**Speech and language therapy for school age children**

If there are concerns about a child’s speech and language development, we may be able to offer support. Parents and carers should speak to their child’s class teacher about their concerns. We can offer speech and language therapy for school aged children.

**Accessing speech and language therapy**

If school staff have concerns about a child’s speech and language development, this should firstly be discussed with the parents or carers.

School staff will need to complete a referral form. This is also known as a Request for Involvement (RFI) form. Parental consent and any relevant reports will need to be submitted with the form. It will then be discussed at a termly planning meeting. Having examples from class or social situations can be helpful to bring to the meeting. If the child has been seen previously by the Speech and Language Therapy Service, information on interventions and current needs will be needed.

At the termly planning meeting the type of support required will be discussed. The support may include:

* advice to support speech, language and communication needs
* signposting to previously delivered training packages
* the child being accepted for an assessment
* the link therapist signposting to support from other professionals

**Referral criteria**

Unfortunately, we are unable to accept referrals from the following:

* children who do not have an identified adult who will be responsible for implementing interventions and/or follow-up support
* children who have literacy problems without clear indications of verbal speech or language difficulties
* if insufficient information is provided for discussion at the planning meeting
* re-referring children who are known to have language skills in line with their general level of education, with no evidence that new advice about speech, language or communication is required
* if the school has had recent training to demonstrate how to target and support a child's needs
* if identified support is already in place at school

**The first appointment**

If the child is accepted for assessment, the link therapist will speak to the school staff and the parents or carers to agree an appropriate time to see the child. At this appointment the link therapist will discuss all relevant information with the parents or carers.

Parents and carers will be given a choice of how the link therapist can share the outcome of the appointment. This may take place at the school.

Not all children need to be seen in person. To decide the most appropriate type of intervention, a decision is made according to the individual needs of the child and their family.

**Support for the child**

Each child we see is unique and will have different individual needs. Our support and intervention will be adapted to suit the child. This support is known as an Individualised Package of Support (IPoS).

If the link therapist identifies that an IPoS is needed, this will be discussed with school staff and the parents or carers.

A member of school staff, often a teaching assistant, will be identified to provide follow-up during, between and after sessions. If an appropriate member of school staff is not able to be released to attend the sessions, we will discuss this with the school and the parents or carers.

Sessions will be provided by the link therapist or a therapy assistant. The sessions will be guided by the teaching assistants feedback on the child's progress. We use progress in practice sheets to support the sessions.

**After the appointment**

We do not routinely write reports, but we can provide a Report of Involvement if required. This may be produced after an assessment or after a completed IPoS. The report will be shared with the school and the parents or carers.