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# Telephone Advice Line to improve access to therapies in Somerset



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# History and Context

- Became a countywide Integrated Therapy Service in October 2009
- Working in episodes of care but difficult to discharge children who didn't have an active need for intervention as parents concerned about not having any access to support
- Many enquiries coming into the four bases from parents or professionals asking for advice on potential referrals – difficult to call back in a timely way



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# Setting up

- Already doing multi-professional countywide triage four mornings a week, rotating round the bases
- IT services set up line which only opens at set times and at other times gives a recorded message
- Line can be programmed into different bases so can be answered by different teams depending on the day of the week
- Line will rotate to different phones so more than one call can be answered



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# What it offers

- Anyone can call about a child with a Somerset GP – parent or professional
- If a professional has consent from the family they can talk about a named child but if not can access advice anonymously
- The line is staffed by an experienced SLT, OT and PT four mornings a week
- We do not have capacity to take referrals over the phone but will sometimes advise a referral and explain how to do it



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# Evaluation and Feedback

- Feedback obtained from a random sample of callers
- 100% of respondents found their call helpful or extremely helpful
- Some very positive comments about the impact both from parents and professionals



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# Comments

I have been trying  
the advice I was  
given and my child  
is making progress  
- Parent

The SLT really  
put my mind at  
rest – Parent

The therapist  
was so kind and  
helpful and took  
time to listen to  
me - Parent

I was worried I would need  
to wait until I had my  
appointment but the  
therapist gave me some  
ideas to try immediately -  
Parent

I was able to ring  
and get advice while  
I was with the family  
- Health Visitor

I have rung the  
line several times  
and always get  
helpful advice -  
SENCo



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# Data

- Over 6,200 calls taken
- 50% - advice given and advised to refer
- 35% - advice given and no referral needed
- 15% - advice given and signposted elsewhere



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# Outcomes

- Continued good feedback from families and other professionals
- Easier to discharge children being able to reassure parents that they can quickly access advice if needed in the future
- Able to stop some inappropriate referrals being made
- Training opportunity when advising other professionals