

# TalkingTAKES OFF



June 2019

**Luton**

A bi-monthly newsletter to provide the latest information and news about the Early Outcomes Fund programme in Luton.

## Luton secures funding to improve language and communication skills of young children

Luton Council has successfully secured funding of £452,000 from the Department for Education (DfE) for its Early Outcome Fund (EOF) programme to support speech, language and communication development in babies and young children from the antenatal period through to when they start school.

This funding which we have called Talking Takes Off is a year long programme to provide clear support and guidance to all families to give their children the very best start in life. It will also deliver additional support for those parents and young children where there may be identified needs.

The programme will be delivered as part of Luton's Flying Start strategy which provides prevention and early help services from pregnancy to five. This funding also links with Luton's Investment Framework in terms of ensuring all children achieve better educational outcomes to ensure they are in the best possible position to take advantage of future employment opportunities in the town.



Throughout the year the core team will work with a range of partners including maternity and paediatric services, health visiting teams, speech and language services, children's centres, primary care settings, dentists, early years providers, schools and libraries. They will ensure all staff are offered appropriate training supporting early communication and language development so they can use this as part of their work with babies and children and also share skills with parents. (see page 3 for more information )

A new pathway for speech, language and communication will be developed with partners and a new screening tool will be  
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**For more information or to contact us**

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# Meet the Team



Welcome to our first Talking Takes Off newsletter. We hope that you find it informative and useful.

We will be publishing every two months throughout the duration of the programme and welcome suggestions for articles and any contributions that you would like included.

Please contact us on [talkingtakesoff@luton.gov.uk](mailto:talkingtakesoff@luton.gov.uk)

Left to right: Emily Martin, Speech and Language Therapist, Stephanie Cash, Programme Lead, Serina Dawkins, Project Coordinator, Michele Smith, Marketing and Communications.

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introduced to help earlier identification of children who may need more specialised support and resources will be developed and made available so that all children can be given help according to their needs. New speech and communication sessions will be offered in our Flying Start Children's Centres and by other providers including our Maintained Nurseries and with Adult Learning which will provide practical support to parents.

We will be recruiting volunteers to raise awareness about early language development to different community groups across the town. Parents will also be invited to get involved in the project to help with research to find out what works best for families and to ensure parental views are loud and clear as the new service models are designed.

**For more information please contact Stephanie Cash  
Early Outcome Fund Programme Lead  
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## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF... an ICAN Volunteer

ICAN volunteers are volunteers who have been trained on babies brain development and early communication and language messages. They work in the community to share this information with parents.



My childminding day starts at 7.30 and ends at 6pm with my daily drop off and pick up and handovers which naturally offers opportunities to include key messages from ICAN.

Once all my minded children have arrived we routinely go to a childminder group, the zoo or park, these locations once again offer the opportunity for me to come into contact with other practitioners, parents and carers.

It never ceases to amaze me how I get chatting about ICAN and dependent on the audience, gauging which message to share.

The school walk offers another great opportunity chatting to parents who are going to collect their children with younger siblings in tow. Reflecting on the audience I have at my disposal is never ending and includes 'Beaver's' were I am an assistant leader. Even on my days off I find myself chatting to various people at appointments such as the hairdressers, doctors, at the gym and lots more besides. My eyebrow technician is my classic example of how important and easily shared the key messages are in the community. She was pregnant and I shared one key message - communication starts before birth.

**Debbie Else**



## Talking Takes Off – Take Away Workshops

As part of the Early Outcome Fund, free training will be available for staff from October 2019

The course is aimed at professionals

- who work directly with families and children in both the children's and adults' workforce
- whose role requires them to be in contact with families. They may not work directly with families but could still promote key messages within their service
- colleagues who work in the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The course aims to

- Describe what normal communication and language development looks like and what to expect at each stage of development and when to be concerned
- Provide you with the Luton context in relation to communication and language needs and introduce you to new Luton Communication and Language pathway from pregnancy to five
- Introduce you to the new Communication and Language screening tool to support early identification
- Clarify how this work supports the demands of your service: how you can measure impact and how you can support within your individual role
- Understand the role of Communication Champions and how they might support your service
- Introduce you to the new Talking Takes Off Luton messages and provide you with some useful free resources to take away.

