Local Offer:

The Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Service

The local NHS speech and language therapy service is part of Central and North West London (CNWL) NHS Foundation Trust. You can view the website for further details of all health services at www.cnwl.nhs.uk

To find us on the main CNWL website, either enter the service name under the main search bar on the home page, or scroll down on the main home page to Find Locations and services. Click on the Find services tab, then click on P to find paediatric speech and language therapy services. After reading the overview, you can scroll down and click on the option specifically for Hillingdon paediatric speech and language therapy.

We encourage all our users to offer feedback in order that we can improve the service we provide, and also know when we have got things right. If you are not happy with the service you receive, and your concerns cannot be resolved locally, you can make a formal complaint-under ‘Your Say’ on the CNWL website below.

Overview of the service:

The paediatric speech and language therapy service is part of Central and North West London (CNWL) NHS Foundation Trust. We offer support to children and their families where children have moderate to severe difficulties with their speech, language and communication skills, or feeding and swallowing difficulties.

Children/young people seen in paediatric speech and language therapy have difficulties with one or more of the following:

- speech sounds
- understanding what has been said to them
- using words and sentences
- understanding social situations
- saying words and sentences fluently
- using their voice
- eating and drinking

What will the speech and language therapist do?

Your speech and language therapist will assess your child’s communication skills to identify their specific areas of difficulty, and give you support and ideas to help your child develop their speech, language and communication skills.

They will work with you to jointly identify how best you can help your child to communicate to their full potential.
Your child may be seen individually or in a group, or the therapist may support your child through training and advice to those who spend the most time with them. This will depend on your child’s needs. The support will look at ideas to help you to communicate with your child in the best way.

If your child is having difficulties with eating, drinking or swallowing this will be assessed by specifically trained therapists. Advice to support these skills and improve safe feeding/drinking will be given.

The service may see your child in a clinic, school, nursery, other early year’s settings, children’s centre or at home. The most appropriate venue will be identified with you, in line with your child’s needs.

The speech and language therapy service has three specialist teams working across three service areas:

1. **Early Years Speech and Language Therapy Service**

This team provides a service to pre-school young children, up until school reception age. For a few younger school aged children this service may continue to offer some therapy support, where this is appropriate.

Children seen by this team may:

- Be late to talk
- Have speech that is difficult to understand
- Have difficulty in learning new words, putting words together, and talking in sentences
- Be reluctant to talk/or are silent outside of the home
- Find it difficult to understand what is being said to them
- Have a stammer

Therapy often takes place in a community health clinic but may also be offered in other settings including children’s centres. In this team most initial SLT assessments take place within Children’s Centres. The service works very closely with parents and other partners including our Health Visiting Service, Children’s Centres, Early Years services based within the Local Authority/ Hillingdon Council Services and Maternity.

**What should you do if you are concerned about your child’s early communication development?**

If you are worried about your child’s early communication development, we would ask you to first discuss your concerns with your health visitor, nursery or Children’s Centre. They will all be able to offer you some advice and further support. They will guide you if your child needs to be seen by a speech and language therapist.

If a referral is made, you will be offered a short initial speech and language therapy screening assessment at a local children’s centre. Different options for advice and support will be discussed with you. For nearly all young children the most important support in promoting early communication development is the home environment, and what parents do to create opportunities for playing, singing, talking and looking at books. Therapy sessions will support you- to increase your confidence and skills in helping your child to develop their communication skills.

2. **Pre-School Special Needs Speech and Language Therapy Service**
This team provides speech and language therapy to children aged 0 to five years who have additional difficulties and complex communication needs. All children seen within this part of the service have needs which are wider than a pure delay in developing speech, language and communication skills. Many young children seen within this team will have longer term health and wider development/learning needs.

The service also provides eating and drinking support for children aged 0 to 16 (or up to 18 years if in full-time education).

The team work as part of a multi-professional team, (often called MDT-multi-disciplinary team with doctors, and different therapists/other professionals working together) based at the Child Development Centre for children with additional complex needs.

