

THE CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED SPEECH AND LANGUAGE
THERAPY SERVICE FOR HACKNEY AND THE CITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



WWW.GETHACKNEYTALKING.CO.UK

ABOUT OUR SERVICE

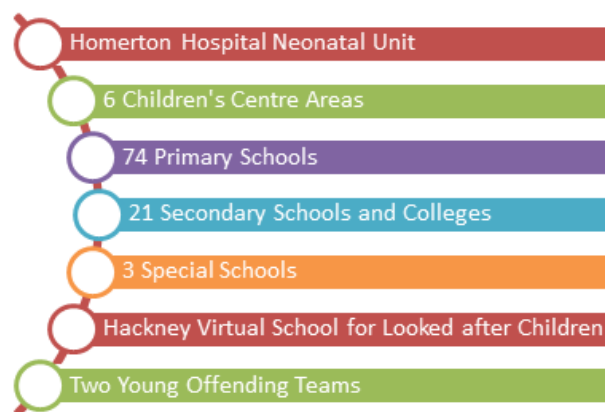
The Hackney Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) Service works to promote the speech, language and communications skills of all children and young people in Hackney and The City, and beyond.

We also have a key role in supporting children and young people with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties.

The SaLT Service is embedded within Homerton University Hospital and Hackney Learning Trust and is integrated at the point of delivery.

The service receives commissioned funding from a variety of sources including: City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group, Hackney Learning Trust (Additional Needs and Children's Centres), individual Educational Settings, and the Local Authority.

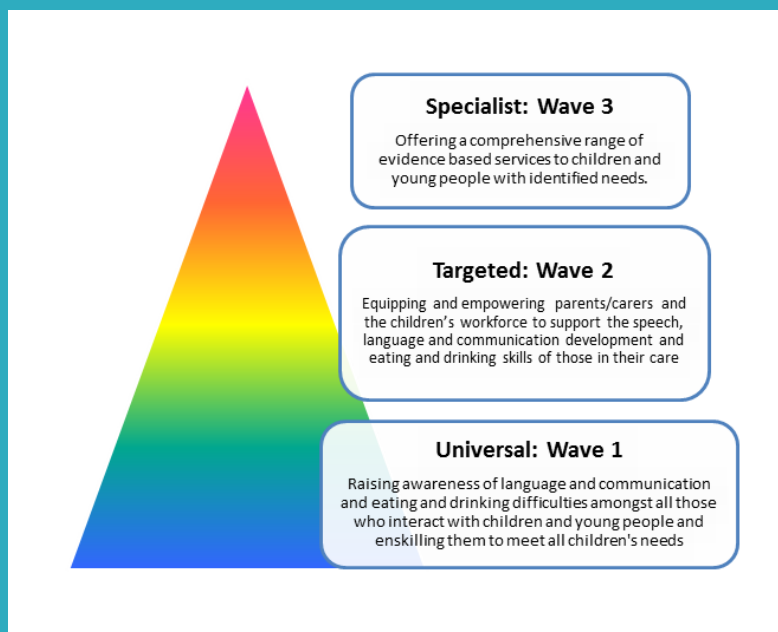
An innovative approach to growth means that the service has a number of out of borough commissions and specifically funded projects. Places we work include:



