

Under 5s Speech Therapy Communication

Referral Guide Overview (updated February 2026)

When NOT to use

For any of the needs listed below, do **NOT** use this flowchart — please submit a referral using the SPA form:

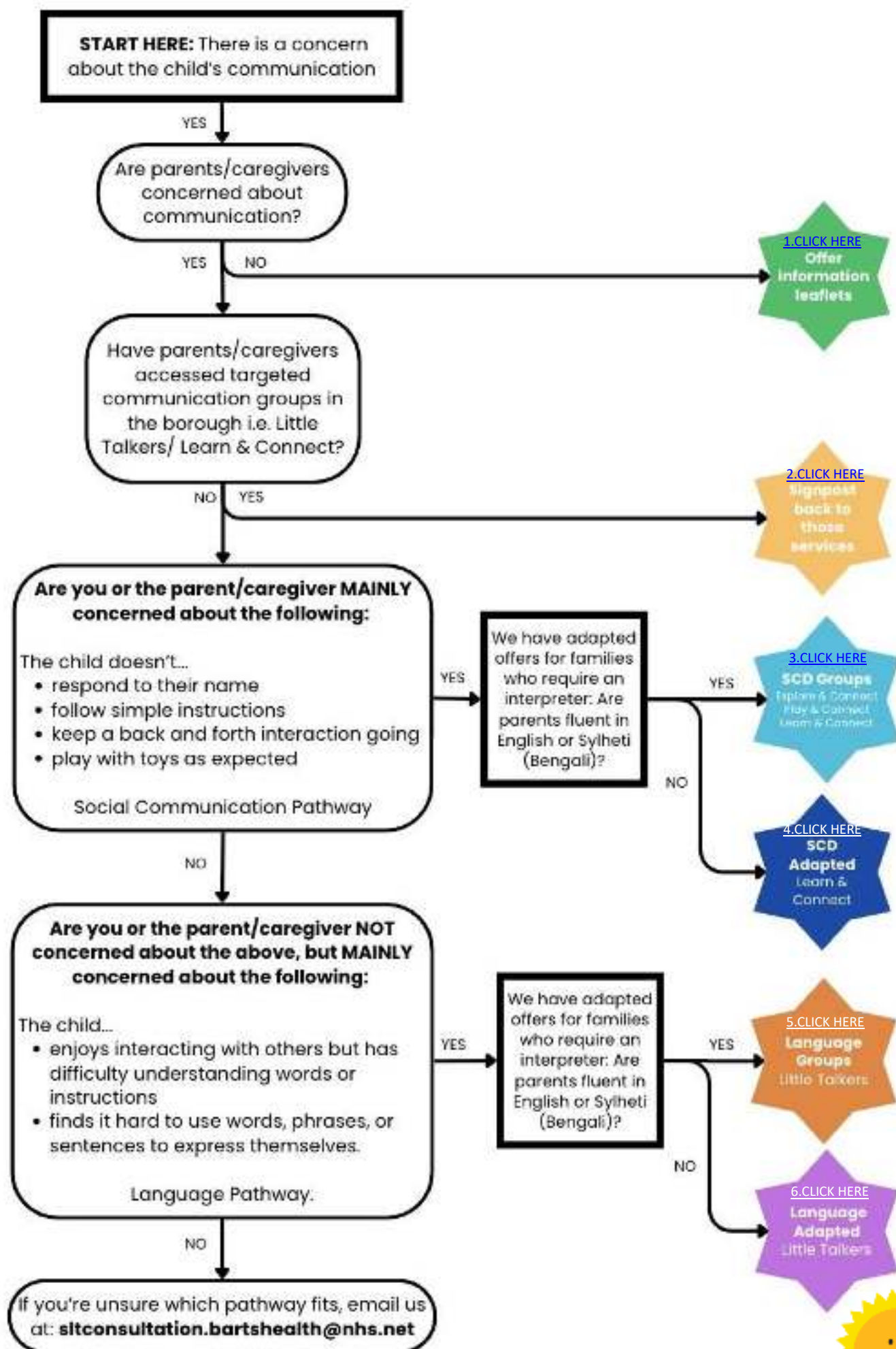
- **D/deaf or hearing concerns**
- **Stammering**
- **Complex needs** i.e. Down's Syndrome or Cerebral Palsy
- **Selective Mutism:** The child talks comfortably at home but becomes very quiet, frozen, or unable to speak in certain places or with unfamiliar people.
- **Speech Sound Disorder:** The child understands language well and enjoys interacting, but their speech sounds are unclear or hard to understand for their age.

When to use

It should be used if a child is aged between 0-5 and lives in Tower Hamlets. It should be used when **parents, carers or other professionals have concerns** about a child's **understanding, talking, or communication with others**.

