

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Version: 21-1

Welcome to Springboard Speech and Language Ltd. We look forward to working with you. Please read through the information below and if you have any questions or would like further explanation do let us know. Many thanks, Chris and Hilary Platt.

DEFINITIONS

- “We”/ “us = Springboard Speech and Language Ltd.
- “Your child” = the child you have parental responsibility for.
- “Parents” = parent, carer, adoptive parent, foster carer, guardian.
- “Assessment appointment/Initial Assessment” = the first (usually longer) appointment where we are evaluating a child’s speech, language and communication skills (and noting linked skills such as play and attention).
- “Therapy Session” = an appointment where we work alongside the child and an adult who is in daily contact with them (parent/carer/teaching assistant) to support that child’s speech/language or communication development.
- “Meeting/liaison session” = an appointment that is used for discussion with a parent, member of school staff, multi-disciplinary group, rather than direct work with the child. Please note these are usually just as valuable, if not sometimes more so, than direct work, and a combination of both is often needed to ensure the best outcomes for the child.
- “SENCO” = Special Educational Needs Coordinator (a member of school staff who oversees the support provided in school to any children identified as having Special Educational Needs). Sometimes referred to as an Inclusion Manager/ Coordinator.
- “Clients” – Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) often refer to the people that they work with as clients (rather than ‘patients’).
- “Commissioners” = The person or organisation that request and pay for our speech and language therapy services. This is often a parent/carer but may also be a Local Authority, Education setting (School/Nursery) or charity.

Speech and Language Therapists try hard not to use ‘jargon’ (technical terms that are hard to understand) but we all do it sometimes. Please do let us know if we need to explain what we mean at any time – we are always happy to do so.



APPOINTMENTS

1. Location of Appointments

Please note that during COVID-19 restrictions, not all of these options may be possible.

Clinic – Southampton Road, Portsmouth (near Port Solent)

We currently offer one clinic location as an option for some therapists / appointments. It is a first-floor setting with an on-site car park. No travel charge applies to sessions taking place at the clinic.

Online sessions – this is sometimes referred to as ‘telehealth’ or ‘teletherapy’

We offer these sessions using Zoom or Microsoft Teams. They work best when you are able to use a laptop or computer that has a reliable internet connection. An adult must be present with the child at all times in order to control the technology and support the child with the activities.

Child’s Nursery or School

We are also able to provide assessment or therapy appointments in your child’s school or nursery, providing they are willing for this to happen.

To work in school/nursery we require:

- A quiet space to work with a child’s height table and chairs.
- A person to observe the session and carry out follow up in between (this is sometimes the parent/carer but is often also a teaching assistant from school, particularly if your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)).

Please Note:

- ❖ If you wish appointments to be in school, you will need to get permission from a senior member of school staff (Headteacher or SENCO) in the first instance.
- ❖ Whilst we can recommend how much time a child would benefit from follow up on speech and language therapy work, schools make their own decisions regarding how they allocate their staff members’ time and have to ensure that support time is provided equitably across the school. If you have any concerns about the amount of support time your child is receiving in school, you will need to discuss this directly with the school.

2. Practice/ Therapy Homework

In order for therapy to be successful children need frequent opportunities to practise the therapy activities or strategies during the period between appointments. Children are unlikely to make progress without this regular practice.

At every session we will explain and demonstrate to parents or school/nursery staff what to practice, and we have lots of creative suggestions to try and avoid it feeling like a chore for the child or the adult!

Please let us know if there are difficulties getting practice done so we can try and work out a solution with you.

3. Resources

We will often loan therapy resources (games, worksheets, books) to be used in between sessions. Often these resources have been specially made by us and take considerable time to do so. Please take care of the resources and return them to us in good condition when you have finished with them (usually at the next session). Where resources are lost or damaged, we ask you to replace them (if a book or object) or pay for a replacement to be made/purchased.

Occasionally we will make a resource specifically for your child e.g. with your family member's photos – these resources are yours to keep, and we will let you know when this is the case.

4. Aims of Therapy

Aims of therapy vary depending on the child's individual needs and circumstances. We will agree these with you after assessment and at regular intervals during therapy. All of our therapists have excellent clinical skills, extensive experience and are keen to achieve the best possible outcomes for children we work with. We will regularly feedback to you about the progress your child is making and discuss your priorities for aims and areas to focus on.

5. Beginning and Ending Therapy

Once we have agreed with you to begin therapy sessions, an initial series will be arranged (often 4-6 sessions). During the series, regular discussions will take place to review; how the sessions are going, progress being made, and the need for further sessions.

You may pause or stop your child's therapy at any time (payment for all sessions up to that point will need to be made). Please note that we are typically oversubscribed and so will not always be able to immediately restart or provide the same therapist for your child if you wish to resume appointments at a later date.