OUR MISSION AND AIMS

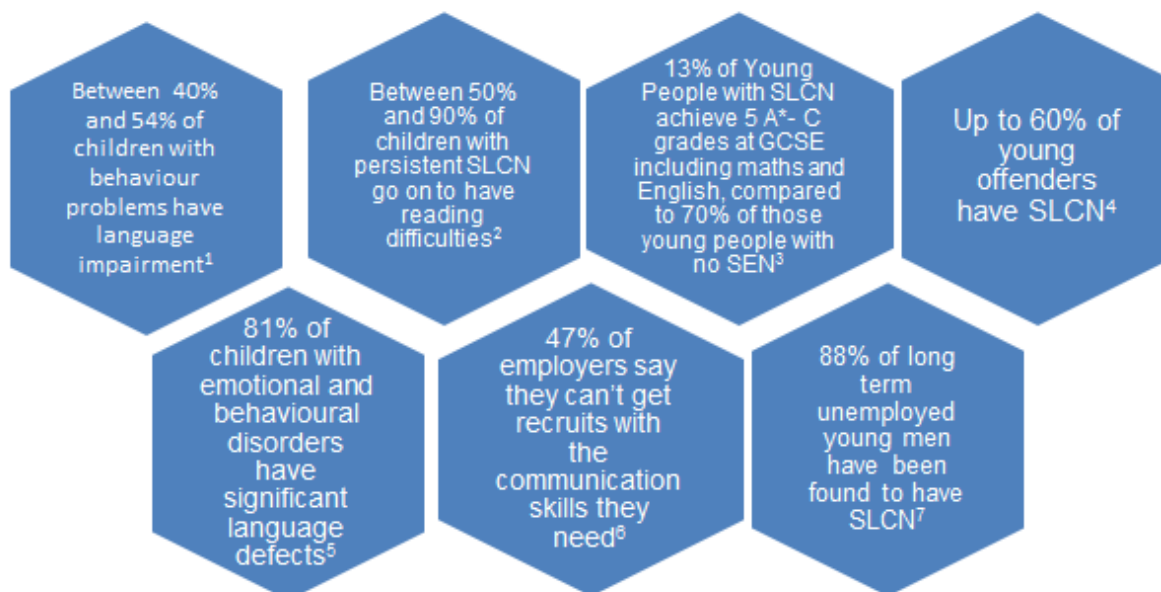
We work to improve children and young people's speech, language and communication, and eating and drinking skills by offering a unified system across the pyramid of need (see diagram).

Speech, language, communication, eating and drinking all develop within a social context. The service believes strongly in partnership with families and the team around the child. We work together to create a system that is high quality, cost-effective and responsive to children and young people's needs.



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY CHANGES LIVES

The lack of appropriate Speech and Language Therapy intervention in a timely manner can have significant costs for individuals and society. Here is a brief summary of some of the evidence that indicates the lasting difference that speech and language therapy can make:



COVID-19 AND THE IMPACT ON OUR SERVICE

The events of recent months have been a period of huge change and challenge for our staff, our colleagues in schools and settings and of course for the children, young people and families with whom we work.

We are also acutely aware that many of our staff have lost relatives and friends as a result of the pandemic, or have been personally impacted in other ways.

A huge THANK YOU to our staff team who have worked tirelessly over past months and despite difficult circumstances have always kept the needs of children and families as a priority.

As NHS employees some members of our team were called upon to support our colleagues in Homerton Hospital.

Some members of our team volunteered to be ward clerks, others were trained as PPE Safety Officers, or other voluntary roles.

We have been using our speech and language expertise across the hospital, for example by giving support and advice around supporting communication whilst wearing PPE and sharing resources on how to explain coronavirus to children. Many of these resources have been shared on the Homerton Intranet

Supporting your children during the pandemic


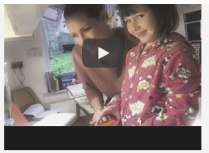
Supporting your children during the Covid-19 pandemic can be difficult. They may be asking you lots of questions about why you are going to work when their friend's parents are working from home. They may be anxious about coronavirus and its effect on you and other members of the family. They may also be finding separation from their school friends difficult too and be looking for interesting things to occupy their time.

Our therapy and psychology teams at the Hackney Ark are here to support staff members who have queries or concerns about their children and young people – whether this is a practical issue (like schooling) or any other concern. Staff can use the huh-tr.childcare@nhs.net email address to contact the team for advice.

Below are some documents that you may find useful to share with your children, produced by the Hackney Ark team. The first is *My Wellbeing Toolkit - Coronavirus*, which includes lots of information and resources. The second is an information booklet to share with your children about *Parents working during Coronavirus*

[Children's guide to coronavirus](#)
[Coronavirus: a book for children](#)

by Elizabeth Jenner, Kate Wilson & Nia Roberts
Illustrated by Axel Scheffler



RESPONDING TO THE NATIONAL CRISIS

Members of our team have contributed to profession-wide guidance and lobbying around support and adaptation of children's SaLT services during this time, working closely with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.



