Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) based in youth offending service (YOS). Research shows that up to 92% of young people who enter the criminal justice system have difficulties with language and communication, and a further 90% of these needs are previously unidentified. SaLT services aim to respond to this by currently running a pilot where every young person allocated to YOS is offered an initial consultation (opposed to waiting for staff to make a referral). Each young person completes a self rating assessment which highlights areas of strength and difficulties, and based on this a full assessment is offered. The role also includes training all staff members, including the wider community team e.g. panel members and appropriate adults in custody, developing resources and ensuring all documents are accessible. A recent ‘Word of the Week’ project in reception has received positive feedback, highlighting the range of new and complex vocabulary encountered at YOS (see picture left).

Lessons learned and/or future plans
- Staff value the importance of SaLT training and input
- Young people and families are receptive to receiving support, and have feedback about the usefulness.
- Review the pilot project (to see all new YOS allocations) in June with a view to write up findings and make recommendations.
- Further training for Police Officers in custody

Key theme area (delete as appropriate)
- Communication is crucial
- Strategy for system change
- Accessible and equitable service for all families
- Support that makes an impact
- Early identification and intervention is essential
- Accessible and equitable service for all families

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Evidence of impact

“J is more talkative now about personal things. Without the help that has been given to J I don’t think we would have achieved so much. We are mightily thankful you”.
(Grandparent)

“Since the assessment started S has been making more positive choices, we feel this is helping his decision making. If you weren’t in school that day he wouldn’t have gone to the detention and would have been in worse trouble”.
(Parent)

P talked about his experience of meeting with the SaLT and how useful he has found it, “she is really nice and explains things well”. We looked at some of the recommendations in the SaLT report and what that meant for him. Importantly, he has seen this as helping to understand himself better and is willing for the recommendations to be shared with college”.
(YOS case worker)

“Thank you to all of you for your hard work with M – a great result! Apparently the Judge was very complimentary about the quality and the usefulness of the reports presented to her.” This young person was not sent to custody (YOS manager)

Word of the Week

Breach
Not following the rules. For example not turning up at agreed meeting times.

(Poster in YOS reception areas: Raising profile of SLCN)