

September 2020

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE INFORMATION FROM THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICE

Dear Parents / Guardians

We have tried to keep you updated with our service over the course of the coronavirus pandemic, lockdown and the gradual easing of lockdown restrictions.

We've made contact with you via telephone, video and our social media channels. Now, as everyone is preparing for returning to school, we are working with our colleagues in education and day care settings to consider the best way to see your children again, as safely and effectively as possible. We will start to offer school and nursery appointments towards the end of September, giving your children time to settle into their new school routines.

We have developed a risk assessment for our Speech and Language Therapy Service but we will also be working to the risk assessments developed by schools and nurseries. This means we may ask you not to attend a school appointment but we will contact you to discuss it afterwards. We may ask you to limit the number of adults who come to appointments to 1 where possible. If you do need more than 1 adult to attend please do contact us so we can discuss the best way to support you with this.

We all have a responsibility to continue with precautions as guided by the government, this includes:

- social distancing to 2 metres where possible
- wearing face coverings
- cancelling appointments when someone in the family, or our own staff, develops symptoms of coronavirus

At all of your appointments with us, including those in schools and nurseries, our staff will be wearing face shields and, where possible, will maintain 2 metres social distance.

We understand that young children cannot understand the need for social distancing so we will be able to work at 1 metre where necessary.

Our professional organisations are still recommending that we continue with telehealth appointments wherever possible and we will continue to offer telephone and video contact where we feel this is appropriate.

We're sure you will appreciate that there are now a number of children and young people who are waiting for a face to face appointment from our service. We appreciate your patience during this time – we will see your children as quickly and safely as possible but there will be an increase in our waiting times. Please do continue to view our social media pages for advice and support.

If you have any concerns or questions about your child's speech and language therapy, please get in touch with us via TVCCG.speechtherapy@nhs.net. Please include your child's name and date of birth so we can access their patient records.

(Please note that whilst NHS emails are secure, we cannot guarantee a secure link when forwarding information to private email accounts – we will not be in a position to send specific clinical information about your child in this manner but would willingly send anonymous resources and hand-outs).

You can also find general information and advice on our Facebook page, our Twitter page, and our YouTube channel – **South Tees NHS Speech Therapy**.

Many thanks for your patience and understanding at this time.



Alison Smithies
South Tees NHS Speech and Language Therapy Service Manager
on behalf of the Speech and Language Therapy Team