

'Making sure we get it right'

Consultation on the New Model of Speech and Language Therapy Services for Children and Young People in Buckinghamshire.

Buckinghamshire's Speech and Language Therapy Service – Current Situation

The current service:

- The present speech and language therapy service (SALT) is delivered by a range of service providers commissioned by NHS Buckinghamshire and Buckinghamshire County Council.
- Community Health Bucks, currently deliver Early Years SALT service and the majority of SALT input identified on a Buckinghamshire child's statement of special educational need.
- Elmtree Outreach currently deliver SALT service identified on a Buckinghamshire child's statement of special educational need at around 20 schools located in Chiltern District (Amersham/Chesham area) and some out of county placed children in neighbouring local authorities eg. Hertfordshire.
- Symbol UK currently deliver SALT input identified on a Buckinghamshire child's statement of special educational need where the child has been diagnosed with downs syndrome.
- 'Spot purchasing' currently occurs across approximately 12 different private providers for Buckinghamshire children with a statement of special educational need requiring SALT input. The majority of this provision is provided to children and young people in out of county placements or on the borders of Buckinghamshire.

A review of the current providers found the following strengths:

- Specialist Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) knowledge and skills in certain areas.
- Respected for their local knowledge and input by other children's services eg. schools in most areas.
- A willingness to change towards an integrated model based on early intervention and prevention.

A review of the current providers found the following weaknesses:

- The current commissioned service is skewed towards children and young people with statements of special educational need (SEN) requiring SALT input. This is mainly due to the pressure of statutory responsibility for children and young people with statements of SEN and not necessarily in response to a needs led prioritisation.
- There has been historical pressure to have a statement of SEN in order to increase access to SALT. This has resulted in resources being realigned to children with statements of SEN in the absence of any available alternative service that if present could alleviate the need for statements. As a result, this has perpetuated the skew of the current commissioned service.
- Currently commissioned services are input focused (that is they are described in terms of the input a child will receive) and do not have sufficient emphasis on key targets and outcomes to be achieved for children and young people.
- Duplication of management input with four provider arrangements and numerous 'spot purchasing' with private providers.
- The national direction of travel for early intervention and prevention for SALT service will require 'new services' to be developed in Buckinghamshire due to the current emphasis on those with statements of SEN. This increased scope of work will, initially, have resource implications.
- Different infrastructures in place across the county.
- Variability and lack of service consistency.
- Lack of universal assessment methodology or evidenced based care pathways.
- Lack of equitable access across the county.
- A number of concerns and complaints from parents/carers.

What is the new model?

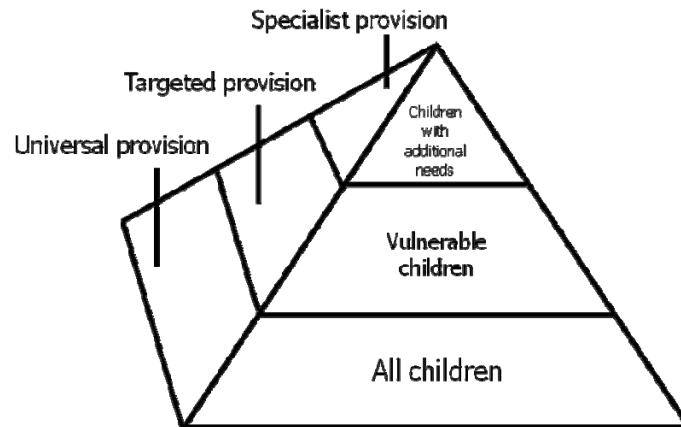
The new model is based on the key aim of ***‘improving outcomes for Buckinghamshire’s children and young people with speech, language, communication and eating/drinking needs’***.

