NHS
South West London

Children's SEND Health Services

in Wandsworth



CONCERN → SPEAK TO GP/SCHOOL → EARLY SUPPORT → ASSESSMENT

Including information about new Social Communication Differences/ Difficulties (including Autism) Service, Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Services and Pre-Diagnostic Support – What Parents/ Carers Can Expect

This Leaflet was created in 2026 with input from parents & carers of young people with SEND in Wandsworth Council.

Wandsworth

Introduction

This leaflet was written by health professionals and parents & carers in Wandsworth to help new families of children with special educational needs, disabilities and health conditions to access the right support early and to navigate a complex range of services.



If you are worried about your son or daughter…

Three simple, parent-friendly first steps:

1. **Tell someone** – your Wandsworth GP, Health Visitor, nursery/ school SENCo, Child & Family Hub professional, SEND Play & Family Team (Siward Road) – contact details in section 6, on page 8

2. **Gather what you're noticing** – examples, behaviours, concerns.

3. **Access early support** – Family Hubs, Early Years Inclusion, or school-based help.

Parents and carers tell us the most important support is from inclusion staff in schools, workshops at the Autism Advisory Service and from other parents/ carers. In Wandsworth we have an active Parents & Carers Forum, as well as support groups run by Wandsworth Child & Family Hubs. Please access support early **rather than waiting for a diagnosis.**

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Understanding Childen's SEND Health Services

Health, education and care services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are detailed on the Local Authority SEND Local Offer website: Family Information Service | SEND Local Offer.

Parents/carers can also phone the Family Information Service helpline on **020 8871 7899** (Option 4) from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

More detailed and up to date information about each service is on each organisations' website. Detailed information about support in schools is available on the Ordinarily Available Provision website: https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/all-services/Mr-ordinarily-available-provision-guide/

Wandsworth is implementing the Experts at Hand model as part of the SEND reforms. This will support children experiencing difficulties accessing learning: speak to your son or daughters' school inclusion team to find out more.

Key information on each service includes:

- **how to access a health service (who can make a referral: GP only, school, parent/carer, young person)**
- **Types of assessment, treatment and support available**
- **Length of the waiting time for this service (available on the website for each service)**
- **Criteria for accessing the service and steps to access the service**
- **What support is available while you are waiting**
- **What happens while waiting and what will happen when you are given an appointment.**

Services Summarised in this Leaflet

1. ADHD assessment and support
2. Autism and social communication diagnostic services
3. Wandsworth Autism Advisory Service (WAAS)
4. Children's therapies: SLT, OT and physiotherapy
5. Sensory services: hearing and vision support
6. Family support services
7. Paediatric pathways: continence, development and epilepsy
8. CAMHS and emotional wellbeing services
9. Medical needs in schools funding support
10. Health visiting
11. School nursing

Key health and support pathways/services for children



1 Services for assessment and support of families of children with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Wandsworth has a range of services and support for children with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), including assessment, treatment and coaching.

Assessments up to 11 years old:

Assessments via the Child Development Centre and ADHD Service at St George's Hospital. Referral must be made by a Wandsworth GP or School. An ADHD Clinical Nurse Specialist contacts families within 18 weeks to ask questions and to help provide support. We then ask the school to fill in a questionnaire. The Consultant led assessment can then take place at St George's Hospital or in our clinic in Putney.

The nursing and consultant team continue to provide advice and support until the child is 18 years old.

Assessments for 11 to 18 years olds:

Assessments of older children are carried out by the Neuro Developmental Service at South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust (SWLSTG). Referrals must be made from your Wandsworth GP or School. An initial screening is carried out by the CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA). Parents and Schools must then complete screening questionnaires. The up to date waiting times are on the service website.

Support in the Community:

Wandsworth Council and Wandsworth NHS are jointly funding ADHD coaching and parent/ carer workshops. Details are available from the Family Information Services website and Family Hubs.

Support for children with ADHD in schools is championed by the ADHD Ambassadors Programme.

