

APPENDIX A

Written Responses in the Consultation Period on the proposed change to the delivery model for Speech and Language therapeutic services

Point of View	Supports Proposal	Against Proposal	Not For or Against	Other comments/Notes
School Governor	Yes			No additional comments
Head Teacher	Yes			Keep children in mainstream education is a priority - as long as they are supported effectively by the SLT team
Teacher	Yes			We would like to see the funds put into the outreach service available for those who require it. Also this builds evidence towards the EHCP's
Head Teacher	Yes			Pupils will be able to remain in their home locality and not feel 'excluded' by this system There will no longer be reintegration that may prove problematic for pupils and families Expertise can be developed across schools/clusters and provision for all pupils will benefit
Inclusion Leader		Yes		The children need small classes, where work is individualised and targets are built into the everyday work that the children do, brings about a positive change in levels of attainment, attitude and self-confidence alongside making progress with their specific delay or disorder which simply cannot be achieved in their mainstream settings. The new model of delivery would not deliver the intensive support that these children need in order to succeed.
SENCO		Yes		<p>We have had one child go to and then come back from the language unit (some years ago) and one who was offered a place at the beginning of last year but his parents did not want to send him as they were concerned that there would not be a place for him when he was ready to return. The first child returned with a statement but within about a year no longer needed this level of support and the statement was discontinued. From this position I can see both sides. I understand the difficulty in appointing specialists but I do not understand that rational behind thinking that more could be appointed by schools. I understand that some children need to travel great distances but is this not more cost effective than specialists travelling to all over. Perhaps more language units should be set up to alleviate the need to travel.</p> <p>My main concerns are that everything from Speech and Language (and other services) just keep being passed to schools to do. We are already at the point where we are unable to provide the best provision for our children and in some cases what is provided is far less than the best. I think what will happen is these children will get the best the school can offer but this will not be sufficient. Our school is in an area where lots of the children, if not the majority, have poor language skills and resources are very scarce. What happens when 2 or 3 schools cannot get a specialist teacher? Then those children will lose the specialist and the small class sizes.</p> <p>I feel these children need small group provision in order to thrive. Perhaps schools should be forced to take them back (or at least expected to even if this takes them over their numbers for a time). They should have the freedom to keep the place open for the child or risk needing to go over numbers when they return.</p> <p>There is an expectation that these children can have £6000 worth of support and that this will be focused on their speech and language needs but the child may require support with other areas of the curriculum which often ends up that the individual schools are expected to cover. I know that an EHC application could then be made but this might not be necessary if the child attended a unit and their speech improved.</p>
As above (part 2)				<p>Perhaps setting up more, smaller language units specialised for certain age ranges would help the need for children to travel longer distances. Perhaps these could have less support from a speech therapist i.e. not every day but be compensated through small groups with specialist teachers and teaching assistants, or a model that is a little like having an EHC level of support for a year or 2 years.</p> <p>I do understand that this is a difficult area and that there is not enough money for everything and so it needs to be spent wisely. I would say the best way to evaluate this is by looking at the progress made of the children in the units compared to those that are not and if savings need to be made then can savings be suggested by the units themselves which again might mean they do lose some provision but I am sure it would still be good provision for each child and far better than mainstream schools can offer.</p>