To find out more about dates and booking your place visit [www.flyingstartluton.com/professional/training-information/talkingtakesoff/](http://www.flyingstartluton.com/professional/training-information/talkingtakesoff/)

## GOOD COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Good communication skills provide a vital foundation for children and young people to build on.

Vocabulary at age five has been found to be the best predictor of whether children who experienced social deprivation in childhood were able to 'buck the trend' and escape poverty in later adult life.

The gaps in language development can be seen from an early age. On average, 40% of the overall gap between disadvantaged 16-year-olds and their peers has already emerged by the age of five. By the age of three, more disadvantaged children are – on average – already almost a full year and a half behind their more affluent peers in their early language development.

These gaps have a lasting detrimental impact on social mobility. Children who arrive at school with good communication skills will find it easier to learn, while those already behind will face a growing challenge: early advantage accumulates, but so too does early disadvantage.

In Luton, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at aged five has increased year on year and in 2018 was 69% compared to 72% nationally. Attainment in these areas has certainly improved but there is still more that we need to do.

In Luton we are able to track the attainment of funded 2-year olds to make sure that our disadvantaged children are making good progress. Many providers use LATS software (Luton Assessment Tracking System) to collect and analyse information about children's attainment. This information is collected by the local authority to help us to understand needs and to identify those areas where additional support is required.

Luton provides high quality childcare with 95.5% of early years providers being judged as good or outstanding. This has increased over the last year by 2.6 percentage points and by 6.1 over the last two years, it is also above the national average. We also know that children who attend an early years provision in Luton have much better outcomes at the end of their Reception year than children who did not attend a Luton provider.

This is an ideal platform on which to build the Early Outcomes project in Luton – a project which is set to capture the enthusiasm of the early years workforce; to engage in training and to 'take away' resources and new skills that could make a really positive difference to the life chances of the children in their care.

## **Speech and Language Therapists provide treatment and care for children and adults who have difficulties with communication, eating and drinking and swallowing.**

This includes identifying, diagnosing and supporting needs in all aspects of communication, such as interaction skills, understanding language, using language, speech sounds, stammering and voice difficulties. Working closely with the child, their parents/carers, education staff and other health professionals amongst others, we offer tailored support to each individual child linked to their specific needs, to help them communicate better in their daily lives.

The Paediatric NHS Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) service in Luton is funded by Luton and Bedfordshire CCGs, with the exception of one new post for our special schools team, which is jointly commissioned by the local authority and the CCG.



The preschool team is based at two locations in Luton, Redgrave Gardens and Liverpool Road Health Centre, however we see children in a range of community settings.

At a national level, 7.6% of children (two in every class of 30) start school with a Developmental Language Disorder and a further 2.3% of children start school with a language disorder linked to another condition, such as learning difficulties or hearing problems.

At the time of writing, we have 484 children on our preschool caseloads. There are 1,300 children on our entire Luton paediatric caseload, which includes the preschool children, school aged children in both mainstream and special schools and our Youth Offending Service post.

This is covered by a total of 7.3 whole time equivalent Speech and Language Therapists when the team is fully staffed.

## **Early Outcomes Fund Key Milestones for delivery 2019/2020**

As part of our application for funding we developed a Theory of Change that would be the framework for our systems change for early communication and language development. The following are some of the key milestones we will deliver as part of grant.

1. Early years Language & Communication Strategy, to be completed by June 2019.
2. Develop an Early years Language and Communication Workforce Plan offering training at a universal and specialist level. Free training will begin in October 2019.
3. Key early year's communication and language messages to be launched from September 2019 onwards.
4. Launch of the new Early Year's communication and language pathway September 2019.
5. Launch of new screening tool September 2019.
6. Establish Communication Champions at elected members, strategic leaders and operational leader's levels from the summer onwards.
7. Develop our sustainability plan linking with Flying Start.

The Theory of Change visit [www.flyingstartluton.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Appendix-I-Theory-of-Change.pdf](http://www.flyingstartluton.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Appendix-I-Theory-of-Change.pdf)