Commissioning speech and language therapy services for your school

THE ‘ONE STOP’ GUIDE

STEP 01 UNDERSTAND Your aims and context

STEP 02 UNDERSTAND Who you are helping

STEP 03 UNDERSTAND What your options are

STEP 04 UNDERSTAND The practicalities

STEP 05 UNDERSTAND How to review and refine

Isn’t it complicated? No, it’s easy if you take it step by step
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION: What is the issue?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about SLCN in schools.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 1: Understand your aims and context</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 2: Understand who you are helping</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 3: Understand what your options are</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 4: Understand the practicalities</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 5: Understand how to review and refine</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DID YOU KNOW?**

10 percent of children have long term speech and language needs – that’s 3 in every classroom.  
**I CAN IMPACT REPORT (2016)**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Language disorders are seven times more prevalent than other developmental conditions such as autism.  
**NORBURY C (2016)**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In some areas 50% of children enter school with lower than expected levels of speech and language.  
**LAW ET AL (2011)**
In some areas of deprivation, more than 50% of children start school with SLCN.

10% of all children have long-term SLCN.

7.56% of all children have a specific language impairment.

1% of all children have severe and complex SLCN.

Speech, language and communication skills are VITAL for learning, behaviour and social and emotional wellbeing.

DID YOU KNOW?
The number of children with SLCN who have reading difficulties is 50-90%.

PRIMARY
STOTHARD ET AL (98)

DID YOU KNOW?
The attainment gap at GCSE between pupils with SLCN and other pupils (with and without SEN) is 41%.

SECONDARY
(DFE STATS 2014-15)

But the good news is that the right support can make a huge difference!

“(The SLC service) has been incredibly valuable in many ways: it has developed TA skills and confidence, helped us to focus in on aspects of language that may have otherwise been neglected and made us as a school more aware of those children who have a language deficit and what we need to do to support them.

I can’t emphasise enough how valuable it has been to us or the impact it has had and will continue to have on our children.”

HEADTEACHER TALK OF THE TOWN (ToTT) RCT

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ISSUE:
• I CAN Impact Report 15/16
• Bercow Report
• ToTT Secondary Evaluation
STEP 1
Understand your aims and context

What do you want to achieve with your SLC service?

Identify the issue you want to address and the outcomes you want on an ‘outcomes chain’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. What is the overall aim for your school?</th>
<th>2. What are the specific aims of commissioning an SLC service?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. What will the short term outcomes be?</td>
<td>4. What will the intermediate/medium term outcomes be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What will the long term outcomes be?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example:

1. To improve attainment for all children.
2. To improve attainment and reduce impact of difficulties for children with SLCN.

3. Short Term Outcome:
   Improved staff understanding of how to identify and support children with SLCN.

4. Medium Term Outcome:
   Effective support provided for young people with SLCN.

5. Long Term Outcome:
   Improved SLC for children with SLCN and reduced impact of difficulties.

But we already do some work around speech, language and communication...

Good! It’s really important that you understand your current context before you decide what else is needed.

Understand your current context and what you already have in place to support SLC.

- Review services already provided internally and externally (internal specialist skills, NHS service, advisory team etc)
- Consult staff about existing SLC practice/knowledge
- Evaluate knowledge of children’s skills and needs
- Review your documents and policies for approach to SLC

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:
- Auditing Environment: Communication Supporting Classroom Observation (CSC) Tool, BCRP (2012)
- Auditing current staff knowledge: SLCF
STEP 2
Understand who you are helping

So have you really thought about WHO will benefit from your commissioned service?
Pupils! And staff too...?

When you commission a service to directly support your teachers for example, it will support your pupils too. It’s important to understand this before you commission so that you fully understand the impact of the service.

Your service may:

**DIRECTLY HELP**

**TEACHER**
who will be trained on how to identify children with SLCN.

**PUPIL WITH SLCN**
who will receive therapy sessions from SLT.

**TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA)**
who will be trained on how to deliver interventions for young people with SLCN.

**WHICH WILL ALSO HELP**

**PUPIL**
who will have their SLCN identified at an early stage as a result of trained staff.

**TEACHER**
who will receive information on the child’s specific needs, targets and strengths.

**PUPIL**
who will attend TA intervention to help improve their SLC skills.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:
• Staff knowledge requirements: SLCF
• Children’s skills: Progression Tools & Universally Speaking

“The SLT supports individual pupils and provides help sheets and activities for the classroom teachers and TAs to use with pupils too.”

