



**Speech and Language Therapy Service**  
**Annual Report 2021-2022 (September 2021 – February 2022)**  
**Southwark Alternative Provision and Virtual School**

**Background**

The Unlocking Language team has provided the Speech and Language Therapy Service for students of Southwark’s Alternative Provision (AP) and Virtual School (VS) and training for their education teams since October 2020. The service has been developed to support the growth of students with speech, language and communication needs by working with them directly and collaborating with their education teams, parents, and carers to further develop their communication skills.

This Impact Report considers the students on the current Speech and Language Therapist caseload ranging from September 2021 to February 2022. The last Impact report was issued August 2022. Speech and Language Therapist, Sarita Austin, was the speech and Language Therapist working with the AP/VS service up until August 2021. A thorough-handover was then given to Speech and Language Therapist, Katrina Bradford. Katrina has since been the Speech and Language Therapist working with the AP/VS service. When the service was handed over, the caseload consisted of 1 student as the rest of the caseload had moved on to further education outside of the AP/VS service.

Caseload	Number
At the start of the academic year	1
New Referrals since September 2021	6
Total current on caseload (February 2022)	7

**Current Service**

The designated Speech and Language Therapist have supported students, education teams, and parents/carers either weekly or upon request throughout the school year so far. All assessments and interventions have been carried out face-to-face, whilst one training session for the education team was carried out via Microsoft Teams. The Therapist worked closely with teams to provide bespoke assessments and interventions based on students' needs. Decisions around the length of sessions, areas of focus, and whether direct 1:1 therapy or targeted support would be provided through Education Support Officers, or family, were all determined in discussion with students and their support network. The decisions were centred around what would most support the student in becoming invested in the

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therapeutic process. Therapist has offered a plethora of services including teletherapy (online therapy), reviews via phone, targeted input including education team coaching, and assessment reports. All parents/carers have opted for face-to-face sessions with Speech and Language Therapist. For Face-to-face sessions various locations have been offered, including home-visits, at the Unlocking Language clinic, and school visit when appropriate. Please see below for the frequency of each location:

Location of sessions	Number of sessions taken place
Home visit	3
School visits	2
Unlocking Language Clinic	3

**Targeted input** included joint target setting, implementation of targets/strategies support, training of AP/VS staff, reviews of young people’s progress towards targets across settings, support for staff by providing strategies to support students communication, providing reports to support referrals submission, and liaison with the wider Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), and support of parents and carers to encourage carryover of skills within the home and community environment.

**Specialist input included:** 1:1 therapy and assessment sessions with students face-to-face, writing assessment and progress reports, and giving students carryover strategies to use in their daily lives beyond sessions.