Diagnostic Services website:

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/all-services/lz-adhd-service/

https://swlstg.nhs.uk/service-detail/service/child-and-adolescent-neurodevelopmental-service-12/

2 Summary of Autism & Social Communications Difficulties Diagnostic Services (0-7 and 8-18).

Assessments up to 8 years old:

A new assessment service started in September 2025. Referrals should preferably be made by schools (can be made by your GP). The referrals are reviewed to check if an assessment is appropriate. Referrals for 0-7 year olds must first go to the Child Development Centre (CDC) at St George's Hospital. The new service has mobilised well and parents have provided positive feedback.

Assessments for over 8s:

For children who are 8 years and over, referrals must go to the CAMHS Single Point of Access at South West London St George's Mental Health Trust, where referrals are triaged initially. Waiting times have increased given high demand.

What is Provided: The diagnostic services offers multi disciplinary social communication assessments and a diagnostic outcome and written report, but do not provide further support, treatment or training.

Waiting times: These can vary significantly depending on demand and pathway, details are on each organisations website.

How to get support: Families can seek support from schools, GPs, or local SEND services while waiting, especially the Autism Advisory Service (see details on page 6).

Backlog Clearance Programme:

0-8 years olds referred to the previous assessment service before September 2025 are on a backlog clearance programme, which is several years long. In urgent situations children can be fast-tracked for assessment. For more information contact:

ENPqueries@swlondon.nhs.uk

Diagnostic Services website:

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/all-services/1D-childrens-development-centre-cdc-at-st-georges-hospital/

https://swlstg.nhs.uk/service-detail/service/child-and-adolescent-



3 Wandsworth Autism Advisory Service (WAAS)

How to Access Help:

Parents and carers can self refer to information sessions, coffee mornings and workshops, while children are waiting to be assessed. For individualised support, schools can refer children and families for one to one advice and training once referrals have been submitted and children once they have a diagnosis.

What is Provided:

All parents with a child with autism/social communication difficulties or those who are on the diagnostic pathway can access workshops to discuss their child's needs, with other parents and professionals. Topic based workshops are also available and led by professionals with specialisms, for example behaviour management, sensory processing and executive functioning difficulties.

For children who already have a diagnosis there are a range of advice sessions that can be delivered with school staff. Schools can also access training.

This service is led by Wandsworth Council, with close joint working from NHS Teams including at St George's Hospital to support children and families.

Waiting Times: Parents / carers can access spaces on information and workshop spaces on a termly basis. As soon a child is on the diagnostic pathway, parents can access the workshops and coffee mornings. Schools and settings can also make a referral whilst you are waiting for a diagnosis.

Challenges: Some parents/ carers express that they want practical help and modelling, to help them understand how to meet their child's needs. However, families that access the range of pre and post diagnostic support through WAAS and their child's school ultimately tell us that they feel empowered to understand and meet their child's needs. When this support has been accessed, if a further referral is needed to a specialist Team, this can be facilitated by WAAS, who work closely with CAMHS and the ICB in Wandsworth.

Support in School and the Community:

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/all-services/t1-wandsworth-autism-advisory-service-waas/



4 Therapies (Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy)



What is available: Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy help children to communicate and to develop skills for everyday life, including their learning at home and school.

Universal SLT, OT advice are available in each school while awaiting assessment and EHCP. SLT advice is also available in Family Hubs and Children's Centres.

How to access: Referrals are from nurseries, schools and other professionals, including GPs and Health Visitors.

Referral forms for OT and SLT are on the Family Information Service website.

Physio referrals require a letter and report from a healthcare professional (this information is also on the FIS website).

Some specialist therapy referrals (e.g., developmental paediatrics, ASD) must go through the **Child Development Centre (CDC)** at St George's Hospital.

Waiting times: For consultant-led physical health services, the NHS states a **maximum 18-week wait** from referral to treatment for non-urgent cases.

Challenges: **Incomplete referral information** can delay the process.

How to get support: Use nursery/school SENCOs, health visitors or GPs for help identifying the right service.

