

Speech Therapy for people who stammer

Request

1. Is the trust commissioned to provide a speech therapy service for children who stammer?
2. If so, what is: the age range?
 - a. the current waiting time from referral to assessment?
 - b. the current waiting time from assessment to first appointment?;
 - c. the current number of children on the waiting list for assessment and first appointment?
 - d. What does your speech therapy service consist of for children who stammer?
3. Is the trust commissioned to provide a speech therapy service for adults who stammer?
4. If so, what is: the age range?
 - a. the current waiting time from referral to assessment?
 - b. the current waiting time from assessment to first appointment?
 - c. the current number of adults on the waiting list for assessment and first appointment?
 - d. What does your speech therapy consist of for adults who stammer?
5. Does the trust have any plans in the current financial year or longer term to introduce / reduce / expand speech therapy services for children / adults who stammer?

Our Response

1. Yes. However, the service is not commissioned separately for children who stammer; provision for stammering is included in the overall service specification agreed with local health commissioners for children and young people with significant speech, language and communication needs.
2. The age range for the service specification is 0-16 years, and up to 19 years for those young people who attend statutory education, i.e. special school placement, mainstream 6th form provision.
 - a. The average current waiting time for the service from referral to first appointment is 5 weeks
 - b. In line with local and national referral to first intervention practice, assessment of need and first treatment is undertaken. Therefore, the service does not hold a separate waiting list from "assessment to first appointment".
 - c. See b above.
 - d. The service for children who stammer comprises the following elements which are utilised based on individual needs:
 - telephone screening and contact for some referrals
 - first assessment and treatment session
 - partnership with parents/carers to set shared goals
 - individual therapy input
 - group therapy input
 - intensive group model delivered once per year
 - collaboration with Early Years settings, schools and relevant others in the child's communication environments.
3. There is a service for adults who stammer.

4. This is from age 16 for those in non-statutory education and those in work. There is no upper age limit.
 - a. The current waiting time for an Initial Assessment is under 4 weeks
 - b. The longest wait is currently 3 weeks.
 - c. As at 31 October there were 3 people awaiting treatment.
 - d. Therapy will initially be individual, but then may be in a group course.

Therapy:

Relaxation and ways to monitor and modify tension

Release of tension in specific areas e.g. jaw, larynx.

Diaphragmatic breathing and coordinating with speech

Block modification

Easy onset

Vocal Fold management

Rate control

Modification of volume

Mindfulness

Solution Focussed Brief Therapy

Cognitive approach to reduce Negative automatic thoughts

Avoidance reduction

Psychology of change

Communication skills

Speaking Circles

Problem solving through discussion

Telephone practice

Interview practice

Presentation skills + practice

5. The Speech and Language Therapy Service is subject to the Trust's current 5 year plan for cost and quality improvements. However, there are currently no plans either to expand or reduce the Speech and Language Therapy Service for children or adults who stammer.