Teacher (Monkhouse)		Yes		<p>The children who come to the units in the County have a severe speech delay or disorder and need a nurturing environment to gain confidence in themselves and build their self esteem. Many of these children can present as aggressive, because of their frustrations with being unable to communicate with their peers, and need to be in a small class to regain their self-confidence as well as having access to intensive speech support and the larger classes in mainstream school to try out their new-found confidence in their abilities.</p> <p>Back in mainstream school these children will become more vulnerable and progress in all areas of the curriculum as well as progress with their specific delay will once again slow down and they will not be reaching their potential for future life.</p>
Head Teacher (Monkhouse)		Yes		<p>The children benefit from the small group support/1:1 that can be provided within the Speech and Language unit. Many lack confidence because of their issues and the intensity of support alongside the building of quality relationships enables them to build self-esteem. Being a member of the small class, where work is more individualised and targets are clear and achievable facilitates progress, albeit in small steps. Our main concern of late has been that we have had more children with complex needs, not exclusively Speech and Language, who have found it more difficult to access a larger classroom environment, even with 1:1 support.</p> <p>I am intrigued by the new proposals which seem to suggest that schools endeavour to meet the needs of these children themselves. In our area it is difficult to recruit any staff at all never mind those with specific skills to support these children. Our experience to date indicates that many struggle in a larger mainstream class even with specific support and can disrupt the learning of others.</p>
Teacher (Special School)		Yes		<p>This is a vital service which provides specialist, nurturing support for children with social, speech and language difficulties. It has proven to make a big difference in their lives.</p>
Teacher (Fosse Way)		Yes		<p>As the teacher of the Speech and Language Class at Fosse Way Academy, I disagree with the proposal to close the Speech and Language Unit classes for a number of significant reasons which I do not feel have been analysed or understood by the people making the decisions. I have personally seen the difficulties and the number of barriers that are faced by the vulnerable children that I come into contact with and I know that we give these children a chance to succeed and flourish in mainstream schooling. The complexities and the challenges of having severe SAL issues cannot be overestimated. I will elaborate on some of these challenges below.</p> <p>Behavioural</p> <p>Many researchers believe that there is a link between SLCN and Behavioural, Emotional, Social Development (BESD) which is clear and conclusive. Silva et al (1987) assessed a large number of three year olds in New Zealand to identify those with language delay. This study confirmed the presence of behavioural difficulties in those children with lower language levels; two in three (59%) of language-delayed three year olds had behaviour problems, compared to only 14% of non-language-delayed children. A more recent longitudinal study by Lindsay et al (2007:10) reiterated the co-occurrence of BESD and language difficulties, in that those 'children with language difficulties have higher levels of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties than typically developing children.'</p> <p>Recently Mary Meredith (Children's Services Manager – Inclusion) spoke at the Head teachers update meeting about the need for all children to have their needs met, specifically regarding Speech and Language in order to be able to function and prevent isolation, frustration and ultimately exclusions. The closing of the Speech and Language classes is therefore contradictory to this statement.</p> <p>From my experience of teaching in the 'Speech and Language Class' the majority of children who come into the unit have some BESD needs. These behaviours can present as disruptive and aggressive, borne out of frustration or alternatively very passive behaviours where the child has lost confidence and a desire to communicate with others. As the receiving teacher, the Speech Therapist and I visit the children in their existing school prior to them being accepted for a placement.</p>

			<p>In almost all cases, the prospective child is the one who is completely disengaged from the learning happening within the classroom. They are often not working with the class group. Usually an adult is supporting them separately on a task away from the class or they are completing a low level activity independently. Is it this early school experience which is setting these children up to fail? It is possible that by the time effective action is taken to remediate their 'barriers to learning' a pattern of disengagement in learning (particularly literacy based activities) is already in place. Is it therefore likely that the environmental factors can sufficiently influence the outcomes for children and young people with a learning difference?</p> <p>The proposed model does not take into account the positive effect that being with others who also struggle to make themselves understood has on the child. The feeling that they are not alone and that they have friends (and adults) who have time to listen and support them. Confidence and high self-esteem are two of the most valuable attributes that we can offer our children to produce happy, functioning children who are ready to learn. The small class sizes and the way that we can make adjustments to the curriculum are valuable tools to achieve this and the results speak for themselves.</p> <p>Cognitive</p> <p>The children who are taken into the unit class usually have a number of challenges with their learning.</p> <p>Phonological memory</p> <p>A research study by Alloway et al (2005:417) states that 'young children's speaking and listening abilities were uniquely linked with phonological ... memory.'</p> <p>Phonological knowledge is the bridge linking speech and spelling. Children with speech sound disorders at preschool may be at risk for later spelling difficulties due to poor phonological awareness and difficulties in phonological coding in verbal memory. (Pascoe, Stackhouse and Wells 2006:239)</p> <p>The children need time to overlearn phonological awareness skills as part of their daily work. This is very difficult to implement into a normal working classroom environment as the pace of the curriculum and the expectations for 'phonic work' far exceeds the level at which the vast majority of SAL children are working at.</p>
			<p>Literacy – Reading & Writing</p> <p>One of the challenges that many children, with SLI, face is the ability to learn to read fluently. Writing in 'Special Children' (July 2011:4) Professor Lucy Henry states that '... Because language is important for reading, around half of children identify with SLI also have difficulties with reading.' This view is endorsed by Gillon (2004:86) who stated that ... 'A large percentage of children who have diagnosed spoken language difficulties also encounter difficulties learning to read.' Indeed Broomfield & Combley (2003:7) believe that:</p> <p>If there is a 'faulty' base of poor speech and language competence, perhaps combined with poor metalinguistic skills, there may be difficulties in literacy learning as the child tries to map the written code onto the spoken one.</p> <p>This is certainly true when a child has a phonological disorder and will impact not only upon the reading but also on the written form. Many written words are incoherent to the audience as they are not phonetically plausible to the reader. Until the underlying speech delay or disorder is addressed the child will struggle to make themselves understood both orally and through text.</p> <p>In the SAL class we work hard, using a range of strategies that support children with literacy difficulties to overcome challenges.</p> <p>Working Memory – Vocabulary Learning</p> <p>Many children in the Speech and Language class have difficulties with memory. This is evidenced on 'Specialist Teaching Team' Assessments.</p> <p>Most young children are able to learn new words quickly with it being an almost automatic process. Aitchinson (cited in Bloomfield & Combley 2003:13) summarised this as, '... Pick(ing) up words like a magnet picks up pins - possibly over 10 a day.' From my experience it is often the case that children with speech and language needs find learning and remembering new vocabulary very challenging. Constable et al (1997:3) in a research study stated that acquiring new vocabulary was a complex process.</p> <p>Learning new words necessarily involves phonological processing: auditory discrimination, segmentation, rehearsal, and memory of the new sound pattern, as well as the integration of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic information from context.</p>

