

# Commissioning speech and language therapy services in the post 16 sector

## THE 'ONE STOP' GUIDE

**STEP 01** UNDERSTAND  
Your aims and context

**STEP 02** UNDERSTAND  
Who you are helping

**STEP 03** UNDERSTAND  
What your options are

**STEP 04** UNDERSTAND  
The practicalities

**STEP 05** UNDERSTAND  
How to review and improve



Isn't it complicated?

No, it's easy if you take it step by step



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Information about the importance of speech, language and communication in post 16 settings and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

### Simple steps to commissioning additional support:

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Are speech, language and communication needs common in post 16 students?

YES!

### DID YOU KNOW?

Good communication skills are rated by schools, employers and politicians as the top/most important employability skills needed for young people entering their first job.

**ASDAN EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS FORUM, VIRTUAL THINK TANK SURVEY RESULTS, 2012**

### DID YOU KNOW?

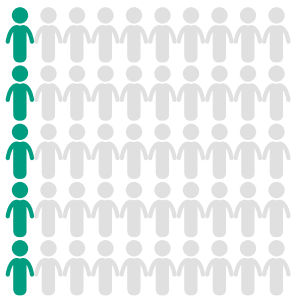
FE staff are more likely to report that 'My setting has not provided or arranged any training for me on oracy in the last 3 years' than staff in other phases of education.

**MILLARD & MENZIES, 2016**

# INTRODUCTION



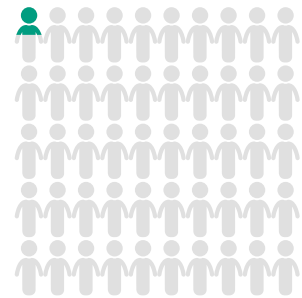
## Did you know?



10% of young people and children have long term SLCN likely to persist into adulthood



7.56% have a developmental language disorder (DLD)



1% have severe and complex speech, language and communication needs.

The good news is that the right support can make a huge difference!



### The Communication Trust's 'Talking about a Generation' report found:

- The demands of the workplace rely increasingly on good communication skills, yet speech, language and communication is not built into the functional skills qualification and communication skills are not a focus in FE
- Without these skills young people are significantly less likely to be employed and more likely to experience mental health problems and enter the criminal justice system
- Young people who have an EHC plan should have their speech and language requirements written into their plan, yet speech and language therapy is often not commissioned for 18-25 year olds. However, there are examples of effective 'beyond school' provision for young people with SLCN.\*

\*see Find Out More box on page 4

### DID YOU KNOW?

The 2016 CBI/Pearson Education and Skills survey found that around **HALF OF BUSINESSES WERE NOT SATISFIED WITH SCHOOL LEAVERS' SKILLS IN COMMUNICATION.** Even for graduates, 23% of employers reported dissatisfaction with communication skills, compared to 14% for literacy and 9% for numeracy.

**CBI/PEARSON EDUCATION AND SKILLS SURVEY, 2016**

## SOFT SKILLS?

Communication skills are sometimes recognised as ‘soft skills’ that employers value. These skills are essential both in the workplace and life.

“Firms need young people who are resilient, good communicators and understand how to work as part of a team.”

**John Longworth, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), 2014**

**I CAN TALK 8 (2ND EDITION)**

### Skills for work, skills for life I CAN TALK 8 (2ND EDITION)

Soft skills employers want	Underpinned by effective communication skills which help you to...
Being a team player	Listen effectively to the views of others; express opinions; initiate and maintain relationships
Accepting responsibility	Give and receive criticism constructively; reflect on how you will approach a task
Resolving conflict	Change the style of how you talk so that you can diffuse rather than inflame a situation
Influencing	Use persuasive language, for example if you want someone to buy what you’re selling or change their behaviour
Working independently	Recognise when you don’t understand and ask for clarification
Creativity	Explain a new idea to a manager or colleague

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS ACTIVELY DEVELOP THROUGH THE TEENAGE YEARS AND INTO ADULTHOOD SO THE RIGHT SUPPORT CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE

“The teenage years are a time of massive brain development and restructuring, when some nerve connections that are not needed during adulthood are ‘pruned’. During this time, certain language related tasks develop, such as selective attention control, working memory and problem solving. However, as well as this, because of the ‘pruning’, adolescents can misinterpret emotions such as fear, and find logical explanations and reasoning difficult.”

