

What is a Speech and Language Therapist?

A Speech and Language Therapist is a specialist in communication and swallowing difficulties.

What services does the Adult Community Speech and Language Therapy service offer?

- This service is for adults over the age of 18 years.
- This service sees clients in one of the Community Hospitals or in outpatient clinics in the Community Hospitals. Home visits are offered in exceptional circumstances.
- This service provides assessment, diagnosis, treatment and management of swallowing and communication conditions.
- Treatment and advice is provided once you have had an assessment. The therapist will decide on the most appropriate treatment for your problem.

What are swallowing difficulties?

- Swallowing difficulties may occur when there are changes to the strength, movement or coordination of the muscles of the face, mouth and throat.
- Problems with swallowing may be shown by coughing, clearing your throat or keeping food or drinks in your mouth when eating and/or drinking.
- Sometimes these problems can result in unexpected weight loss or chest infections.
- A Speech and Language Therapist will be able to advise you on the best way to manage these problems.

What are communication difficulties?

- This is where a person has difficulty understanding what others are saying or expressing themselves using speech, language or by other means, such as gesture or electronic devices.
- The Speech and Language Therapist will be able to assess your communication skills to identify areas of difficulty and will advise you on the best way to help with those areas.
- They may suggest a period of therapy or strategies to best manage the problem.

What can I expect when I attend my appointment?

- Your appointment letter will say where to wait depending on the clinic you are attending.
- Your first appointment may take up to one hour.
- The appointment will take place in a clinic environment; in exceptional circumstances, if you are very unwell and bedbound, a home visit may be offered.
- The Speech and Language Therapist will need to ask you questions about your condition.
- For a swallowing appointment the therapist may ask you to eat or drink during the session. You do not need to fast for this assessment.
- You may be asked to undertake some informal or formal assessments.
- Once you have been seen by the Speech and Language Therapist they will discuss what is needed to manage your condition.
- If you require the services of an interpreter at your appointment please telephone the Speech and Language Therapy service on 01603 218132 or 01603 776816.

What should I do if I cannot make the appointment?

Please telephone the Speech & Language Therapy appointments line on 01603 776816

Please arrive on time for your appointment. If you arrive late we regret to inform you that you may not be seen.