

The Balanced System[®], what will this mean for therapies in the Kingston and Richmond boroughs?

The Balanced System[®]

The Balanced System[®] was developed by Marie Gascoigne and Better Communication CIC. It was developed as a framework for commissioning and providing services for children and young people with a range of speech, language and communication needs. For more detailed information see [here](#).

The approach has also been taken on by occupational therapy services with the support of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

The principles of the 'Balanced System' will form the core of the new model for therapies (speech and language, occupational and physiotherapy). Many of these principles are evident in previous practice. We are looking to respond to feedback from parents, carers, young people and settings about what does and does not work and to develop what has been working well, address gaps in provision through this work and ensure consistency of what is offered across the Kingston and Richmond boroughs.

The core model reflects the need for a clear strategic overview, jointly commissioned outcomes for services and core involvement of parents and carers. It also highlights the need to ensure the most effective use of all elements of the children and young people's workforce to support children and young people in achieving their outcomes.

There are five key areas of the model which will be considered in terms of the way the services are commissioned and consequently the way in which contracts are monitored. These are:

- family support
- environmental support
- workforce development
- identification of need
- intervention

These principles will be supported through the work of services at universal, targeted and specialist levels. The underlying premise is that all children will begin at the universal level and that targeted and/or specialist interventions may become appropriate over time for some children and young people. The principles mean that a child will access the right support at the right time regardless of whether they have an education, health and care plan.

Universal interventions are, by definition, available to all and may include:

- generic advice sessions through children's centres, schools, clinics
- general information leaflets and signposting
- provision of training for different groups around topics such as understanding of speech, language and communication needs, opportunities to promote physical and mental health

Targeted interventions are designed for children and young people where there are concerns about aspects of their development and where a therapist may work with a setting to support families and settings to delivering interventions which are embedded within their everyday experiences.

Specialist interventions include those which are directly managed by a therapist working in collaboration with the family and the setting the child or young person attends.

When will we see the difference?

This is a three year development programme. We are establishing an oversight group to manage the work and have already gone out to advert for additional occupational therapy posts. A project plan is in development and will be shared on the Local Offer and through the PCFs.

References

www.thebalancedsystem.org/2016%20Balanced%20System%20Outline.pdf

RCOT; Occupational Therapy Unlocking the potential of Children and Young People

Alison Stewart, Designated Clinical Officer for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities