



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SERVICES

Speech, Language and Communication Service (SLCS)



September 2023-July 2024

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Introduction

Welcome to our information pack which contains current information about the team and its offer to schools.

We keep up to date with current research and therapy approaches to support our work with schools. We aim to share national and local developments through our Facebook page and Padlet.

We are a dedicated team made up of two dually qualified Teachers / Speech and Language Therapists, two Specialist Language and Communication teachers, one Speech and Language Therapist and eight Specialist Assistants for Speech and Language. Our collective teaching experience has involved early years, primary and secondary mainstream (delivering from EYFS to 'A' level) as well as teaching in specialist provisions.

Meet the Team

Fiona Tarn: High Incidence Needs Teams (HINT) Manager

**Libby Jordan: Lead Practitioner,
Specialist Speech and Language Therapist/Specialist Teacher**

Libby started her career working for the NHS in North Tyneside as a Speech and Language Therapist supporting children in special schools and in mainstream schools with a diverse range of speech, language and communication needs before specialising in the area of Deafness and Hearing Loss. She then enjoyed many years working as a Teacher across each year group within the primary phase of education. More recently she has been able to combine teaching and therapy skills, unpicking and supporting the unique complex profiles of children in mainstream settings. Libby now has specialist interests in the areas of Selective Mutism and Developmental Language Disorder. Libby is passionate about breaking down the barriers that children can experience due to their speech, language and communication needs and is particularly enthusiastic about supporting schools and parents to support the speech, language and communication needs of their children and relating this to the increasing demands of the curriculum.



Angela Harkness: Specialist Teacher

Angela is a qualified teacher with more than twenty years experience of working in mainstream education. Angela specialised in Early Years education and gained a Post Graduate Diploma in Early Years Education and Care at the University of Northumbria. She worked as a Local Authority early years advisor for eight years, part of this role was supporting early language development through the roll out of Every Child a Talker programme as an Early Language Consultant, she also delivered the accredited ICAN and Elklan training programmes. Angela joined the team in March 2021 and is passionate about working in partnership with families, schools and other professionals to support the language and communication needs of children and young people across Northumberland.



Lizzie McCarthy: Specialist Speech and Language Therapist

Lizzie spent the initial years of her career as a Speech and Language Therapist within the NHS in Sunderland, working within mainstream and specialist educational settings. She also worked as the Lead Therapist in a Specialist Primary School for children with ASD diagnoses and has specific clinical interest in this area alongside Selective Mutism and Developmental Language and Speech Disorders. Lizzie has now worked for NCC for seven years. She is passionate about Northumberland as an area and is keen to support local families and schools.



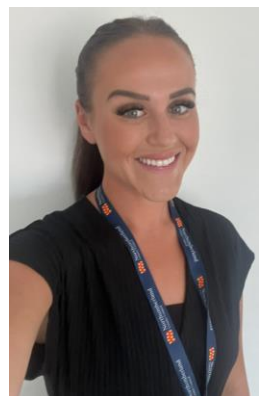
Amanda Cuthbertson: Specialist Speech and Language Therapist/Teacher

Amanda is a qualified Speech and Language Therapist and Teacher. She has over 25 years of experience working in educational settings. In the past she has worked for the NHS in special schools with pupils with ASD, MLD, SLD and in a mainstream language class provision supporting pupils with complex speech and language and learning needs. Amanda has worked in Northumberland for the last 21 years as a Specialist Language Teacher supporting pupils, parents and staff to improve quality of life and educational outcomes.. She is a co-author of '*Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Practical Strategies for Teachers and other professionals*' (published by David Fulton, 2004, over 4000 copies sold and continues to be available).



Alex Cheel: Specialist Teacher

Alex joined the Speech and Language Team at NCC in 2022. Alex worked as a Primary school teacher for 5 years and within this time, Alex has taught in the Early Years, Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2, gaining a broad knowledge of the primary curriculum. In 2021, Alex took on the role as Early Years Lead at a local primary school and in 2022, she took on the role as Acting SENCo. Alex has always been enthusiastic about supporting children with speech, language, and communication needs. Alex is currently studying at Sheffield University for a Post Graduate Diploma in Language and Communication Impairment in Children.



Rachael Mason-Donoghue: Senior Specialist Assistant for Speech and Language

Rachael has worked with children from 6 months to 19 years, including specialist provision for children / young people with autism. She holds a BA (Hons) Degree in Child and Family Studies, BTEC National Diploma in Childhood Studies and NVQ 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. She has supported children and young people with specific speech and language difficulties. Rachael has completed Elklan Language Builders (5-11yrs) course and a Diploma in Special Educational Needs.



Tracey Brock: Specialist Assistant for Speech and Language

Tracey began working with the Speech and Language Team at NCC in 2010. She has worked in education since 2004 in a local primary school where she was involved in supporting children with specific speech and language difficulties. Tracey has completed Elklan courses in Speech & Language Difficulties in the Classroom and Autistic Spectrum Disorders in Children.



Sue Carruthers: Specialist Assistant for Speech and Language

Sue joined the Speech and Language Team at NCC in 2006 after working as a Teaching Assistant in a school in Amble. Sue has OCN qualifications in Spoken Language Difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorders in Children.