We have also been actively involved in collecting and sharing good practice and networking across the country via meetings, Clinical Networks and on social media.



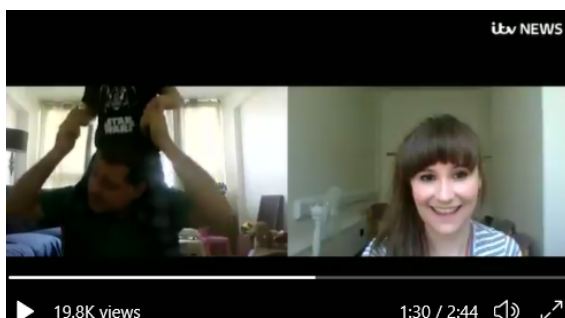
The Oak National Academy is a DfE-sponsored online portal of lessons for students, families and schools to access during COVID 19.

The Hackney SaLT Service was asked by the Royal College of SLTs to support the Specialist SEND section of the website through the creation of online sessions for parents and students on topics such as vocabulary, choice making and storytelling..

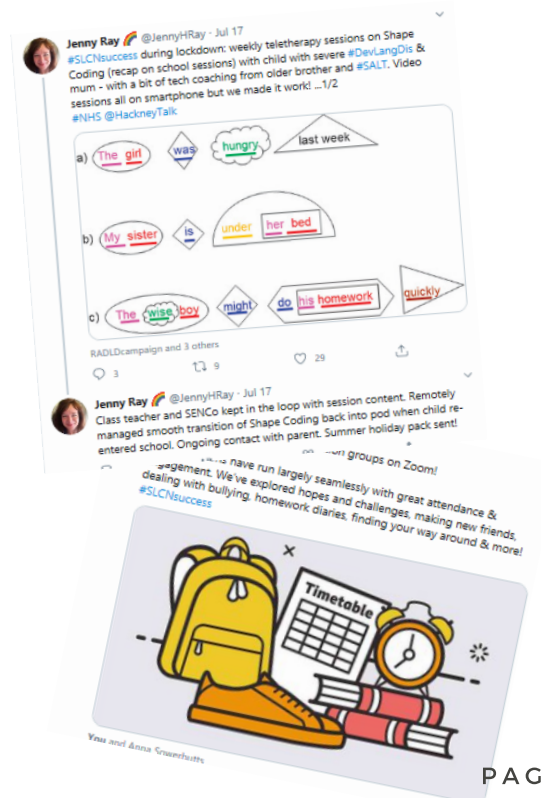
DEVELOPING A TELE THERAPY SERVICE

We have developed a comprehensive digital offer for children, young people and parents, providing initial assessments, ongoing therapy, training and group work via online methods.

We have received very positive feedback and we were even featured on ITV news as an example of how services have adapted during Lockdown.



We quickly set up a tele-therapy working group who facilitated learning and skill-sharing in the team, and shared our successes across the profession.

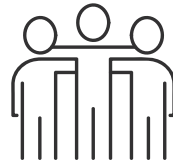


IMPACTS & LEARNING FROM COVID-19



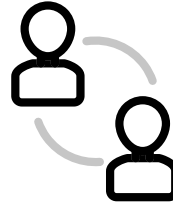
New Referrals

Since March 2020 referrals to the SaLT service have reduced by an average of 58%. In the Academic Year 2019-20 our service received 1641 referrals (this is down from the 1735 referrals received last year). This is an area of concern for us as there is likely to be a growing unmet need for speech and language intervention. Ensuring these children do not fall through the gaps will be a real priority.



Parental Engagement

Home schooling and tele-therapy has meant that our direct engagement with parents has increased. This has been a real positive and is something we would like to continue.



