

“Our vision is to create a system where no child in Norwich is left behind.”

Dr. Tim Coulson

Independent Chair of Norwich

Opportunity Area Partnership Board





What was the problem?

- Proportion of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) was poor in Norwich
- Schools and settings told us that pupils often have poor communication, social and emotional skills at school entry
- Support from Speech and Language services and therapists can have long waiting lists
- Children that are behind at age 5, too often struggle to catch up and the progress children make varies significantly



Communication Champions

- Trained **Communication Champions** in schools, nurseries and early years settings to create a universal approach to improving speech and language
- A **Communication Champion** is a leader in empowering children and young people with the skills for their future



Communication Champions - CPD

- 83 Communication Champions trained face-to-face
- 32 Communication Champions trained virtually
- 295 practitioners accessed online CC training
- CCs trained approximately 200 of their colleagues using our cascade resources.
- Provided accredited Elklan Training to 42 practitioners and funded MA qualifications for 7 practitioners.



Communication Champions - Hubs

- **Development of 5 locally led Communication Hubs, including a 0-2 Hub led by a nursery**
- Sustainable legacy from the NOA
- Designed to develop as 'centres of excellence' in speech, language and communication
- Provides a forum for professionals to regularly share expertise and for practitioners to engage in good practice discussion
- Locally led Hub model to plan future response to SLC needs
- Professional generosity and commitment to improve outcomes



Role of a Communication Champion Hub

- Half-termly (remote) meetings organized by Hub leads
- Professional networks - NOA Communication Champions, EY practitioners, Early Years Advisers, Early Help practitioners, ECCH therapists, service representatives
- CPD focus in areas relevant to early speech, language and communication development (e.g. Working with parents, communication environments, supporting children with EAL)
- Forum to share good practice and problem solve
- Training offers to network members



Hub Leads

- North Norwich Communication Hub - Mile Cross Primary School & Catton Grove Primary School
- Lionwood Infant and Nursery School Hub
- Lakenham Primary School Hub
- Peapods Preschool Hub
- 0-2 Communication Hub Partnership - Little Squirrels Play Forest and Chestnut Nursery





Outcomes so far

- Practitioner confidence and expertise improved significantly in:
 - ✓ Identifying early speech, language and communication needs
 - ✓ Supporting needs early with a range of approaches
 - ✓ Engaging with parents to support SLCN tools at home
- Best practice approaches embedded within schools
 - ✓ SLCN assessments
 - ✓ Whole school development plans that reflect SLC needs
 - ✓ Quality interventions by all EY practitioners
- Networks well attended and enthusiastic champions share their learning and collaborate



Reflections – what did we learn?

- High quality and engaging practitioner CPD was valued by participants and school leaders
- Empowering local leaders and passionate practitioners provided a focus to improve outcomes locally
- Importance of time and capacity for practitioners to learn together, share best practice and collaborate around solutions

Feedback from Mile Cross Primary School





Impact on Staff Skills

- Four NOA trained Communication Champions (Three to Leadership Level)
- All class staff (nursery-year 6) have received cascaded training
- Universal level of skills and understanding
- Another element in outstanding QFT and an integral part of high-quality Early Years provision
- Ongoing CPD



Impact on teaching and learning

- Communication-Friendly Environments: displays, reading areas, noise, light, clutter ...
- Communication-Friendly teaching and learning strategies: visual supports, modelling, extending sentences...
- Improving provision for all children, and better supporting children with SLCN
- Long-term impact on GLD and narrowing the attainment gap



Impact on Parents and Families

- Partnership working
- Importance of home learning
- Communication Cafes and parent packs to support engagement



Staff feedback from the Communication Champions training

Strategies to support the children I work with. I could ask questions about what to do for individual children to help them make progress.

Sharon Barnes - TA

It made me think about the learning environment in the Early Years and how to improve it to make it more communication friendly and inviting for children on their transition into school.

Steph Hall - Early Years Teacher

It raised my awareness of how speech and language impacts on every single school subject as well as the child's self-confidence and social skills.

Hannah Ruffell - Early Years/KS1 Teacher

The understanding, confidence and resources to promote speech, language and communication at a whole school level.

Eileen Maceachern - SENCO



Stakeholders

- Primary Schools, Early Years Settings & Childminders
- LA Departments: Early Years, Communities & Partnerships, SEND
- Norfolk County Council Services: Family Learning, Libraries, Early Childhood & Family Service, Portage,
- Department for Education
- SLC Organisations: The Communication Trust, ICAN, Communicate
- Wider Organisations: NHS Healthy Child Programme, Action for Children, University of East Anglia
- East Coast Community Healthcare (ECCH)