Children and Young Peoples Therapy Services in Buckinghamshire
Includes – Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is changing for parents/carers?
   a. It will be easier to talk to someone about your child’s progress. Parents/carers will be more involved in setting goals and outcomes. The therapists will all be in one service so parents/carers will not have to do as much coordination between professionals as they have told us they do at the moment. Reports will be written in a style and language that is easier to understand.

2. I’m worried that there won’t be specialists or experts anymore?
   a. There will still be specially trained speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. The difference is that they will be working much more closely together.

3. How will the needs of children with particular conditions be met?
   a. Therapists are trained to support children with a wide range of needs. Within the service there will be some staff with particular expertise about a condition, who people can talk to for advice. Staff can also access additional training.

4. Who will be monitoring the service and who do we go to if it’s not working?
   a. The service is overseen by a manager at the Council who will meet with the service every month to look at performance and any issues arising. The service will have processes in place for giving feedback and making complaints and information on how to do this will be available on the service website. You can also contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

5. How is it going to work in practice?
   a. Anyone, including parents/carers, schools and GPs can make a referral into the service, providing they have the parent or carer’s consent. When a referral is accepted parents/carers will be contacted and information provided about what to do while they are waiting for an assessment.

6. What does ‘one team’ mean?
   a. This means that there will be clinical staff with different training and specialisms working together to provide the service. For example there could be joint assessments. The main difference in how services will be provided is to children accessing more than one therapy, as this will feel much better coordinated and staff will be able to talk to each other much more easily.
7 When will we know who is going to be providing the service?
a. We’ll know sometime towards the end of January 2017 who has been awarded the contract to supply the services.

8 When will the changes take effect?
a. The new contract will begin on 1 April 2017, but it will take time to move to the new way of delivering services. We are expecting the new service to be fully operational by April 2018.

9 Will we still be able to access these therapies while the new providers are settling in, or can we expect these services to be temporarily unavailable?
a. Yes therapy services will continue to be available during the changeover period. We will aim for a seamless changeover to avoid any disruption of services. More information will be available nearer the time.

10 Has the funding been cut for Children’s Therapies?
a. No, funding has not been cut for the new service.

11 How are you going to achieve the new aims?
a. The service will work to a specification which clearly sets out how we want it to be delivered. We will monitor the service regularly and listen to feedback from people who use the service.

12 What does one team mean in terms of line management of each of the services?
a. The therapists will still have clinical supervisors for their own discipline. For example, a physiotherapist will still be supervised by a physiotherapist for their casework.

13 Where will the team be located?
a. This will depend on the office buildings of the provider who is awarded the contract, so we don’t know just yet.

14 When will we have the next update communicated to us?
a. The next update will be in January 2017, when we will know who has been awarded the contract.

15 How long will it take to get hold of someone to talk to/ for meetings/ for advice/ for children to be seen?
a. There are going to be communication standards about responding to people who contact the service. There will continue to be a focus on reducing waiting times.

16 Will there still be link therapists for schools?
a. Yes link therapists will continue to be part of the service.
17 How are you going to ensure that using technology is not discriminatory for people who can’t access online resources?
   a. Although it is expected that many people will use online resources, the service will need to provide information in a paper-based format, for people who are not able to access the internet. Service staff will also talk through information over the phone.

18 How will modern technology help and how will it be offered?
   a. Technology can help with therapy by providing ways for exercises to be practised at home or school, for example by having apps on smartphones or tablets, and videos online, which can be downloaded, watched and used at home or at school. This means that even when the therapist isn’t present the child or young person can still see and practise how to do an exercise. Children, young people, families and schools will have the choice about whether they want to use it or not, or if they want to try it and see how it goes.

19 How will you keep parents better informed?
   a. Therapists will ask parents how they want to be communicated with. If a child is seen in school the therapist will do a short written update following the session. It will be clearer for parents how to contact the therapist to talk about their child’s progress.