

Developmental Communication Service Wolfson Neurodisability Service

Information for families

Great Ormond Street Hospital
for Children NHS Foundation Trust

What is the Developmental Communication Service?

The Developmental Communication Service at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) is a multidisciplinary team that offers specialist assessment and advice on the communication and learning needs of children with severe communication impairment arising from physical and other disabilities. We aim to answer the questions that you have about your child's communication and other relevant aspects of their development.

Members of the team

Team content will vary depending on the child's need. In our team we have the following professionals:

- **Speech and Language Therapist**
– assesses communication skills (understanding and expression)
- **Occupational Therapist** – assesses for the best position for communication and the use of a controlled body movement to handle toys and access communication systems
- **Consultant Paediatrician** – reviews the medical history, contributes to developmental assessments and assesses vision
- **Clinical Psychologist** – undertakes assessment of learning and academic skills in some children

We are all experienced in working with children with severe communication impairment and motor impairments.

Who we see

We see children up to the age of 17 years, with severe communication impairments and associated neurodevelopmental problems and movement disorders. Many of the children we see have cerebral palsy affecting all body movements, but we also see children with verbal dyspraxia, neuromuscular conditions, and children with no confirmed diagnosis. We see children with autism who may have additional speech difficulties. We can answer a wide range of referral questions; typical questions relate to relevant forms of augmentative communication, use of switches for play and communication, and the development of speech and communication.

Before the appointment

We will ask you and your child's therapists to complete pre-visit questionnaires. This will give us background information, and will clarify the role that our team will play. Please send us copies of recent assessment reports together with any therapy or education goals/targets as well as any other information you think would be helpful. Prior to the appointment, we may liaise with local services; this may include your child's school or therapy team.

At the appointment

Local professionals (from education or health) are welcome to attend; this should be confirmed in advance. Appointments may last up to three hours; please bring some refreshments for your child.

There are usually three parts to the appointment:

- **Discussion:** we explore your child's history, current skills and the questions you and your team want us to consider
- **Assessment:** we assess your child's abilities and communication skills through play based observation and games. The assessment may also include tests of language understanding, current expressive methods, vision, physical skills, developmental level and other aspects of your child's learning. We may video some parts of the assessment, explaining how stored video material may be used in the future, with your consent.
- **Feedback:** We meet with you to discuss our findings and to make recommendations. You will be given a summary report to take away on the day.

Audit and research in the Developmental Communication Service

We collect clinical information about all children seen by our service. We use this patient data to understand more about the development of children with communication impairment, and the most effective ways of conducting clinical assessment. Data collected is used to improve the quality of the service we deliver. Anonymised data may be used in retrospective case note studies which are registered with the Trust's Research Governance department. In addition, we are actively involved in ethics approved research projects and may ask you and your child if you are interested in being involved in a project if s/he is eligible. Participating in a research project will not affect your child's clinical care in any way.

Please let a member of the team know if you wish to discuss any of the above.

Great Ormond Street Hospital's privacy notice is available at www.gosh.nhs.uk/privacy.

After the appointment

You will receive a full report including recommendations within three weeks of the appointment. This will also be sent to all professionals currently working with your child.

Contact details

**For more information
on the Developmental
Communication
Service please contact
the clinic secretary on
020 7405 9200
ext 5293.**

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