Multi-agency Working

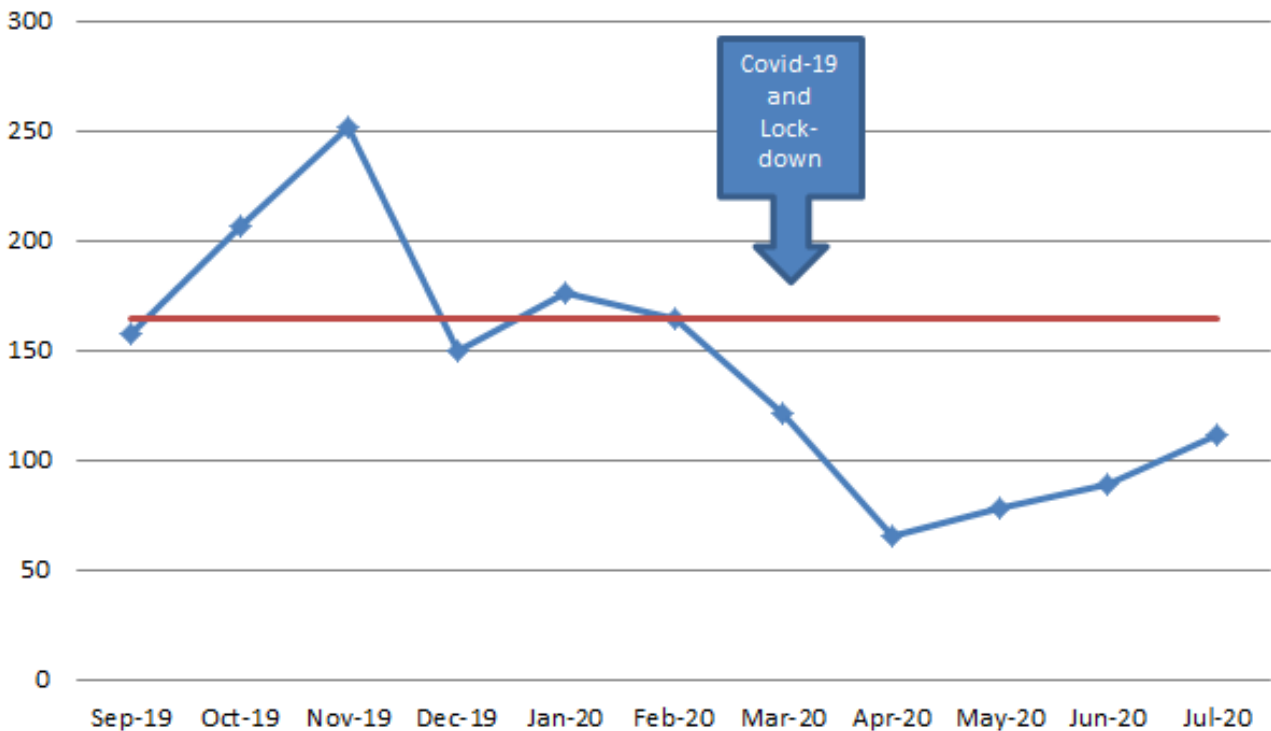
An increase in online meetings, and a heightened understanding of the importance of working together for families has meant that multi-agency working has improved significantly since COVID-19 and will continue.



Online working and data

Increased use of email and digital working for has led to an increased number of reported 'communication'-related incidents. New policies and training for staff is now in place and will continue to develop.

New Referrals to SaLT 19-20



STUDENT SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPISTS

Our service is one of the largest providers of clinical placements for student SaLTs from UCL and City, and these placements form a key part of under-graduate / post-graduate training to join the profession.

Following the cancellation of existing Spring / Summer placements by the universities in March due to COVID-19, Hackney has worked hard together with the Homerton, the universities and Health Education England, to ensure that students due to qualify in 2020 were still able to do so.

"The benefits of having students are definitely worth the effort I have put in...It has also been really helpful to do joint calls/ sessions...we have been able to discuss the case together and gives me an opportunity to reflect on my own work and decisions- this is always helpful but particularly useful at the moment with all the changes in how we are working."

27

27 placements from UCL and City completed by early March 2020

10

10 final-year students in the period June-July 2020 from City University (9 MSc2s and 1 BSc3) completed 15-day placements with the team - despite lockdown and a team working remotely.

