



Self Assessment of our SEND Implementation

November 19

*A new approach to special educational
needs and disability*



Improvements in accessing Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) appointments for children with complex SEN.

What was the issue

- Children with complex communication needs often need ongoing support for their functional communication. Parents became anxious at the end of an episode of care because of long waiting times to be re-referred in to the service. This resulted in some children remaining open on caseloads for many months or sometimes years.
- Children would be sent review appointments. Due to the complexity of these children progress is often small and this can be very demoralising for the family. The review appointments were often wasted or not needed as parents commented that their child was at the same level as before or had not made any progress.
- Parents raised that they often had too many health appointments to attend with their child and that they would like to access a service in a timely manner when they wanted further advice.

Our Journey so far

- Drop in appointments now offered fortnightly
- A leaflet has been produced
- A drop in report template has been produced

What have we done?

- The SLT Complex Needs Team at John Parkes Unit have been offering fortnightly drop in appointments to families with a preschool child for about 4 years now. The drop ins are open to families who have been assessed by our service and have received a block of intervention (such as V.E.R.V.E. and an Early Communicators group).
- A drop in leaflet was produced and is given to parents after their block of intervention. They are encouraged to phone or email to book an appointment when they are ready for more advice. Phone consultations are also an option.
- A drop in report template was created which focusses on What's working/Going Well, What's changed/Not working/Main concerns and on the back there is room for recommendations and advice. The SLT writes straight onto the report and photocopies this at the end of the appointment so that the parent does not have to wait for the report.

What difference has this made?

- The pathway for these children is much clearer now, particularly for the community SLTs.
- The Complex Needs SLTs have more manageable caseloads and have reduced their admin process as no longer sending out review letters.

- Parents access support when they need it. They report feeling more confident about ending an episode of care as they know they can access advice when needed. Families are offered an appointment within two weeks
- Parents leave at the end of the appointment with a written summary of the appointment /report which they can share with settings if needed. Less admin time for SLT resulting in increased face to face contacts

Areas for further action

- At the moment we offer the drop ins in 1 location in Torquay. We are looking at offering these drop ins in the child's community clinic as travel can be an issue for some families.
- Joint drop in appointments with OT & physio.
- Joint drop in appointments with child's community SLT to develop their skill in Complex Needs.
- Parents forget about the drop ins – reminders/training to Portage / Paediatrician / Health visitor. In the last few weeks we have received a few inappropriate referrals from Paediatricians for children who are eligible for the drop ins.
- More structured feedback from parents to support anecdotal evidence.

Immediate next steps

- Email Paediatricians the drop in leaflet as a reminder.
- Identify other locations to offer to families

Author

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