SENCO, PRIMARY SCHOOL
STEP 3
Understand what your options are

Isn’t it just about providing a service for pupils with SLCN?

No. You need to consider how your prospective SLC service meets the requirement to offer a graduated response to SEND. You could offer a service aimed at Wave 1 and/or Wave 2 and/or Wave 3!

Options:

- To support children at WAVE 3
  - INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

- To support children at WAVE 2/3
  - INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENTS

- To support children at WAVE 2
  - TARGETED INTERVENTION GROUPS

- To support children at WAVE 1/2
  - TARGETED TRAINING

- WAVE 1
  Universal good practice
  • INSET/WHOLE STAFF TRAINING

SCHOOL CASE STUDY:

“We examined our graduated response to literacy and used it to plan our SLC service:

Wave 1 is staff support and training for high-quality inclusive teaching that helps all students develop their SLC skills further. It is supported by effective whole-school policies and frameworks.

Wave 2 is provision designed to increase rates of progress and secure learning for groups of learners that puts them back on course to meet or exceed national expectations. This usually takes the form of a tight, structured programme of small-group support that has an evidence base of impact on progress and is time-limited.

Wave 3 intervention is specialist screening and input possibly on an individual basis. It is in addition to wave 1 and can be in addition to wave 2.”

INCLUSION LEAD, PRIMARY SCHOOL

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

Graduated response
- NASEN: Everybody Included
STEP 4
Understand the practicalities

What are the options for commissioning the activities you want?

- NHS commissioned services
- Independent/3rd party commissioned services
- Share the commissioned service with another school setting
- Use ‘in-house’ specialism

You need to consider if the service provider is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualified</td>
<td>Check that the commissioned provider has the right legal registration and qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervised</td>
<td>Check that the commissioned provider has a supervisor to support their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insured</td>
<td>Check the provider’s policies eg public liability insurance, data protection and safeguarding etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of these will depend on the requirements of your particular activities and the kind of professional you commission.

Also consider the practical challenges in your setting:

- Space/physical resources
- Timetables (staff and children)
- How to integrate your commissioned service into your school eg: using school meetings etc

If your commissioned provider is an SLT, they need to be HCPC registered. You can check this on the HCPC website.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:
Speech Therapy Professionals
- RCSLT
- ASLTIP
- HCPC
STEP 5
Understand how to review and refine

**Our new SLC service sounds great!**

Yes but how will you know it has actually made a difference?

**Planning the evaluation of your SLC service**

You need to agree how you are going to evaluate the service with your service provider before it begins.

**Why?**

- So you will understand how well you achieved your aims and outcomes
- So you understand the resources used to achieve these outcomes and can demonstrate good value for money
- To gather evidence and data to share with parents, governors OFSTED etc

To help you understand how you might improve your services in the future and have even greater impact!

**Examples of how you may evaluate against your original aims:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>How to evaluate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better staff awareness of need/identification</td>
<td>Test staff knowledge before and after to measure this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A more communication friendly school environment</td>
<td>Complete classroom audits before and after (use CSC tool)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement in young people’s SLC</td>
<td>Use assessments, screening tools to measure this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement in children and young people’s behaviour and performance</td>
<td>Look at young person’s attendance and behaviour (ask their teacher) before and after service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:**

- Testing staff knowledge: SLCF
- Auditing environment: CSC tool
- Screening tools: Progression Tools
- Planning evaluation: Building an approach to self evaluation
References

- I CAN Impact report (2015/16)
- DfE GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics 2014-15
- TOTT Secondary Evaluation (2016)
- The Communication Trust: Universally Speaking- Ages and stages of children’s communication development.
- The Communication Trust: Progression Tools
- The Communication Trust: Speech Language and Communication Framework (SLCF)
- NASEN: Everybody Included (2014)
- RCSLT: Guidance on quality standards for local authorities and schools as commissioners of speech and language therapy services in the UK (2011)
- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)
- ASLTIP: Introduction to Commissioners

Other helpful commissioning resources

- I CAN: Guidance for schools commissioning services for SLCN
- The Communication Trust: Communicating the Code, Ch7 Joint Commissioning
We’d love to hear what you think about this guidance. Do you have 5 minutes to complete a short survey to share your thoughts?

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/tctschoolscommissioning