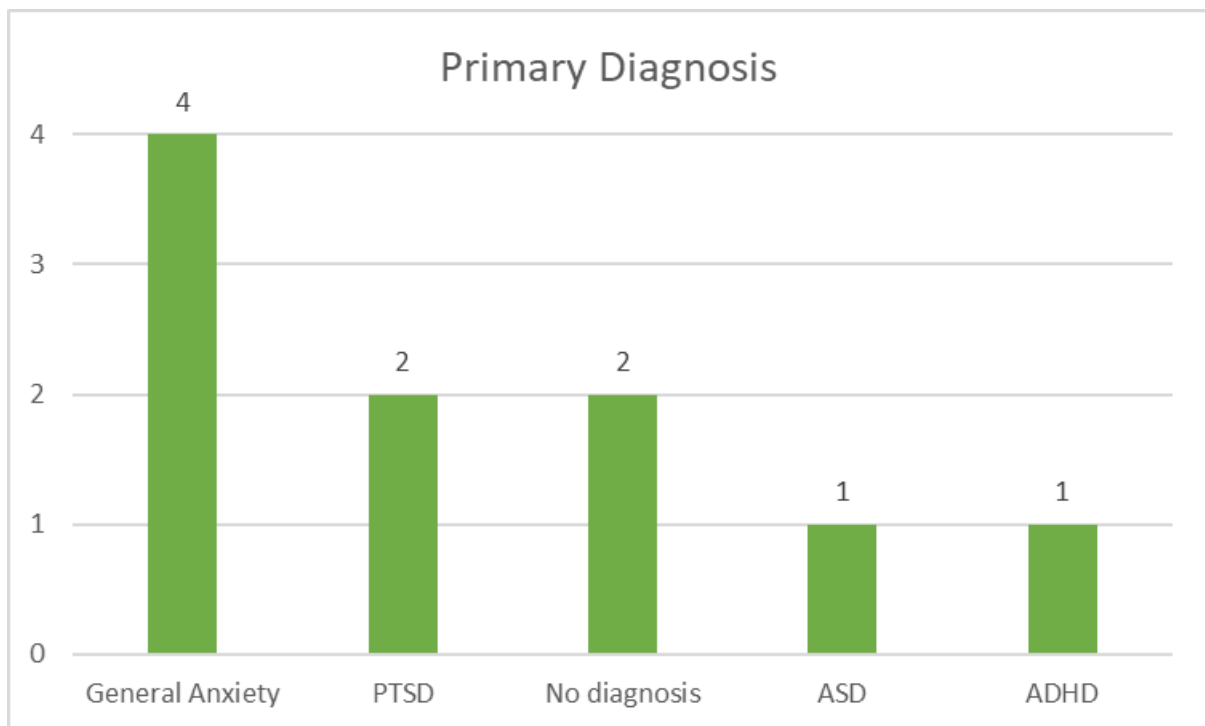
### Demographics

Demographics Data	Number
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	5
Female	2
Transgender	0
Nonbinary	0
<b>Current Education level</b>	

Early Year Education	0
Primary Education (KS 1-2)	1
Secondary Education (KS 3-4)	3
Further Education (KS 5)	2
NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)	1
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
<b>Asian/Asian British</b>	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Any other Asian background	
<b>Black/Black British/African/Caribbean</b>	
African	
Caribbean	2
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	
<b>Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups</b>	
Asian/White	
Black African/White	2
Black Caribbean/White	
Latino/Spanish	
Any other Mixed/Multiple Ethnic background	
<b>White</b>	
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	2
Irish	

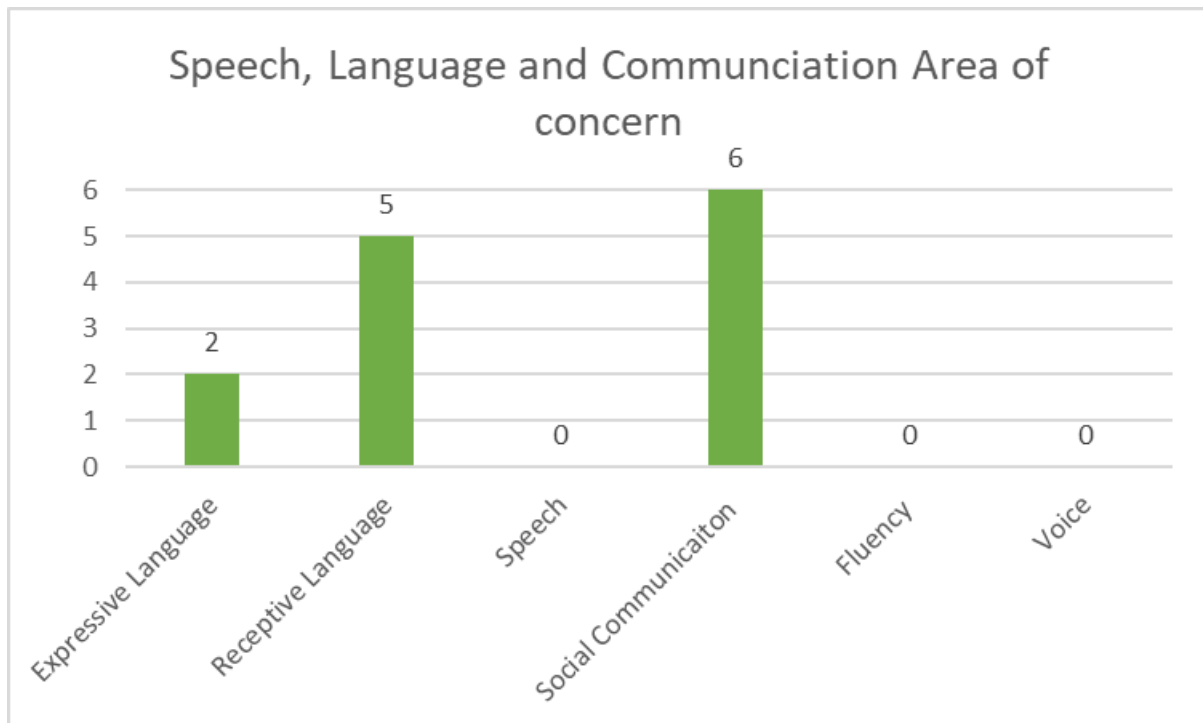
Gypsy/Irish Traveller	
Latino/Spanish	
Any other White background	
<b>Other Ethnic Group</b>	
Arab	<b>1</b>
Any other ethnic group	

**Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)**



As depicted in the graph above, the primary diagnosis is in regard to their mental health, with 96% of the AP/VS students having a formal diagnosis such as General Anxiety and/or PTSD. 32% of the students have no diagnosis when being referred to the Speech and Language Therapy service. Here it is important to note, that some of these students are unaccompanied minors and therefore the medical information available is limited. It should also be noted that some of our students have more than one diagnosis or impairment.

Regarding their specific speech and language needs, the AP/VS students' primary area of concern identified in assessments and addressed in therapy was social communication. However, 83% of the students also have either receptive/expressive language disorder or both which is also addressed in therapy.