**I CAN TALK SERIES – ISSUE 10 SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION IN SECONDARY AGED PUPILS**

### How can you help develop these skills?

Some FE colleges have found that **COMMISSIONING A SPECIALIST** is an effective means of improving universal practice in staff and providing individualised support for specific students. Each post 16 setting will need to decide how a commissioned specialist could help them improve their offer in terms of speech, language and communication. **The following 5 steps will talk you through the basic things you need to consider.**

### FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ISSUE:

- I CAN Talk 8: Skills for work, skills for life (2nd edition)
- I CAN Talk 10: Speech, Language and Communication in Secondary-aged Young People
- Association of Colleges’ case studies
- Bercow Report

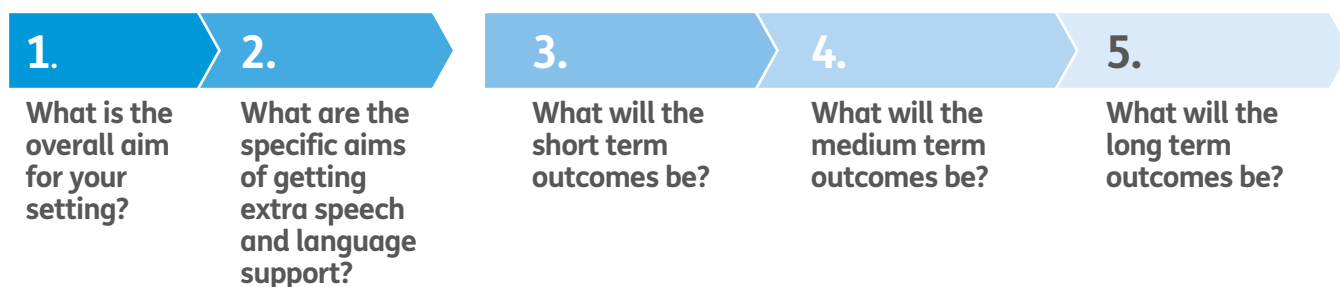
# STEP 1

## Understand the aims and context of your post 16 setting



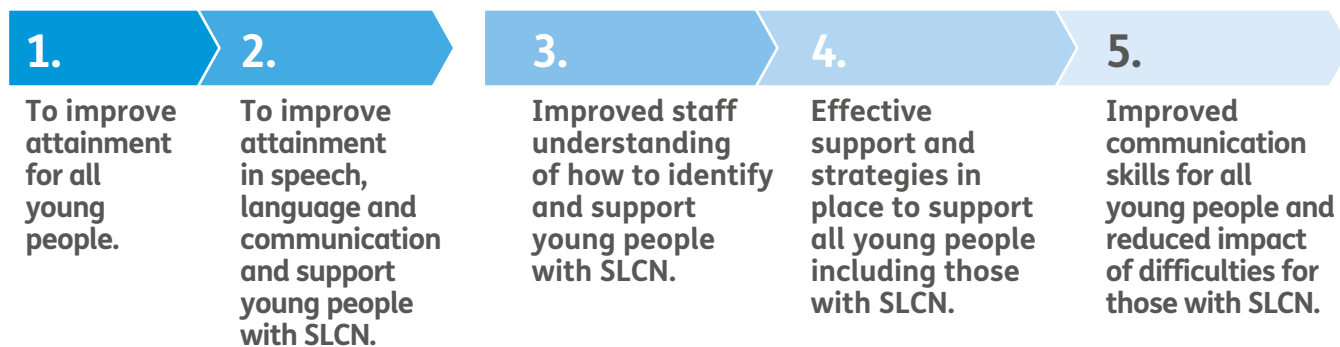
When planning for young people's speech, language and communication needs, you may want to commission additional support. Before you do this, it is important to understand the aims and context of your setting.

Identify the issue you want to address and the outcomes you want on an 'outcomes chain'.



### Overall aims

### Example



**Understand your current context and what you already have in place to support communication and oracy for specific students and for young people more generally.**

- Review your links with feeder schools to see how well the work carried out in those schools is being built on in college
- Review services already provided internally and externally (internal specialist skills, NHS service, advisory team etc)
- Consult staff about existing speech, language and communication practice/knowledge
- Evaluate knowledge of young people's skills and needs
- Review your documents and policies for approach to speech, language and communication

#### FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- Auditing current staff knowledge: SLCF
- Young people's skills: Progression tools (16-18)

# STEP 2

## Understand who you are helping

So have you really thought about WHO will benefit from your commissioned service?

