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| ***NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS’ SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICE***  ***Terms 5 and 6, 2023-24*** |

Welcome to our latest Newsletter. Contents:

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11. ***Get Balanced System® ready***

You should now all be aware of the Balanced System® which is being rolled out across West, North and East Kent at the beginning of the new academic year to support pupils with SLCN. The plan is to offer a ‘Link Therapist’ model of delivery from September 2024. Link Therapists will work collaboratively with schools, supporting the development of provision across the five Balanced System® strands (Family Support; Enabling Environments; Workforce development; Identification; Intervention) and three levels (Universal, Targeted and Specialist).

To get ready for meeting your Link Therapist:

Register to use free Balanced System® tools: <https://www.thebalancedsystem.org/balanced-system-tools/>

* Stars, Moons and Bugs
* Baseline Evaluation
* Detailed Evaluation

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| See the attached Link Therapist Guidance Document:   * Information about Link Therapist role and what to expect * Information about tools to self-evaluate school’s SLCN provision to inform planning * Outlines responsibilities of school and Link Therapist |  |

Access virtual demo sessions on the Balanced System® tools via Teams – just turn up:

* Tuesday 7th May 2.00–3.00 pm [Click here to join the meeting](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/ap/t-59584e83/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com%2Fl%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%253ameeting_MTA4MTViMWQtNzQ5YS00ZDZkLWJjNDItYzgyZDQ5YmUzMDE3%2540thread.v2%2F0%3Fcontext%3D%257b%2522Tid%2522%253a%25223253a20d-c735-4bfe-a8b7-3e6ab37f5f90%2522%252c%2522Oid%2522%253a%2522de7f78ad-0af7-4d7e-99cc-88f3d4e8e3a1%2522%257d&data=05%7C02%7Ca.wright27%40nhs.net%7C616fef044d3e42e1d6de08dc53f581fe%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638477561406686710%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=UGVqsWPOTNuMXIrT9xAfoL73M3wOEZYuVBYghSA9dgE%3D&reserved=0)
* Wednesday 22nd May 1.00–2.00pm [Click here to join the meeting](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/ap/t-59584e83/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com%2Fl%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%253ameeting_YjkxNjM5NzItNmNhYy00YjYzLTlhOGItODk3YTFhMmNkMmNi%2540thread.v2%2F0%3Fcontext%3D%257b%2522Tid%2522%253a%25223253a20d-c735-4bfe-a8b7-3e6ab37f5f90%2522%252c%2522Oid%2522%253a%2522de7f78ad-0af7-4d7e-99cc-88f3d4e8e3a1%2522%257d&data=05%7C02%7Ca.wright27%40nhs.net%7C616fef044d3e42e1d6de08dc53f581fe%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638477561406697565%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=n4SRDIDgVUBC11wvy7lOgmwdM2kRtXlWOONM6VKO2D4%3D&reserved=0)
* Wednesday 5th June 9.30–10.30am [Click here to join the meeting](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/ap/t-59584e83/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com%2Fl%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%253ameeting_Y2U5ZmJiNzgtMzQ4ZC00NTI3LWE4ZTUtMjAyOTMyMDhmZTQy%2540thread.v2%2F0%3Fcontext%3D%257b%2522Tid%2522%253a%25223253a20d-c735-4bfe-a8b7-3e6ab37f5f90%2522%252c%2522Oid%2522%253a%2522de7f78ad-0af7-4d7e-99cc-88f3d4e8e3a1%2522%257d&data=05%7C02%7Ca.wright27%40nhs.net%7C616fef044d3e42e1d6de08dc53f581fe%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638477561406707285%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=FoH%2FzZM4ubis6%2Bx8VYNFBZGzP8mKMeQyXMgHPMqXaSo%3D&reserved=0)

1. ***Closure of language referrals during Term 6/summer holidays***

As we prepare the Speech and Language Service for delivering the Balanced System®, we will be not accepting new referrals into the service during Term 6 or the summer holidays; most referrals received during this time will be rejected and can be re-submitted in September. We will continue to accept referrals for speech, stammering and voice disorders.

