Speech and Language Therapy Referral Criteria for School Age children

Please note that we only accept new referrals in the Autumn and Spring terms for school age children.

- Referrals will only be accepted for children whose GP is within the NHS in Bedfordshire or Luton.

- Parent / Carer consent must be obtained.

- The child presents with disordered speech and language development and evidence shows that intervention from Speech and Language Therapy is needed in order for the child to acquire the necessary communication skills to progress in social, emotional and educational development. This includes children or young people with:
  - receptive language difficulties (understanding);
  - expressive language difficulties (speaking);
  - disordered speech development;
  - a stammer / non-fluent speech;
  - a voice disorder, e.g. hoarse voice;
  - no functional communication and specialist support is needed to implement alternative and augmentative communication;
  - a swallowing difficulty.

- Speech sound difficulties. Refer if the child presents with any of the following speech difficulties:
  - Child is not understood by familiar listeners.
  - Child is becoming frustrated or reluctant to talk to others. Please describe the impact of the speech difficulty in detail.
  - No consonant sounds or very limited consonant sounds (e.g. only uses d).
  - Vowel errors (e.g. bee is said as bar).
  - Child is making many sounds at the back of the mouth (e.g.’p b t d m s” replaced with “k” or “g”).
  - Child is missing off the first sound in many words.
  - Child is using lots of ‘uh’ sounds to replace consonants.
  - Child not talking (see language descriptors).
  - EAL – persistent sound errors observed in all languages

- Referrals must contain sufficient information for the Triaging therapist to make an informed decision about the child’s needs. So for example include a sample of their sentences, the sounds made or which are difficult to use or how they play with others.
Exclusion criteria

- Children or young people with a mild or moderate speech delay.
- Children or young people with global developmental delay or learning difficulties whose language development is in line with their overall development.
- Referrals of selective mutism where there is evidence that speech and language development is age appropriate and/or in line with other skills.
- Children with a tongue-tie where there are no concerns regarding speech and language difficulties.
- Children or young people where the main need is attention and listening, social or emotional.
- Children or young people with a diagnosis of ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) where their language and social communication difficulty profile are in line with this diagnosis.
- Referrals of children with specific literacy problems where there is evidence that verbal communication is normal.
- Referrals for dribbling where there is no concern about speech and language skills.
- Re-referral of children who have been discharged and do not present with new or additional difficulties.
- Referrals for children whose speech, language and communication needs are being met by other appropriate means e.g. an Independent Speech and Language Therapist.