

***Practice* Based Scenario**

**Counselling and discharge in a school setting**

**About this document**

This document is designed to take you through a practice-based scenario to help you reflect on what you might do if faced with a similar situation. It can be used to guide your thoughts and prompt discussion with your colleagues. Working through this document counts towards your continuing professional development (CPD). Your reflections on this document are not assessed and you do not have to send your responses to the RCSLT.

You can work through it on your own, with a colleague or supervisor, or in groups, e.g. as part of an RCSLT Hub or Clinical Excellence Network.

This document is broken into six parts:

1. **The scenario:** for you to read
2. **The issues to consider:** for you to gather your thoughts on practice issues relating to this scenario
3. **Next steps:** for you to plan out what you would need to do next
4. **Prompts for consideration:** RCSLT prompts for further consideration
5. **Sources of further information:** links to CQ Live themes
6. **Update your CPD diary:** for you to do
7. **The scenario**

**You have been providing therapy to a child with a Developmental Language Disorder in association with his learning disability for two years via school and home visits. Your review assessment and outcome measures, alongside those of the Educational Psychologist, indicate the child’s language scores are in line with his cognitive ability which under your service provider compels you to discharge the child. When you discuss discharge with the parents, they tell you they feel very unsupported and isolated. They are reluctant for Speech and Language input to end as their child enjoys your visits and has established a rapport with you. They feel your sessions are benefiting their child’s functional communication skills even though there has been no improvement on standardised assessments.**



**What do you do in this scenario?**

1. **The issues to consider**

**What do you need to consider?**

Think about the above scenario and its implications and jot down your notes about issues you may need to consider. Please feel free to use extra sheets of paper if you need. Or, if you are in a group, you may like to record on a whiteboard or flipchart.

1. **Next steps**

**What steps do you think you need to take next?**

1. **Prompts for consideration**

In this scenario, there are different elements to consider that will be specific to where you work. Remember that if you are faced with a similar situation you will need to think about it in relation to the frameworks within which you work, such as the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards, RCSLT professional standards, local and national policies and also policies of your employer (or your own policies if practising independently). The list of prompts and resources that follow, however, will help with your thinking.

It is recommended that you think about the following prompt questions and formulate a considered strategy to deal with the problem.

Please note that the prompts and resources provided here are not exhaustive and do not constitute legal advice.

**Prompt questions to consider**

1. Is discharge appropriate under guidelines of professional bodies including the RCSLT and HCPC?
2. Do you need to record the parents’ concerns?
3. Do you need to seek the support of senior colleagues?
4. Is the discharge policy of your organisation appropriate for this scenario?
5. If you do not agree with the discharge policy who can you discuss these concerns with?
6. Does the child and family have circumstances which may allow the child to remain on your caseload?
7. If discharge is appropriate how can you ameliorate the family’s anxiety about no longer having regular contact with you?

**Possible next steps**

1. Although the child has not improved on assessment, ongoing SLT may be appropriate, for example:
   * Delivery of more support, advise or training to the adults in the child’s environment, for example at home, school or nursery to maximise the child’s communicative environment.
   * Outcome measures that can be used to judge whether non-direct therapy is being effective for this child.
2. It may be appropriate to find out more about the family circumstances, for example:

* Is the child or family known to socials services.
* Are there factors which make this child more vulnerable to re-accessing services after discharge if needed.

1. Depending on your own level of experience or banding, you may want to:

* Contact your line manager for support and advise on conveying your service provider’s criteria for discharge to the family.
* Raise concerns and give rationale if you feel discharge would be inappropriate in this case.

1. Consider steps you can take to ensure the family do feel their child’s speech, language and communication needs are being met once therapy ceases, for example:

* Reassurance about the competencies of the team around the child and their knowledge and training with regards to supporting communication.

1. **Sources of further information**

**The following resources will support you in this area and can be found on the RCSLT website:**

[Discharge](https://www.rcslt.org/discharge)

**Other sources of information:**

# [HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics](http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/standardsofconductperformanceandethics/)

[Speech, language and communication needs: Evaluating outcomes](https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/12886/slcn_tools_evaluating-outcomes_1_.pdf)

1. **Update your CPD diary**

Working through this scenario counts towards your continuing professional development (CPD). Once you have completed this scenario, please record this learning and your reflections in your CPD diary.