INNOVATIVE REMOTE PLACEMENTS

A range of remote placement models were used to suit the needs of the service area. All were paired placements and used a team approach to planning and delivery. Support for Practice Educators was set up by dedicated Student Coordinators and included a joint Induction session and end of placement online student seminar, as well as online Forums where SaLTs could share experience.



Good feedback from both Practice Educators and students



A strong sense of team support despite no face-to-face contact - students commented that 'Everyone in the team I spoke to was so lovely and welcoming' and 'It is a lovely trust to be part of.'



Students appreciated a higher degree of independence, and they had still been able to access a range of different experiences.



Families and clients were happy to work with students remotely, with online sessions or 3-way phone calls providing more opportunities for unobtrusive shadowing or observation to develop skills.



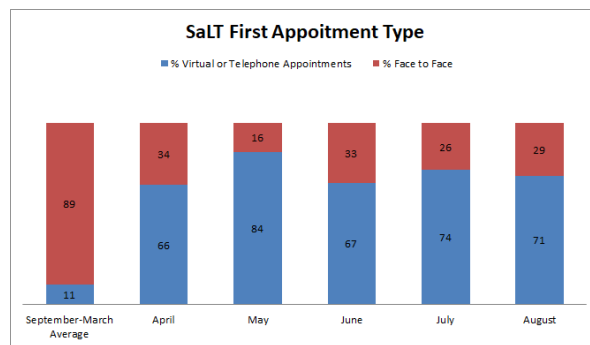
Additional online therapy sessions were able to be run independently by the students providing more input than the therapist would usually have had time for.

"I thought this would impact my experience greatly but in fact I felt that this was a great placement...as it encouraged independence and gave me a wide range of experiences"

ACTIVITY DATA

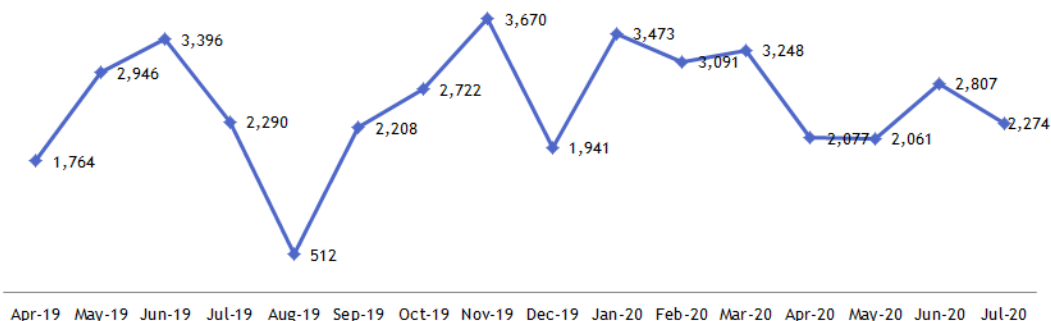
Activity data is one of the SaLT service's Key Performance Indicators. This refers to direct interactions between therapists and children or young people for assessment or intervention. This includes Face to Face contacts, telephone contacts and virtual therapy.

The graph (below) demonstrates that activity fluctuates across the year, largely due to school terms. It also shows that activity remained as expected throughout the period of Lockdown and despite challenges faced.



This bar chart demonstrates how our rapid shift towards telephone and virtual consultations enabled us to maintain activity and productivity throughout the year. Ordinarily 11% of first contacts are virtual, rising to 84% in May this year.

Speech and Language Therapy Activity



SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

EARLY YEARS AND CHILDREN'S CENTRES



In September, we presented the findings and learning from our Mind the Gap project at the RSLT National Conference. This was a joint quality improvement project with the Health Visiting team which aimed to increase the number of children accessing our service in the early years.

We have also been working with the Healthy Early Years multi-disciplinary group to develop the Birth to 5 tool. This is a resource which guides parents through the key milestones of their child's life and signposts to useful resources at a national and local level. We have been involved in every stage from developing the ideas, the content and the launch.