			<p>The children need overlearning of any new vocabulary. This needs to be done in a systematic way and revisited regularly to enable long term recall. It would also therefore make sense that these children would also find it difficult to follow lessons as at a receptive level the amount of vocabulary that is used in an age appropriate classroom and the speed with which it would need to be processed would be beyond the SAL children. Indeed the way that lessons are timetabled in the SAL class are such that learning is chunked (particularly that with excessive amounts of vocabulary e.g.. Science / topic / RE) so that the children build on learning over a week having an RE block over a set week so that learning is retained from one day to the next and as such transferred into long term memory. This is not possible to do in a mainstream class where lessons are taught on a fixed weekly timetable and therefore the child would not retain the language learning from one week to the next.</p> <p>Alongside the above there are many errors in the 'consultation report' detailing the number of students in the provision and the amount of time that they spend in the SAL class as opposed to the mainstream school. Many of the items that were hi-lighted as weaknesses in the provision could be worked on at the County Council level, for example children not been able to gain access back to a local school and the fact that parents do not know what support they can access if their child does not access the SAL class.</p> <p>To conclude:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children who are given a placement in the SAL class are not having their needs met in their local mainstream setting: The children are already failing when they reach us and have become disaffected from their learning. • The children's SAL needs are affecting all elements of their school day – social time & learning activities. Without this facility, the gap between the children and their peers would undoubtedly increase leading to greater levels of need and disengagement as a result of low self-esteem and confidence. • The provision works due to the nature of the work been highly differentiated and individualised to enable all children to succeed. This is only possible due to the knowledge and experience of the team working in the SAL class alongside the small numbers of pupils. • Many children are bordering on exclusion due to their behaviour when they arrive in the SAL class and their attitude improves alongside their speaking skills
Teacher (Mablethorpe)		Yes	<p>I am against the proposal as I feel that the units provide a unique learning environment based around the individuals speech and language therapy needs in a way that cannot be replicated in a mainstream classroom. Our Children receive up to 4 input sessions a day (daily drilling, SLAT therapy session, specialists TA session, unit TA pm session). The literacy teaching is based upon their therapy programmes and individualised. It is supported by Makaton, the pace and smaller group size ensures that all communication attempts are successful, even if it takes 10 minutes to say one sentence - with mime and props! This is what makes our children regain their communication confidence and makes them open to the constant practice that therapy required. The time this takes, the patience and cooperation required from the rest of the call, is very difficult to ensure in a lively class of 30. Our children are often very anxious, reluctant communicators with low self esteem. The units provide a safe, encouraging and fun learning environment where no feels "odd" or has comments made about their speech because all the children have SALT needs. Behaviour problems become nil because embarrassment and frustration are no longer an issue. The unit children do spend some time in mainstream class but this is very carefully managed. We want to promote peer group social interaction and provide good language models. However this is only during activities which have a low language load such as art, PE, ICT etc and the children are supported by a unit TA. Transport has been a barrier children coming into the unit (one we have worked hard to overcome) because parents are asked to put very young, often non verbal children in a car with a lone stranger, the use of a chaperone will overcome this issue. As a unit we provide lots of extras beyond the mainstream curriculum such as extra trips, individual ipads, recording equipment, Makaton etc. I am also the school senco, however the funding for this post comes from the main academy budget and not from the unit money. As a unit we would have welcomed a service level agreement and more accountability/interest within county. We are disappointed that this consultation has not included an opportunity to see our unit in action. Ofsted rated our unit outstanding at our last inspection and we feel you would have too. The children in our unit have already received at least two blocks of outreach therapy. How will you ensure that the "enhanced plus" provision will not just provide more of the same? A great deal of thought needs to be given to the nature of the outreach that you intend to provide as an alternative, it is disappointing that as the specialist teachers we have not been consulted in how this may take shape.</p>