The young people! And staff... ?

While some young people may require periods of one to one support, it is essential you also look at how the expertise of a speech and language specialist can be used to train staff, both teaching and support staff. When students are receiving speech and language support it can be very beneficial to also liaise with parents and carers so that they can reinforce techniques at home. **It's important to understand what the additional service will achieve before you commission it.**

### Your service may:

#### DIRECTLY HELP

##### FE TUTOR

who is trained in how to support development of oracy skills within lessons and how to teach students useful strategies.

#### WHICH WILL ALSO HELP

##### STUDENT

who is supported to develop their oracy skills and understand strategies they find helpful.

##### WORK PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR

who is able to have a conversation with a student about which strategies they need to support them in having a successful placement.

##### YOUNG PERSON WITH SLCN

who will undertake small group work with a speech and language therapist to practice their social communication skills.

##### FE SUPPORT STAFF

who see effective support strategies being modelled and can use them in sessions with the young person.

##### PARENT /CARER

who will receive information which they can use at home and in other environments to support good communication with their child.

### CASE STUDY, KENT:

Support for SLCN is embedded in East Kent College. The multi-campus college directly employs a speech and language therapist (SLT) to work as part of the wider staff team. The SLT works across the whole system developing infrastructure and providing training as well as supporting young people.

**EAST KENT COLLEGE**

### FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

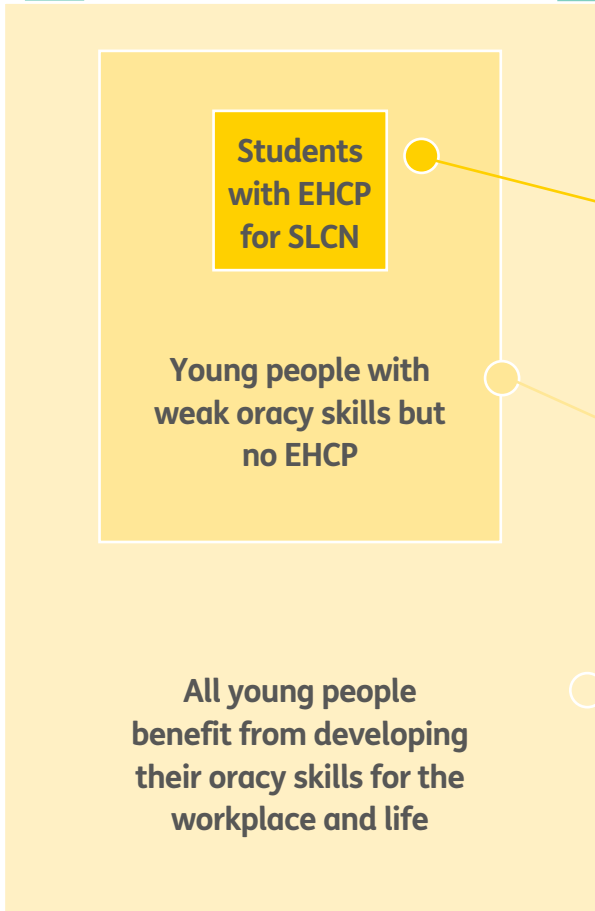
- Staff knowledge requirements: **SLCF**
- Young people's skills: **Progression Tools (16-18) and Universally Speaking 11-18**

# STEP 3

## Understand what your options are

Isn't it just about getting some specialist support for the young people who are really struggling or have an EHCP?

No. If possible, it is best to think about your whole setting and providing support that will benefit all young people as well as those with more specialist needs. That way you can really maximise the benefits of your additional support and include young people whose needs may have been missed or misdiagnosed.



### OPTIONS:

**Young people with an EHCP** may require some individualised support, eg a personal 'communication passport' to share with staff/peers.

**Young people with no EHCP who need support** may benefit from trained teaching support staff who embed speech and language into the curriculum. For example, trained staff could run social skills groups during break times.

**All young people** may benefit from trained staff who understand how to make the FE environment 'communication friendly'.

