

Speech and Language Therapy in Special Schools

Information for patients, relatives and carers

December 2023

Who are we and what do we do?

We are a team of speech and language therapists (SLTs) and assistants (SLTAs) who specialise in supporting children with special needs and their families. We provide specialist support within the special schools in Gateshead. We assess and support children and young people with their speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and swallowing difficulties. We may support with:

- Developing early communication skills such as attention and listening, imitation, turn taking, eye contact or anticipation
- Understanding language (e.g. the meanings of words and following instructions)
- Using language (e.g. talking, expanding vocabulary, developing sentences)
- Using total communication (e.g. using signs, symbols, photographs and/or objects to support speech and language)
- Speech (e.g. making it clearer, or more consistent)
- Communicating successfully with others
- Feeding and swallowing

How is my child supported by your team within special schools?

Your child will be supported within school by one of our SLTs or SLTAs who work closely with school staff. The needs of each child are different and change over time. The SLT may wish to see your child often during some stages of development and less often at other times. Support may include:

- Assessment: collecting up to date information about your child's SLCN
- Environmental Strategies: working together with school staff to create an environment that supports the specific communication needs of your child (e.g. using signs, symbols, objects)
- Active Classroom Support: working alongside staff and children within the classroom environment to help them to use their communication skills within meaningful activities
- Target and Programme Setting: providing clear goals for classroom staff to develop specific communication skills
- Episodes of individual therapy: working on specific communication needs on a 1:1 basis
- Episodes of group therapy: working on specific communication needs in groups consisting of 2 or more peers
- Annual Review: we contribute to your child's annual education health care plan (EHCP) review

If your child's communication needs are being met by the strategies within the classroom, they may no longer need to receive support directly from their SLT. If this applies to your child we will be in touch with a view to discussing discharging your child from the service. We will always ensure we agree this with you. We are happy to accept further referrals if your child's needs change or you require further advice.

How will we communicate with each other?

We will write to you at the start of each school year in order to provide information about any changes to the SLT service, to gather your views on how your child is communicating, and to obtain updated consent for us to work with your child in school. We often work with other professionals involved in your child's care and will communicate with them as appropriate. We are in regular contact with your child's school staff to ensure the support they are receiving remains appropriate. During the school year we will provide you with information about your child's annual EHCP review. This will include progress your child has made and will describe any changes needed to be made to their communication outcomes. We may also be in touch at other times to discuss any significant changes to your child's communication needs.

Although we are a school-based service, we value the support that parents and carers can also provide to help their children to communicate more effectively. If you would like to discuss ways in which you can support your child's communication needs at home, please do not hesitate to make contact with us at any point throughout the school year, as we are always keen to work more closely with parents and carers!

Contact details

Children's Speech and Language Therapy
Old Urgent Care Office
Bensham Hospital
Fontwell Drive
Gateshead
NE8 4YL

0191 445 6667
ghnt.specialneedssalt@nhs.net

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have.

If you have any suggestions or comments about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 0191 445 6129 (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday).

You can also email PALS at ghnt.pals.service@nhs.net

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Mrs Trudie Davies,
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust,
Trust Headquarters,
Queen Elizabeth Hospital,
Sheriff Hill,
Gateshead,
NE9 6SX

The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews and Statistics.

Further information is available via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website ([Privacy - QE Gateshead](#)) or by contacting the Data Protection Officer by telephone on 0191 445 8418 or by email ghnt.ig.team@nhs.net.

**This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats
upon request**