

Speech and Language Therapist working in the Autism Communication Team

COST

The service is provided by a Specialist Speech and language Therapist working 3 full days per week with the team.

The service with on costs is £26,698 per year for the provision of Speech & Language Therapy within the Autism Communication Team, available for **all** mainstream schools.

If the current service is not sustained, schools will need to purchase training externally at a cost of approx £100 per hour. This would be a total of £2,400 for the training provided in the last financial year. Other activities would need to be commissioned separately.

If this service is not provided locally within schools there is an increased risk that children requiring this specialist support would need to be educated outside the Borough at a cost of £40,000 a year for each child.

ACTIVITY

- Current caseload of 24 children across 18 mainstream schools (growing in number)
- Assessment, therapy and liaison with school staff: 52%
- Specific advice sessions to parents and school staff: 11.5%
- Report and strategy writing: 21%
- Training sessions provided: 15.35%

All activity is carried out in mainstream schools up to and including key stage 4:

1. Intensive therapy and support in mainstream schools, beginning with an extended observation and evaluation in the classroom, an individual communication assessment and a discussion with staff. This is always promptly followed by a printed report and a comprehensive, detailed action plan containing strategies for managing autism and specific speech and language targets with instructions for staff on how best to implement these.
2. Dedicated time for families to come in to school and discuss their concerns with a speech and language therapist.
3. Signposting families to other relevant services (parent support groups, counselling services, Rotherham Disabled Children's Information Exchange, parent workshops, other statutory services to offer potential support with eating, sleep, toileting and behaviour including supporting full referrals to ACT for more generic autism support in school).
4. Training for teachers and support staff in practical strategies for supporting children with autism (the new courses having been developed and co-presented by the post-holder in consultation with a number of Rotherham head teachers).
5. Support for teaching staff in the use of visual supports for specific children.
6. Provision of therapy, support and adapting the environment in classroom settings by a speech and language therapist working in a multi-agency team and with the knowledge, experience and confidence in that setting.

7. When speech, language and communication needs are identified the child has been transferred to the therapist for triage. A decision has then been made regarding the most appropriate team to provide ongoing therapy and support (one of the above core-level services or direct support from the therapist (see point 2)).
8. Direct support for the ACT team regarding communication issues.

BENEFITS OF THE CURRENT SERVICE

Provision of the above service within ACT gives the following positive outcomes:

- Children with ASD are enabled to attend mainstream schools (parental choice)
- Teachers receive guidance on how to facilitate the classroom environment allowing access to the curriculum
- Staff in school know how to communicate effectively with children with a diagnosis of ASD
- Positive therapy outcomes for each child in terms of specific communication targets
- Whole school awareness of ASD through training sessions
- Management of behaviour in the classroom through providing the right environment and means of communication (e.g. visual timetables)

CONSEQUENCES OF DECOMMISSIONING

Risks/consequences associated with decommissioning of the service:

- Decreasing choice for children and families in terms of mainstream vs special school
- More children may need to attend specialist provision outside the borough (e.g. Robert Ogden School)
- Children with ASD may show disruptive behaviour in the classroom due to poor environment and communication
- IEP targets not met due to restricted communication skills
- Children will not receive speech and language therapy input in schools following diagnosis as the core SLT service does not provide this service
- Parents will not receive the advice and support they need in school and regarding ways to support their child's communication and development at home
- Schools will need to purchase training externally at a cost of: approx £100 per hour. This would be a total of £2,400 for the training provided in the last financial year
- If this service is not provided locally within schools there is an increased risk that children requiring this specialist support would need to be educated outside the Borough at a cost of £40,000 a year for each child.

CORE SERVICE

Should the above service be decommissioned only the following core S< service will be available for children and young people with a diagnosis of ASD:

- Assessment and diagnosis of autism spectrum conditions at the Child Development Centre (CDC).
- Advice for families by the speech and language therapy team based at CDC.

What other services are available in school for children with ASD to replace SLT in ACT?

Name of School (Optional).....