School Staff (Mablethorpe)		Yes	<p>I am whole heartedly against the proposal as I believe it to be a mistake to close the S&L units. I have worked in the Mablethorpe Speech and Language unit for 12 years. During this time I have seen many children's lives benefit from being here. I am aware that some parents are unsure about moving their child and placing them in a taxi at first, however, I know that these same parents soon realise that it was the best decision for their child as they soon see the vast improvement of their child's speech and language, communication and confidence etc. Having spoken to our parents about the closure, some of them burst into tears, and all were upset at the thought of their child leaving, and could not believe that such a thing was even being contemplated! The children going back to mainstream and receiving enhanced SLT support seems absurd, as those same children, had S&L support in class, and it did not work for them. We are here for those children who need that bit extra, that no mainstream school with S&L intervention can provide. If anyone who has decided to close the units had actually bothered to come and see us working, talk to the staff, children and parents face to face, they would realise what a mistake it would be to close the unit.</p>
School Staff (Fosse Way)		Yes	<p>As a teaching assistant working in the Speech and Language Class at Fosse Way Academy I feel I want to leave my thoughts and opinions on the closure. I have seen first-hand the success that has been achieved from this provision. We receive children already damaged by the negative experiences they have already had in their former primary school. They have already 'failed' as their speech and language disorders and difficulties have not been addressed effectively. These schools are not at fault but they do not have the small class facility, specialised and highly trained teachers and support staff and as these children need more time to process and access their learning, this is not possible to apply in a large group situation. We gradually and carefully pick up the pieces and re-build these children and being in a safe environment with peers facing the same difficulties it has a very positive effect. Many have huge behaviour issues and before coming to us are already in grave danger of exclusion. They can be violent and aggressive with frustration at not being understood, or alternatively passive, unconfident and have no self-esteem. No two children are alike and each one is given an equal opportunity to flourish, grow and develop to the best of their ability. In this small class they are fully supported to enable them to be a part of a mainstream environment until gradually they become ready to fully integrate and become independent. During this period we teach them the skills, strategies and confidence to cope not only in school but socially too. We target their individual needs and boost self-confidence to maximise their full potential. As our children leave us they are then equipped with all the skills in place to forge ahead educationally and reach their full potential thus allowing them to access any opportunities that should come their way.</p> <p>Closing this provision is a travesty. Closure will fail children in the future and destroy chances they otherwise would have. I have worked for 18 years in this class and I am incredibly proud of what this class, the staff and school has provided for the fortunate children that we have had here but I am truly saddened and disgusted to think of those in the future who may not have this opportunity. I wholly believe the proposed changes are totally unworkable and the needs of the future children cannot be met. To see the difference in a child from when they arrive to when they leave us is immense and I find it bewildering to see any relevant reason for the demise of this service and its success can not be measured in my opinion by finance, the restructuring will have no benefit as the geographical constraints involved will cause so many difficulties in reaching so many children effectively. I therefore unconditionally oppose the closures.</p>
Teacher (Monkshouse)		Yes	<p>The decision to deliver speech and language to children through outreach would result in delayed speech and language progress. Furthermore, closure would impact on learning as specific needs could not be met as effectively if children were taught in larger mainstream classes.</p> <p>I have worked in the Speech and Language unit as a class teacher since September with the specific intention of improving all aspects of Literacy to children with specific speech and language needs. In what I consider to be a short space of time, the children I have taught have vastly improved their Speech and Language skills through intensive sessions from a speech therapist attached to our school who we can liaise with regularly. The children's reading and writing skills have also progressed through focused, small group activities and furthermore working intensively on their speech/Literacy skills in our unit has given them more confidence - they are far more capable of interacting with their peers socially and have adapted to working in their mainstream classroom. This could not have been achieved in the time without a Speech and Language Unit.</p>