Contact Details:

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/all-services/Pk-childrens-specialist-therapies/

5 Audiology, Ophthalmology and Sensory Support (Hearing & Vision Support)



How to access: Parents should speak to their GP, Health Visitor or School Nurse if they are concerned about hearing and sight difficulties, so a paediatric audiology referral can be made to St George's Hospital. If needs are identified an onward referral will be made to Wandsworth Sensory Support (WSS). Parents and Schools can also directly refer to WSS. The referral must include a clinical letter/report describing the diagnosis or deafness and/or visual impairment from audiology or opthalmology.

WSS supports deaf, visually impaired, deafblind and sensory-impaired children from birth to 25.

Waiting times: Within 48 hours of receipt of referral for children under 5 years. For school age children within 5 business days from receipt of referral. Contact is made by phone. Home/school visits are arranged within 10 business days from initial contact.

The service would accept a referral from any audiology department as long as the child is a Wandsworth resident at time of referral.

Challenges: Parents may not recognise early sensory needs. Understanding who to contact is important (school vs. health vs. local authority).

How to get support: Seek advice and referral from your GP for further assessment for hearing or vision concern. Contact WSS directly by phone/email for guidance.

Website contact:
https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/all-services/SJ-wandsworth-sensory-support-wss/

6 Family Support, Parenting and Early Help Services (Including Family Hubs and Children's Centres)

What is available: Support is available for families build confidence and manage challenges with their child's development.

Parenting advice and support: Practical advice and workshops can help families with children's behaviour, communication, sleep and positive parenting approaches.

Early Help and Family Hubs: Provide activities, stay and play sessions, advice about child development and access to health services and community support.

How to access: Families should contact their local Family Hub or Children's Centre or speak to your Health Visitor, GP, SENCO.

Challenges: Parents may feel **stigma**, anxiety or worry about seeking help.

Contact website:

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/

Other family support:

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/advice/childrens-centres-and-family-hubs/

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/advice/what-is-early-help/

7 Paediatric Pathways (Including Continence, Developmental Paediatrics and Epilepsy)

How to access: Continence assessments for children are usually started by health visitors, **specialist health visitors or school nurses**.

Referrals for support with medical conditions must go via your GP to **The Dragon Centre** or **Child Development Centre (CDC) referral pathways** at St George's Hospital.

Waiting times: Continence assessments occur following an individual assessment; reviews are typically annual.

Challenges: Parents may delay seeking assessment lack of awareness of services.

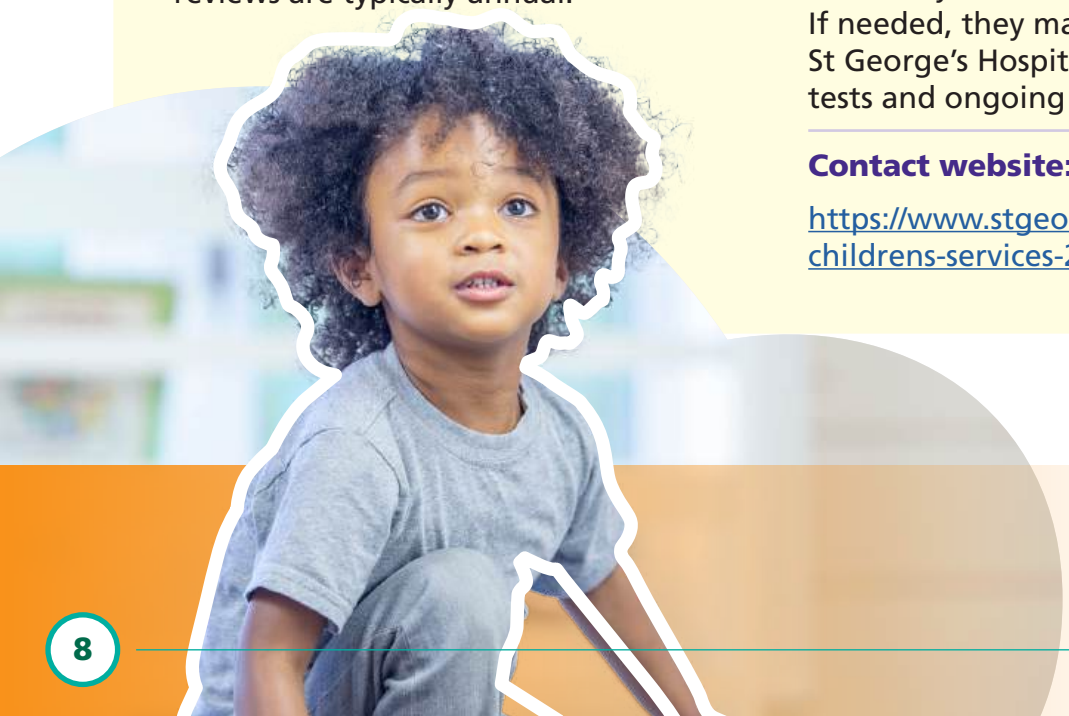
Parents need to provide detailed developmental history and school reports.

