



# What is therapy?

East Sussex Children's Integrated Therapy and Equipment Service

**A guide for parents to explain  
speech and language therapy**

# What is therapy?

Therapy is where a child or young person is enabled to overcome or adapt to communication problems that affect their daily life.

The purpose of therapy is **not to cure but to reduce** the impact of these problems. Our team of therapists work with other people to support a child to reach their full potential.



## Who are we?

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) is jointly commissioned by East Sussex County Council and the NHS to deliver East Sussex Children's Integrated Therapy and Equipment Services (CITES).

Our service employs:

- occupational therapists
- physiotherapists
- speech and language therapists
- administrative staff.

This guide concentrates on speech and language therapy.

Our 100-strong team is responsible for providing non-acute children's therapy to people living in East Sussex.

This includes specific therapy provision outlined in pupils' education health care plans.



# Speech and language therapists

We are all qualified therapists and are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council.

We must maintain clinical professional development and have regular supervision.



Our focus is on helping a child develop a functional communication system – whether that is with the spoken word, signs, symbols or a mixture of these.





## Integrated therapy assistants and speech and language therapy assistants

Our integrated therapy assistants have all had internal and external training on the three therapy areas.

We are skilled and experienced in carrying out therapists' programmes.

Speech and language therapy assistants carry out programmes written by the speech and language therapist. We have a thorough understanding of language and communication and are highly experienced delivering these therapy approaches.

All our assistants help run groups for our service and supporting our training programme.





## How do we work?

Therapists use assessments to get a better understanding of a child or young person. We provide personalised support by using our specialist skills with the child and the people around them.

Personalised support includes recommendations on how the environment can be changed to make it easier for a child or young person to communicate.

It may also include time-limited pieces of work by a therapist or therapy assistant to teach a new skill. This work is modelled to parents and teaching staff so they can practise it at other times.

There is evidence to show outcomes are improved when therapy practice and strategies are included in a child's environment and daily routine.

We accept referrals for children from the time they are born to when they are 19-years-old. We work hard to get the right care in the right place at the right time.



## Working with pre-school children

Firstly, parents and carers should seek advice on speech and language from their health visitor or an early years communication worker, both are based in children's centres.

These professionals work closely with our service and will give you home learning activities to carry out with your child. Depending on progress, they may offer further support or discuss a referral with you. We also work closely with iSEND Early Years, which works with children with additional needs.

We provide support and training to all of our early years colleagues so your child's communication needs can be understood and integrated into the home and nursery environment.



## Working with school-age children

Once your child is old enough to go to school, we will contribute to their transition into school environment. We offer training to schools alongside the Communication, Learning and Autism Support Service.

We may not always keep your child on our caseload once they are well supported by the school's local offer. However, we accept re-referral at key transition points and if any new concerns arise.

There is a natural overlap between teaching and therapy.

Where a child's communication needs are well understood and the school has the tools to deliver support through the additional needs plan, the school will lead.

This is commonly the case for long-term language and social communication needs.

Sometimes, children will need a reassessment, for example if they are not making expected progress with their learning or there are significant changes to home or school life, such as moving to a new school.

This enables us to assist the wider team in checking that recommendations are relevant and up-to-date.



# Care pathways – what are they?

When your child's referral is accepted, we will start our assessment in clinic and, if needed, we will also see your child in other environments.

Following the assessment, you will get a report with recommendations for home and school. If further intervention is needed, we will discuss the best care pathway for your child with you.

We have developed a range of care pathways designed to provide equitable yet personalised assessment and intervention. Each care pathway is designed to be the best way of receiving care and treatment for every individual patient.

These include:

- speech disorder
- dysfluency (stammering)
- developmental language disorder
- eating and drinking difficulties
- speech language and communication needs associated with other medical conditions.

The extent of direct intervention from a therapist needs to be balanced.

For example, a child with dysfluency may receive more direct intervention with a therapist than a child with a language disorder because the wider workforce has less knowledge and skills to work with dysfluency than language.

This is in keeping with the principles of commissioning children's speech and language services in the UK. We will work with you to personalise your child's care pathway, so it is clear what you can expect from our service over the course of the following year.

You may be offered sessions with an integrated therapy assistant or speech and language therapy assistant, as well as a therapist.

There is still much research needed in the field of children's therapy.

The Children's Integrated Therapy and Equipment Service only uses approaches that are evidence-based via well respected channels, such as The Communication Trust's What Works website.

Intervention is evaluated using the respected *Therapy Outcome Measures for Rehabilitation Professionals* (Enderby 2015).

This is a holistic tool that describes your child in the context of four dimensions: Impairment, participation, activity and well-being.

These dimensions allow us to work together to develop a shared understanding of your child's needs and how therapy can best reduce their impact.





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## Working with our partners

We work with a wide range of partners. These include:

- parents and carers
- health professionals, such as local consultants, GPs, school nurses and health visitors and specialists from tertiary centres
- colleges, schools, pre-schools and children's centres
- specialist teachers and educational psychologists
- East Sussex County Council and district and borough councils
- children's disability services
- private therapists
- local charities.

With your permission, we liaise with all partners who are working with your child in their best interest.

We work closely with the county council by providing clinical advice to inform the assessment process for education, health and care plans.

We also have a close working relationship with iSEND Early Years and sometimes provide joint programmes and reports.

We have strong partnerships with our local special schools. We work in these schools on almost a daily basis and are valued associates. As well as seeing

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individual pupils, we work with each leadership team to make sure the school environment and the skills of the teaching staff are suited to the learning needs of their pupils.

We contribute to other education partnerships, such as school clusters and alliances.

This helps us to jointly improve service delivery, provide bespoke training where needed and problem-solve together. Some schools buy additional therapy services from us, which enables them to further strengthen their local offer.

We provide workshops for parents/carers and other professionals so that we can work together to understand the different needs of the children and young people we see.

We deliver joint training with some of our stakeholders, for example an accredited course, called Working with pupils with speech, language and communication needs.

Where a child or young person is also known to a specialist or tertiary centre, such as the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering or the Evelina, we will work closely with these professionals to ensure that their recommendations can successfully transfer to local care.

On occasion we may join the family for assessments at one of these centres.



## We operate from three main sites:

### Grove House

Phone: 0300 123 2205  
Crowborough Hospital, Southview Road,  
Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1HB

### Chaucer Clinic

Phone: 0300 123 2650  
Unit A4, Chaucer Business Park, Dittons Road,  
Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6QH

### Hastings Clinic

Phone: 01424 728360  
407 Old London Road  
Hastings, East Sussex TN35 5BH  
Email: [kcht.escits@nhs.net](mailto:kcht.escits@nhs.net)

## How did we do?

Do you have feedback about our health services? Contact:

### Customer Care Team

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust,  
Unit J, Concept Court, Shearway Business Park,  
Folkestone, Kent CT19 4RJ

**Phone:** 0300 123 1807  
8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

**Text:** 07899 903499

**Email:** [kcht.cct@nhs.net](mailto:kcht.cct@nhs.net)

**Visit:** [www.kentcht.nhs.uk](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk)

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**Our values**  
Compassionate Aspirational Responsive Excellent

