

For immediate release



**LEADING ACADEMICS LAUNCH CAMPAIGN TO RAISE AWARENESS OF A CONDITION
AFFECTING AT LEAST ONE CHILD IN EVERY CLASSROOM**

One child in every reception classroom is affected by a specific language impairment, a little-recognised condition that affects all aspects of life, prompting a group of leading academics to come together and launch RALLI, a video led campaign to raise awareness. Specific language impairment (SLI) hinders understanding and expressive language and can impact on how children learn, form friendships and on educational development. Despite how common the condition is, it receives little recognition, with many children and their families missing out on accessing much needed help and support as a result.

To change this, academics Dorothy Bishop, Professor of Developmental Neuropsychology at Oxford University, Gina Conti-Ramsden, Professor of Child Language and Learning at the University of Manchester, Courtenay Norbury, Head of the Literacy, Language and Communication Laboratory at Royal Holloway, University of London and Maggie Snowling, Professor of Psychology at the University of York, have joined forces to launch RALLI, Raising Awareness of Language Learning Impairments. Aimed at children, parents, families and education professionals, it will share video stories based on people's experiences of SLI and what can be done to help those affected. RALLI has been launched with funding support from Afasic, The Waterloo Foundation and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Professor Dorothy Bishop commented: "Language impairments can have a dramatic impact on children. Research shows that two in five children who have the condition say they have difficulties interacting with peers and, children with SLI are twice as likely to be bullied. These issues do not stop as they grow older, in fact, teenagers with language impairment are two and half times more likely to report symptoms of anxiety or depression. That's why we had to take action and launch RALLI, to raise awareness of those who suffer."

Becky Clark, RALLI editor and a speech and language therapist said: "Our ambition is to bring together the leading academics in the field, alongside children and families affected, to produce informed, relevant video that will shine a light on SLI and ultimately help many other children. The channel will become a place where people can come and get reliable information, but also comment and discuss the issues. We're really hoping to build a community as well as raising awareness."



Professor Conti-Ramsden said: “Like all the members of RALLI, when I tell people about my work in SLI, most people have never heard of the condition; that’s why I got involved. It’s essential we raise awareness of SLI so that children and families can get an early diagnosis and get the help they need.”

Professor Snowling said: “Studies show that often children with dyslexia have an underlying language impairment. It is important to have greater recognition of the complexity of the problems associated with SLI and support for the professionals helping those affected.”

Dr Courtenay Norbury commented: “I would love everyone who watches the RALLI videos to consider how important language is. Imagine if you were not able to understand or express yourself in the way everyone else could and the impact this would have across the whole of your day. So, watch RALLI, then if you like it, pass it on to six of your friends and family. We hope it will change people’s knowledge of SLI for good.”

To find out more about SLI and to watch the launch videos, please go to RALLI’s YouTube page: <http://www.youtube.com/rallicampaign>

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