By focusing on outcomes, the model has recognised that the needs of children and young people can best be met through an integrated service (health, education and social care) focused around three types (or tiers) of provision:

Universal	All children and young people and their families.
Targeted	Vulnerable children and young people – whose speech, language and communication skills are at risk due to external factors as well as mild to moderate specific difficulties. These children typically respond well to intervention and show good outcomes.
Specialist	Children and young people with additional needs – those with severe and specific speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and those with complex needs.

The diagram below in figure 1, shows how the three levels of provision and the sub-groups of children and how they relate to each other.

Figure 1: The relationship between tier of provision and the population of children and young people¹

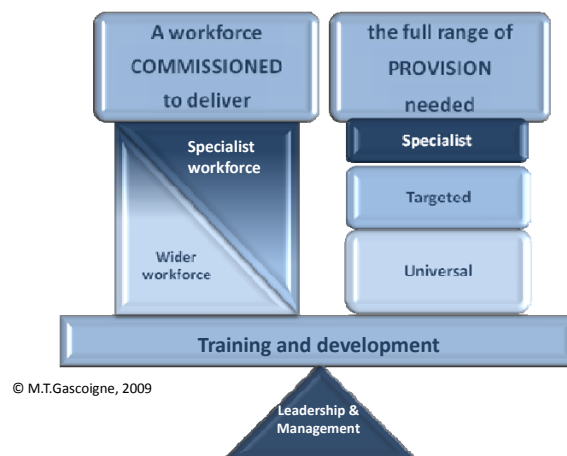


That is, the majority of children and young people in Buckinghamshire require ‘universal’ services (the biggest section of the pyramid), fewer require ‘targeted’ services (ie. additional help) and the least number of children and young people in the county require specialist services. However, any child or young person will receive the most suitable service to meet their SLCN needs, where this might mean a mixture of universal and some targeted and or specialist with some targeted and universal services.

Figure 2 shows how the workforce to support children and young people across the three tiers requires a balance between specialist speech and language therapists and the wider workforce including teaching assistants, early years workers etc.

¹ Gascoigne, M.T., (2006) Supporting children and young people with speech, language and communication needs within integrated services. RCSLT Position Paper. London

Figure 2: The Balanced System™ : a whole system model for delivering specialist support within an integrated service².



How will it be delivered?

Linking in to the children and young people's trust 'local delivery' framework, the new model will look to be delivered on a 'locality' basis by integrated therapy teams based in each of the following local areas:

- Chiltern and South Bucks
- High Wycombe area (including Thame and Chinnor GP operating areas)
- Aylesbury Vale area

What does this mean for parents/carers?

- Easily accessible speech and language therapy services regardless of where you live.
- Reduced waiting times for assessment and treatment.

² Gascoigne, M.T. (2009)

- Drop ins (ie. no appointment necessary) at some Children's Centres.
- Fun and free communication and language based activities at Children's Centres eg. 'talking toddlers' groups for parent/carers to attend with their child(ren).
- Choice of appointment times and location eg. school, Children's Centre, home.
- Provision of consistent information and resources (eg. at Children's Centres, libraries, Early Years Settings) to support parents/carers roles in developing their child's communication and language skills.
- Involvement of parents/carers in their child's treatment plan by providing additional support and guidance for those children and young people at the targeted and specialist provision levels to ensure full engagement and interactive therapy.

What does this mean for children and young people?

- Engagement and involvement in their treatment plan, including reviews of treatment for statements of special educational need.
- Treatment appropriate to the needs of each child/young person at the right time and in the most appropriate place eg. school, Children's Centre or home.
- Key support at times of transition for children and young people currently receiving treatment eg. moving from primary to secondary school.
- Children and young people with complex needs will also be entitled to receive Universal and Targeted based intervention where appropriate as part of their treatment package.

What does this mean for schools?

- A named 'link' speech and language therapist for every school.
- Training and support (skills sharing) to learning support assistants, teaching assistants and teachers.
- Training and support to teachers, learning support assistants and teaching assistants to ensure schools are communication supportive environments.
- Additional training and support for teachers, learning support assistants and teaching assistants to ensure children and young people who are vulnerable or have complex speech, language and communication needs are involved and engaged in the child's treatment plan.
- Close working and collaboration with specialist teachers and assistants to ensure full involvement and interaction in the child's treatment plan.

