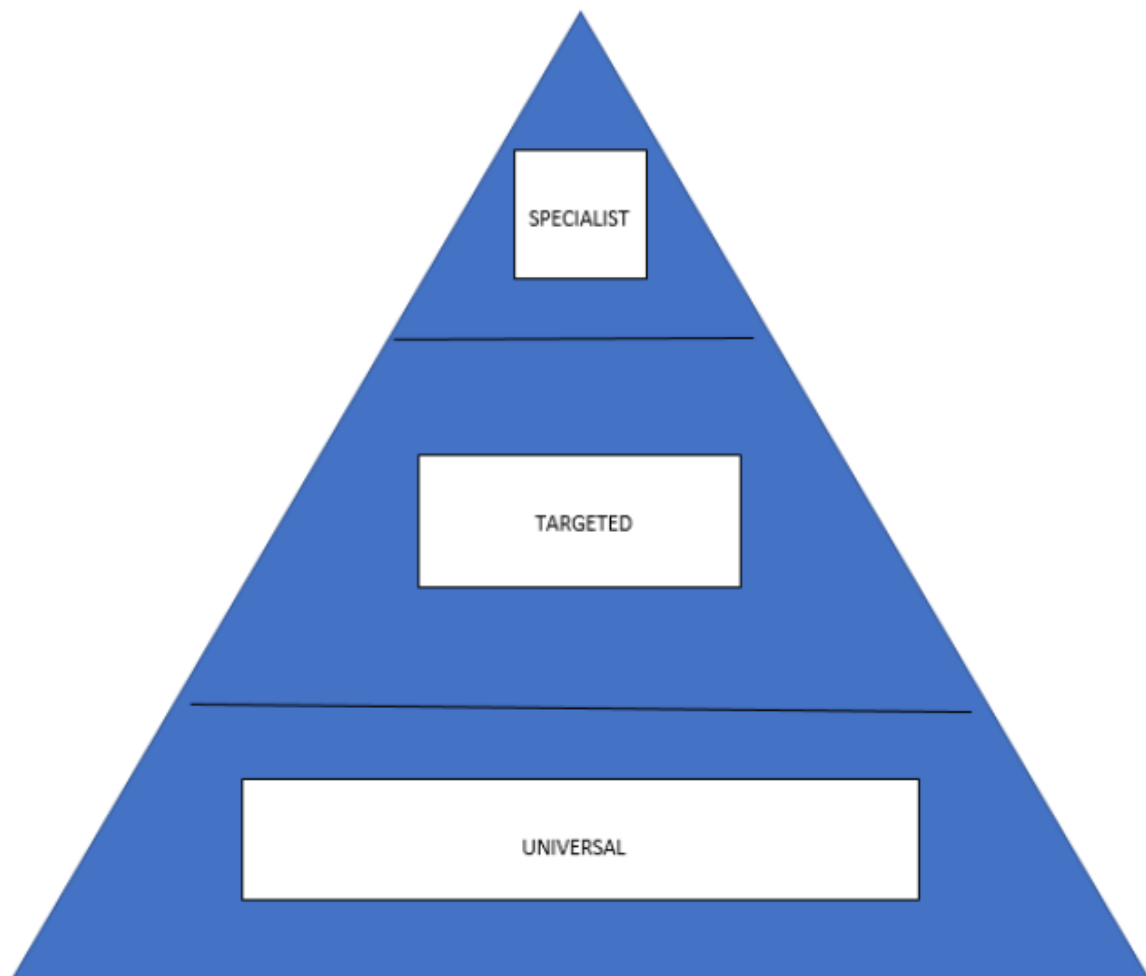


Supporting speech language and communication needs in Medway special schools and specialist provisions.

Children in special schools have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). If a speech and language therapist has contributed advice to the EHCP, there will be recommendations regarding strategies and the level of support your child requires in school to support their speech, language and communication needs.

Special schools are uniquely equipped with the skills and resources to support the communication of children with a range of communication needs on a daily basis. It is the speech and language therapist's role to work with the school and families to best support children's speech, language and communication needs. The speech and language therapist aims to empower parents and schools to understand each child's individual communication needs and implement appropriate approaches and strategies to support that child's communication on a daily basis and help them to meet their potential.

In Medway, support is identified at a universal, targeted and specialist level as recommended by the Better Communication Research Programme and the SEN Code of Practice which refers to a graduated approach to identifying additional health and learning needs for children.



Universal Level

All children benefit from the support strategies and environmental adaptations to support their communication. At this level:

- All schools and settings should clearly identify how they will support SLCN and provide a communication friendly environment. Schools can utilise the National Communication Commitment to support them in adapting a whole school approach.
<http://thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/communication-commitment/>
- Strategies as outlined in Medway Core Standards should be implemented. Medway Core Standards training is offered free of charge by the Children's Specialist Health Service. Schools can contact the service for more information.
- All schools can access training at a universal level. In addition to Medway Core standards, we recommend training such as Language for Learning and ELKLAN.
- MCH will develop content on our website www.medwaycommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk regarding development of communication skills, available to all parents and education staff.
- Schools can also commission the "whole school environment adjustments" package from MCH+ designed to support them in developing communication friendly environments and any other specific training need that is identified.

Targeted Level

All children in special schools (with speech and language advice on their EHCP) have access to this level of support in Medway special schools and specialist provisions. This support is provided in many ways, which may include:

- Every special school and specialist provision has allocated speech and language therapists, to provide advice and guidance as required.
- Regular meetings with class staff to discuss speech, language and communication needs within their classroom.
- Tailored training sessions for school staff and parents.
- Support is adapted to meet each individual school and provision's needs.
- All children at this level are also supported at the universal level.



Specialist Level

The majority of children in special schools will have their speech, language and communication needs met through targeted services. In cases where school/parents require additional specialist advice/guidance regarding their child's needs (that cannot be met by the targeted level of support) the speech and language therapist will open the child's case at the specialist level. This may include:

- A diagnostic assessment block to determine a functional communication system, that best meets your child's needs.
- Delivering of specialist interventions provided by the speech and language therapy team, alongside parents and school staff, with the aim of empowering all those working with the child to continue the interventions.
- Gathering evidence to inform onward referral to other specialist services, e.g. Kent CAT service for specialist AAC assessment.
- For many children, once communication systems have been established and the environment has been adapted they may not require ongoing intervention at the specialist level, and their needs will be met by targeted and universal support.

