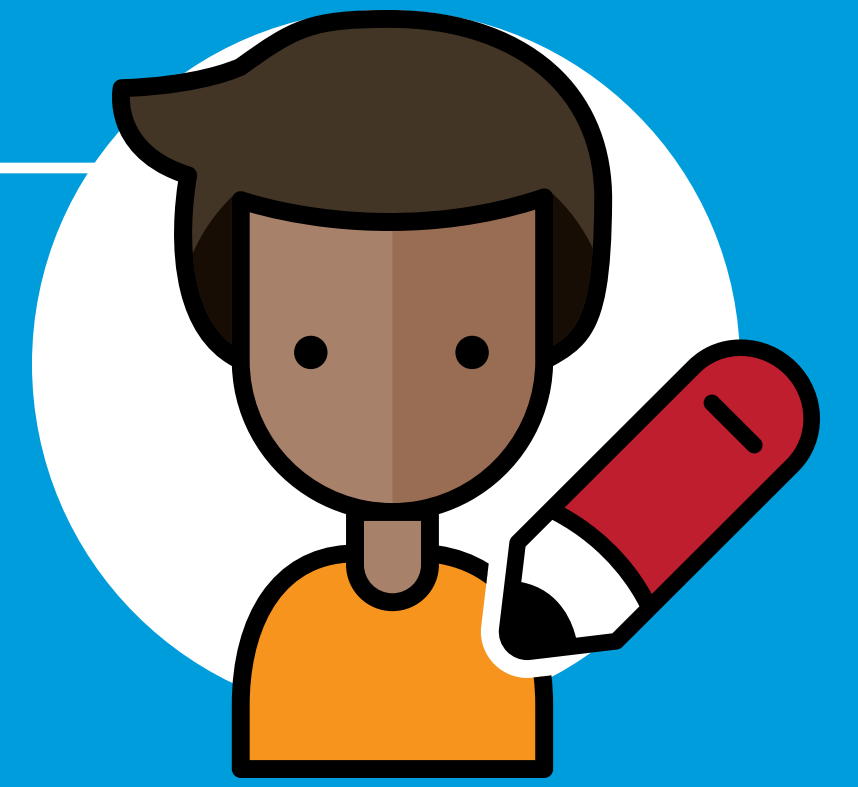


# Making effective referrals

## Building a communication profile

For speech and language services, information provided by referrers is invaluable. Being aware of the different types of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) will make it easier to describe the child or young person's (CYP) difficulties accurately, enabling them to access the right support as quickly as possible.



## What do different types of SLCN look like?

Think about which of the descriptors below best fit the difficulties you can see. Using one or more of these terms in your referral will provide a common language with the speech and language service, and ensure it is not misdirected or misunderstood. For example, **a child or young person with...**

**receptive language difficulties** might not understand verbal instructions given in the classroom. They may copy other people or display difficult behaviour to hide those difficulties, become passive and miss out on learning. This is also known as understanding or comprehension difficulties.

**communication difficulties** may be less aware of social rules. They might interrupt, stand too close, make less or more eye contact than their peers, and/or struggle to form and maintain positive social relationships.

**expressive language difficulties** may struggle to get their message across using the right words, sentence structure or grammar. This can make it difficult for them to share their ideas and opinions.

**speech difficulties** might find it hard to pronounce words clearly, or they might repeat words or syllables. They may be unclear to others and so it might be time consuming for them to get their message across, meaning that they have less opportunity to contribute.



## How do you figure it out?

Some CYP have difficulties across more than one area, and you may need to use tools, like *Universally Speaking*, to pinpoint what the need is and if the CYP is behind in terms of age-related expectations. These should be used as a part of your setting's graduated response to special educational needs (SEN).

### Screening



Most screening tools can be carried out by education staff or parents. Even if your local service doesn't require this, it can help to build a stronger case for referral and support the CYP in the meantime.

### Observations



What can the CYP do and what do they struggle with? If possible watch for at least 10 minutes in a structured activity, and give specific examples, eg "X only uses single words" or "X says 'sty' instead of 'sky'".

### Targeted interventions



What have you already tried? Look at the *What Works* database for evidence-based interventions and approaches that can be used in the classroom or in a small group.

## Where should your referral go?

Contact your local speech and language therapy (SLT) service to enquire about their referral criteria. Some SLT services refer to different services according to the CYP's age or type of SLCN.



Visit the Talking Point website to locate your local SLT service.