How to get support: Complete referral forms with **full developmental and school information**. Attend toileting groups or enuresis clinics if recommended. Ask school SENCOs to help provide reports.

Epilepsy referral: Speak to your GP or school if you are worried about seizures. If needed, they may be referred to St George's Hospital for specialist care, tests and ongoing support.

Contact website:

https://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/service/childrens-services-2/



8 CAMHS & Emotional Wellbeing Services and New Website for Children and Families

What is available: A range of support in schools and the community for children experiencing emotional wellbeing and mental health needs. This includes our Under 5s CAMHS Services, talking therapies in schools and specialist mental health treatments and interventions.

How to access Referrals go through the **Wandsworth CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA)**. Professionals such as GPs, teachers, school nurses or social workers may refer. Young people aged 16–17 can self-refer.

SPA also accepts routine and urgent referrals; families may receive telephone or face-to-face assessments.

Waiting times: CAMHS acknowledges waits can vary with demand but aims to see young people **as soon as possible**. Average wait time covers referral to first meaningful contact.

Delays can occur while waiting for neurodevelopmental questionnaires to be returned by parents/ schools.

Challenges: High service demand leading to longer waits. Families unsure whether concerns are "serious enough."

How to get support: Access support in school first, including Mental Health Support Team counselling, dramatherapy, Place2Be. Use **telephone consultations**, which can signpost families to alternative support if CAMHS is not the right service.

Contact CAMHS SPA for advice if unsure whether to refer.

https://swlstg.nhs.uk/wandsworth

New Support Hub Website: Information about emotional wellbeing services and early support available here

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/advice/wandsworth-mental-health-and-wellbeing-services/

9 Medical Needs in Schools Funding Support

How to access: Schools and professionals can request support through the South West London (SWL) Medical Needs in Schools Panel where a child has significant health needs affecting access to education. Parent/carer consent is required.

What is provided: The panel considers funding requests for children who need additional health support in school, including specialist medical interventions, healthcare staffing or support linked to Individual Health Care Plans (IHCPs).

Waiting times: Applications are reviewed monthly.

Challenges: Incomplete paperwork, unclear health provision plans or missing clinical evidence can delay decisions.
How to get support: Schools and professionals should ensure referral forms, healthcare plans and supporting clinical information are fully completed before submission. SENCOs, paediatric teams and commissioners can help families understand the process and identify the right support.

How to get support: Contact the SENCO at your child's school and Wandsworth ICB for more information.

www.southwestlondonics.org.uk/contact/

10 Health Visiting Services (funded by Wandsworth Council)

What is available: The Wandsworth Health Visiting Service is provided by Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH) for all children aged 0–5 who live in Wandsworth and their families.

Health visitors provide new-birth visits, infant-feeding advice, developmental reviews, parenting support and advice about family health, minor illnesses, immunisations, screening and parental emotional wellbeing. They can provide additional support where needed and help families access services such as speech and language therapy, Family Hubs and early-years support

How to access: New babies are normally referred automatically by maternity services. GPs and other professionals can also refer. Families who have recently moved to Wandsworth, or are unsure whether their child is known to the service, can contact the Wandsworth 0–19 Single Point of Access directly. Well-baby and infant-feeding clinics are also available.