This year we have been working hard to use the momentum from numerous national campaigns to promote the need for strong early communication skills here in Hackney. These include the BBC's Tiny Happy People and the government's campaign Hungry Little Minds.

We have worked with the local health visiting team to build links and enhance the new national training programme aimed at improving the language of young children. We also worked with the childminder networks to share these national resources and develop their skills in supporting children's communication development.

Our Journey - Birth to 5 Years

- Stay up to date with your appointments and immunisations so you and your baby are healthy
- New birth contact (Health Visitor)
- Close and loving infant feeding
- Talking, singing and reading builds your baby's brain!
- 6-8 week review (GP and Health Visitor)
- Back to sleep... on tummy to play
- Around 6 months
- Introduce solid foods pick up the cup
- 8-10 month review (Health Visitor/Community Nursery Nurse)
- Talk and play everyday!
- Ball
- Visit the dentist for a first checkup by age 1 year
- Brush teeth twice a day as soon as they appear
- 27 month review (Health Visitor/Community Nursery Nurse)
- Growing up! I'm tall
- Active play 3 hours a day
- Moving more and sitting less
- Pre-school immunisations
- Starting school
- A healthy weight
- Make healthy snacks and drinks part of your 5 a day

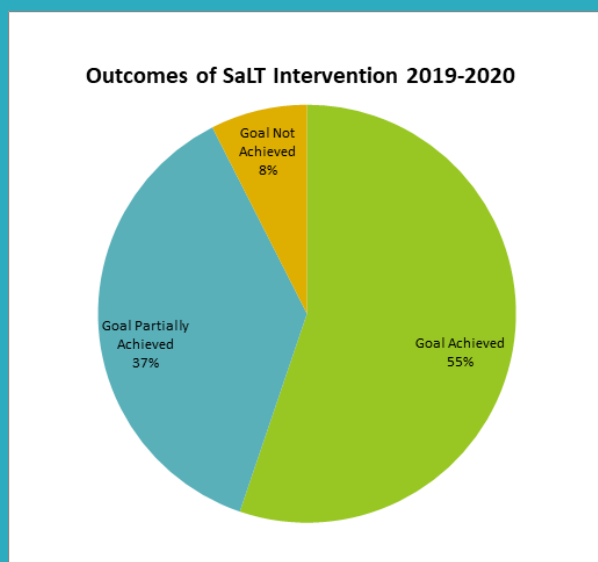
hackney learning trust | Hackney | NHS Hamerton University Hospital | Happy, healthy and ready to learn | www.learningtrust.co.uk/birthtofive

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Speech and Language Therapy Service measures the effectiveness of each package of intervention provided.

Appropriate, specific and measurable targets are set at the beginning of each intervention package.

Despite disruptions due to COVID-19 the pie chart (right) demonstrates that the majority of interventions continued to make a positive difference for children and young people. Goals not achieved were largely due to changes in the focus of intervention.



FEEDBACK

The Speech and Language Therapy Service use Smart Surveys throughout the year to ensure that the voice of children and young people, families and staff in schools is listened to. We want to make sure that the difference we make is really impacting on children's lives.

97% Children and young people say - "yes, SaLT has helped me"

92% Parents say that SaLT has helped their child

91% School staff say that SaLT has been of positive benefit to pupils in their school

Now I am more able to communicate with others at school and I have settled more at school and with friends.

It helped me because the first time I came to speech and language I was shy to speak with other kids but now I'm not - thanks

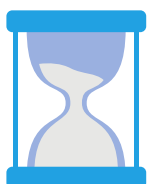
You have helped him getting his confidence, you saw the potential in him. We are very grateful for you and you have made a difference in our lives

A QUALITY SERVICE

As well as measuring what we provide for children and families and the difference that it makes, we also measure **how** our service is provided.



We measure how quickly new referrals are seen. We are proud that the average wait time for any new referral is **3.5 weeks**. Any cases where children wait more than 5 weeks are investigated.



Reasons for longer waits include:

- Parent choice
- Difficulties contacting the family
- Data anomaly or error

We also measure appointments not attended. The average across this year was:

7% Child was not brought (DNA)
4% cancelled by patient
3.5% cancelled by service

There was a significant increase in service cancelled appointments and other non-attendance in March and April 2020 but as digital therapy options were made available activity levels returned to normal.

