacy.
- In some cases, this may lead to a diagnosis of dyslexia.

If the above criteria are not met, further information about private assessments can be sought from the BDA (the British Dyslexia Association) or PATOSS (the professional association of teachers of students with specific learning difficulties).