If you wish to submit a referral during Term 5, please refer to the table at the end of this Newsletter, which explains what information must be included in order for us to accept a referral for assessment, and what we offer for children who have a valid referral. Please note that incomplete referrals cannot be accepted – they may be rejected or you may be asked to submit further information.

1. ***Transition to Secondary School programme***

Children with speech, language and communication needs need extra support during their transition to secondary school. To this end, we have developed a workshop that enables schools and parents to deliver a five-part programme with their Year 6 students over the course of the summer term, available on The Pod <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/speech-and-language-therapy/school-aged-language/>.

The workshop is accompanied by resource pack. Before completing the workshop, please contact the Children’s Therapies Administration Team via [kentchft.wktrainingadmin@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.wktrainingadmin@nhs.net) in order to request the resource pack. You will need to refer to the resource pack while watching the workshop.

1. ***New EHCPs***

The Children’s Therapies Service is usually informed directly by KCC about newly finalised EHCPs. When we are informed we are usually able to start providing the child’s SLT input the following term. However, there have been cases where we have not been kept informed by KCC, and unfortunately this has delayed our input.

When you receive a final EHCP that specifies SLT input, please feel free to let Anthony Wright know ([a.wright27@nhs.net](mailto:a.wright27@nhs.net)), particularly if we have not got in touch to arrange input by the following term.

1. ***Referring and re-referring via The Pod***

We have been told that some schools are having difficulty completing referrals and re-referrals via The Pod, in particular because it is not possible to save incomplete forms and finish them at a later date. We have asked our IT department whether they can set things up so that forms can be saved for later, and they tell us that unfortunately this is not currently possible.

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| To help you complete your referrals in one go, the dummy referral forms attached show you all the sections that you will need to complete, so you can collect and prepare all the information before you start filling out the referral form. |  |
| Please note that the re-referral form currently only allows for one attachment to be uploaded. If you have more than one attachment, for the time being please use the referral form instead. |  |

1. ***Education staff coffee mornings***

Class teachers, TAs, SENCOs and key workers are invited to drop-in and explore resources, network with others and have a hot drink and a piece of cake! Each session will be attended by one of our Education Specialists, an SLT and/or another relevant professional. These events are proving to be extremely popular, so book early to avoid disappointment!

Venue: The Heathside Centre, Coxheath <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/location/heathside-centre/>

For further information, please contact Education Specialist Emily Duddy [emily.duddy@nhs.net](mailto:emily.duddy@nhs.net)

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| **Term** | **Date/time** | **Theme** |
| 5 | 16.5.24, 9am-12pm | Emotional regulation resources for children in the Primary classroom |
|  | PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SESSION HAS BEEN RESCHEDULED FROM 2.5.24 | |
| 6 | 6.6.24, 9am-12pm | Transition resources for Nursery/Pre-school and Primary age children |

1. ***Parent/Carer Makaton Taster Sessions***

Children’s Therapies are offering a free Makaton taster session for parents/carers of children who have been known to the service in the last 12 months. The aim of this 1.5hr taster session is to introduce Makaton with a focus on teaching some key Makaton signs. For more information on Makaton please go to [www.makaton.org](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.makaton.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7Ca.wright27%40nhs.net%7C9c463e4416e848fb254008dc5de1ea1f%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638488472065922152%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=S5KFkfxTv8uhW9kIf4vEu3yNvUIgZN8XjV28mTGMxN0%3D&reserved=0).

The sessions we are currently offering are:

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| **Date** | **Time** | **Venue** |
| Tuesday 25.6.24 | 09:30-11:00 | Heathside Centre, Coxheath |
| Tuesday 9.7.24 | 09:30-11:00 | Virtual – MS Teams |
| Wednesday 25.9.24 | 15:30-17:00 | Virtual – MS Teams |

Parents can book their place by emailing [kentchft.makaton@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.makaton@nhs.net).