Please also note that we are legally required to retain and archive all clinical records about your child that were completed up until the point you chose to stop therapy. We follow the professional regulations around the length of time that these should be stored for (details on retention periods can be found in our Privacy Notice or contact the office for more information).

If a therapist becomes unable to continue appointments for a reason such as illness or maternity leave, another member of the team will offer to continue if possible. When that is not possible, we will do our best to direct you to other possible sources of support.

In the unlikely event of needing to, we reserve the right to stop appointments with immediate effect for example if the therapist experiences threatening or aggressive behaviour.

6. Second Opinions/Student Placements

We are proud of our clinical experience and knowledge and are always keen to continually expand this and share what we know with others. Therefore, we regularly go to other team member's appointments for second opinions or clinical development.

From time to time we may also have students working alongside us – either for observation or as part of a Speech and Language Therapy degree course where students are required to do 'hands-on' work as part of a clinical placement. We will always discuss a student's participation in a

session beforehand and seek your consent for this – please note you have the right to refuse a student’s participation in a session should you wish to.



REPORTS, PAPERWORK AND EHCPs

(a) Clinical Records

When we see a child for assessment / therapy we create clinical records for them.

This means that we make notes after each ‘contact’ e.g.

- a therapy session.
- a discussion with a parent/carer in person or by telephone.
- a discussion with another professional about your child (e.g. a teacher, another Speech and Language Therapist, a GP).
- a meeting that we attended about your child.

The details we record from these ‘contacts’ includes information such as:

- the date and time of the contact.
- who was present and where the contact took place.
- what happened (i.e. the activities/targets that we worked on and how your child got on).
- any relevant information that you shared (e.g. a recent hearing test finding, a change in the child’s health).
- any relevant information about your child (e.g. that they were congested and found concentrating harder in the session than in previous sessions).

Also included in the clinical records are copies of our assessments, reports and letters written by us, plus copies of emails and reports that we have been sent by you or a professional working with your child (where you have given permission to them to share with us).

We keep these records because:

- We have to – it is a professional standard of the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC).
- To help us remember what has happened and been discussed.
- To help us monitor progress and check how the child is progressing with the aims that we are hoping to achieve.
- So that if another therapist within our team started working with your child they can check what has been done before and how your child has been getting on.
- To help us write progress reports or reports as part of Education, Health and Care Plans (we refer to the information to comment on progress, previous targets, assessment findings etc.)
- To refer back to if there was a query about the work we had done with a child.

These records are kept securely (see Privacy Notice) and you have the right to ask to view these records.

(b) Initial Reports

An assessment summary report is included in the cost of the standard initial assessment.

(c) Additional Reports and Letters

There are times when a new report may be helpful. For example: when a child is changing school, when there have been significant changes or new needs have been identified, or if a request for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is being made.

Reports take a considerable amount of time to write and therefore are charged. Details of current costs are on the fees appendix and your Therapist will discuss the costs with you at the time you request a report.

When required (e.g. to make an onward referral or to reply to an enquiry from a medical professional) letters will be charged as per the Fee Appendix applicable at that time.

(d) EHCP Annual Reviews

When a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place their annual review is an important opportunity for us to contribute to the wider plans and aspirations for the coming year. It also provides an important opportunity to review your child's progress and reflect on the most appropriate and meaningful therapy goals for them looking ahead. Unless agreed otherwise we would expect to contribute to this process in some way. Dependent on the child's specific needs at that time, this could range from simply providing updated targets for the coming academic year to a full report and attendance at the review itself. We will discuss the level of input required with you each year. Charges for our input into a child's annual review are listed on our fee appendix.

MEDICO-LEGAL WORK / SEND TRIBUNALS

Occasionally a family we are working with may decide to initiate an Educational Tribunal for their child e.g. about speech therapy input or a school placement. Please speak to your therapist as early as possible if you are considering this course of action so that they can explain what we do and do not offer in these circumstances and provide you with written confirmation of this.

In almost all circumstances parents are advised to seek the input of a specialist Speech and Language Therapist who has completed additional medico-legal training to provide the Tribunal report and act as your expert witness.

Please note that all liaison work undertaken as part of a Tribunal, will be charged at our Liaison/Additional Administration rate as listed on our fee appendix.



PAYMENT

(a) Fees

Fees are charged as per our separate 'Fees' appendix – please ask us for a copy if you have not received one already. We aim to keep our prices fair and reasonable but inevitably fees may be

increased from time to time. We review fees on a yearly basis and will always give you one month's notice, in writing, of any increase.

(b) Payment Procedure

- Payment is required following each session or by agreement we may invoice you monthly in arrears.
- Payment is due within **14 days** of issuing the invoice.
- Our preferred payment method is by **bank transfer/BACS** (please include a reference of the invoice number or surname).
- If you have private medical insurance, please check with them to ensure that speech and language therapy for your child is covered. We do not deal with insurance companies directly so you will need to pay for the session(s) and then reclaim the cost from them.