What does this mean for GPs, Health Visitors and Community Nursing?

- Clear referral criteria and single point of access to the speech and language therapy service.
- Early identification of children and young people who are not making expected developmental gains or who are exhibiting early signs of difficulty through collaborative working across health, education and social care services.
- Reduced waiting times for assessment and treatment – the service will be delivered within Royal College of Speech and Language Therapist (RCSLT) best practice and quality guidelines.

What does this mean for Early Years Settings eg. pre-schools and childcare providers.

- Training and support to ensure early years settings are language and communication supportive environments.
- Collaborative working with the Every Child a Talker (ECAT) programme.
- Engagement with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework to ensure children's development in language, communication and literacy is monitored and appropriate action taken where indications of difficulties or developmental delay are found.

What does this mean for Children's Centres?

- Children's Centres used as locations for appointments, assessments and treatment.
- Regular 'drop ins' (no appointments necessary) at a range of Children's Centres to enable easier local access to speech and language therapy services.
- Group sessions (eg. talking toddlers) activities to support parents/carers.
- Targeted services to those vulnerable children and young people at the following Children's Centres:
 - Chiltern & South Bucks (Chesham – Waterside, Amersham, Burnham, The Ivers)
 - Wycombe Area (Castlefield Sure Start, Hampden Way, Disraeli & Downley, Risboroughs)

- Aylesbury Vale (Southcourt, Quarrendon, Elmhurst)

What does this mean for current speech and language therapy providers?

- The service will look to re-commission in three contract blocks representing the Children and Young People's Trust local delivery areas:
 - Chiltern & South Bucks
 - Wycombe Area (including Thame and Chinnor GP operating areas)
 - Aylesbury Vale
- The opportunity to tender to deliver one, two or three contract blocks.
- The opportunity to deliver a new fully integrated service that meets the speech, language and communication needs (including eating and drinking) of all children and young people in Buckinghamshire.

Questions

1.a. Please select which group best describes how you are responding?

- Parent/Carer
- Child/Young Person
- GP
- Health Visitor
- Community Nurse
- Children's Centre staff
- Early Years Staff/Childcare
- Teacher
- Learning Support Assistant/Teaching Assistant
- Speech and Language Therapist/Assistant
- Specialist Teacher/Assistant
- Other professional
- Other (please write in)

Specific questions for parents/carers (please skip to Q.2 if not applicable)

1.b If you had concerns about your child's speech, language and communication (including eating and drinking) where would you prefer to they were seen?

- Clinic
- Hospital
- GP Surgery
- School (including pre-school)
- Children's Centre
- Village Hall/Community Centre
- At home
- Other (please write in)

1.c. Is your child(ren) currently receiving speech and language therapy services?

- Yes
- Please state who by (if known) eg. NHS:
- No

2.a. Overall, what do you most like about the new model in terms of what it means to you?

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.....
.....

2.b. Please tell us what you most like about the new model in terms of the three levels of provision?

Universal:

Targeted:.....

Specialist:.....

3.a. Overall, what do you least like about the new model in terms of what it meant to you?

.....
.....
.....

3.b. Please tell us what you least like about the new model in terms of the three levels of provision?

Universal:

Targeted:.....

Specialist:.....

4. What do you see as the 3 biggest challenges in implementing this new model in Buckinghamshire?

1)

2)

3)

5. Any other comments/feedback you would like to give?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this consultation.

If completing a paper copy of this consultation questionnaire please return by
Monday 29th March 2010 to:

Sue Butt
Children and Young People's Commissioner (Pooled Budgets Manager)
Joint Commissioning, Children and Young People's Services
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County Hall, Aylesbury
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