1. ***Online event: Supporting Children with DLD in school***

Schools are encouraged to attend an online event on Tuesday 14th May at 4pm with renowned expert Stephen Parsons, where he will share valuable insights, practical strategies, and evidence-based approaches to effectively support students with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). From identifying the signs of DLD to implementing inclusive teaching practices, this event aims to empower attendees with the knowledge and tools needed to make a positive impact in the lives of students with SLCN.

Stephen Parsons is a Speech and Language Therapist, trainer and co-author of ‘Language for Thinking’, ‘Word Aware’ (1, 2 and 3) and ‘Language for Behaviour and Emotions.’ He has 35 years’ experience in the field, including 1996–2017 in Hackney and the City of London where he was Speech and Language Therapy Service Manager for a number of years. He is Chair of NAPLIC, the UK organisation for professionals working with Developmental Language Disorder, and Chair of RADLD, the international campaign to raise awareness of Developmental Language Disorder.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/supporting-students-with-slcn-focus-on-dld-with-stephen-parsons-tickets-803831089427>

*And a quick read:*

Here is a five minute read on the importance of language development, and how language is the foundation of children’s learning and wellbeing outcomes across the board – please share with your colleagues: <https://www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/early-years/how-schools-can-support-language-development>

1. ***Advice Line***

Our Advice Line is for parents and professionals who want advice from an SLT, a Physiotherapist or an Occupational Therapist about **any child not currently known to the Kent Children’s Therapies service**. Our clinicians are able to provide you with advice, sign-posting to further information, or we may recommend a referral for a fuller assessment. **The Advice Line is a great way to get some immediate advice, and in many cases is quicker than waiting for an appointment at a SENCO Surgery.**

The Advice Line is open on 0300 123 7004, **Monday, Wednesday and Thursday**, between the following hours:

* Speech and Language Therapy – 10.00-12.30 and 13.30-15.30
* Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy – 9.30-12.00 OR 14.00-16.30

Press Option 1 to speak to the Admin Team – they will connect you to the SLT, OT or Physiotherapist working on the Advice Line that day.

1. ***LIFT meetings/SENCO Surgeries***

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| LIFT meetings and SENCO Surgeries are a great way to get further advice when you are not sure how to support a child in school. Appointments at SENCO Surgeries with STLS are arranged via your LIFT groups. Please complete the Surgery request form and email two weeks before the date of the planned surgery. You will then be allocated an appointment time. |  |

| **Group** | **Next LIFT meeting with SLT attending** | **Joint SENCO Surgery** |
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| Maidstone District | | |
| Group 1 | 11.06.24, 13:30-16:00, Craig Loftus | 18.04.24, 8:30-16:00  22.05.24, 8:30-12:00  13.06.24, 8:30-16:00  10.07.24, 8:30-12:00  (Anthony Wright) |
| Group 2 | 20.06.24, 13:30-16:00, Craig Loftus |
| Group 3 | 24.06.24, 13:30-16:00, Anthony Wright |
| Group 4 | 09.05.24, 13:30-16:00, Anthony Wright |
| Group 5 | 02.07.24, 13:30-16:00, Anthony Wright |
| Sevenoaks District | | |
| Group 1 | 12.06.24, 13.30 – 16.00, Nikki Dearsley | 18.06.24, 9.30-12.30 (Craig Loftus) |
| Group 2 | 01.05.24, 13.30 – 16.00, Anthony Wright |
| Group 3 | 26.06.24, 13.30 – 16.00, Nikki Dearsley |
| Group 4 | 15.05.24, 13.30 – 16.00, Anthony Wright |
| Group 5 | 22.05.24, 13.30 – 16.00, Nikki Dearsley |
| Tunbridge Wells District | | |
| Hawkhurst Group | 03.07.24, 9:30-12:30, Craig Loftus | 11.06.24, 9.30-12.30 (Craig Loftus) |
| Paddock Wood Group | 14.05.24, 9:30-12:30, Victoria Horner |
| Secondary Group | 13.05.24, 13:30-16:30, Donna Taylor |
| St Mark’s Group | 01.05.24, 9:30-12:30, Anthony Wright |
| TW North Group | 05.06.24, 9:30-12:30, Craig Loftus |
| TW South Group | 21.05.24, 9:30-12:30, Craig Loftus |
| Tonbridge & Malling District | | |
| Malling Primary A | 08.05.24, 12.30 pm - 3.30 pm, Craig Loftus | 29.04.24, 9.30-13.00  20.06.24, 9.30-13.00 (Anthony Wright) |
| Malling Primary B | 03.07.24, 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm, Anthony Wright |
| Tonbridge Primary Schools | 19.06.24, 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm, Craig Loftus |

