



SEND Professionals

Information about the role of a range of external professionals who may be involved with your child's care:

- **Audiologist**

An audiologist carries out hearing tests and explains the results of those tests. If your child needs hearing aids they will identify the best type and arrange to get them for you. They also monitor your child's hearing, to make sure that any hearing aids supplied are appropriate.

- **Clinical psychologist**

A clinical psychologist is a health professional who helps children with specific problems with learning or with overcoming behavioural difficulties.

- **Community nurses**

Community nurses are based at a local GP's surgery. They can give advice and training to parents and pre-school groups on administering epi-pens (for severe allergic reactions) rectal valium (epilepsy) and other medical issues.

- **DIAS – Devon Information, Advice & Support**

DIAS is a dedicated team offering legally-based and easily accessible information and advice about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). They support parents, carers, children and young people with SEND and their service is impartial and confidential.

They can help you to:

- Understand more about SEND support
- Develop good relationships with professionals
- Prepare well for meetings
- Express yours and your child's views
- Understand the paperwork

- **Dietician**

A dietician is a health professional who gives advice about nutrition and swallowing or feeding difficulties. Occasionally children need nasogastric or gastrostomy feeding to receive the nutrition they need. This means liquid feed is given through a tube that is inserted directly through the abdominal wall or through a narrow tube that is passed through the nose, down the food pipe and into the stomach. Dieticians make a full nutritional assessment and are often responsible for ordering the supplies and equipment and will make sure you have a regular supply of the things you need to feed your child.

- **Duty social worker**

A duty social worker is a person who deals with telephone calls and takes details when you ring to make contact with social services.

- **Educational psychologist**

An educational psychologist is concerned with helping children or young people who are experiencing problems within an educational setting with the aim of enhancing their learning. Challenges may include social or emotional problems or learning difficulties. Work is with individual clients or groups, advising teachers, parents, social workers and other professionals.

- **Health visitors**

Health visitors are responsible for pre-school aged children and all children with disabilities. A few health visitors do pre-school screening or developmental tests. Some will visit early years settings and discuss individual children (with parental permission). They are often an informal point of contact for a parent who has a concern about their child and can be accessed through their local GP or clinic.

- **Key worker/Lead professional**

Key workers or lead professionals maintain regular contact with your family and take responsibility for checking you have all the information you need, that services are well coordinated and that information about your child is shared efficiently (with your permission) with everyone who is working with your family.

- **Learning disability nurses**

Learning disability nurses are specialist nurses who work with children and adults with a learning disability and with their families. They can help you find services for your child and also support for you as a parent.

- **Occupational therapist**

An occupational therapist (OT) helps children with difficulties they have in carrying out the activities of everyday life. This could include sitting in a chair, holding a spoon or fork or drinking from a cup. They can also advise on how you, as a parent, can carry your child up and down stairs safely. OTs work for both health and social services and assess children for things like specialist seating and equipment that may be supplied.

- **Outreach service**

Some early years centers, special schools and Portage services offer a SEN outreach service to pre-school groups. Individual children can be discussed with their parents' permission. Advice can be given on setting IEPs or in accommodating the child within the group.

- **Paediatric neurologist**

A paediatric neurologist is a doctor who specialises in how the brain works in very young children.

- **Paediatrician**

A Paediatrician is a doctor who specialises in working with babies and children. They are often the first point of contact for families who find out their child has an impairment or disability very early on in hospital. They can offer advice, information and support about any medical condition a child has. It is usually a Paediatrician who refers your child to any other specialists they need to see.

- **Physiotherapist**

A physiotherapist is a health professional specialising in physical and motor development. They will assess your child and develop a plan that might include helping with head control, sitting, rolling, crawling and walking. They can also advise you on how to handle your child at home for feeding, bathing and dressing and advise on equipment that might help your child's mobility.

- **Portage Home Visitor**

A Portage Home Visitor is someone who has received training in supporting children with SEN and their families. They come from a wide range of backgrounds including teaching, nursing, early years education and health therapy services. They will work closely with you and your child to understand and develop your child's skills and will visit you regularly (usually weekly) at home. They will also liaise closely with all of the other people who are involved in your child's care and development.

- **Social worker**

A social worker is a professional who supports children and families by advising on appropriate services. They are normally employed by the local authority and can provide practical advice about counselling, transport, home helps and other services. They may also be able to help you with claiming benefits or obtaining equipment you need at home.

- **Specialist teacher advisors**

There are specialist teacher advisors for the deaf and hearing impairment, visual impairment and physical development. They are specially trained and qualified in their respective area. They support children, their families and other professionals who are involved in your child's education.

- **Speech and language therapists**

A speech and language therapist specialises primarily in language, communication and speech problems and in some circumstances, may also offer support with feeding problems. They assess, diagnose and develop programmes to help children develop communication skills. This may include verbal (i.e. using speech) or non-verbal, using signs, symbols or communication aids. They work closely with families and the settings children attend depending upon the child's needs and circumstances. Often the best way for a speech therapist to work is by assessing the child's needs and developing a programme that is then carried out in the child's setting or home. This allows for more opportunity to practice their skills in a natural and relaxed environment. This programme will be regularly reviewed by the speech and language therapist.