

Further information and support

Information on what to expect and how to prepare for the first appointment will be sent out with the appointment letter. In the meantime, you may find it helpful to access the following information and support:

NHS Choices - NHS services information

<http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

Dorset Healthcare University Foundation Trust - Dorset Paediatric Speech and Language Service

<http://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/WS-Dorset-HealthCare/Pages/services/children-and-families/speech-and-language-therapy.htm>

The Communications Trust - resources for parents

<http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk>

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists - further reading

www.rcslt.org

The National Autistic Society

www.autism.org.uk

Autism Wessex

www.autismwessex.org.uk

The information in this leaflet is available in additional languages and alternative formats. Please contact the Trust for further details.

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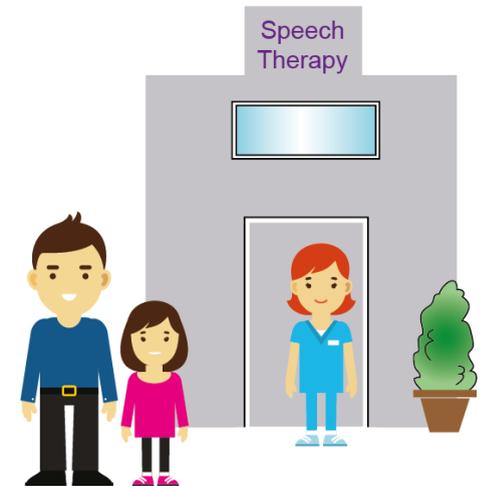


Dorset HealthCare
University
NHS Foundation Trust

Welcome to the Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Specialist Service for the Diagnosis of Complex Developmental Disorder

“Great service, so helpful”

“...really good at putting my daughter at ease and explaining everything to us”



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**Information for patients,
relatives and carers**

**Excellence
Compassion
Expertise**

What is a Speech and Language Therapist?

Speech and Language Therapists are qualified professionals with specific expertise in the study, assessment and treatment of problems with speech, language and communication. They also contribute to the assessment and diagnosis of complex developmental disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) working closely with other professionals involved in the diagnostic process.

Why has my child been referred for a specialist assessment?

Your child has been referred for a specialist speech, language and communication skills assessment. This is one of the assessments needed to find out if your child's difficulties are part of any complex developmental disorder, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The Speech and Language Therapist will consider aspects of your child's development including:

- Understanding what others are saying to them
- Use of language
- Non-verbal communication
- Understanding and using the rules of talking (e.g. taking turns)
- Making and maintaining friendships
- Imagination
- Sensory differences (e.g. sensitivity to sound, touch, light etc.)

These difficulties can range from severe to mild and can have a significant affect on both your child and your family. Sometimes the difficulties are more severe in one place than another, for example at home or at school.

Your child may have seen a Speech and Language Therapist previously but will not have been assessed for social communication skills.

“Excellent with my son. Listened to my concerns, gave time to both of us and made us feel relaxed.”



What can I expect from the Speech and Language Therapy Service?

Following acceptance of a referral by the service, your child will be placed on our specialist waiting list and an appointment allocated with a Speech and Language Therapist with specialist skills and knowledge in complex communication and developmental disorders.

The appointment session will include information gathering, observations and informal and formal assessments to identify your child's specific areas of speech, language and communication difficulty. We adopt a flexible approach to the format of the assessment depending on the age of the child and other individual circumstances. This means the appointment may take place in a clinic location, or school, or occasionally at home. Sometimes the therapist will arrange to call you before the appointment for the information gathering part of the assessment. Very occasionally, the assessment process may require more than one appointment session.

Appointments are held between 08.30am to 4.30pm Monday – Friday.

The specialist assessment appointment may take up to two hours. Your appointment letter will provide you with full details.

The outcome of the specialist assessment and strategies to support your child will be discussed with you and followed up in a written report for your child's lead clinician (usually a Paediatrician or Psychiatrist). You will be sent two copies of our report, one of which you may wish to share with your child's school or pre-school/nursery.

The overall outcome of the diagnostic process is managed by your child's lead clinician (usually a Paediatrician or Psychiatrist) who will arrange to meet with you to feedback the conclusions of the assessments by all the professionals involved.

Most children we see for this specialist assessment do not require further support from the speech and language therapy service. For a small number of children who have additional speech, language or fluency difficulties, unrelated to any complex developmental disorder, a referral may be made to our community therapy service. This will be discussed with you at the time of the assessment.