***Contacting the SLT Service***

The West KentSchools’ Speech and Language Therapy service is based at:

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|  | **Heathside Centre**  Invicta House, Heath Road, Coxheath, ME17 4AH  **0300 123 7004** |

For any queries regarding the Speech and Language Therapy service to your school, please contact:

Anthony Wright West Kent Schools’ Team Lead [a.wright27@nhs.net](mailto:a.wright27@nhs.net)

Maria-Loukia Bratsou Locality Clinical Manager [marialoukia.bratsou@nhs.net](mailto:marialoukia.bratsou@nhs.net)

Karin Corrigan Locality Clinical Manager [karin.corrigan@nhs.net](mailto:karin.corrigan@nhs.net)

***GENERAL INFORMATION***

***Making a referral to the SLT service***

You can refer a child for assessment/support via The Pod: <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/childrens-therapies-referral/>. Schools are expected to have carried out two terms of intervention on the child’s area of need before submitting a referral. **Referrals that do not provide evidence of this intervention will generally be rejected.** Schools are strongly advised to use the Language Link and Speech Link interventions that are recommended by the Language/Speech Link screens.

| **Area of concern** | **Referral paperwork needed** | **What we offer** |
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| Language (understanding and use of spoken language) | * Online referral form * Relevant flowchart * Language Link screen * Communication checklist (where child cannot access Language Link screen) * Evidence that child has received two terms of intervention at school * Language for Learning observation (aka Appendix SYP) * Parental information (aka Appendix A) | * Assessment at school * Report and advice/ recommendations * Access to Joint SLT/STLS Surgeries * Blocks of therapy in school for children with EHCPs where language needs are identified |
| Speech sounds | * Online referral form * Speech Link screen – full results, not just the front page * Evidence that child has received two terms of targeted intervention at school | * Two sessions in clinic to complete assessment and to give advice about therapy activities * Report with advice/ recommendations * Blocks of therapy or parent coaching sessions for children with severe speech sound disorders that are having a severe impact on intelligibility |
| Stammering | * Online referral form * Relevant flowchart * Language for Learning observation (aka Appendix SYP) * Language link screen (if appropriate) * Parental questionnaire (aka Appendix A) | * Online stammering workshop * Phone assessment with parents to agree next steps (either closure, monitoring or therapy waiting list) |
| Selective Mutism (SM) | * Complete the SM referral questionnaire on <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/childrens-therapies-referral/resources-for-childrens-therapies/> * School staff and parent must have completed the online workshop program and implemented strategies for two terms. * Referral must include details of what intervention has been put in place in school and details of any progress made. | * Discussion with setting and parent to agree appropriate targets and interventions for setting to implement |

***Supporting children in school through the use of Universal strategies***

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| Our reports usually include a few suggested areas of focus for the child in relation to their speech, language and communication. This attachment provides guidance on Universal strategies which can be shared with staff to support a child’s needs. These link with the Quality First Teaching Strategies within the Mainstream Core Standards. |  |

For further support on how to implement the Core Standards in your classrooms, contact our Education Specialist Stacy Appleby directly at [stacy.appleby1@nhs.net](mailto:stacy.appleby1@nhs.net).