Waiting times: A health visitor normally visits at home 10–14 days after a baby is born, followed by a further contact at around six weeks. Developmental reviews are offered at 9–12 months and 2–2½ years. Additional contacts depend on the needs of the child and family.

Challenges: Families may not realise that health visiting support continues until a child starts school or that they can contact the service directly about development, behaviour, feeding or parental wellbeing.

Contact website:

www.clch.nhs.uk/services/health-visiting



11 School Nursing (funded by Wandsworth Council) and Special School Nursing (funded by NHS/ICB)

What is available: School nursing support is provided by different NHS organisations according to the type of school a child attends.

In Wandsworth mainstream state schools, the service is provided by Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH).

Each school has a named school nurse who supports children from Reception age onwards. Support includes health assessments, health promotion, emotional wellbeing, toileting and advice about conditions such as asthma, allergies, diabetes, continence and epilepsy.

In Wandsworth special schools, school nursing is provided by St George's Hospital. Nurses support children and young people with learning disabilities, mental health concerns and complex health needs. They develop person-centred individual healthcare plans, support transitions, train school staff and help children participate safely in education, particularly children with complex health and medical needs.

Nursing teams in special schools also provide continence assessments and advice related to products for children aged 4–18 (currently parents/carers must fund continence products themselves, but can apply for support from Child Disability Living Allowance).

How to access: Parents, schools and young people can contact the mainstream school nursing service. Young people and parents can also use school nurse drop-ins where available. Special-school nursing support is arranged through the child's school and based on assessed needs.

Waiting times: Requests are triaged according to clinical need. CLCH aims for the named school nurse to respond within three working days. In special schools, support is planned around the child's assessed needs and healthcare plan.

Challenges: Some parents/carers may not know who their school nurse is or how to access this services.

How to get support: Speak to the school SENCO, inclusion team or named school nurse. For urgent health advice contact your GP or NHS 111; in an emergency call 999.

How to get support: Contact the SENCO at your child's school or school nursing service directly.

School Nursing in Mainstream Schools:

www.clch.nhs.uk/services/school-nursing

Special-school nursing information:

www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/service/community-services/special-schools-nursing

Early Identification: Understanding your child's development

What is available:

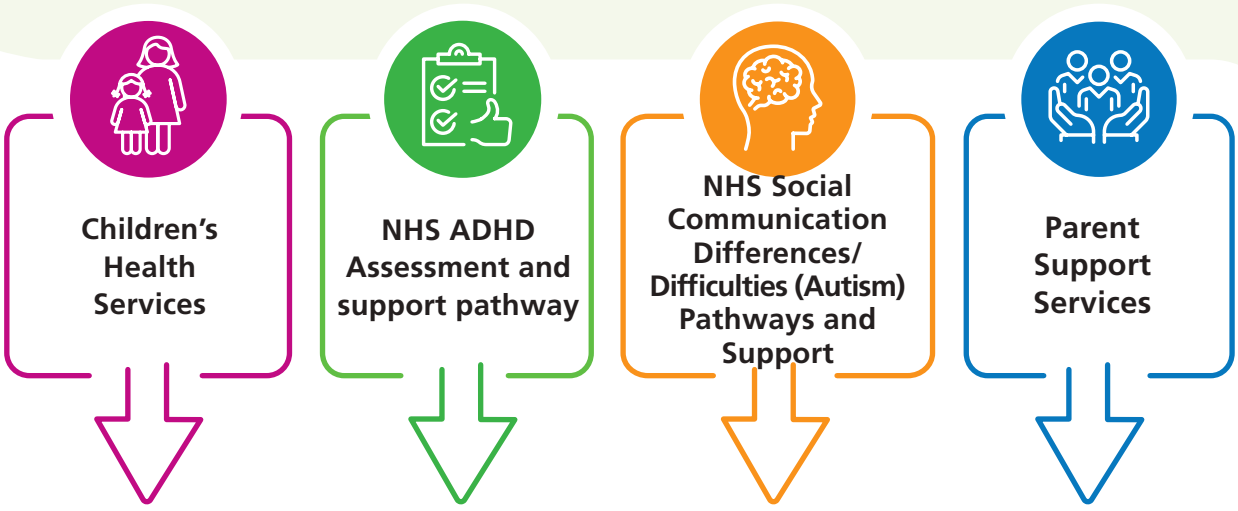
Parents can explore age-and-stage development checklists in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guide for parents and carers.