The team supports children who may have:

- Wider developmental difficulties: This may be part of a wider medical diagnosis with other areas affected. For some children, difficulties may interact and communication difficulties may be part of a wider profile of health/learning needs and development.
- A specific syndrome affecting communication and/or feeding
- Motor or sensory feeding difficulties
- Autistic spectrum disorders or Asperger’s Syndrome

Therapy often takes place at Child Development Centre but can also be offered at home, nursery or playgroup, or children’s centre dependant on the child’s needs. The team often work closely with other health professionals such as paediatricians/doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dieticians and community children’s nurses- as well as teaching colleagues or local authority/wider support services.

**What should you do if you are worried about your child’s communication development as part of more complex or additional health needs?**

You can discuss your concerns with your GP, health visitor, nursery or Children’s Centre and they will be able to support you in making a referral or accessing appropriate support/advice.

When your referral is received you will be offered an initial appointment which usually takes place at the Child Development Centre (CDC). If your child needs speech and language therapy, the most appropriate type of support will be discussed with you. The therapist will work in partnership with you to agree goals.

2. **School-Age Speech and Language Therapy Service**

This service provides speech and language therapy into mainstream primary and secondary schools in Hillingdon. The service supports children with moderate to severe speech, language and communication needs. The needs of the children and the level of support offered are prioritised by the therapist and the school SENCO.

The team works jointly with schools to implement strategies and advice that will support your child to access the language of the school curriculum and communicate effectively to interact and form friendships etc.

Children and young people supported by the service may have difficulties with:
- Understanding what the teacher is saying in lessons
- Using word endings and including all the small grammatical words when they are talking and writing
- Explaining or expressing more complicated ideas and thoughts
- Making friends, understanding social rules, and having conversations, i.e. taking turns, staying on the same topic, maintaining eye contact etc.
- Saying sounds clearly, speaking fluently and speaking in school, even though they speak at home

Therapists will work in different ways in schools according to the needs of the child/young person/school.

Some of the ways the speech and language therapist may work in school include:

- Individual or group sessions with a member of school staff observing in order for follow up sessions to take place in school, and strategies and skills to be generalised into the classroom
- Training school staff on strategies that can be used in the classroom to support all children/young people with speech, language and communication needs, including those which can be incorporated into good teaching practice
- Training school staff on specific interventions/strategies that can be used with identified children/young people
- Attending meetings with parents/school staff/other professionals to discuss the best ways to support individual children/young people
- Jointly setting and reviewing targets and outcomes with parents/school staff/other professionals

If your child attends a mainstream school in Hillingdon the therapy input will take place within school. You will be kept informed via letters/reports and phone conversations, and you are able to meet with your child’s therapist if you wish.

If your child attends a special school, then the school have their own therapy arrangements and you should contact the school directly.

If your child attends school anywhere else, please discuss your concerns with the school SENCO first. The school can refer your child for an assessment if they have a moderate- severe speech, language or communication difficulty. All assessment and follow up sessions for this group of children/young people will take place in a health clinic.

What should you do if you are worried about your school aged child’s/ young person’s communication?

You should discuss your concerns with your school’s SENCO. All Hillingdon mainstream schools have an identified link speech and language therapist, and possible new referrals are prioritised through joint discussion between the therapist and the school.

Schools have an allocated amount of time from the service. The proportion of time for each school is dependent on relative need, and all schools have the option of buying in additional time.

Special schools in Hillingdon employ their own speech and language therapists directly (please see above).

Your local NHS SLT school service is delivered primarily within Hillingdon state schools. For children/young people attending independent or out of borough school the service can offer a termly
review and a home/school programme. The service does not have the capacity to offer a school based service for these cases

**Hillingdon Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Service: Hours of opening**

The core paediatric speech and language therapy service operates between 9.00-17.00 Monday-Friday (excluding bank holidays)

**Hillingdon Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Service: Contact Details**

The paediatric speech and language therapy service can be contacted via the services’ central administration number: Tel- 01895 488 200.