**Transforming lives,   
improving outcomes**

**Speech and language therapy delivers**

**better lives for people with**

**communication and swallowing needs**

*A guide for budget holders and decision-makers*

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| **What is speech and language therapy?** |

Speech and language therapy transforms the lives of, and improves outcomes for, people with communication and swallowing needs. It plays a key role in:

* promoting public health through prevention and early intervention
* helping children with special educational needs and disabilities to engage with their education
* enabling self-management
* supporting rehabilitation
* helping people remain in or regain employment
* improving people’s quality of life
* promoting general health and wellbeing
* helping people to live independently
* enabling people to achieve their potential and the outcomes they want

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| **What do speech and language therapists do?** |

Speech and language therapists:

* assess and develop treatment programmes for people with communication and swallowing needs
* train and provide guidance to others to support people with communication and swallowing needs - these include the health, care, and education workforce (for example health visitors, early years’ settings, teachers, and care workers), employers and training organisations, and families, friends and the wider public

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| **Where do speech and language therapists work?** |

Speech and language therapists work across a range of settings and with a range of other health and care professionals to support integrated, personalised care. Places they work in include:

* health settings (acute and community)
* education settings (nursery, primary, and secondary schools, and further education)
* social care settings (care homes and nursing homes)
* justice settings (courts, prisons, and young offender institutions)
* children’s centres
* people’s own homes and workplaces

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| **What does speech and language therapy offer people with communication needs?** |

Speech and language therapy offers:

* social mobility, better literacy, and improved educational, employment, and social outcomes
* support for people to consent to their treatment and care, particularly important in relation to mental capacity and end of life care
* prevention of possible mental health problems, and potential involvement in the criminal justice system

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| **What does speech and language therapy offer people with swallowing needs?** |

Speech and language therapy offers:

* safe eating and drinking
* prevention of choking, chest infections, malnutrition, dehydration, pneumonia, and ultimately early death

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| **What does speech and language therapy offer budget holders and decision**  **makers?** |

Speech and language therapy offers:

* cost effective solutions for improved outcomes for people with communication and swallowing needs across a range of health, education, and care pathways
* reduced system pressures: prevention of hospital admissions, early and effective discharge, and reduced readmission
* financial savings and avoided costs for the NHS, local authorities, the criminal justice system, and the wider economy
* better public health through prevention and early intervention so communication and swallowing problems do not lead to further complications and poorer outcomes for people

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| **Speech and language therapy in action locally**  **Cranford NHS Trust’s Rapid Response Therapy Team:**   * **prevents hospital admissions** * **ensures safe discharge** * **prevents readmission**   Speech and language therapists play a crucial role in the Trust’s Rapid Response Therapy Team. They work alongside other allied health professionals and attend A&E to:   * prevent unnecessary hospital admissions via a highly responsive service that assesses patient needs 12 hours a day, 365 days a year * work collaboratively with social work colleagues to support the patient to return home * deliver urgent speech and language therapy assessment to ensure patients’ swallowing can be managed at home by community staff   Intensive speech and language therapy:   * ensures patients start eating and drinking as soon as possible * avoids the use of tube feeding * allows a faster and safer return home with community support   Speech and language therapists also work closely with the discharging and community teams to ensure that patients identified as at risk of re-admission receive appropriate support at home.  The Cranford NHS Rapid Response Therapy Team has improved patient outcomes, reduced system pressures, particularly during winter, and secured financial savings:   * hospital admissions have been reduced by almost 2,500 a year * hospital stays have been reduced from 10 to 7 days * saved nearly 17,000 bed days with the potential to reduce costs by £7 million a year |

**For further information, please contact:**

Include your contact details here