Screening for Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

In some areas, more than **50%** of children start school with SLCN

10% of all children have long term SLCN

7% of all children have Developmental Language Disorder

1% of all children have severe & complex SLCN
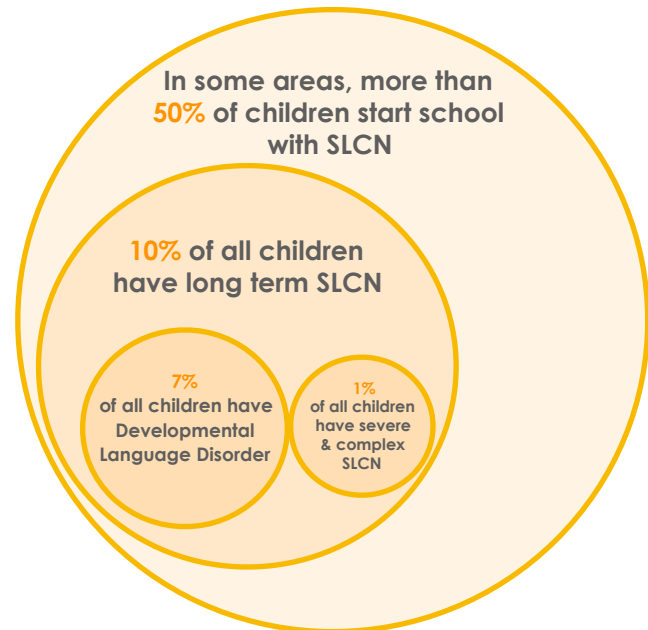
The life outcomes for CYP with SLCN are disproportionately poor

SLCN is the most prevalent childhood disability

SLCN is under identified

"There is a major mismatch between the known prevalence of SLCN and the numbers of children actually being identified and supported"
Talking about a generation report (2017)

Baselining vs Screening

Using a screening tool only with selected children and young people. E.g. pupils who..:
- are hard to understand
- you think have a language difficulty
- receive 'SEN Support' or have an EHCP
- are in the 'lower ability group'
- teachers raise concerns about

Reduce risk of under identification of SLCN

Using a screening tool with all pupils on entry including those who arrive later in the year (in KS2/3 settings, considered criteria are applied - see 'Who to Screen?')

All settings should ensure that they are screening rather than solely baselining to address the problem of "the missing children" (Talking About a Generation, 2017)

What is screening ?

Screening for SLCN refers to the process of carrying out assessment(s) with a whole cohort to identify speech, language and communication needs.

Who to Screen?

Nursery & Infants
- All pupils on entry to nursery and/or reception
- Remember, there are many types of SLCN that can be hard to pick-up on in everyday classroom practice

Junior & Secondary
Consider:
- setting size
- capacity to screen everyone
- Information from previous setting(s)
- Agree measures for deciding who you screen

Challenges of identification

Understanding is difficult for me

Conversations are difficult for me

Talking is difficult for me

A number of things are difficult for me

- SLCN is often a 'hidden disability'
- Co-occurring difficulties can make identification more difficult
- Visibility of need - e.g. speech and articulation are easier to spot than difficulties with Understanding
- Children can become skilled at masking difficulties

Best Practice for SLCN Screening

Ensure that screening is driven or supported by the **Senior Leadership Team**

Consider **which screening tool is best** for your setting (cost / age of CYP / size of setting / function of screener)

Carefully **plan how the screening process will work** in your setting (See 'SLCN Screening Process Poster')

Ensure **whole school training** so that all staff understand why screening is important

Ensure that screening is carried out by **fully trained and confident staff**

Be clear about the **difference between screening and baselining**. They are not the same thing

Benefits of Screening

Screening…
- Enables accurate identification of who needs support
- Appropriately targeted early intervention
- Can increase attainment because language underpins all learning
- Leads to benefits for mental health and well-being through effective provision for SLCN

Early identification leads to better outcomes for children and young people. The sooner a need is identified, the better!

Birmingham City Council

Access to Education

Pupil and School Support

SLCN Screening Process

Screen new cohort
(ensure any pupils who arrive later in the year are also screened)

Plan intervention for those with mild or significant delay

If significant, consider referral to S&L Therapy

Deliver intervention to target areas of need identified

Following intervention, reassess using screening tools

Plan next steps