How to access:

www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2023/08/Revised_What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf

Feedback

From Parents/Carers about Navigating Services



Complex Range of Services/ Pathways:

There are more than 40 paediatric and child health services in Wandsworth, and another 30 children's emotional wellbeing and mental health services. So, the system is complex

GPs and SENCOs (in schools) have information about how to refer children to relevant services and access early support.

School/ LA services are provided on the basis of which borough you live in. NHS services are usually provided on the basis of your GP's location.



Sometimes it is necessary to get one type of assessment before another assessment is possible. For example, children age 0-5 must have a Developmental Assessment before they can be assessed for Autism.

Every child is different. Every child's journey is different. Not every child will need to access lots of services.

Support and interventions are available now via your child's school GP and family hubs.

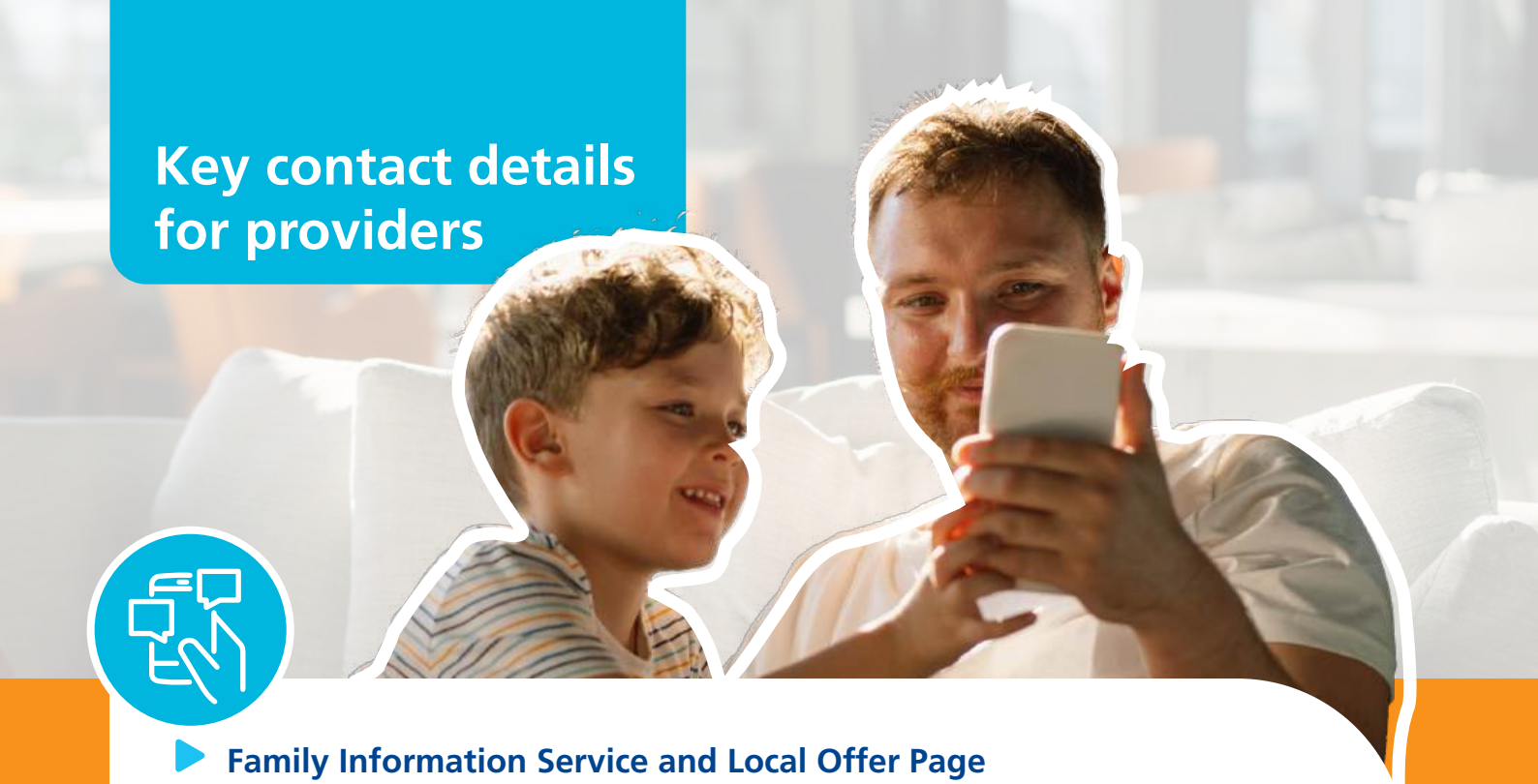


“You do not need to understand every pathway/ service — professionals will help guide you.”

Parent & Carer Advice for Navigating SEND Pathways:

- Services are complex and can vary from borough to borough, so it is understandable if you feel confused.
- Speak to Health Visitor SEND Advisor, SENCO or Early Years Inclusion Team and support networks early.
- Understand referral routes for health, ADHD, autism and parent support pathways.
- Health information will be shared between professionals when needed to help your child. We keep you and your child’s data secure.
- Join peer support groups (SENDAllkind, Wandsworth Parents & Carers Forum).
- Access universal SALT and OT advice while waiting.
- Maintain regular communication with your child’s school or nursery.
- Use Family Hubs for early help, parenting support and SEND navigation.
- Ask every service for clear contact points and expected timelines.
- Request updates regularly – don’t wait silently during long waits.

Key contact details for providers



Family Information Service and Local Offer Page

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/

Wandsworth Parents & Carers Forum

https://sendpcwandsworth.org.uk/

Health Visiting Service

https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health/your-health/children-and-young-peoples-health/school-health-service/

Child & Family Hubs – Family Support

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/advice/childrens-centres-and-family-hubs/

Early Years Inclusion Team