Head Teacher and Governor (Fosse Way)		Yes	<p>I am writing in response to the Consultation Document which proposes the closure of Lincolnshire's three specialist Speech and Language Units in favour of replacing them with a model of delivery in the child's local school called Enhanced Plus. In my view, and in the view of the Governing Body of Fosse Way Academy, this move would be a short – sighted approach when attempting to meet the very specific and complex needs of the children attending these units. I therefore disagree with the proposal for the following reasons.</p> <p>Children come to the Speech and Language Unit at Fosse Way having already received an enhanced speech and language input in their own school setting. The children with whom we work have specific Speech, Language or Communication delays or disorders which have not responded to intensive outreach support. Having lost confidence in their ability to be understood and / or developed negative behavioural traits (presenting as either incredibly passive or frustrated and aggressive), these children are extremely vulnerable and difficult to engage. Indeed, Mary Meredith started at recent Headteacher Briefings in Lincolnshire that the major cause of behavioural difficulties in schools was directly due to the communication problems of the children involved. 50-60% of young people who are involved in offending have speech and language and communication needs and the outcomes for these children are bleak unless early intervention is delivered. It would seem at odds to be putting large sums of money into the new behavioural Outreach Support Services in Lincolnshire whilst taking away a service which has a direct positive influence on behaviour.</p> <p>Often the children in the unit class also have difficulties linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence / self – esteem • Phonological awareness (the building blocks of spoken & written English) • Memory • Reading • Spelling • Written tasks • Behaviour • Spatial awareness / Motor skills delay
Part 2			<p>Being a member of the small Speech and Language class, where work is individualised and targets are built into the everyday work of the children, brings about a positive change in levels of attainment, attitude and self-confidence as well as progress with a specific delay or disorder. The children in these classes need a specific type of teaching delivery, with regular opportunities taken to overlearn vocabulary and have the curriculum 'chunked' into smaller blocks in order to compensate for the difficult in retention and memory that the children face. The individualised approach is not available in a mainstream setting. The new model of delivery would not, in our opinion, deliver the intensive support that these children need in order to succeed. Indeed, we have evidence to support the view that children taking places in the Speech and Language Unit at Fosse Way Academy greatly outperform children staying in their home school with enhanced provision. This evidence is readily available from the Speech and Language Therapy Service.</p> <p>Whilst the importance of children receiving their education locally cannot be denied, caution should be advised when thinking this will be a cheaper option for meeting their education and therapy needs. The reason that the Speech and Language Units were originally set up across the country in large numbers was to meet the needs of this group of children in a cost effective way. There are very specific costs in the report relating to the existing model, but no detailed cost analysis of moving to the 'Enhanced Plus' model of delivery including the employment costs of the new speech therapy and teaching staff who would undoubtedly need to be employed in order to meet the children's needs.</p> <p>The report also states that there are parental concerns about travelling involved to the Speech and Language Units, and that children would not be able to return to their own local school. These concerns are very quickly allayed when the children join us and we have had nothing but glowing praise for the provision from parents. All children who have joined the Speech and Language Class have been able to return to their locality when ready.</p>

Part 3				<p>Mention is also made in the consultation document about the lack of accountability in the working of the Speech and Language Units in Lincolnshire. I would agree with this, and have mentioned it on many occasions. However, the provision that the Fosse Way Speech and Language Class provides is exemplary and we have no say in the accountability structure and line management above school level. This is surely a matter for those people in the Local Authority with a mandate for overseeing the effectiveness of the provision of High Needs Unit. This point is linked to the relatively low uptake of places in the units. We accept all children suitable for the Speech and Language Class but have no say in how these places are allocated or advertised. Many schools SENDCO's do not even know about the specialist provision here at Fosse Way so it would seem prudent to advertise the Local Authority's services more widely. I do know that our uptake numbers were incorrectly stated in the consultation document, being too low, despite this error being pointed out on earlier paperwork. I also know that there are currently around 33 children (23 in Units and 10 needing a Unit placement) who will require an Enhanced Plus service. Should the Speech and Language units be closed, I would envisage a situation whereby greater numbers of EHC applications are made due to the difficulties encountered by these children. By improving accountability are increasing the uptake to ensure the units remain full, their costs effectiveness would improve automatically.</p> <p>In conclusion, I would like to make it known that we at Fosse Way Academy disagree with the proposal to close Lincolnshire's Speech and Language Units and replace the current provision with Enhanced Plus deliver mode in the child's local school.</p>
Head Teacher			Yes	<p>Apologies for the lateness and appreciate my views are unlikely to form part of the consultation outcomes. However, I still feel it important to express them. I am neither for nor against the proposal. I do feel the, yet again, schools are being asked to use their notional SEN money for supporting a greater range of children. For some schools, like mine this notional SEN does not cover the cost. We already have to use £6000 for EHCP/statements and emergency funding should issues arise. To further add to this with any speech and language needs is going to provide further strain. Could the saving not be put specifically towards supporting the schools? If it is not then it does seem like a purely cost saving exercise. Although the actions may well suit the child and family, if funding is not offered then other children may be disadvantaged.</p>

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