What to do

Follow the flowchart to choose the right support. **Click 'CLICK HERE' at the top of the relevant star** for a direct link to referral forms and resources.



Social Connect Groups

In Tower Hamlets, the Health and Education Family Centres and Family Hubs are working together to help children with social communication difficulties (SCD) to achieve:

- More confidence and concentration in school
- More positive relationships with other people, children and adults
- More positive relationships with other people, children and adults
- More positive relationships with other people, children and adults

There are different groups you can join, depending on what you and your child's goals are. In these groups, you will learn strategies to help your child to develop in their every day activities.

You can attend these groups in a one-to-one together with a professional, you can decide which group you think is best for you.

Some of our groups are online, you join from home using your phone or computer and have an 'in-person' group to go to the children's centre.

To join the online groups, sign yourself up on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/towerhamletsfamilycentres or visit www.towerhamletsfamilycentres.co.uk

Online groups are run by the children's centre staff.

There are also in-person groups, you join from home using your phone or computer and have an 'in-person' group to go to the children's centre.

To join the online groups, sign yourself up on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/towerhamletsfamilycentres or visit www.towerhamletsfamilycentres.co.uk

Online groups are run by the children's centre staff.

Early Language Team

In Tower Hamlets, the Health and Education Family Centres and Family Hubs are working together to help children with speech and language difficulties.

The Early Language Team supports children aged 0-5 years old up to the end of Reception living in Tower Hamlets who have difficulties with:

- Language (understanding and talking)
- Pronunciation (saying words clearly and correctly)
- Selective Mutism (able to talk in some places but not in others)

Free and Play
Speech and language therapists come to play and play sessions every month at some of our Family Hubs. If you would like to see a specialist or get some advice about your child's talking, then a speech and language therapist, see your nearest Health and Family Centre.

Little Talkers
Little Talkers is a speech and language therapy group for parents/carers and children who have speech and language difficulties. Parents/carers learn strategies to support their children's talking. Children in Little Talkers will have more support, children and family carers or speak to a professional.

App for Little Talkers
An app for Little Talkers Online version for parents/carers only. Scan this QR code to sign up for Little Talkers Online.

Set down, get talking, Tower Hamlets
Early Language Workshop
Parents/carers only. To find out more about a speech and language development and what support is available for your child, you can access the online parent workshop by scanning the QR code.

Growing Talkers
Growing Talkers is a play-based programme for children who have already started Little Talkers or Growing Talkers, and have been identified as needing more speech and language therapy support. Children can be referred to Growing Talkers if you have been to Little Talkers before.

To find out more or get help, email us at towerhamletsfamilycentres@nhs.uk or call 020 7767 3122. Option 2 and leave a message for the Early Language Team.

To find out more or get help, email us at towerhamletsfamilycentres@nhs.uk or call 020 7767 3122. Option 2 and leave a message for the Early Language Team.



Signpost back to services



NOTE: the professionals who ran the targeted groups are best placed to help the family with their next steps.

IF FAMILIES ATTENDED ONLINE:

Learn & Connect: bartshealth.socialconnect@nhs.net

Little Talkers: bartshealth.earlylanguage@nhs.net



NOTE: the professionals who ran the targeted groups are best placed to help the family with their next steps.

IF FAMILIES ATTENDED FACE TO FACE:

Encourage parents/carers to go back to their local children and family centre.



SCD Groups

NOTE: The referrer must complete the highlighted sections of the MAST form for children aged 0-5, where families want face to face groups:

Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) Request for Support Form

If you are concerned about a child or family, use this form to get support from the team at Tower Hamlets Council and our partners.

You can expect feedback within 24 to 48 hours upon submission of this referral form. We are dedicated to actively collaborating with you and other relevant services to guarantee every child receives the necessary support.

Please indicate the relevant option by placing a tick in the corresponding box.

1 Child/Young Person

First Name	
Last Name	
D.O.B	
Gender	☐ M ☐ F

NOTE: You can encourage parents/carers to book their own Learn and Connect groups on eventbrite, for children aged 0-5, where families want online groups

Learn and Connect Parent Group

In Tower Hamlets, the NHS and Children and Family Centres and Family Hubs are working together to help children with 'social communication differences' (SCD) or Autism.

- Research shows that children with SCD or Autism learn best when their parents/carers are trained to use strategies that a speech and language therapist or occupational therapist would in the child's every day life and routines. This is when they make the most progress, not through a short block of 1:1 therapy.
- That's why speech and language therapists and

Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy for your child



SCD Adapted

NOTE: **BOTH** forms must be fully completed and submitted to thgpcg.spa@nhs.net. Ensure all **mandatory sections** are completed before sending.