Trish Charlton: Specialist Assistant for Speech and Language

Trish joined the Speech and Language Team at NCC in 2003. She has previously supported children in local schools in the west of Northumberland. She has specialist qualifications in Spoken Language Difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorders in Children.



Helen Dumble: Specialist Assistant for Speech and Language

Helen worked at the Grove Special School in Berwick then worked as a Teaching Assistant at a first school in North Northumberland for 16 years before joining the Speech and Language Team at NCC in 2011. Helen has Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status, holds an OCN qualification in Spoken Language Difficulties and level 3 Elklan Speech and Language Support for Verbal children with ASD.



Gail McIver: Specialist Assistant for Speech and Language

Gail began working at Hexham East Speech and Language Unit in September 2014 after working in schools with children with varying needs. She joined the Speech and Language Team at NCC in May 2016. Gail holds the Level 4 Teaching Assistant certificate from the Open University, has an OCN qualification in Autistic Spectrum Disorders in Children and has also undertaken Elklan training at level 3.



Diane Pearson: Specialist Assistant for Speech and Language

Diane has worked with children from birth to 11 years. She has worked across the Early Years in a range of settings and across the Primary age in school for 15 years, delivering interventions in Speech and Language and phonological awareness, including Talk Boost interventions. Diane has a Diploma in Childcare and Education, Diploma in Working with Children with Special Needs, Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status, Talk Boost training, Makaton and BSL level 1.



Sarah Taylor: Specialist Assistant for Speech and Language

Sarah joined the Speech and Language Team at NCC in 2023. Previously she has worked as a TA for many years where she supported children with specific speech and language difficulties and a variety of other additional needs. Sarah has a Level 2 in Understanding Autism, TalkBoost training and she has undertaken level 3 Elklan training (5-11yrs).



How can we support children in school?

By working together to promote speech, language and communication, we can support schools to:

- Raise attainment
- Promote inclusion
- Support health and well being
- Build up information as part of the graduated response
- Offer training opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of staff in supporting speech, language and communication
- Create a communication supportive environment for all learners.

The Team can offer:

- Accessible advice and consultation in reference to your SLC priorities in school.
- Prompt and comprehensive assessment of speech, language and communication needs (including for those children with a diagnosis of ASD who require a speech and language programme)
- Written reports for schools and parents following assessment
- Provision of SMART targets in consultation with school staff
- Training and support for school staff
- Targeted intervention for individual pupils and groups of children
- Attendance at meetings regarding children and SLC school provision.



Individual Pupil Support

Support for each individual pupil referral will be planned and agreed with school staff according to context, for example:

- Pupil need
- Cycles of support already in place
- Status on the SEN register

It is a much more flexible mechanism by which all professionals can work together to target support depending on the unique set of variables. Each referral and case will be different. Support from our service will vary accordingly and may include some (or all) of the following:

- Signposting to appropriate resources and sources of information
- Writing/ reviewing Speech and Language Support Plans
- Observations
- 1:1 work with the pupil
- Input to SEN paperwork eg. Writing the next cycle of support with school staff
- Gathering pupil and parent voice
- Consultation with staff
- Reflection & evaluation of current documentation, provision and interventions in place
- Follow up and monitoring visits

For some pupils, a more in-depth/ higher needs assessment may be appropriate. This will take the form of an initial assessment ie. Observations, meeting with school staff and parents/ carers, 1:1 session with the pupil and a full report with findings, recommendations and advice.



Whole School Support

Whole school requests refer to anything not linked to a named individual pupil. This is a very collaborative approach between school and the Speech and Language professionals. Support and input will be planned with school staff to ensure it is targeted and tailored to need. Some examples of this work may include:

- ❖ Observations
- ❖ Learning walks
- ❖ Training
- ❖ Coaching and mentoring
- ❖ Support for group work
- ❖ Planned interventions and strategies
- ❖ Support with paperwork

We aim to work with school staff in order to support and upskill them so that speech and language support and ordinarily available provision are continually developing and improving.

NB if the agreed plan involves group work, the school must complete a form that confirms that parental/carer consent has been sought and given for each group participant. The group consent form must be returned to HINT prior to any work commencing.



Children with Complex Speech Sound Difficulties

What is the pathway here?

A child may be referred to our service who has both speech and language needs. A Specialist Therapist from our service will carry out the assessment for speech. A SASL can deliver an agreed number of sessions in collaboration with your staff:

- some interventions will need constant oversight (e.g inconsistency)
 - some pupils could be left for periods whilst specific targets are undertaken by schools
 - SASL can return to review
 - SLT/Teacher will have oversight
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Integrated Pathway for Intensive Speech Support

Children with the most complex speech profiles can be referred from the NHS SaLT Service **and** the HINT SLC Service to receive some intensive speech support provided by the HINT SASLs.

It is agreed at a joint HINT SLCS and NHS SaLT panel as to which children shall receive this support.

SASLs work directly with the child providing intensive support whilst simultaneously upskilling a named member of school staff to continue the support throughout the week. This support has proven extremely effective.



