

RCSLT Workforce planning toolkit

TOOLS IN 'TOOLKIT'

The following tools are included in the RCSLT Workforce Planning Guidance for speech and language therapy services.

- a. [NHS Career Framework 'Christmas Tree'](#)
- b. ['Calculating Available Hours for 1.0 WTE Speech and Language Therapist'](#)
- c. [Signposts to Workforce Related Websites](#)

PROCESS FOR USING 'RCSLT WORKFORCE PLANNING TOOLKIT'

- i. Assess the needs of the population through:
 - Consultation with focus groups – analyse and incorporate themes into final models of practice.
 - Epidemiological and population data gathering and analysis.
- ii. Analyse the current speech and language therapy service using:
 - Staffing establishment and skill mix information on speech and language therapy services and the wider workforce
 - Models of speech and language therapy service delivery
 - Speech and language therapy referral and activity data
- iii. Review:
 - Current accepted models and examples of good practice in the speech and language therapy profession as recognised in Communicating Quality and by National and RCSLT Clinical Guidelines.
 - The skills or competencies required to deliver the models.
- iv. Propose:
 - Models of service delivery that you could provide,, including an overview of the staffing establishment and skill mix you think you will require.

Methodology for consultations

Consult with service users! In the context of the Patient led NHS agenda, information based on need and demand is particularly powerful and persuasive. You should try to capture as much information from service users as possible. For example, if a language unit is to be added to a local school, you should consult with the speech and language therapy service users attending the school and their parents. You should aim to be as comprehensive as possible in your survey and include the school authorities, teachers and assistants working in the school, the local education department, referring educational psychologists, and other health professionals working within that school's catchment area.

To look at a larger development, you may need to consult with a sample of services both users and other professionals with whom you collaborate. For example, to look at a paediatric speech and language therapy in an area without consulting every individual service user and member of the children's workforce, you could survey a representative sample, using results taken from each of the locations that children's services are provided in, without having to conduct research with every user, parent and member of staff at that location.

These samples should be based on a fair representation of the demographic and population variables that exist. By ensuring samples are taken addressing the full range of demographic variables are, you will be able to extrapolate from the data/results information on services/locations that you have not been able to look at directly in your research. From this extrapolation you should be able to derive a picture of the competencies and workforce numbers required in your service (or at that location) as a whole.

You may want to carry out these consultations through face-to-face contact with individuals, small or large groups and with separate or mixed audiences. In deciding on which method or methods you employ, you should take into account the scale of the consultation required, the relative importance of the audiences you are consulting with and, of course, your capacity to fund and carry out the consultative work. At the start of every consultation, you should explain the purpose of the consultation, perhaps though giving a short presentation explaining what a speech and language therapy is about and different models of service delivery that are under

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consideration. It might help you to record or video your contact with important audiences (with their permission, of course) as this may help to facilitate accurate analysis of the views expressed and themes that may emerge

Examples of locations where you might carry out consultations:

Education settings
Primary schools
Secondary Schools
Special Schools
Specialist Units
Nurseries

Health settings
Hospitals
Community clinics

Residential settings
Care Homes
Residential Homes
Nursing Homes
Prison

Method for assessing current skill mix and establishment

1. You will need to conduct an audit of your speech and language therapy service's current staffing establishment and skill mix, perhaps using the RCSLT skill mix tool/Christmas Tree Tool.

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2. Ideally, you should analyse the staffing establishment and skill mix for all professional and allied staff groups within the selected educational, residential and health settings in which your service operates. You might ask Local Authorities to provide the relevant staffing figures for those settings or ask them for assistance with requesting the information from the relevant heads of service.
3. You should then map the functions, responsibilities and skills of all staff groups in the selected settings and produce a comprehensive staffing profile.

Don't forget! When assessing the staffing establishment required, you will need to take into account that for every whole time equivalent therapist funded for 52 weeks of the year approximately, only (at most) 42 weeks are available for actual work as time must be deducted for annual leave, study leave for continued professional development and mandatory training as well as time allowed for possible unplanned leave such as sick/parental/compassionate reasons ([RCSLT Calculating 'Available Hours' per 1.0 WTE Speech and Language Therapist](#)).

Method of analysing current speech and language therapy activity

You will need to collect and analyse data on past activity in your speech and language therapy service and look at the following aspects:

- Referral numbers according age group, location and medical and speech and language therapy diagnoses
- Activity data, including clinical and non-clinical activities, according to care group/medical/ speech and language therapy diagnosis.

Methodology for predicting demand for speech and language therapy services for children/adults

To predict the possible number of children/adults with communication and or swallowing difficulties in your service area, you should use and refer to published data on incidence and prevalence of speech and language

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and swallowing disorders in children/adults in combination with National Statistics census information for the your local/regional population.

You should also review data you already hold on demand for speech and language therapy as currently or historically measured by your service. Current and past referral and activity data for speech and language therapy services in the organisation will show a trend of present demand but will not include any unmet need. To help understand this unmet need, you may need to compare of referral rates, uptake and epidemiological population data.

Method for assessing the functions or the work that is required and the competencies / skills and knowledge needed to deliver

You should be able to get a view of the outputs required from the children's/adult's workforce from the consultations you undertake. From this overview, it should be possible to identify the specialist input required from the speech and language therapy service, for example:

“From consultations it becomes evident that in order for a learning support assistant to most effectively support the child in its curriculum learning and for the child to communicate most effectively in the school environment a learning support assistant (LSA) may require the following specialist input from a SLT:

- *regular termly reviews of the child with feedback time to the LSA*
- *time for the LSA to feedback on her experience with the child of the progress and implementation of the therapy programme*
- *opportunity to attend training events to increase the LSA's understanding of communication difficulties ; and*
- *ideas for further material/approaches to incorporate in the programmes.*

Some of this input may be possible in larger group forums (formal training events) and others will have to be in an individual setting.”

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There is usually national and local guidance available on good practice for speech and language therapy with the different care groups and you should refer the RCSLT clinical and professional guidelines for more information and speak to your peers for guidance about best practice.

Summary

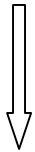
It should be possible for you to estimate the speech and language therapy skill mix and establishment your service requires for each type of setting by looking at:

- the skills mix available to you
- the functions that have to be carried out (outputs and outcomes)
- the population information
- the current caseload
- the number and mix of locations in which the service is to be delivered
- the model of practice chosen
- competencies (as described by *Skills for Health* and in RCSLT guidance); and
- by using the 'Christmas Tree' tool.

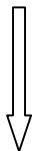
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Assess Need

Consult with service users
Consult with wider workforce
Analyse epidemiological & demographic data
Current & past SLT referral rates



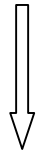
Needs & functions
competences



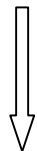
Propose

Analyse staffing

Staffing SLT establishment & skill mix
Wider workforce establishment and skill mix

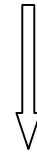


Competences

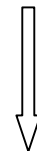


Analyse SLT service delivery

Models of SLT service delivery per care group
SLT activity analysis



Functions & competences



Review

Current evidenced based models of good practice
Skills and competences that are required to deliver the models



Functions &



Models of service delivery with staffing establishment and skill mix