THG Community Paediatrics SPA referral form (01/20)

TOWER HAMLETS & SPECIALIST CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICE - SPA REFERRAL FORM

Please e-mail this referral form back completed to: thgpcg.spa@nhs.net
 Please only use private email addresses when sending a referral - i.e. not @nhs.net, gov.uk, nhs.uk or using an email such as Egrow.

Telephone No for TH GP Care group - SPA: 0200 033 6000
 Telephone No for Community Paediatrics: 0200 767 3322
 Referral guidance for this form can be found: <http://www.towerhamlets.nhs.uk/health-care>

Section 1 Information Sharing and Consent

How to refer: It is important that the person with parental responsibility understands where that information may be shared with other health professionals and other agencies such as education, social care or the local authority where appropriate. This includes agreeing access to GP EMIS and East London shared electronic records for the child. Please ensure that you have consented that this referral form will be shared to the most clinically appropriate service (single joint referral).

Has the young person got competency to give consent? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has the parent given consent for referral? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has the carer/guardian given consent for referral? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has the young person given consent for referral? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Has the parent/carer/guardian/child/young person given consent for information sharing? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 (If none/no answer specify reasons why)

Section 2 Service(s) Requested (Please tick multiple boxes if required)

1. ☐ Community Nursing (Day/night) (Home/Out) Date First Visit Required: _____	2. ☐ Speech and language therapy (Communication only)
3. ☐ SIT training, coaching and modelling service (For children with swallowing difficulty and Oropharynx)	

NHS
Barts Health
NHS Trust

EARLY LANGUAGE AND SCD REFERRAL FORM

This form is for children up to the end of their Reception year who:

- 1) Have difficulties with understanding or talking
- 2) Or have social communication differences (SCD) and/or autism

This form is **not** for children who:

- 1) Are in Year 1 or above
- 2) Are deaf
- 3) Have complex needs (children with gross/fine motor difficulties as well as communication needs - such as cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, progressive conditions)

* please continue to refer using the SPA referral form

Please note that all sections are mandatory.

Parent/carer are the best possible people to help their child learn communication and independence skills. Our professionals will coach parent/carer to use strategies proven to support communication development and independence during everyday routines and activities. This is NOT will help parent/carer make a plan to support their child's communication and independence development. The parent/carer will be expected to put this plan into action during everyday routines and activities.

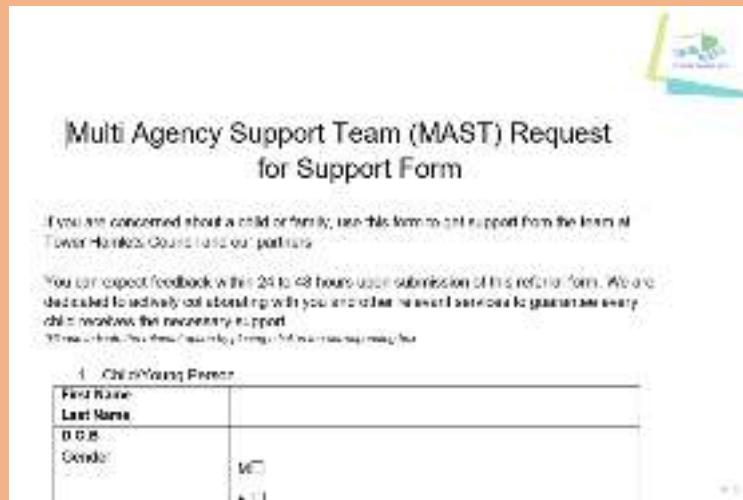
Section 1

Child's name: _____



Language Groups

NOTE: The referrer must complete the highlighted sections of the MAST form for children aged 0-3, where families want face to face groups:



The image shows a document titled "Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) Request for Support Form". It includes instructions for parents and a form section for "Child/Young Person" with fields for First Name, Last Name, DOB, and Gender. The form is partially filled out.

Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) Request for Support Form

If you are concerned about a child or family, use this form to get support from the team of Tower Hamlets Council and our partners.

You can expect feedback within 24 to 48 hours upon submission of this referral form. We are dedicated to actively collaborating with you and other relevant services to guarantee every child receives the necessary support.

Where a child or young person is in danger, please call 999 or 112 immediately.

1. Child/Young Person

First Name	
Last Name	
DOB	
Gender	☐ M ☐ F

NOTE: For children aged 0-5, where families want online groups, you can encourage parents/carers to scan the Little Talkers online application QR code:



Language Adapted

NOTE: First, check whether parents/carers can complete the Little Talkers online application on their own. You can support the families to complete the form, however, if they need support and give consent, you can also email bartshealth.earlylanguage@nhs.net with the parent's contact details. A team member will arrange a call with an advocate to help them complete the application.