Although we have continued to make contact with all new referrals (usually via digital platforms), full assessments of need have not always been possible, particularly for vulnerable families.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity within the Speech and Language Therapy profession is an area that many of our staff have been passionate about addressing for some time. RCSLT data shows that only 13% of SaLTs are from Black and Ethnic Minority populations and the profession is also predominantly female.

The Black Lives Matter movement and the events in America and closer to home this year have given us a renewed impetus to address this issue. The service, alongside our employer Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is committed to building a fair and just workforce for all. We are also committed to ensuring that our staff are culturally competent to work with our linguistically and ethnically diverse population.

We have formed a series of working groups with the aim of identifying realistic and achievable actions. The topics of these working groups are:

- Culturally competent and inclusive practitioners
- An inclusive and diverse workplace
- Towards a more diverse profession
- Specific support for BAE staff

Some of the actions we have already implemented include: a commitment to ensure diverse representation in our symbol and picture resources, training and reflection sessions relating to the topic of cultural competency, sharing of reading lists and a diversity-focussed book club, participation in Homerton's Together We Rise staff network, inclusion of diversity issues in our staff induction.



These are small steps that we are committed to continuing to make and build upon, in partnership with our colleagues across Health, Education and Social Care through the coming year.

INCIDENTS AND LEARNING

Incidents and near misses are recorded on a NHS system to ensure that we learn from mistakes and take an honest and open approach to reporting issues.



8 out of the 16 incidents reported in 2019-2020 related to issues of confidentiality and data. This was due to the increase in online and email-based communication with families.



New systems and procedures have been set up to support the team and reduce these incidents in the future.



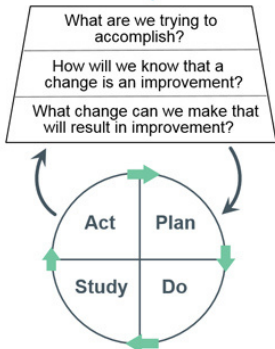
We welcome comments and feedback on our service, both positive and negative. Learning from feedback this year has included:

- Ensuring regular communication with parents when changes in service occur
- Clarity on responsibility to inform both parents about child's progress when parents are separated

AUDIT & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

This year we have continued to use Quality Improvement (QI) tools to aid our service developments and improvements.

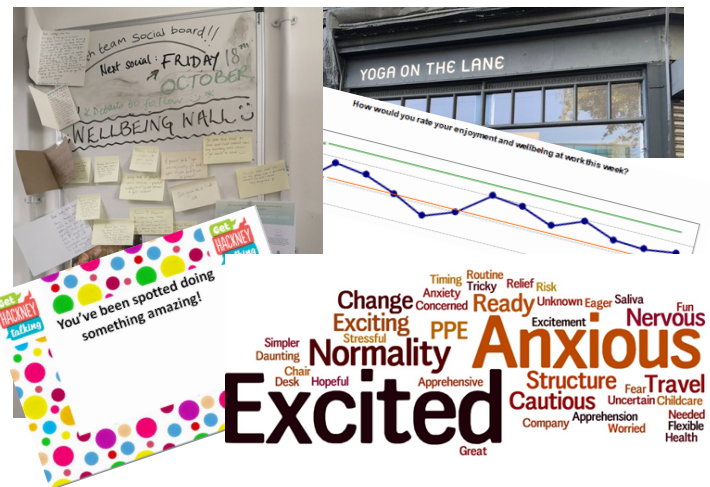
Model for Improvement



Using the model for improvement we have engaged in QI projects to:

- support staff wellbeing
- improve recruitment and retention
- Instigate a teletherapy service

The QI approach has enabled us to instigate changes in a structured way, and to use data and feedback to ensure that the changes we make bring about real and meaningful improvements.



We have continued to build on our QI project to improve staff wellbeing and in November we were shortlisted for a NHS Elect Excellent Teamwork Award. The tools and support structures developed have led to improved staff wellbeing and better outcomes for children as a result.

