



Information for parents in Richmond: Speech and language therapy for children and young people in Richmond

What is a speech and language problem?

Some children and young people have difficulties communicating. Many children under 5 need some help in developing skills. Over 5% of older children will have significant, longer-term communication difficulties. This is due to a wide range of causes and can present in many different ways, including delay and difficulty in achieving:

- Safe and effective feeding and swallowing
- Successful social interaction with other people
- Clear speech sounds
- Reliable understanding of spoken/signed language
- Clear and effective use of spoken/signed language
- Associated skills in written language
- Fluent speech
- Healthy and strong voice use

I think my child might have one or more of these difficulties. What should I do?

You can contact our department to discuss your concerns via our Telephone Advice Line (020 8973 3512) where you can talk to a qualified speech and language therapist about any concerns you have regarding your child's speech language or social communication. We can provide information and advise whether a referral is necessary. If you leave a message on the above number a therapist will return your call.

Alternatively you can discuss your concerns with your Health Visitor, GP or child's teacher and they can make a referral on your behalf.

What will happen if I refer my child?

If your child is aged 0-5:

When we receive the referral for your child we will arrange for a speech and language therapist to meet your child. This initial meeting may take place in a children's centre, clinic, nursery or school depending on the age and particular need of your child. In some cases, a family will be visited at home. The service aims to see your child within four weeks in line with local guidelines





If your child is aged 5+:

Most referrals for children within this age group come from school staff (with parental consent). When a referral is received a therapist will contact both you and the school and arrange to carry out an initial appointment in school to work with your child both individually and in the classroom in order to assess your child's speech language and communication difficulties and identify how these difficulties are affecting their learning at school.

Following the assessment, the therapist will contact you to discuss the assessment and share ideas about how you can support your child at home. They will also meet with the child's class teacher to discuss how they can support them in the classroom. As for the pre-school service, all children are seen within four weeks.

If your child is aged 5+ but the only concern is about voice or stammering or speech:

Your child will be offered an appointment for an initial assessment in clinic. A therapist will see them on a 1:1 basis and offer advice and therapy if appropriate.

Feeding and swallowing:

If your child has a difficulty with feeding or swallowing that is resulting in choking or other serious effects you are advised to contact your GP to seek immediate help and advice. They will refer on for a specialist speech and language therapy assessment where necessary.

What does the speech and language therapy service aim to do?

Our service aims to:

- provide information, assessment, advice and treatment for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
- provide information, assessment and management of feeding and swallowing difficulties
- provide training and support for families and other people involved in the care of those with SLCN
- provide training for professionals who work with children and young people with SLCN
- carry out general and targeted supportive work in the community to prevent or reduce communication difficulties from developing
- participate in research and development and student therapist training

We achieve this in different settings – clinics, children's centres, special schools, primary and secondary schools.

We work with other professionals in health, education and social care services as well as with voluntary and charitable organisations.



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What is speech and language therapy like?

Sometimes, therapy will take the form of advice and suggestions regarding small adjustments that you, (and others involved in the care of your child), can make to everyday living to support the development of the child's speech, language and communication.

When we work directly with young children, our activities are play-based. We aim for children to learn through playing and having fun. We use toys, pictures, books and whatever else will interest the child in order to get maximum attention and best results.

When we work with older children and young people, we still aim to keep activities fun and relaxed but sometimes there will be a greater element of more formal teaching involved.

We work in closely with parents, teachers and other professionals involved with the child or young person. Support from parents and teachers in order to practice new skills at home and integrate targets into the classroom are key to the child and young person progress

What is a speech and language therapist?

All of our therapists complete a degree course and many also hold masters degrees and other forms of post-graduate qualification.

All of our therapists are registered with the Health Professions Council which is responsible for ensuring clinical excellence and safe practice.

All of our therapists are members of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists which further ensures continuing professional development.

All of our therapy and support staff have enhanced CRB clearance

What is a speech and language therapy assistant?

An assistant is a professional who has experience of working with children and who assists the therapists. Sometimes they work alongside therapists and sometimes they will work independently under the guidance of the therapist.

How to refer your child to speech and language therapy?

Speech and Language Therapy has an open referral system – anyone e.g. Parents (via Telephone Advice Line), Health Visitor or School Nurse, GP, School, Nursery or Children's Centre staff can refer a child or young person for assessment, including the young person themselves if aged 14 or over.

Written consent from the main care giver is required before the child or young person can be referred and seen, (except in the rare case of a self-referring young person aged 14+).



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Contact us

We are based in a number of clinics and schools across Richmond.

The main speech and language therapy office is open 9am – 5pm and there is an answer phone and fax machine to leave a message outside of these hours.

Contact details:

Richmond Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Department:
Teddington Health and Social Care Centre (THSCC)
18 Queen's Road
Teddington
TW11 0LR

Tel: 020 8614 5330

Fax: 020 8614 5451

Children's SLT Services Manager: Claire Schneider

Administrator – Sheila Hill Tel 020 8614 5330

Telephone Advice Line: 020 8973 3512

The Telephone Advice Line is a quick way to access our service for advice/information on anything to do with your children's speech, language and communication development. It provides the opportunity to ask a qualified speech and language therapist questions about your child's talking, understanding, concentration and any other issues you may have. No referral is necessary although the therapist may feel, following her discussion with you, that a referral into the service is indicated. Just call the above number and leave a message for a therapist



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