(c) Late Payment

Late payment of invoices results in extra administration time and as a small business can also cause cash flow difficulties for us. Consequently, one reminder will be issued after 14 days and if payment is still not received within 7 days of this, a £10 late payment charge will be added to the invoice.

Please note that if payment is not forthcoming, there will be no further sessions until the outstanding balance is cleared, and action will be taken to secure payment for the outstanding balance plus interest and all associated costs. This includes, if necessary, making a court claim.

If you are having any difficulty paying an invoice, please speak to us as soon as possible so we can arrange a repayment plan.

(d) Cancellation of Appointments

We recognise that it is not always possible to avoid cancelling or rearranging an appointment e.g. due to a child's illness. However, due to the nature of our work offering regular therapy sessions, cancelled appointments can rarely be offered to someone else. Please do check dates carefully when booking with us to try and avoid the need to reschedule if you can.

- For children receiving weekly therapy sessions, the first cancelled appointment per half term will not be charged. Subsequent cancellations will be charged at £20.
- For children receiving fortnightly therapy sessions, the first cancelled appointment per term will not be charged. Subsequent cancellations will be charged at £20.
- If we have travelled to the appointment without being notified that the session had to be cancelled, you will be charged half of the session fee.

Please note that if we see your child at school or nursery then it is your responsibility (not the school's or nursery's) to inform us if your child will not be there – e.g. if they are off sick, away on a school trip etc.

(e) Additional Administration

There is often some administration required between appointments e.g. emails to school to confirm an appointment time, a brief liaison email or phone call with an NHS Speech and Language

Therapist etc. However, from time-to-time situations arise for clients where there is more correspondence and administration between sessions required than is standard. For example, this may be because a child is transitioning between school placements, new medical information has come to light, or there are plans to begin or change an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). If more than 30 minutes administration time is required between appointments, then the time over 30 minutes will be chargeable as per the administration charges in the current Fee Appendix. We will aim wherever possible to have discussed this with you beforehand.



FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

(a) Feedback

We are always keen to hear feedback about our services and suggestions for ways we could change or improve so please let us know in person, via email, or through completing any questionnaires that we send out.

(b) Complaints

All therapists working for Springboard Speech and Language Ltd must maintain their registrations with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT). HCPC Registrations can be checked online – www.hcpc-uk.co.uk. Additionally, our therapists may choose to register with the Association of Speech and Language Therapists in Independent Practice (ASLTIP) which is an optional registration.

We always aim to work to the highest standards. However, if you have any concerns about our work, please contact us and we will be happy to discuss it with you. If we are unable to resolve your concern to your satisfaction, we will provide you with details of who you can pass your complaint on to. This may be one or more of the bodies listed above: the HCPC, RCSLT or ASLTIP.



LIAISON WITH OTHER PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHILD

Liaison with Other Professionals

There are usually a number of people involved in supporting your child's health and education at any point in time. These may include some of the following:

- Teachers / Nursery staff
- Educational Psychologists
- NHS and/or Independent Speech and Language Therapists / Physiotherapists / Occupational Therapists
- Portage workers / Health Visitors
- Specialist Advisory Teachers / Teams
- GP / Audiologist / Paediatrician / CAMHS

Some families may be receiving speech and language therapy via the NHS as well as from us, or they may have recently seen a different independent speech and language therapist. Our professional guidelines recommend that all speech and language therapists involved (or recently involved) with a child liaise with one another. This ensures that your child receives consistent support as therapists can agree targets and approaches, as well as avoiding reduplication of assessments (which may invalidate the results). When we start working with your child we will ask your permission to contact any other therapists who are also involved with them.

In order to give your child, the best support, we may need to liaise with other professionals as well, such as those in the list above. We will ask your consent to do this at the point of a first appointment and will ask you to renew this consent if our input continues for some time.

If you do not wish for us to liaise with one or more people involved in your child's care, please let us know as soon as possible. In exceptional circumstances, where we feel it is clearly in the interests of your child for us to liaise with other professionals but you do not consent to this, we reserve the right to stop working with your child.



SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION

All therapists working for, or on behalf of, Springboard Speech and Language Ltd will have had an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and are required to stay up to date with their knowledge of safeguarding legislation and procedures.

In common with all people who work with children we have a legal responsibility to ensure children are kept safe from harm. If we have significant concerns about a child's welfare then we are legally required to follow these up - if necessary via discussion with other professionals such as a child's health visitor, teacher and / or social services. Except in exceptional circumstances we would seek to discuss any concerns we have with a child's parents / carers in the first instance and keep them informed about any follow up action taken.



CONFIDENTIALITY/KEEPING INFORMATION SECURE

Data Protection

You will be provided with a copy of our Privacy Notice which sets out what information we obtain and store about you/your child and the measures we take to ensure that we abide by our legal and professional obligations and keep your data secure.