We continue to audit our team's practice and compliance against set standards. A focus this year has been the auditing of casenotes to ensure data recording and collecting is accurate.

EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

As a service we actively encourage clinician-research. Two of our staff members are completing a NIHR funded MRes and one staff member is completing a NIHR funded PhD.

We believe it is everyone's responsibility to understand, interpret and apply research. Clinical networks and journal clubs allow our whole team to keep up to date.

We also partner with other organisations to support larger research projects by collecting data and providing advice and feedback.



Our Twitter account is a good way to make research connections, promote and disseminate research practice and learn from others.

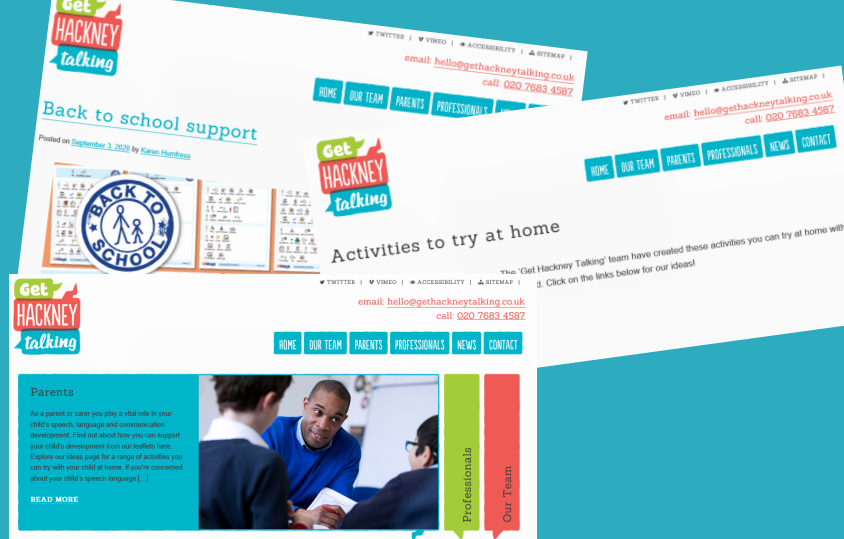


SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Website

www.gethackneytalking.co.uk

This year we have further developed our web presence with regular blog posts and updated resources and ideas to support parents during school closures and to share information.



Twitter

@HackneyTalk
1,613 followers

Twitter is used to link with professionals and partner agencies. We now have 1587 followers



Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/gethackneytalking/>
306 page likes - 338 followers

This year saw the successful re-launch of our Facebook page with posts aimed mainly at parents and local partners

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The Speech and Language Therapy Team is always changing and developing in order to improve. Here are some of the things we would like to focus on in the coming year:



Data

Collecting and collating in the right ways at the right time with the right tools in order to positively influence are improvements



Diversity and Inclusion

Ensuring we are a culturally competent and diverse team in order to better serve our diverse community, and so that all staff experience is positive and affirming



Staff Well-being

Continuing to focus on staff well-being project, particularly through periods of change and uncertainty



Joint Commissioning

Working with the CCG and other stakeholders to explore a commissioning model that works for children and families



Business Development

Ensuring that our service continues to meet the needs of children and family by developing a sustainable model for business and growth.



Teletherapy and Web Presence

In order to remain resilient through the coming year we will focus on the continued development of our teletherapy offer, website and social media.

REFERENCES

from page 2

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4. Bryan K, Freer J, Furlong C. Language and communication difficulties in juvenile offenders. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders* 2007; 42, 505-520.
5. Information provided by the Youth Communication team, North Yorkshire, covering April 2016 to March 2017, and validated by Loughborough University 2017.
6. Courtesy of The CommunicationTrust
7. Elliott N. (2009) Interim results from a PhD in preparation. An investigation into the Communication Skills of Long-Term Unemployed Young Men.

FURTHER INFORMATION



Further information is available on request. In addition to this overarching report, each individual commissioner has received a report with more detailed information specific to the service they commission.





**For more information:
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020 7683 4587**