

You said:

1. Communication with the Setting

There is concern that communication between the Speech and Language service and the child's educational setting often relies heavily on the parent acting as the go-between. This can lead to miscommunication, delays, and inconsistent support.

Recommendation:

- Direct communication channels should be established between the Speech and Language service and the school or early years setting, ensuring clarity and shared responsibility.
- Regular updates should be provided to settings **without relying solely** on parental relaying of information.

We did:

- We are ensuring that all advice given at the speech and language therapy drop ins is shared with the child's early years setting, with consent from the parents.
- We have actively engaged with early years settings and strongly encouraged them to share with us, any information they feel may be useful about a child, for the parent to bring to drop in, where this is appropriate.
- We have implemented virtual drop ins for any parents struggling to attend the Family Hubs, which both parents and early years settings can attend.

You said:

2. Parental Involvement and Family Structures

Questions were raised about how parental involvement is managed when families are separated or divorced. There is concern about whether both parents are included in communication, decisions, and updates.

Recommendation:

- Clear protocols should be put in place to involve all legal guardians, regardless of family structure, ensuring that both parents (where appropriate) are kept informed and able to contribute to their child's care plan.

We did:

- We are ensuring that practitioners update the SystmOne record with all legal guardians' contact information where this is shared. Any next steps from a drop in will then be shared with all legal guardians.
- We encourage any legal guardian to contact the service if they are not receiving any updates, so that their details can be added to their child's record.

You said:

3. Language, Jargon, and EAL Barriers

Some parents, particularly those for whom English is an additional language, reported that jargon-heavy communication can be inaccessible and confusing.

Recommendation:

- Use clear, jargon-free language in all verbal and written communication.
- Offer translation or interpretation services where needed.
- Provide simplified written summaries alongside clinical reports.

We did:

- We continue to provide short, clear summaries following each attendance at a drop in.
- We translate all written information into the parent's first language, where this is not English.
- We continue to utilise translators, either in person or on the telephone, in drop-in clinics where this is requested.

You said:**4. Transport and Access Issues**

Families have highlighted that transport to and from appointments can be a barrier to access, particularly for those without a car or with limited mobility.

Recommendation:

- Consider community-based delivery models where services are offered in local schools or centres.
- Explore travel support schemes or virtual sessions where appropriate.

We did:

- The drop in model is community based and delivered from Children's Centres designated at Family Hubs across 10 locations in Lincolnshire. Working within the children's centres has developed greater links between early years services, so that families can access a range of support for their child in one location. These venues are strategically placed across Lincolnshire, in conjunction with the local authority. All are easily accessible by public transport and have a car park attached.
- We have implemented virtual drop ins for any parents struggling to attend the Family Hubs, which both parents and early years settings can attend.

You said:**5. Parental Anxiety or Overwhelm**

Some parents reported feeling too overwhelmed or nervous to attend appointments, especially if they feel blamed or judged.

Recommendation:

- Offer a welcoming, non-judgemental environment and ensure professionals are trained in trauma-informed and empathetic practice.
- Provide pre-appointment information to help reduce anxiety and set expectations.

We did:

- We are currently producing a video to help explain the process of attending a drop in session.
- Our clinicians are very friendly, experienced practitioners who will welcome any family into a drop in, taking time to listen to their concerns about their child's development and provide practical advice to support key adults in the child's life to support their communication development.
- The drop ins are located within children's centres, which are purpose built to be as welcoming as possible for families, often with stay and play activities or early years groups running alongside our drop ins, that any family is welcome to join in with.

You said:

7. Sibling Care

Parents raised the practical issue of attending appointments when they have other young children or siblings in their care.

Recommendation:

- Consider creating family-friendly environments or offering creche support for key appointments.
- Offer remote or flexible services for families with caring responsibilities.

We did:

- The drop ins are located within children's centres, which are purpose built to be as welcoming as possible for families, often with stay and play activities or early years groups running alongside our drop ins, that any family is welcome to join in with.
- We have implemented virtual drop ins for any parents struggling to attend the Family Hubs, which both parents and early years settings can attend, which offers more flexibility for parents.

You said:

8. Implementation of Interventions

There are concerns that even when advice is provided, settings or families may struggle to put it into practice due to time, resources, or understanding.

Recommendation:

- Provide practical, achievable interventions tailored to the setting and family context.
- Offer follow-up to check on implementation and provide troubleshooting or adjustments.

We did:

- We ensure that we are giving simple next step advice; giving 1-2 practical strategies for parents and settings to implement.
- We will be offering demonstration sessions within the Family Hubs to support parents to understand how to support their child's communication.
- The drop in sessions are openly accessible to all early years children and families are encouraged to come back to a drop in if they would like more support or are ready for the next steps.

You said:

9. Waiting Lists

There is strong support for maintaining a **no waiting list** approach, ensuring timely access to assessment and support.

Recommendation:

- Preserve the "no waiting list" model by investing in capacity and exploring group-based models, digital screening, or triage pathways as needed.

We did:

- The drop in model will continue to work with no waiting list, so parents can drop in as and when needed for advice and support.
- Group based intervention is being delivered in the Family Hubs, which children are invited to attend following a drop in session, as indicated.
- The service has invested in a video-based platform which is supporting triage and reviews.

You said:

10. Re-accessing Services

Parents greatly value the option to **return for further support** as needed, without starting from scratch.

Recommendation:

- Ensure families can easily return to the service when needed, maintaining records and avoiding repeat referrals or delays.

We did:

- The drop in model is needs led, families can access support as and when needed and many are already returning for next step advice or further support. All contact at the drop in is recorded in the child's health record.