

Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)
and
Special Educational Needs and Disability
‘Local Offer’

In July 2014 the Departments of Health and Education published a new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice for children and young people 0 to 25 years.

South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust children’s Speech and Language Therapy department and health commissioners are actively engaged in supporting and developing services in line with the Code of Practice.

Speech and language therapists are trained to help children to develop their communication skills. They can help develop:

- attention and listening
- play skills
- understanding and using spoken language
- clear speech
- using language socially
- other ways of communicating, e.g. using signing and symbols
- voice production
- fluency
- feeding, eating and drinking

Speech & Language Therapists work in partnership with parents and families, nursery and education staff and other professionals to identify where speech and language needs may present a barrier to learning and full participation in life at school.

Pre-school children

Warwickshire pre-school speech and language therapy service recognises the benefits of early identification of SEN or disabilities. Warwickshire aims to identify need at the earliest point and make effective provision improving long-term outcomes for children.

time to talk is a county wide communication strategy developed by speech and language therapists in Warwickshire and implemented across the County in Children’s Centres and early years settings. By providing training to health visitors and early years practitioners we are able ensure early identification of children with speech language and communication needs and to effectively support children and families in Warwickshire.

All Children’s Centres in Warwickshire offer a Speech and Language Therapy “Drop in” session. There is no appointment system – anyone can come along. The Speech and Language therapist is available to meet families in an informal, play-based setting and talk to them about their child’s communication development. This could include sharing information, giving advice and/or providing informal assessment and referral into the system.

The Pre School Speech and Language Therapy Team operates an open referral system for children aged 0-5. A large number of referrals are received from Health Visitors following the 2 year review. Children are seen for an initial screening appointment in clinic individually or in a small group with their parents. Following this initial screening appointment, the therapist may see children at home, in nursery or in clinic.

We also provide parent information sessions to compliment direct work. Therapists work closely with other support agencies and nursery staff in order to support children and families in the most effective way to enable children to develop age appropriate communication skills.

If a young child under compulsory school age has, or probably has, SEN or a disability, the pre-school speech and language therapist will work with other agencies to support the child and family including

- Referral to specialist speech and language therapy services e.g. Specialist for Deaf Children, Specialist for Autism Spectrum Disorder, Specialist for Complex Needs, Specialist for Cleft Palate
- Early Support Meetings
- Referral to the Child Development Service
- Provide written evidence for consideration of placement in specialist setting e.g. assessment nursery
- Contribute to the Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)

School Age children

For children attending school, we support a cross agency *Speech, Language & Communication Needs Pathway; a graduated response* which provides advice to schools on how to identify need and on the types of support they can put in place. This is consistent with Warwickshire 'SEND Education Provision Matrix.' For those children with persisting needs, we encourage schools to submit referrals to Speech and Language Therapy following a discussion with the child's parents or carer. Referrals are also accepted from parents, GP's and other health professionals.

Following assessment, written recommendations are provided about the type and level of support required. Some children may require ongoing input from Speech & Language Therapy.

Where a child has identified SEN or who has an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) our aim is to work with others to remove or reduce the impact of the speech and language difficulty. We may do this in a number of ways:

- Advising on specific strategies to facilitate communication in the classroom and at home
- Setting up alternative communication systems (e.g. Makaton, PECS, symbols)
- Recommending targets, resources and programmes of work to develop speech and language skills
- Training school and nursery staff
- Working directly with a child and key adult for a period of time.

We work closely with:

- Parents
- Teachers and nursery staff
- Specialist teachers from IDS (Warwickshire County Council Integrated Disability Service)
- Educational Psychologists
- SENDAR (Warwickshire County Council SEND assessment service)
- Other Health professionals, e.g. Clinical Psychologists, Paediatricians, Occupational Therapists.

All Primary Schools and Special School classes in Warwickshire County Council area have a named Speech & Language Therapist who works in school to provide support to identified children.

There is no commissioned service for mainstream secondary schools. For a small number of students attending mainstream Secondary Schools, when persistent specific speech and language needs have been identified in an EHCP or Statement, ongoing SLT support is commissioned by SENDAR .

Students over 18 with SEN and communication needs associated with Learning Disabilities are transferred to the Adult Learning Disability Speech & Language Therapy team (Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust)

For more information please contact:

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You can find out more about SEND in Warwickshire on the website : <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send>