

Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Provision within Hertfordshire Authority Special Schools

Introduction

Physiotherapy (PT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) at Special Schools throughout Hertfordshire is provided by Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust. Therapists are based at the local Child Development Centre and provide a service into Special Schools for the pupils that require either OT or PT. This helps to prevent your child having to miss long periods of education to travel / attend therapy appointments, it also supports care to be integrated into the child's school day, and enables training to be provided to the school staff. If your child is under 5 years old and only attends a Special School on a part time basis, their treatment may continue at the Child Development Centre in your area, which will be discussed with you.

How We Work

What is Physiotherapy?

Physiotherapists work with children who have difficulties in movement for a variety of reasons. Physiotherapists assess a child's gross motor function, posture and range of movement with the aim to promote their mobility and independence. Postural Management Programmes (PMP) are devised for each child to help support the School to carry out beneficial activities.

What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational Therapists help children who have a disability or additional needs to be as independent as possible within their environment. This may include looking at new ways of doing activities, providing specialist equipment and/or adapting the environment.

Therapy Technicians

Therapy technicians work closely with the qualified Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists to help monitor equipment and carry out activities under the instruction from a Therapist

How to Refer to PT and OT

Children who require a PT or OT assessment and have not been known to the Service previously will require a referral to be completed. Referrals to our service are accepted from medical professionals such as a Pediatrician, GP or School Nurse. For a referral to be accepted functional difficulties need to be identified.

Episodes of Care

Once the referral has been accepted, an episode of care will start. The Therapist will complete an assessment and depending on the child's needs a treatment plan will be devised with clear goals. If required a block of therapy may be provided for example following surgery or to work on a specific goal that the therapist can assist with. This may be completed by either a qualified Therapist or a Therapy Assistant Practitioner.

Ending Episodes of Care

If your child's physical needs are currently being met within school through a daily programme of activities and / or use of specialist equipment to aid their function, the episode of care will close. Equipment reviews / adjustments, and postural reviews can be requested by either the school or parents at any time once an episode of care has been closed.

If following a review, a period of input is required, the episode of care can be re-opened without the need for a new referral.

Therapists' Role in School

Our aim is to offer advice and support within the remit of OT/PT:

1. To enable the child to access the school curriculum using appropriate equipment and participate as independently as possible, following the Educational Health Care Plan.
2. To assist and support parents / carers and school to meet the 24 hour postural management needs of their child through appropriate OT/PT management, training and liaison with anyone involved in the child's care.

This includes:

- Assessment and provision of specialist equipment (e.g. standing frame, walking aids, seating, toilet equipment and laying positioning)
 - Advice and support with access to the school curriculum, supported by a written physical management programme and training to school staff.
 - Assessment of Functional Abilities – for example feeding using specialised equipment/ using switching technology /splint provision.
3. To support children and parents / carers to gain a greater understanding of their physical needs enabling them to develop strategies to participate in daily activities.

School's Responsibilities

School is responsible for school staff training. All Education staff are advised to complete the following mandatory training in physical management and support:

- moving and handling training (theory and practical aspects delivered by the schools in-house Moving and Handling Assessor and external, certified training provider)
- All staff are advised to complete an Introduction to Postural Management (theory and practical session delivered by Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapists)
- Carry out and embed advice from postural management programme into the school day.
- School need to allocate time for the therapy team to provide class/ team and individual training sessions, when new equipment or activities are introduced to a child.

Parental Responsibility

- Please inform us of changes relating to their medical condition. If you receive clinic letters / reports from your consultants and notice that OT/PT have not been copied into the correspondence (at the bottom of the letter) we will not be aware of the information that you have.
- Equally if your child has planned orthopaedic surgery or Botox injections, please could you ensure that the school therapy service is included in any correspondence from the hospital. We need prior warning of any surgery or Botox to arrange any intervention in a timely manner. Please provide your consultant with the Therapist's contact details.
- Inform the therapist if any issues with equipment arise. For home equipment please ensure you request this so that a date can be planned during the school holidays (or sooner if the need is urgent).
- Liaise with wheelchair services to arrange for reviews and repairs.
- Private Equipment:-If you have equipment that has been charity or privately funded your school may have a local policy to ensure insurance is covered, please check with the

school. It is the parents responsibility to maintain the servicing and overall safety of the equipment.

If you have any concerns during the school holidays you will need to contact your local Children's Centre who may liaise with the school therapists.

The HUB Contact Centre: 01923 470680 will get a message to your local therapist.

- St Albans Children's Centre (St Albans)
- The Marlowes Health & Wellbeing Centre (Hemel Hempstead)
- Peace Children's Centre (Watford)
- Danestrete Children's Centre (Stevenage)
- Bull Plain Children's Centre (Hertford)

Useful Contacts

Millbrook Wheelchair Service

Millbrook Wheelchair Service assesses, provides and maintains the wheelchairs in Hertfordshire. If you would like to have a review of the wheelchair due to your child's growth or require a repair you will need to contact Millbrook Wheelchair Service directly to arrange this: **0333 234 0303**. We are unable to attend any wheelchair appointments unless a need is identified to do this. The Wheelchair Service has their own therapists who prescribe your child's wheelchair.

Hertfordshire Equipment Service

All equipment in School and at home is provided by the Hertfordshire Equipment Service. If you no longer use equipment at home, please call the Hertfordshire Equipment Service to request a collection 01707 292 555.

Orthotics

- **Stevenage Lister** – 01438 286084, this service covers North and East Herts: Stevenage, Letchworth, Hitchin, Baldock etc.
- **Jacketts Field** – 01923 378150, this service covers West Herts
- **St Albans Children Centre orthotics department** – 01727891100, this area covers St Albans, Potters bar and Harpenden areas.
- **Marlowes Health Centre** - 01442 275678, this service is based in Hemel Hempsted.