

Information about the new Norfolk Speech and Language Therapy Service

From 4th April 2016 the Speech and Language Therapy support which you receive will be changing.

Norfolk County Council and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups for Norwich, North, South and West Norfolk have jointly commissioned East Coast Community Healthcare (ECCH) to deliver the new service for children and young people aged 0-19. At present, ECCH runs the Speech and Language Therapy in Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Waveney.

The new Service will be different and will enable ECCH to deliver Speech and Language Therapy across Norfolk. It is based on information and views gathered by the Commissioners when they spoke to parent focus groups, children's centre networks, children and schools between January and July 2015.

The new Norfolk service will be in line with recommendations supported by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT). They are also backed by a government-led investigation into how best to support children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and eating and drinking difficulties. The new way of working is based on what is known as the Balanced System Model, endorsed by the RCSLT, which divides speech, language and communication needs into three tiers:

Universal:

- This level of service focuses on the needs that all children have to ensure they develop their speech language and communication potential. It enables others to provide communication rich environments and supports individuals to know when a referral to Speech and Language Therapy is needed.

Targeted:

- This level of service focuses on the needs some children have to ensure that their difficulties are supported. We will enable others to support your child's specific needs. A therapist will ensure that the right level of support is given.

Specialist:

- This level focuses on the children who need the specialist skills of a Speech and Language Therapist to ensure that their needs are supported.

It is important to us that your child can access the right level(s) when needed.

If your child is receiving speech and language therapy your therapist will review your child's needs with you to assess their current level of need.

More information on the Balanced System Model® can be found here:

<http://www.bettercommunication.org.uk/the-balanced-system/>

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are the benefits of this new model?

A. The new model is based on the principle that 'Communication is everyone's business'. We will be training practitioners and staff in Early Years settings, schools and the wider community in how best to support children and young people with speech and language needs. This will maximise their opportunities to develop their skills.

Q. What will this training consist of?

A. Training will be provided by ECCH specialists based on local need. Individuals can choose modules which relate to areas of communication development or specific speech language and communication difficulties or eating and drinking difficulties.

Q. Where will my child be seen?

A. Your child may be seen at home, nursery or school. The aim of this is to move away from the clinic setting as evidence shows it is more beneficial for the child or young person to be supported in this way. It means they don't need to be taken out of school, nursery etc for half a day to attend an appointment and therefore minimises disruption to their education and learning. It also means we see them in familiar surroundings where they feel more comfortable.

Q. Who will work with my child?

A. Under this model we aim for the main adults who work with your child on a regular basis to be actively supporting their individual communication needs. They will also be supported by, and have access to, a Speech and Language Therapist or Speech and Language Therapy Support Worker if needed.

Q. How will I contact the service if I need support?

A. There will be a new way for you to get in contact with us using one telephone number: **01493 809977 (from 4th April)**. As well as an advice line, there will be dedicated pages on ECCH's website www.ecch.org. We want to make it easy for you to get advice and support if you need it.

Q. Will my child still receive therapy?

A. Yes, depending on the level of need. This may happen in schools or other educational settings through trained staff or directly from a member of our team, as appropriate.

Q. When will I find out about my child's future therapy?

A. Your current therapist will let you know by the end of April 2016.

Q. How often will my child be seen?

A. This will depend on their level of need. We will discuss this with you.

Q. My child is mid-way through Lidcombe therapy. Will this continue?

A. We will be reviewing all of the current therapy programmes such as Lidcombe and will contact you about your child's future support.

Q. My child has a statement/EHCP. What will happen to this?

A. Their statement/EHCP will remain in place and continue to be reviewed on an annual basis.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio cassette, Braille or in a different language please contact Andrea Dawson on 01502 718600