

Initial Case Study Collection

1. Organisation Name	Hillingdon Community Health Speech and Language Therapy Department in partnership with The London Borough Of Hillingdon's Childcare and Early Years Team
2. Contact person for org.	<p><i>Name: Lucy Rennison, Speech and Language Therapist (SLT)</i> <i>Email address: lrennison@hillingsdon.gov.uk</i></p> <p><i>Telephone: 01895 277877/250516</i></p>
3. This case study is an example of:	Targets in line with the Bercow Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint working • Training • Health promotion • Promoting positive interaction skills of Early Years Practitioners and families
4. Local background details	<p>The SLT's, Inclusion Advisors, teachers and Early Years Practitioners in Hillingdon have a long-standing habit of collaborative work across teams for the benefit of children and families. The missing part of this collaboration was being able to offer training packages for both families and practitioners.</p> <p>When the constraints of busy caseloads allowed, local SLT's were able to provide one off training sessions. However, this was dependent on time and difficult to follow up in order to review impact and usefulness. At times families and practitioners were attempting to support and refer children without enough underlying knowledge and understanding of speech, language and communication needs to make this effective.</p> <p>In order to promote collaboration and fill in this missing link, Hillingdon's Childcare and Early Years Service now employs a full time SLT from Hillingdon Community Health. More specifically this post was established to increase joint working across health and education, providing universal, targeted and specialist input to pre-school settings and the wider children's workforce, through the use of a training framework.</p> <p>The training provided has been developed in order to support the needs of practitioners who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in direct contact with children (0-5 years) • Lead teams in settings (nurseries, playgroups, children's centres...) • Plan daily routines and activities to support communication in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum • Work with children with specific language impairments • Support parents of vulnerable children • Work with children and families in areas of social and educational deprivation

	<p>Elklan: Speech and Language Support for Under 5's forms a key layer of this training framework.</p>
<p>5. What was done that made a difference to the above situation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of a yearly, borough wide, speech and language training programme means that Early Years Practitioners can access training in a much more timely and meaningful way. • The training framework is flexible and consists of both short, taster sessions (1-3 hours), peer support groups and the accredited, 10 week Elklan, Speech and Language Support for Under 5's course. • Frequency of courses is adapted according to local needs. For example Elklan now runs each term due to an increased demand. • Sessions are available during the day and in the evening. Whole setting training is also available. • The two day version of Elklan Under 5's course was provided for all the Childcare and Early Years Service (CEYS) team members (i. e. Advisory Teachers, Inclusion Advisors, Child Development Team) in order that they were more aware of it's content, what practitioners were learning, and as a refresher of their own knowledge. • Targeted advertising of courses. Identifying settings who have a large proportion of children with additional needs, those with low Foundation Stage Curriculum Profile scores, those in areas of deprivation, those involved with the Every Child a Talker (ECAT) programme and those that have needed a higher level of support regarding speech, language and communication needs in the past or currently.

The outcomes**Outcomes at Community/Workforce Level**

Whilst the shorter sessions are well received it is the Elklan course that has had most impact on practitioners knowledge and understanding: Through the completion of portfolio activities, that relate directly to everyday early years practice, learners report they gain a much better depth of understanding. The Elklan course is run on a termly basis and compliments the key messages covered within the shorter sessions. This means that there are shared consistent messages about communication throughout the borough. These messages also fit seamlessly into the principles which are promoted through the ECAT programme.

Learners value the course for it's content and the accreditation they receive and this also means that the borough benefits from a more highly skilled workforce. Several learners have also gone onto study for the Early Years Foundation degree after completing Elklan because it has enabled them to see how "theory" relates to everyday benefits for themselves, children and families.

A tracking system means that CEYS team members are able to see which settings have practitioners who are Elklan trained. Following the delivery of the two-day version for the CEYS team, these team members are able to reiterate key strategies for children and staff on their support visits, and they know that the staff will understand what they are recommending.

The success of Elklan is seen in its inclusion in the CEYS team plan and the joint early years strategic planning between health and education. Funding has also been provided for two additional CEYS team members to be trained as 'Elklan trainers'.

Outcomes at Family Level

Following attendance at the Elklan course staff have not only made changes to their own skills and interaction with children but also been more able to support families. This has been evidenced through:

- A practitioner who now runs coffee mornings for families to share information about promoting communication.
- Practitioners who run 'stay and play' sessions that now include information about communication, the value of bilingualism and the importance of play for language.
- Settings that have made changes to their environment so that they are more communication friendly and accessible to children and families.
- Practitioners who are more able to identify children, who require additional support, share with this with families in a constructive way and put strategies in place whilst the family is waiting for an appointment with a SLT.

	<p>Outcome at Child Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners are now more able to support <i>all</i> children's communication skills and adapt their interaction to suit the child's individual needs. • Children are being identified earlier so are less likely to have long-term difficulties. • Children are benefiting from increased frequency and quality story and song times. • Staff are more aware of the benefits of both one-to-one and group sessions for children. • Children are benefiting from improved planning for communication, language and literacy based activities that include details about practitioner involvement/roles rather than child-focussed targets alone.
<p>Summary</p>	<p>Speech, language and communication are crucial to every child's ability to access and get the most out of education and life, and also under pins the five Every Child Matters outcomes. Hillingdon's use of the Elklan course has meant that because practitioners now have an improved knowledge and understanding of speech and language development, they are able to support all children's communication during, after and before there may or may not be an identified 'problem'.</p>