

## The Local Offer for Speech, Language and Communication Needs in Worcestershire Special Schools

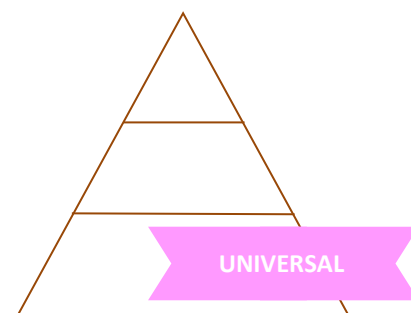
Worcestershire's vision is to provide support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs, at an appropriate level, as early as possible, to maximise ability to achieve and thus improve life chances.

It is estimated that 10% of all children and young people have long term or persistent speech, language and communication needs. Children with the most complex communication, language and learning needs attend our special school provision in Worcestershire. To meet children's needs effectively a whole school approach is needed with support identified at a universal, targeted and specialist level as recommended by the Better Communication Research Programme and the SEN Code of Practice.

### Universal Level

The universal offer ensures all children have appropriate language and communication opportunities. At this level:

- Information and guidance is provided to parents and carers to support speech, language and communication skills development. This is available from a number of sources including parent newsletters, information leaflets, information on school websites, the Worcestershire SLCN Pathway and the Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service website and social media feeds.
- Special schools identify how they will meet speech, language and communication needs as part of their local offer.
- School staff measure progression of speech, language and communication skills. This may be through the Foundation Stage Profile, assessment tools, pre-national curriculum levels and within the context of the Programme of Study for Spoken Language.
- Special schools provide children with a communication and language friendly environment to support the development of functional communication skills. A total communication approach is adopted with use of natural and sensory cues, objects of reference, photographs, signing, symbols, aided language displays, communication books, portable visual support and communication passports. Schools undertake audits utilising appropriate tools, for example audit tools for specialist settings from Worcestershire's SLCN Pathway and from local training delivered by the Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service.
- Special school staff are trained at an **enhanced** level of competency and are able to identify and support speech, language and communication needs. The Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service offers training as an

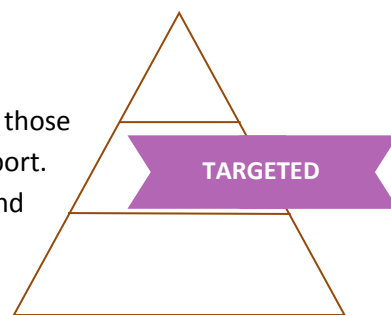


additional service to special schools to support effective use of universal strategies and approaches across the school day.

## Targeted Level

The targeted offer gives specific support in a meaningful and functional context for those children with speech, language and communication needs who require additional support.

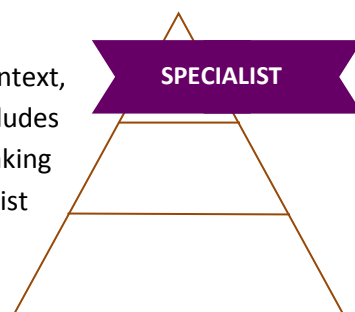
The group is wide ranging including children with significant language and communication needs linked to a learning disability, a medical condition or a syndrome. Following targeted intervention some children will return to the universal tier and some children may go on to have more specialist level needs. At this level:



- Every school has a named speech and language therapist/s. The therapist/s liaises with the school to identify children and young people requiring targeted and/or specialist support and agree plans to meet their needs.
- The speech and language therapy team provides advice to parents of children at this level in a number of ways. This may include parents' evenings, telephone contact, contact through home/school books, specific training events for parents and copies of reports/targets.
- The speech and language therapy team assess children and young people's speech, language and/or communication needs.
- Schools deliver a rolling programme of identified, evidence based targeted interventions across a range of core speech, language and communication skills. Initial set up is supported by the speech and language therapy team. Examples include: listening and attention groups, language groups, Lego therapy, social communication skills programmes such as TALKABOUT, narrative intervention, messy food play and vocabulary groups. Some children may receive targeted intervention on an individual basis rather than in a group.
- School staff have the necessary competences and confidence to deliver small group and individual targeted interventions with the support of the speech and language therapy team.
- The Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service offers training as an additional service to special schools to support effective implementation of targeted interventions.

## Specialist Level

The specialist offer supports children and young people in the most appropriate context, ensuring joint working with the multi-disciplinary team and parents. This group includes children with complex learning and communication needs and eating and drinking difficulties who require a highly individualised programme of support. Specialist support is in addition to the universal and targeted offer. At this level:



- The speech and language therapy team provides advice for parents of children with specialist level needs in order to ensure they are confident in their role as key communication partner for their child. The speech and language therapist may carry out home visits in addition to those forms of contact identified above at a targeted level.

- Schools ensure environments that children and young people access are appropriately adapted for optimum communication in collaboration with the speech and language therapy team. This includes any adaptations required to meet highly specialist level needs in addition to the universal level expectations for creating a communication and language friendly environment.
- Multi-agency assessments identify persistent and complex speech, language and communication needs, for example autistic spectrum disorder or the use of AAC technology.
- The speech and language therapy team provides specialist level support to facilitate the effective implementation of specialist interventions by school staff. This may include specialist level assessments and a range of interventions. Interventions are delivered across the school day within the context of the curriculum and at social times. This may include PECS, intensive interaction, specific speech programmes, TaSSEs, social stories, supporting use of AAC and specific meal time plans.
- Speech and language therapists deliver direct intervention for children and young people when deemed clinically appropriate. Regular direct intervention for children and young people in special schools is not centrally commissioned, however this is available for schools to commission.
- There is a local agreement for specialist assessment and intervention, i.e. practice and procedures for high technology augmentative and alternative communication (including referral to ACT); and managing dysphagia within education settings.
- The Children’s Speech and Language Therapy Service offers training as an additional service to special schools to support effective implementation of specialist level interventions.

## Workforce

- Every school has a Communication Team, including a lead teacher for language/communication and teaching assistant who act as a resource for colleagues in delivering universal, targeted and specialist level interventions.

The ‘Speech, Language and Communication Needs: Wider Workforce Plan, Training and Development’ document identifies workforce development opportunities in Worcestershire. All training courses are mapped onto the national Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF). The SLCF provides a clear and detailed framework of the skills and knowledge in speech, language and communication which are important for everyone who works with children and young people. It provides competences at four stages – universal, enhanced, specialist and extension. Expected competences for each professional group are identified.

DfE and DoH (2014) *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years* London: DfE & DoH

Gascoigne, M (2008) [www.mgaconsulting.org.uk](http://www.mgaconsulting.org.uk) and Gascoigne, M (Ed) (2012) *Better Communication – shaping speech, language and communication services for children and young people* London: RCSLT

Jordan, E & Gascoigne, M (2011) *Joint Commissioning Services to Children and Young People with Speech, Language and Communication Needs: Service Redesign – Proposed Model of Service Delivery* NHS Worcestershire and Worcestershire County Council

Jordan, E (2014) *Speech, Language and Communication Needs: Wider Workforce Plan, Training and Development* Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust and Worcestershire County Council

Lindsay, G; Dockrell, J; Law, J and Roulstone, S (2012) *The Better Communication Research Programme: Improving provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs* London: DfE-RR247-BCRP1

[www.hacw.nhs.uk/our-services/speech-language-therapy/childrens](http://www.hacw.nhs.uk/our-services/speech-language-therapy/childrens) - contact Emma Jordan at [emma.jordan@nhs.net](mailto:emma.jordan@nhs.net)

[www.languageforlearning.co.uk](http://www.languageforlearning.co.uk)

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