

Outside Agencies

The range of services in Worcestershire

This factsheet includes descriptions of some of the services in Worcestershire that may support children with SLCN and/or their families at a universal, targeted or specialist level. Please refer to the Parents section of the site for information and suggestions of ways that professionals can support parents.

Health Professionals

Health professionals play a key role in supporting families and can support children's speech, language and communication development by working closely with parents. Speech and language therapists are the lead experts in the field.

Health professionals include midwives, health visitors, GPs, paediatricians, school nurses, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists, mental health professionals, etc. Any or all of these professionals could be involved with identifying the child's needs and/or supporting the child and his/her family.

Speech and Language Therapy Service

<http://www.hacw.nhs.uk/our-services/speech-language-therapy/childrens/>

Speech and Language Therapists are professionals registered with the RCSLT (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists) and HCPC (Health and Care Professionals Council) who assess children and support the intervention of children and young people with SLCN. All Speech and Language Therapists must be registered with the HCPC (www.hcpc-uk.org). This is a regulatory body set up to protect the public. Speech and Language Therapists work with children and young people aged 0-19 years with SLCN and dysphagia in a range of settings including:

- Children's Centres
- Early Years settings
- Mainstream schools
- Special schools
- Specialist settings/provision
- Home

Therapists assess children with SLCN, set targets, monitor progress and work in partnership with parents and staff to deliver intervention.

Health Visitors

Health visitors manage and advise on the health needs of children 0-5 years of age. They play an important role in the early identification of children with SLCN. The *2½ Year Check* which became statutory in April 2010 covers an element of speech, language and communication, as a delay would generally be difficult to detect at an

earlier age unless the child had a special need or disability. The Ages and Stages assessment is used in Worcestershire which covers speech, language and communication assessment.

Early Years and Childcare Service

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/homepage/96/early_years_and_childcare

This service supports early years and childcare settings to fully include children with additional needs, and supports children with complex needs and their families in the home environment. The Improvement Advisor can refer a setting to the Inclusion Team to support inclusion of children with complex needs, or further development of the setting's inclusive practice. Settings can also contact the Inclusion Team directly.

Children's Centres

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/childrenscentres

Children's Centres offer information, advice and activities to support families with children aged 0-5. They offer a range of services for families in the local community (see Section 5.2 for more information about Children's Centres).

Learning Support Team (LST):

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20107/special_educational_needs/522/learning_support

The Learning Support Team (LST) consists of a team of specialist teachers who provide a range of services to children with SEN, including SLCN, in mainstream schools. The team is committed to working in partnership with schools, parents and other professionals to raise standards of achievement for pupils with a wide range of special educational and learning needs including SLCN.

Educational Psychology Service (EPS):

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20128/education_welfare/492/educational_psychology_service

EPs have knowledge and expertise about psychology, child development and aspects of education and additional needs. Their work aims to improve outcomes for children by making psychological expertise available to parents and professionals.

Integrated Specialist Support Service - ISSS:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20036/specialist_teaching_services

ISSS supports learners with a low incidence disability or a medical educational need to achieve the five outcomes of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. The service is made up of specialist teachers, sign language advisors, teaching assistants, administrative and technical support staff, working throughout Worcestershire in support of pre-school providers, schools, children, young people and parents. ISSS has several teams. Each team supports children with particular needs. The area covered by each team is given below. See links for more information and contact details for each team.

Complex Communication Difficulties / Autism Team – CCD

The **Complex Communication Difficulties/Autism Team** supports pupils and students with complex communication difficulties, or an autism spectrum disorder, primarily in mainstream school environments, at the Action Plus and Statemented stage of the SEN Code of Practice.

Hearing Impairment Team

The **Hearing Impairment Team** offer support, information and advice on:

- interpreting hearing test results, and clinical procedures
- different types of hearing loss and its management
- the range of hearing aids currently available on the NHS and their on-going maintenance (including ear moulds)
- other listening devices including cochlear implants and bone anchored hearing aids (BAHA's)
- developing communication and language skills (from birth onwards – including pre-verbal skills, early language skills, spoken, signed and written language and communication)
- making effective use of residual hearing using individual auditory training programmes
- assessment of children with complex needs
- local support groups and contact with other families and deaf role models
- latest technological advances.

Specialist teachers are closely involved in:

- Support and teaching in the home, Early Years settings, mainstream and special schools
- Advising on school entry and phase transfer
- Contribution to Statutory Assessment, Annual Reviews, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and individual programmes of work
- Advice on special arrangements for internal and external examinations and assessments

Early Years Support for Hearing Impaired (HI) children:

The aim of the Early Years Team is to initiate a structured programme of support & habilitation for the hearing impaired child with their family at the centre. The parents and family are the key workers in the child's overall development. The Service strongly advocates a policy of Inclusion for the HI child throughout their education. The aim of the support is to review the child's and the family's needs, to monitor progress and to set attainable targets.

Communication choices

Recent advances in early diagnosis of hearing loss and hearing aid technology including cochlear implants, now give deaf children much better opportunities to develop good listening and spoken language skills.

We believe that an integrated approach to communication, that has a strong emphasis on oral/auditory skills combined with lip-reading and signed support, will give the child the best opportunity to develop good language skills.

Medical Education Team

The **Medical Education Team** supports pupils with:

- medical difficulties which prevent them from attending school and which are evidenced by a written request for support from a medical consultant.

Multi-Sensory Impairment Team

The **Multi-Sensory Impairment Team** supports children and pupils who are:

- deafblind and have a combination of vision/hearing loss, which creates a unique pattern of learning difficulties or who have substantial developmental delay in responding to sensory stimuli
- Pupils with a sensory loss and additional disabilities.

Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) and Communication

The MSI service is offered to children who have a hearing and/or visual impairment and additional learning needs. The approach to communication will vary significantly for each individual depending on the level of each of these needs. Primarily this is dependent on the residual hearing and visual abilities of each child, although this is often difficult to ascertain for these young children, therefore ongoing assessments are made, often yielded from the way they communicate. Often much of the communication is focused on play activities, songs, rhymes and games which encourage skills such as turn taking, imitation and interaction all of which are vital for communication. This is combined with more formal approaches to communication according to the individual. These can range from a total communication approach with signing (Signalong and onbody signs), gestures, speech, objects of reference, natural cues, photographs and symbols, to any combination of the individual aspects mentioned above.

Visual Impairment Team

The **Visual Impairment Team** support visually impaired babies, pupils and students (0-19 yrs), their families and carers. A visual impairment is a condition that cannot be fully corrected by glasses and which may have an impact on the child's development and/or learning.

Further & Higher Education Team

The **Further & Higher Education Team** supports post 16 learners with a sensory impairment or autism spectrum disorder, in colleges throughout Worcestershire and other counties, via college service agreements or the disabled students allowance (DSA) for students in higher education.

Integrated Services for Looked After and Adopted Children (ISL)

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20033/education_inclusion_and_access_services/753/working_with_integrated_services_for_looked_after_and_adopted_children

The Integrated Service for Looked After and Adopted Children (ISL) is a multi-agency service that is working to improve the educational, social care, health care and community/leisure opportunities of every child and young person who may be in the looked after system, in a pre-adoptive placement or once they are adopted.

Health and Social Care

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20004/health_and_social_care

Specialist social work teams support children with permanent and substantial disabilities / complex health needs and their families. These teams offer support and assessment of need, as well as providing the full range of statutory childcare duties. The primary aim of the teams is to provide supportive care packages based on the assessed needs of the child and family, including the needs of carers and siblings. In doing this the teams work closely with the child/young person and the family as well as a range of other workers from the statutory and voluntary sector where this is required.

Guidelines for involvement of agencies

Who should be involved, and what is their role?

Everybody involved with a child - whether a parent or a professional - will have their own recognised core role.

However, in any team of people, each will have his or her own individual experience and skill.

The answer to '*who should be involved and what is their role*' therefore depends on:

- What knowledge and skills are needed to meet this child's needs?
- Who has the appropriate skills?

For school-age children, discussion will usually take place at School Support Team Meetings - SSTMs (or similar) where outside agencies meet with school staff to determine appropriate support and the **priority** of involvement from external agencies.

How do we decide which service or services to refer to?

The SENCO will usually take responsibility for information-sharing between key professionals. A decision about which service to refer to will depend on the type of communication difficulty. For children with a range of needs, it may be that more than one agency is involved. Refer to *Guidelines for Involvement of Outside Agencies* (downloadable from the Targeted and Specialist section of the website 7.7).

Examples of outside agency involvement	
For:	Consider referral to:
Children aged 0-5 with possible SLCN	Health visitors who may refer on to other agencies (e.g. speech and language therapists, community paediatricians, occupational therapists, specialist teachers, educational psychology service, etc.)
Children with language delay associated with other learning difficulties	Learning Support Team Educational Psychology Service (Discuss with Speech & Language Therapy Service)
Speech and communication difficulties associated with hearing impairment	Integrated Specialist Support Services (ISSS): Hearing Impairment Team Speech & Language Therapy Service
Specific language impairment (when language is more delayed than other areas)	Speech & Language Therapy Educational Psychology Service Learning Support Team
Complex social communication difficulties such as Autism Spectrum Disorder	Integrated Specialist Support Service (ISSS): Autism Team Speech & Language Therapy Service Educational Psychology Service
Communication difficulties associated with visual impairment	Integrated Specialist Support Service (ISSS): Visual Impairment Team
Children who may warrant the use of communication aids, graphic symbols or other forms of assistive technology for communication	Speech & Language Therapy Service

Effective multi-agency working and collaboration

By working together, the team will enable children to make maximum progress:

ASSESSMENT	
<p>May include: Parents and family Paediatrician Educational Psychologist Specialist Teachers for Learning Support, Hearing, Vision, Sensory Impairment, Autism/Complex Communication Difficulties Clinical Psychologist Speech and Language Therapist Physiotherapist Occupational Therapist and others</p>	<p>In addition to parents, one or more of these people may be involved, helping to gain an understanding of children’s communication strengths and needs, and how speech and language can be developed.</p> <p>They can also provide information, advice, guidance and training.</p>
DEVELOPMENT	
<p>May include: Parents and family Childminder Early Years Setting Staff Playgroup Leaders Nursery Nurses Play/Nursery assistants School Staff Teachers Teaching Assistants Lunchtime supervisors Careers advisers Before & after school care and others</p>	<p>These are the people in contact with the child every day. They apply their knowledge of how to be good communication partners, and how to provide a good communication environment. They are the ones actively developing the child’s speech and language.</p> <p>They can share ideas about what does and what does not work for individual children.</p>
SUPPORT	
<p>May include: Speech and Language Therapist Educational Psychologist Physiotherapist Occupational Therapist Health Visitor Specialist Teachers for Learning Support, Hearing, Vision, Sensory Impairment and Complex communication/Autism and others</p>	<p>These people with specialist knowledge and skills support the people in daily contact with the child. They try to remove barriers to achievement, agree strategies, provide training, and identify and sometimes provide resources</p>

(from: Worcestershire County Council & Worcestershire Primary Care Trust (2008) "Worcestershire Good Practice Guidelines")