



A-Z of SEND Professionals

We will always work with you to support you and your child in every way we can. At times pupils may access external support from one or more agencies. We actively seek and encourage partnerships with all professionals and work together to support pupils through fully inclusive practice. Key professionals who may be involved in your child's care are:

Audiologist

An audiologist carries out hearing tests and explains the results of those tests. If your child needs hearing aids they will identify the best type and arrange to get them for you. They also monitor your child's hearing, to make sure that any hearing aids supplied are appropriate.

Clinical psychologist

A clinical psychologist is a health professional who helps children with specific problems with learning or with overcoming behaviour difficulties.

Community nurses

Community nurses are based at a local GP's surgery. They can give advice and training to parents and pre-school groups on administering Epipens (for severe allergic reactions) and other medical issues.

Dietician

A dietician is a health professional who gives advice about nutrition and swallowing or feeding difficulties. Occasionally children need nasogastric or gastrostomy feeding to receive the nutrition they need. This means liquid feed is given through a tube that is inserted directly through the abdominal wall or through a narrow tube that is passed through the nose, down the food pipe and into the stomach. Dieticians make a full nutritional assessment and are often responsible for ordering the supplies and equipment and will make sure you have a regular supply of the things you need to feed your child.

Duty social worker

A duty social worker is a person who deals with telephone calls and takes details when you ring to make contact with social services.

Educational psychologist

An educational psychologist may be a qualified teacher who has additional training as a psychologist. Educational psychologists help children who find it difficult to learn or to understand or communicate with others. They can assess your child and provide support and advice.

Health visitors

Health visitors are responsible for pre-school aged children and all children with disabilities. A few health visitors do pre-school screening or developmental tests. Some will visit early years' settings and discuss individual children with parental permission. They are often an informal point of contact for a parent who has a concern about their child, and can be accessed through your local GP or clinic.

Key worker/Lead professional

Key workers or lead professionals maintain regular contact with families and take responsibility for checking they have all the information they need, that services are well co-ordinated and that information about the child is shared efficiently (with permission) with everyone who is working with the family.

Learning disability nurses

Learning disability nurses are specialist nurses who work with children and adults with a learning disability and with their families.

Occupational therapist

An occupational therapist (OT) helps children with difficulties they have in carrying out the activities of everyday life. This could include sitting in a chair, holding a spoon or fork or drinking from a cup. OTs work for both health and social services and assess children for things like specialist seating and equipment that may be supplied.

Outreach service

Some early years' centres, special schools and Portage services offer an SEN outreach service to pre-school groups. Individual children can be discussed with their parents' permission. Advice can be given on setting IEPs or in accommodating the child within the group.

Paediatrician

A paediatrician is a doctor who specialises in working with babies and children. They are often the first point of contact for families who find out their child has an impairment or disability very early on in hospital. They can offer advice, information and support about any medical condition a child has. It is usually a paediatrician who refers your child to any other specialists they need to see.

Parent Partnership Service

The Parent Partnership Service provide independent advice and support for parents and carers to help them understand special educational needs and the SEN Code of Practice, including the EHCP process. They help by providing information and sometimes by going with parents to meetings.

Physiotherapist

A physiotherapist is a health professional specialising in physical and motor development. They will assess the child and develop a plan that might include helping with head control, sitting, rolling, crawling and walking. They can also advise how to handle the child at home for feeding, bathing and dressing and on equipment that might help the child's mobility. A physiotherapist may see the child at home, in a setting such as a nursery or in a child development clinic.

Social worker

A social worker is a professional who supports children and families by advising on appropriate services. They are normally employed by the local authority and can provide practical advice about counselling, transport, home helps and other services. They may also be able to help you with claiming benefits or obtaining equipment needed at home.

Specialist teacher advisors

There are specialist teacher advisors for the deaf and hearing impairment, visual impairment and physical development. They are specially trained and qualified in their respective area. They support children, their families and other professionals who are involved in the child's education.

Speech and language therapists

A speech and language therapist specialises primarily in language, communication and speech problems and, in some circumstances, may also offer support with feeding problems. They assess, diagnose and develop programmes to help children develop communication skills. This may include verbal (ie using speech) or non-verbal skills, using signs, symbols or communication aids. They work closely with families and the settings children attend depending upon the child's needs and circumstances. Often the best way for a speech therapist to work is by assessing the child's needs and developing a programme that is then carried out in the child's setting or home. This allows for more opportunity to practise their skills in a natural and relaxed environment. This programme will be regularly reviewed by the speech and language therapist.