



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Speech and language therapy for adults with voice disorders

Issued by the Adult Speech and Language Therapy Service

For people referred by an ENT Consultant for Voice, Cough, Swallowing or Breathing difficulties.

What happens at the first appointment?

You will have been seen by a consultant prior to being referred to the speech and language therapy department. This will usually be an ear, nose and throat doctor in the case of voice and swallowing disorders or a respiratory doctor for cough and breathing difficulties. Your examination will be summarised and sent to the speech and language therapist (SLT) who will then need to ask you:

- Details about your difficulties
- Any previous therapy you have received
- Medical information and general health
- Your work, hobbies and voice use

The SLT will then carry out an assessment, giving full explanation, during your appointment. This may include:

- Asking you to read aloud, repeat words and phrases
- Assessing breath control and breathing patterns
- Listening to your voice to determine volume and pitch control
- Use of technology to measure vocal fold function
- Assessment of your swallowing function

Location of speech therapy services

Out-patient clinics are provided at hospital sites throughout Northumberland and North Tyneside. These are Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth, Hexham, Morpeth NHS Centre and North Tyneside General Hospital.

An initial appointment will be offered at the most convenient location – usually the closest hospital outpatient department to your home. However, if you would prefer a different location please contact the SLT department.

What do we do?

A speech and language therapist working with ENT and cough patients is trained to assess, treat and advise about voice, cough and breathing problems such as:

- Inflammation, reflux and changes to the vocal cords
- Muscle tension problems
- Vocal cord palsy
- Loss of voice
- Problems with an irritable larynx and throat clearing
- A feeling of a lump in the throat
- Certain types of cough
- Laryngospasm

We also assess and give advice about swallowing problems, including: coughing, choking and drooling.

What happens next?

At the end of your first visit a plan of action will be agreed with you.

This may be:

- Further assessment using nasendoscopy to determine the function of your voice or further assess your swallowing
- Discussion about your voice use and advice on preventing recurring difficulties

- A number of treatment sessions to learn and practice techniques to help your voice such as breathing and breath control work, voice exercises and relaxation therapy
- Monitoring of the problem
- Referral to another specialist

Your ability to commit to the advice and exercises given by your SLT is very important and progress will not be seen unless you follow the instructions given. If you have any difficulties with the exercises or advice it is very important that you let your speech and language therapist know as they can often be adapted.

There will be continued liaison between your speech and language therapist and the ENT Consultant.

Contact details for SLT departments:

North Tyneside General Hospital	
Morpeth NHS centre	01670 500954
	01670 500949
Alnwick Infirmary	01665 626717
Berwick Infirmary	01289 356644
Blyth Community Hospital	01670 396434
Hexham General Hospital	01434 655084

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 07815 500015

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

www.northumbria.nhs.uk



PIN 737/V2

Review date: May 2024

© This material is the copyright of the Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.