### FIND OUT MORE ABOUT INCLUSIVE APPROACHES:

- **Everybody Included: The SEND Code of Practice explained**
- **Implementing the SEND Code of Practice**
- **Communicating the Code**
- **Association of Colleges' case studies**

### CASE STUDY, BEDFORD:


"We supported the funding application made by the parents of a high-needs student for a speech and language therapist. That application led to the formation of a social group for a small group of students, and we then took the learning from that social group and disseminated to the rest of the staff leading to benefits for all staff and students. It really maximised the impact of the new commissioned service."

BEDFORD COLLEGE




# STEP 4

## Understand the practicalities



Should I just give our local speech therapist a call now?

Well there could be a better way to deliver the service your post 16 setting has identified...



### What are the options for commissioning the activities you want?

- NHS commissioned services
- Independent/3rd party commissioned services
- Share the commissioned service with another post 16 setting
- Use 'in-house' specialism

### You need to consider if the service provider is:

#### Qualified



Check that the commissioned provider has the right legal registration and qualifications.

#### Supervised



Check that the commissioned provider has a supervisor to support their work.

#### Insured



Check the provider's policies, eg public liability insurance, data protection and safeguarding etc.

**If your commissioned provider is an SLT, they need to be HCPC registered. You can check this on the HCPC website.**

### Also consider the practical challenges in your setting:

- Space/physical resources
- Timetables (staff and young people)
- How to integrate your commissioned service into your post 16 setting, eg using staff meetings etc

### FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

#### Speech Therapy Professionals

- RCSLT Guidance on quality standards for local authorities and schools
- ASLTIP
- HCPC



# STEP 5

## Understand how to review and improve



Our new speech, language and communication service sounds great!

Yes, but how will you know it has actually made a difference?



### Planning the evaluation of your commissioned speech, language and communication service

You need to agree how you are going to evaluate the service with your service provider before it begins.

#### Why?

- So you will understand how well you achieved your aims and outcomes
- So you understand the resources used to achieve these outcomes and can demonstrate good value for money
- To gather evidence and data to share with parents, governors, OFSTED etc

**Most importantly, to help you understand how you might improve your services in the future and have even greater impact!**

### Examples of how you may evaluate against your original aims:

#### Aims

#### How to evaluate

Better staff awareness of need/ identification

Test staff knowledge before and after to measure this

A more communication friendly post 16 setting environment

Complete environment audits before and after

Improvement in young person's speech, language and communication

Use assessments and screening tools to measure this

Improvement in young person's behaviour and performance

Look at young person's attendance and behaviour before and after service

#### FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- Testing staff knowledge: SLCF
- Screening tools: Progression Tools (16-18)
- Planning evaluation: Building an approach to self evaluation



# References

ASDAN (2012). Employment and Skills Forum, Virtual Think Tank Survey Results, 2012

Association of Colleges (AOC): Case Studies

Association of Speech and Language Therapists in Independent Practice (ASLTIP)

Bercow, J. (2008). The Bercow Report: A review of services for children and young people (0-19) with speech, language and communication needs

Better Communication (2015). Implementing the SEND Code of Practice (0-25): Implications for SLCN

CBI (2016). The Right Combination - The CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2016

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

I CAN (2016). Skills for work, skills for life: I CAN Talk 8 (2nd edition)

I CAN (2011). Speech, Language and Communication in Secondary-aged Young People: I CAN Talk 10

Millard, W. and Menzies, L. (2016). The State of Speaking in Our Schools. Research Voice 21

RCSLT (2011). Guidance on quality standards for local authorities and schools as commissioners of speech and language therapy services in the UK

The Communication Trust (2016). Building an Approach to Self Evaluation

The Communication Trust: Further Education Case Studies

The Communication Trust: Progression Tools (16-18)

The Communication Trust: Speech Language and Communication Framework (SLCF)

The Communication Trust (2017). Talking About a Generation: Current Policy, Evidence and Practice for Speech, Language and Communication

The Communication Trust: Universally Speaking - Ages and stages of children's communication development

# Other helpful commissioning resources

- Gascoigne M.T. (2015). Commissioning for Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN): Using the evidence from the Better Communication Research Programme
- Lazarus, C. (2004). Making it Personal 2. How to commission for personalisation: Guidance for commissioners and others in children and young people
- RCSLT (2009). Resource Manual for Commissioning and Planning Services for SLCN
- The Communication Trust. Communicating the Code, Ch7 Joint Commissioning

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We'd love to hear what you think about this guidance. Do you have 5 minutes to complete a short survey to share your thoughts?

[https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/  
tctguide](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/tctguide)



[www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)