### **Impact-Outcome of Unlocking Language's Service:**

Below is a list of intervention approaches taken and resources used by our Speech and Language Service.

#### **Receptive Language**

- Word Maps and Mind Maps
- Equipping students with a toolkit of strategies to improve comprehension, e.g., ask for repetitions, ask speaker to say it in parts, say the message in your own words & minimise background noise
- Supporting educators to alter learning environment and how they present information
- Language for Thinking

#### **Expressive Language**



- Colourful Semantics (sentence structure)

### **Social Communication**

- The Zones of Regulation
- Comic Strip Conversations
- Language for Behaviour and Emotions
- Coaching education team and parents on how to consider students' diagnoses and communication style and needs when interacting with them.
- On topic/Off topic
- Interview preparation

### **Challenges**

During the first two months of the school year 21/22 there were no new referrals coming to the Speech and Language Service. However, the Speech and Language Therapist and the AP/VS service were proactive and discussed training in how to recognise when a child or young person might need a referral to Speech and Language therapy. This training was then carried out by the Speech and Language Therapist on 25th October 2021 where five members of AP/VS service attended. The first new referral was made shortly after the training. The Speech and Language Therapy Service has in total received 6 new referrals in the past 6 months.

Over the course of the past 6 months the communication between the Speech and Language Therapy Service and AP/VS has at times been limited. This is thought to be due to the transition from being completely remote to starting to provide face-to-face sessions again post-pandemic. Further, the head deputy for the VS service, who was the main point of contact for the Speech and Language Therapist, left in December. This has meant that the Speech and Language Therapist has had to liaise directly with the head of the VS service, a position with a high workload concentration. This has meant less direct communication between Speech and Language Therapy service and the AP/VS service. However, a meeting was set up between VS head and Speech and Language Therapist where key barriers were identified and an action plan was agreed upon. This included:

- For Speech and Language Therapist to formally get introduced to all key members of staff at VS service
- For VS head to liaise directly with Director at Unlocking Language in regard to service provision
- For Speech and Language Therapist and VS head to agree on training going forward to ensure that all members of staff at AP/VS service are aware of the Speech and Language Therapy provision available for the AP/VS students

### **Successes**



Although new referrals have been limited the past 6 months, there has however been a steady increase. One Education Advisor specifically mentioned that she was very impressed with the level of detail and understanding the Speech and Language Therapy reports included, since it encapsulated the student's needs well. This has led to some Education Advisors having an increased understanding of the value of the Speech and Language Therapy service.

Further one student in-particular has started to make progress in their way of thinking about the future and using that as motivation to attend service appointments and sessions. For example, they identified short-term and long-term goals they want to achieve which acts as a motivator.

Another student is being seen at school, where the school has been impressed with the swiftness and service provision the Speech and Language Therapist has been providing for one of their students who are apart for the AP/VS service.

A significant success for the Speech and Language Therapy Service and the AP/VS service, has been the rise in face-to-face appointments with the AP/VS students. This has led to good engagement from the students and parents/carers. Face-to-face appointments have also meant that the Speech and Language Therapist has been able to establish a good rapport with most of the students on the caseload. The increase of face-to-face sessions is especially significant since most students have SEMH needs. Therefore, being able to offer the service which the student feels most comfortable with, has been a major success and helped establish a good rapport and trust between the Speech and Language Therapist, student, and carer/parent.

### **Going forward**

Going forward there will be an increased focus on providing training for the staff at the AP/VS service. These training sessions will focus on the following;

- The role of Speech and Language Therapy and the relevance for children who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Identifying children who could benefit from Speech and Language Therapy
- Joint training from Educational Psychologists and Speech and Language therapists on the link between Social, Emotional, and Mental Health needs and Speech, Language, and Communication Needs
- Q&A session for AP/VS staff at the end of each session for them ask Speech and Language Therapist any questions they might have

Speech and Language Therapists would also benefit from being part of key meetings, to ensure that AP/VS staff are aware of the Speech and Language Therapy service available.

It would be beneficial for the Speech and Language Therapist to have the key people, including heads of AP/VS service, Education Advisors, and Educational Psychologists, from



both the AP and VS service to meet termly to discuss caseload, new referrals, progress of students, and training.

**Summary:**

Overall, this has been a successful 6 months for the Unlocking Language Speech and Language Therapy Service with Southwark's Alternative Provision and Virtual School. We are pleased to have provided a high quality, continuous service to our students.

It has been a pleasure working with the AP and VS young people, leadership teams, education teams, and families and we look forward to continuing to build an innovative service that supports students in developing their speech, language and communication skills to their full potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background, reading 'Katrina J. Bradford'.

Katrina J. Bradford

Speech and Language Therapist

Shermeena Rabbi – Consultant Speech & Language Therapist & Director of Unlocking Language