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/all-services/qd-the-early-years-send-inclusion-team/

SEND Play & Family Team

https://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/all-services/dH-the-send-play-and-family-team/

NHS GP Registration

https://gpwandsworth.co.uk

St George's Hospital – Children's Services

https://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/service/childrens-services-2

NHS SWLSTG (including Autism Assessment for 8 – 18 year olds and ADHD Assessments for 12 – 18 year olds)

https://swlstg.nhs.uk/wandsworth

St George's Hospital Paediatrics

www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/service/social-communication-difficulties-service-including-autism

Glossary of Terms (Helpful Acronyms)

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

A condition that can affect a child's attention, behaviour & ability to focus.

ASD – Autism Spectrum Disorder

A condition that affects how a child communicates, interacts and experiences the world.

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

NHS services that support children and young people with emotional or mental health needs.

CDC – Child Development Centre

A specialist service for children to be assessed for developmental conditions.

EHCP – Education, Health & Care Plan

A legal plan that outlines the support a child or young person needs across education, health and care.

GP – General Practitioner (Family Doctor)

Your local doctor, usually the first point of contact for health concerns.

OT – Occupational Therapy

Support to help children develop everyday skills such as writing, dressing or sensory processing.

SCD – Social Communication Differences/Difficulties

Challenges with social interaction and communication, sometimes linked to autism.

SENCO – Special Educational Needs Coordinator

A teacher in school responsible for supporting children with additional needs.

SLT – Speech and Language Therapy

Support for children who have difficulty with speaking, understanding language or communication.

WSS – Wandsworth Sensory Support

A service for children with hearing or vision needs.

WAAS – Wandsworth Autism Advisory Service

A service providing advice, workshops and support for families of children with autism or social communication needs.

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

A term used to describe children and young people who need additional support.



British Sign Language (BSL)

Interpreting support is available for patients, visitors and people using local NHS services in Wandsworth.

More information: swlstg.nhs.uk/interpreters

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): **020 8725 2453**