

Children and Family Health Devon

Address

Email

[www.childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk](http://www.childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk)

Date

## **Children and Family Health Devon –**

### **Changes to How You Access Early Years Speech and Language Support**

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to let you know about an important change to how families will access Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) support for young children in Devon and Torbay.

#### **What Is Changing?**

From 6 April 2026, families of children aged 0 to school entry (Year R) will no longer need to send in a referral to get help from our Speech, Language and Communication team.

Instead, you will be able to come straight to one of our Easy Access drop in sessions, held in local places such as children's centres, family hubs, and community clinics.

This means you can get advice and support more quickly, without waiting for a referral to be processed.

#### **Why Are We Making This Change?**

We want to make it easier for families to get help when they need it. Moving to a drop in system will:

- Give faster access to speech and language advice
- Remove delays caused by waiting lists and paperwork
- Support families at the right time, without needing a referral
- Help parents and early years staff learn useful strategies
- Focus on early help and preventing difficulties from getting worse

Our aim is to make support more flexible, more responsive, and easier to reach.

#### **Who This Change Applies To**

##### Included

- Children aged 0–4 years 11 months who are not yet in primary school
- Families, nurseries, GPs, health visitors, or anyone who would normally refer

##### Not Included

Some children will still need specialist referral routes, including those who:

- Need support for feeding and swallowing (Dysphagia)

- Have a cleft lip and/or palate
- Have a severe or profound hearing loss
- Are already being seen by a specialist SLT team (e.g., AAC or ECD)
- Children who need the above support or who are already at primary school will continue to use the usual referral process.

### **What Happens After April 2026?**

From 6 April 2026:

- You will not need a referral for children aged 0–Year R.
- You can simply attend an Easy Access drop in session in your local area.
- If someone sends in a referral after this date, we will direct them to the drop in sessions instead.
- You will not need to book ahead — just come along.

When you arrive, you will register using a QR code or a paper form if needed.

### **If Your Child Already Has a Referral**

If your child has already been referred and accepted:

- You will receive an invitation to book into an Easy Access session.
- If you do not book or attend, your child’s case will be closed in line with our usual process.
- The person who referred your child will also receive a copy of the letter.

### **Where to Find More Information**

We will update our website with full details:

- CFHD referral information page  
<https://childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk/referral-forms/>
- CFHD Balanced System transformation page  
<https://childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk/news-and-events/the-balanced-system-transformation/>

We will also share updates through newsletters, social media, and partner organisations.

### **We’re Here to Support You**

We know that changes to services can feel uncertain, but our goal is to make it easier for you to get the help you need, when you need it. If you have any questions, please contact us through your usual CFHD channels.

Thank you for your ongoing support as we make this positive change for families across Devon and Torbay.

Warm regards,

## Children and Family Health Devon

**Children Family and Health Devon provided by an alliance of NHS providers:**

Devon Partnership NHS Trust | Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust | Livewell Southwest

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