




South Tyneside 
NHS Foundation Trust

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Rapid Response Pathway Initiative

Providing a range of NHS services in Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

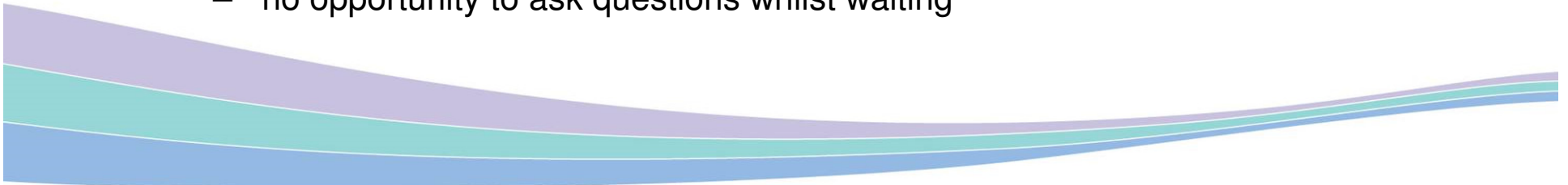
Special Needs Speech & Language Therapy Team (Gateshead)

- Children from 0-19 with significant & complex communication and/or eating and drinking difficulties
 - Close multidisciplinary working with health & education professionals
 - Provide a comprehensive, evidence-based service of assessment and intervention
 - Service delivered in homes, clinics & education settings
 - 5.2 WTE Speech & Language Therapists (SLT) and 1 WTE Speech and Language Therapy Assistant (SLTa)
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Review of Communication Pathway

Identified Areas of Concern

- Families offered verbal advice followed up by a report at assessment
 - no opportunities to model advice
- Discussions at point of assessment are highly emotive
 - families have difficulty retaining information
- A need for intervention targeting communication skills identified
 - historically, families then wait approx. 16 weeks with no contact from service
 - no opportunity to ask questions whilst waiting

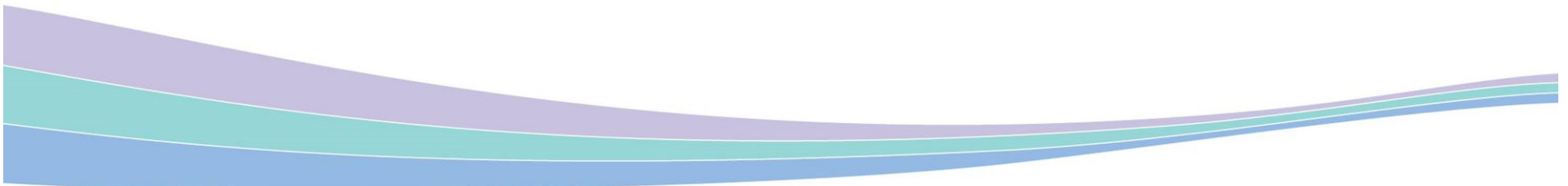


Rapid Response Pathway Initiative Objectives

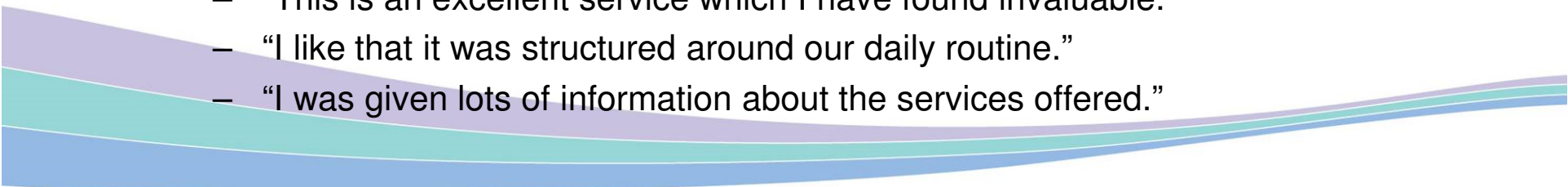
- To explain the Special Needs Speech & Language Therapy service and the supports available from the service
 - To help parents/carers understand the nature of their child's communication strengths and needs
 - To help parents/carers understand the important role they play in supporting their child's communication skills
 - To explain and demonstrate strategies parents/carers can use to support their child's communication development
 - To identify the appropriate type of intervention for the child
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Rapid Response Pathway Initiative Implementation

- Families receive up to 4 home visits
- Sessions jointly carried out by an SLT and an SLTa
 - allows simultaneous demonstration and explanation of strategies
- Information also given in written format
 - copy provided for other professionals involved
- SLT available for telephone discussions whilst waiting for next intervention



Rapid Response Pathway Initiative Impact and Results

- Pathway evaluated objectively through:
 - clinical audit
 - critical appraisal of clinical evidence base
 - parent/carer questionnaires
 - Waiting times reduced significantly from approx. 16 weeks
 - families now usually seen within 6 weeks of assessment
 - Parents/carers gave positive feedback
 - “This is an excellent service which I have found invaluable.”
 - “I like that it was structured around our daily routine.”
 - “I was given lots of information about the services offered.”
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Rapid Response Pathway Initiative

The Future

- Positive response confirms we should continue to implement this initiative
 - empower parents/carers to be the agents of change in developing their child's communication skills
 - demonstrably improved interactions between team members and families
- Methodology could be implemented across the Early Years and Community Speech and Language Therapy Teams within the trust to yield similar benefits



Thank you!

