

**Talking Takes Off**

**Role Description for Operational Communication Champions**

**Context**

Communication is key for early child development. For children who do not experience the opportunity to develop their speech, language and communication skills this can have a major impact on their readiness for school, their ability to form relationships and their emotional development as well as future life chances. There may be a range of reasons why children experience speech, language and communication (SLC) difficulties, which may be transient or linked to longer term additional needs. We are committed as a partnership in Luton to tackle this important issue collectively through a systems change approach to our work.

Luton is a super diverse town with over 122 languages spoken with a highly mobile population. The levels of poverty in the town are high and Luton has the seventh highest rate of child poverty of all the local authorities in the country. There is strong evidence that children who live in deprived wards will be up to a year behind in their vocabulary by the time they start school compared to children from more affluent wards. 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; however, in some areas more than 50% of children are not reaching the expected levels in communication and language on school entry.

Luton has successfully secured funding from the Department for Education through its Early Outcome Fund tosupport its social mobility strategy and narrow the word gap for children in readiness for school. The programme is expected to allow Luton to make a systems change to how partner agencies in Luton support children and their parents to ensure they are able have the best start at school. This programme in Luton is called Talking Takes Off and is part of our Five to Thrive strategy.

**Benefits to the setting in appointing a Communication Champion in Early Years settings.** The Ofsted Early Years inspection handbook 2019 states that inspectors should consider how effectively senior leaders use performance management and their assessment of strengths and areas for improvement within the setting to provide a focus for professional development activities, particularly in relation to increasing children’s vocabulary and cultural capital. [P20 90]

If you have identified communication and language as areas for development in your setting then supporting a Communication Champion would provide excellent evidence for this key area of leadership and management.

**Benefits to the Communication Champion**

This role would provide the Communication Champion with evidence of taking a leading role in an area of key importance to children’s success. You will be supported to deliver training, support staff in your setting and look at the evidence to show that this work is making a difference. All of these are fantastic transferrable skills to add to your record of professional development.

**What would be expected of a Communication Champion?**

1. In the context of your job role, raise awareness as to why early years speech, language and communication development is so important, particularly linked to improved outcomes for children.
2. Encourage staff to access the free Talking Takes off universal training and targeted training offer where relevant in your organisation – information is available on the [Flying Start website](https://www.flyingstartluton.com/professional/training-information/talkingtakesoff/)
3. Deliver internal staff training for those who cannot attend training, using resources provided by Talking Takes Off to raise awareness, so that all staff are trained in key messages, skills and behaviours.
4. If applicable, support staff / team members to understand and use the screening tool.
5. Understand, disseminate and embed the new communication and language pathway throughout your organisation to assist with its being embedded in local practice.
6. Disseminate promotional Talking Takes Off messages through your social media, in public areas and on your website.
7. Promote the Talking Takes Off Communication Friendly Setting Award in your setting/team and advise your team/setting how you can take part and the benefits it will bring.
8. Assist with collection of data and/or information as needed, including case studies to demonstrate impact.

**How will we support you?**

1. Training will be available to support you in this role. The training will be delivered by specialists who will provide you with training resources and materials.
2. To recognise this important role, we will provide you with a certificate for your own CPD.
3. Termly Talking Takes Off network meetings will be arranged for you to attend and ensure you are kept up to date and have the opportunity to share best practice and ideas.

**What is the commitment?**

The role is yours to develop within the context and needs of your workplace. **As a minimum, you will be expected to**:

1. Attend the Talking Takes Off Takeaway training (half day training) See [flying start website for booking details](https://www.flyingstartluton.com/professional/training-information/talkingtakesoff/)
2. Attend the Talking Takes Off Communications Champions training (one and a half hour training). See [flying start website for booking details](https://www.flyingstartluton.com/professional/training-information/talkingtakesoff/)
3. Deliver in team/ setting training to raise awareness of speech, language and communication needs to work colleagues/ staff for those who cannot attend the universal training and/or for new starters. This could be delivered as part of a team meeting or as a one off meeting. It would probably take around an hour.
4. Attend termly Talking Takes Off network meetings to keep up to date with all issues related to Talking Takes Off. You would then be expected to share this with your team at team meetings.
5. Support and advise your team members/setting on communication development and local pathways/support available.
6. Potentially speak to researchers from the University Of Bedfordshire who are evaluating the Talking Takes Off programme.
7. Potentially be asked to prepare a case study to support the evaluation as described as above.

In summary, the time is likely to be more at the beginning with your training to become a Talking Takes Off Communication Champion. Once you have completed your training the commitment will include training of colleagues in your team and service, which may be a one off or may be several sessions.

If you require further information, please call Flying Start on 01582 548356 or send an email to [talkingtakesoff@luton.gov.uk](mailto:talkingtakesoff@luton.gov.uk)

**Line management agreement**

Please ensure that before you take on this commitment you have secured the agreement from your line manager. This will ensure you can be released from your duties to take on this important role.

Please complete the following and return to Talking Takes Off [talkingtakesoff@luton.gov.uk](mailto:talkingtakesoff@luton.gov.uk)

**Your details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Team / service area/ setting name |  |
| Organisation |  |
| Address |  |
| Phone number |  |
| Email |  |

**Line manager’s approval**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Line managers name |  |
| Line managers signature |  |
| Line managers email |  |
| Date |  |

Please return this form to [talkingtakesoff@luton.gov.uk](mailto:talkingtakesoff@luton.gov.uk)

*August 2019*