Key theme areas
- Communication is crucial
- Accessible and equitable service for all families
- Joint working
- Support that makes an impact

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Description
There were historically strained relationships between therapy services and some special schools in the county. There was also a lack of consistency in the way we worked with schools with some excellent practice but some quite ineffective working. A project group of therapists met with representatives of the special schools and the Executive Head to better understand how we could work together to meet the needs of children with highly complex needs. It was a very interesting and evolving process as we debunked some myths and started to fully appreciate each other’s point of view and found a lot of common ground with what we wanted for the children and young people.

Lessons learned and/or future plans
We need to launch the document and ensure that the principles are embedded in our work with all schools.
We can use the document for positive conversations about areas that are not working as well as others to ensure consistency of provision through the schools. We would like to extend this process into mainstream schools in the future.

Evidence of impact
- A jointly written document has now been produced with information about how the therapy service works and what needs to be in place in each special school to meet the communication and physical development needs of all the children
- The document references advice sheets and further sources of support so teachers and teaching assistants can build their knowledge and skills
- Better understanding is resulting in more positive relationships and issues being discussed in a culture of joint problem-solving and taking ownership

The initial project group exploring issues to understand each others’ perspectives