



Dear Parent/Carer

Following consultations with parents / carers since the last special educational needs inspection in 2018, Children's speech and language therapy (SaLT) services in Stockport are changing. We are writing to tell you about the changes and how we will be working in the future. We hope that through these changes we will achieve the outcomes parents / carers and others told us they wanted.

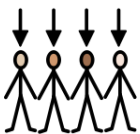
In Stockport, we are going to use a well-established framework called 'The Balanced System®' to help us work differently. This involves everyone working together to support children's speech, language, and communication skills. This means we will work closely with families and other partners (e.g. health visitors, early years setting and school staff).

We will start making changes from September 2024.

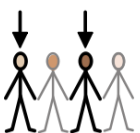


What is the Balanced System®:

The Balanced System® can help children who need support at different levels - universal, targeted, and specialist. The Speech and Language Therapy service is involved in developing help at all levels.



Universal support is help that everybody gets. This could be general advice and support to help children develop their communication.



Targeted support is for children who may need extra help with their speech, language and communication. This could be small group work in early years settings or school, or activities you can do at home. Sometimes the Speech and Language Therapist will be

directly involved but often they will have provided training and support to others who work with children in the early years setting or school.



Specialist support is for children who need more specific support from a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT). This could be more detailed assessment and individualised support that is required for your child to achieve a specific goal.

The Balanced System Framework aims to ensure that a child is supported as well as possible within their everyday environment. To do this, the Framework asks us to think about:

- **Family Support**
- **Environment**-making sure nurseries, schools and homes are set up to help with communication
- **Workforce development**-making sure that anyone working with a child has skills to help them with communication
- **Identification**-there are easy and reliable ways of finding out who needs help
- **Intervention**-using activities and strategies we know help with communication

? What does this mean:

In Stockport the NHS and local authority are working together to support Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). There will be 3 organisations providing speech and language therapy to children in Stockport, with the age of the child / school setting being the key factor in which provider sees which children. The three providers are:

- 1) Stockport NHS Foundation Trust
- 2) Together Trust
- 3) Speechwise

- **If your child is attending a Stockport Local Authority special school, or a mainstream school from reception upwards:**
 - There will be a Link Speech and Language Therapist for every school who will work with you/ your child and the school to agree

what level of support your child needs (Universal, Targeted and/or Specialist).

- All children who are currently on a waiting list for speech and language therapy will be discussed with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) or Inclusion Lead.
- You will then be contacted to confirm the next steps for your child.

If your child attends a mainstream school they will receive the SaLT service from Stockport NHS Foundation Trust.

If your child attends a special school they will receive the service from either Speechwise or Together Trust. For more details please see the information at the end of this letter.

- **If your child is pre-school age and has a Stockport GP:**

The SALT service will be provided by Stockport NHS Foundation Trust

- Your local Startwell Team (health visitors, portage services and early years workers) can provide you with advice about how to support speech, language and communication needs. Tips and information can be found here <https://www.startwellstockport.co.uk/>
- Local "Stay and Play" groups are available, which you can drop into with your child. These are a great place to meet other parents/carers and get support for your child's development.
- Your child will receive healthy child programme mandated ASQ 3 development assessments between 9 and 12 months and at 2 years of age with the Start Well team. This will be an opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have and your child's development will be discussed with you.
- Speech and language therapists are available to offer support and advice in these groups and if more help is needed, and more specialist support specific to your child's needs can be arranged through the Startwell teams also.

- **If your child has a Stockport GP but is attending a school outside Stockport Local Authority's control** (e.g. Trafford, East Cheshire, Tameside or an Independent/Private School):
 - As the new Balanced System® approach is in partnership with Stockport Local Authority, we will discuss with your child's school the universal and targeted approaches they have in place and agree next steps with them.

- **If your child is home educated:**
 - Please contact the speech and language therapy admin team on CTSAdmin@stockport.nhs.uk to agree how we can support you and your child.

If you have more general questions about supporting your child's speech language and communication, in the first instance where possible, please talk to your child's health visitor, early years setting or school.

If you have specific questions about specialist support your child has from the speech and language therapy services please contact your child's link therapist via the school / contact details at the end of this letter.

If you want to find out more information about the Balanced System®, please visit: www.thebalancedsystem.org.

We welcome your feedback and look forward to working with you in this new, exciting way.

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Services

CONTACT DETAILS

Pre-school Age / Mainstream Schools including schools with resource bases:



Stockport

NHS Foundation Trust

Contact: CTSAdmin@stockport.nhs.uk

Special Schools list with provider:



Valley – Together Trust

Heatons – Together Trust

Moat House – Together Trust

Oakgrove – Together Trust

Pear Tree – Together Trust

Castle Hill – Together Trust

Contact Together Trust: admintss@togethertrust.org.uk



SpeechWise

Pendlebury - Speechwise

Highfields – Speechwise

Windlehurst - Speechwise

Lisburne – Speechwise

Contact Speechwise Admin Manager: admin@speechwisetherapy.co.uk