How can we support parents?

As the experts on your children, our team aim to fully include you in the work that we do. This may include some or all of the following.



Parents are welcome to contact us at any stage during our work by phone or email. We use the contact information you provide to gather your views and aspirations for your child and to update you on their progress.

Meetings in school may be necessary and children working regularly with our team members are issued with a home-school diary.



Access our [Parent Padlet](#) here for information about how you can support your child at home.



Our Training Offer

In addition to our core training, we have a comprehensive training package which aims to empower schools and settings to support the speech, language and communication needs in their schools. Our additional training offer includes:

Ordinarily Available Provision: the Role of Speech, Language & Communication Skills in Teaching and Learning

This training will look at how a focus on spoken language and communication can improve the quality of teaching and student engagement and offer practical strategies to support the development of these spoken language skills.

Speech Difficulties in the Classroom

This training will cover the basics of speech sound production and provide information regarding the developmental progression of speech sound acquisition. We will also explore different types of speech difficulties and their wide-ranging impact. Participants will develop their knowledge of strategies to support children with speech needs in the classroom.

Supporting Vocabulary Development in the Classroom

This training looks at the central importance of vocabulary in developing spoken language skills, literacy and academic achievement across all ages, and is available for both Primary and Secondary schools. It includes an introduction to the importance and impact of making vocabulary a prominent focus in the classroom. It will also provide opportunities to consider how to promote vocabulary knowledge and teach vocabulary skills as well as guidance on how students learn and apply word learning strategies.

Supporting Pupils with SEMH: The Contribution of Language and Communication Skills

This training will cover what we mean by speech, language and communication skills. We will consider why SLCN and SEMH difficulties can co-present and the impact these difficulties have on mental health, behaviour and learning. Practitioners will improve their ability to identify pupil needs and to develop strategies to support them in the classroom.

Auditory Memory in the Classroom

This training will explore what is meant by auditory and working memory and its importance in the classroom. There will also be opportunities to consider strategies to support children with poor memory skills.

Our Training Offer

Selective Mutism

This training supports you in identifying what SM is, what the risk factors to developing SM are, how you can support children and young people in being able to use their voices freely and confidently through the implementation of effective strategies. Unless the correct support is provided by key adults around the child/young person, this could develop into a life-long debilitating condition.

How to Develop Understanding and Spoken Language Skills Using Lego Therapy

Suitable from Reception to Years 7 or 8, this will be of benefit to pupils who need additional support to develop skills in the following areas: attention and listening; understanding concepts such as behind, in front, beside, etc.; using correct vocabulary to be able to give instructions; knowing how to ask for help when stuck and sequencing skills. Schools will need their own Lego/Duplo resources and ideally an iPad or similar to photograph models.

Phonological Awareness Skills

This training explores what we mean by phonological awareness and the important links to literacy skills, how it typically develops and considers how it differs from phonics. We will look at the main elements that make up phonological awareness skills and discuss how we can promote these in the classroom.

Understanding Questions and the Development of Verbal Reasoning

This training looks at the development of children's early reasoning skills, considering their understanding of questions of different levels of complexity (based upon the Blank Model) and how staff can adapt their questioning to support learning.

Understanding and Supporting Early Language Development

This training aims to support EYFS staff to understand how language and communication skills develop from birth to 5 years. Delegates will become familiar with the age-related stages of speech and language development and be signposted to useful support documents. This will allow them to accurately decide whether children are 'on track' to becoming effective communicators. The session also facilitates planning of a communication-supportive environment and ordinarily available provision to ensure all children make the best progress possible.

Our Training Offer

We can also offer a bespoke training package linked to your school development needs.

Training sessions can be requested by submitting a Whole School Request form. We are flexible in terms of delivering training either virtually or in person or via our pre-recorded sessions. It's also possible to request training for your school or a small group/partnership from our service.

We also offer accredited training from a few nationally recognised organisations, e.g., the Speech and Language UK Talk Boost series of training and the Elklan training for practitioners working across different phases of education. Further information can be found on our [Service webpage](#)



Partnership Areas

	Specialist Teacher/Therapist	Specialist Assistant
Alnwick	Amanda Cuthbertson	Rachael Mason-Donoghue
Ashington	Alex Cheel	Tracey Brock
Bedlington	Alex Cheel	Trish Charlton
Berwick	Lizzie McCarthy	Helen Dumble
Blyth	Amanda Cuthbertson	Sarah Taylor/Diane Pearson
Coquet	Lizzie McCarthy	Sue Carruthers
Cramlington	Libby Jordan	Diane Pearson
Haydon Bridge	Angela Harkness	Gail McIver
Hexham	Angela Harkness	Trish Charlton
Morpeth	Angela Harkness	Rachael Mason-Donoghue
Ponteland	Angela Harkness	Gail McIver
Prudhoe	Amanda Cuthbertson	Sarah Taylor
Seaton Valley	Libby Jordan	Tracey Brock
Emily Wilding Davison	Amanda Cuthbertson	

Although the above partnership areas have assigned team members, requests for support are allocated subject to capacity and professional expertise.

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