

Norwich Opportunity Area

Communication Champion Online Training Package

About the Norwich Opportunity Area project

This online training package was designed as part of the Norwich Opportunity Area Communication Champion project. The original vision of the project was to improve children's early speech, language and communication development across the City of Norwich through training a group of Communication Champion Leaders in key concepts in children's speech, language and communication. These Communication Champions were then responsible for cascading training to their colleagues and other local schools and settings in order to improve local knowledge and expertise.

As of April 2020:

- 54 Communication Champion Leaders have been trained
- 33 schools, settings and organisations have been involved
- 5 Communication Hubs have been established

The Communication Hubs act as centres of excellence around speech, language and communication best practice, and run half termly network meetings. If you are interested in joining one, please get in contact with your local hub:

- Lakenham Primary School Hub
- Mile Cross Primary and Catton Grove Primary Partnership Hub
- Peapod Preschool Hub
- Lionwood Infant and Nursery Hub
- Little Squirrels Play Forest and Chestnut Nursery Research Park Partnership Hub

About this online training package

This online training package is based on the training sessions that were delivered to Communication Champion Leaders. Sessions have been converted to an online format so that they can be worked through by early years teachers and practitioners in their own settings and at their own pace.

As a result of completing this online training package, you will:

- Have increased knowledge of children's speech, language and communication, including typical development and possible indicators of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
- Learn new ways of supporting children's speech, language and communication in your setting

- Consider ways of engaging parents in supporting their child’s speech, language and communication development at home

Completing this training will enhance your knowledge around this important area of child development. However, it will not give you the expertise of a speech and language therapist who has trained to degree level over several years.

This training will not equip you to formally assess and diagnose children’s speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), or take the role of a speech and language therapist in providing specialist input to a child with diagnosed speech, language and communication needs.

Your new knowledge **will** allow you to put early support in place for children who may not be reaching expected milestones in terms of their speech, language and communication development, and know better when there is a need to refer to speech and language therapy.

Structure of online training package

The online training package is divided into 2 blocks. Sessions within each block should be taken sequentially (rather than picking and choosing individual sessions) as they build on each other.

1. **CORE:** this block of four training sessions is at the “basic” or “universal” level and is recommended for all staff that work with children aged 0-5. When viewed sequentially, these sessions will provide a solid foundation of understanding around key principles and concepts in children’s speech, language and communication development.
2. **A STEP FURTHER:** this block of three training sessions is at the “intermediate” level and will extend on some of the topics that were introduced in the core block. These sessions may be more relevant for a smaller group of staff such as teaching staff or lead teaching assistants who are directly involved in supporting children with SLCN.

CORE (basic/universal)	A STEP FURTHER (intermediate)
1.1 Speech, Language and Communication: Definitions, typical development, and impact on other areas of learning	2.1 ‘Attention and listening’ and ‘Understanding of language’

1.2 Identification and assessment of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)	2.2 Vocabulary and expressive language
1.3 The communication environment, including the home environment and engaging parents	2.3 Speech sounds, and including children with SLCN and their parents
1.4 Strategies and support for children with SLCN	

There is also a questionnaire that should be completed at the beginning and end of each block. Please see the “training evaluation” section below for more information on this.

Timings

We recommend you allow 1 – 1 ½ hours to complete each session. The actual time of each recording is around 20 – 30 minutes, but we suggest that participants pause the recording at specified times in order to complete relevant activities that will help to solidify and extend their understanding of concepts and ideas.

In addition to completing the activities, we also recommend that participants try to regularly connect with colleagues who are completing the online training package to compare answers to the exercises and to discuss action points to put into practice. One way of doing this could be to arrange a follow-up phone call with a colleague after completing each session.

Training evaluation

To assist us with the evaluation of this training package, you are requested to complete two brief online questionnaires, at the beginning and end of the block of training sessions you are taking.

If you are completing the **core** block of online Communication Champion training sessions:

- Please ensure you have completed the **core baseline questionnaire** before you begin session 1.1. You will find the link to this questionnaire [here](#), and in the webpage notes for this session.
- Please ensure you complete the **core end point questionnaire** when you finish session 1.4. You will find the link to this questionnaire [here](#), and also in the webpage notes for this session.

If you are completing the **intermediate** block of online Communication Champion training sessions:

- Please ensure you have completed the **intermediate baseline questionnaire** before you begin session 2.1. You will find the link to this questionnaire [here](#), and in the webpage notes for this session.
- Please ensure you complete the **intermediate end point questionnaire** when you finish session 2.3. You will find the link to this questionnaire [here](#), and also in the webpage notes for this session.

All data collected will be anonymised, stored securely and collated by the Norwich Opportunity Area and Norfolk County Council to help us understand local practitioners' training needs and SLCN knowledge.