Parents’ Perspective
As families we all have a General Practitioner (GP) sometimes known as the family doctor who manages our general health needs, prescribes medicines when we are sick and refers us to specialists when we have more difficult problems with our health. When we have our children we meet the health visitor and when our children reach school age the school nurse helps monitor our children’s development and health.

All children and families access these services at some time, we call these universal services. When our children have additional needs, they may have difficulty with walking, talking, eating, seeing, hearing, understanding the world around them or because of a serious illness; we meet a whole range of additional health professionals.

It can be confusing particularly at first getting clear in our minds who people are, what they do and where they are based.

This section helps explain the people you may meet with your child, what the particular services do, and where they are based.

We have also included some contact details of the local and regional services you may need to visit or contact for your child.
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**What is a Health Visitor?**

The Health Visiting service is a Universal service; this means that all children have access to a Health Visitor as part of the primary Health Care Team. Every child is allocated a Health Visitor linked to the GP practice or Sure Start Children’s Centre.

A health Visitor is a nurse who specialises in the developmental progress of young children. All children have a Health Visitor who will carry out developmental checks throughout your child’s early years until your child is at least school age.

You may have contact with your health visitor in the baby clinic or they may visit you and your baby in your own home. The Health Visitor will work with you and may be the first person who helps you identify that your child is not reaching the usual developmental milestones at the same time as other children of a similar age.

The Health Visitor may support you in referring your child onto other services who may help them with the things they appear to be finding difficult. The Health Visitor may also refer your child to a paediatrician to have a closer look at their health and development.

As someone you may know well and with whom you may have had the opportunity to build up a trusting relationship, your Health Visitor may be someone you look to for emotional support.

**How to Contact**

Health Visitors are based in health centres and Sure Start Children’s Centres across the town. If you are unsure who your Health Visitor is contact your GP or local Sure Start Children’s Centre. You can contact your Health Visitor Monday to Friday 8.30am till 5pm.
School Nurse

What do school nurses do?
Once your child starts full time school their Health Visitor passes their health records onto the school nursing service. The school nurse offers advice and support for your child in school on health issues and helps you and the school determine how your child’s health needs will be met and managed within school.

The school nurses may advise on a number of issues such as speech difficulties, dietary advice, developmental concerns and behavioural problems. They are also involved in health education and immunisation programmes.

Where to find them
There is a named school nurse for every school in Hartlepool although they are not based in the school itself.

How to contact
The school nurses are based at:
Caroline Street Health Centre,
Caroline Street
Hartlepool TS26
9LE Tel: 01429 267901
You can also contact the school nurse via your child’s school

Catcote School
Catcote School employ their own school nurse who is based within school. Additionally to the duties of mainstream school nurses, the school nurse at Catcote offers a high level of support to teaching staff working with children with additional health needs and liaises closely with parents, and paediatric services ensuring that the children’s health needs are met as well as possible.

How to contact
The school nurse at Catcote School can be contacted on: 01429 2
Why would your child need a physiotherapist?
There are a number of reasons why our children meet with a physiotherapist; generally they treat children who have injuries such as broken bones, sprained muscles or ligaments. This is usually only needed for a short time until the child recovers.

Physiotherapists also work very closely with children who have special needs and learning disabilities. They assist children develop skills such as rolling, sitting, crawling and walking.

Children who have chest problems such as asthma and cystic fibrosis and joint problems such as arthritis also need a lot of support from the physiotherapy team.

Who are the physiotherapists?
The physiotherapists working with children are highly skilled and experienced in the assessment and treatment of children, they are called Paediatric or Children’s physiotherapists.

What can you expect from your child’s physiotherapist?
When you meet your child’s physiotherapist they will discuss with you your child’s problems and listen to your concerns.

They will assess what the problems are and write a problem list and together you will agree goals for treatment.

They will set out a treatment plan for your child. They will train and advise you and anyone else who cares regularly for your child on the daily management of your child’s problems. This may be advice on how to use any seating and equipment or how to do the exercises your child needs.

Usually it is you as a parent/carer who becomes your child’s daily therapist, the Physiotherapist is there to support, train and advise you but it is you who is with your child most of the day the therapy advice being best incorporated in everything you do with your child as naturally as possible.

Where can your child meet with the physiotherapist?
You may see your child’s physiotherapist in a variety of settings including:
- On the children’s ward or in children’s out patients
- In schools or nursery
- At home
- They may also see your child jointly with other professionals such as paediatricians, nursing staff, occupational therapists and teachers.

How to Contact
Children’s Physiotherapy Department University Hospital Hartlepool Holdforth Road
Hartlepool
TS24 9AH
Tel: 01429 522810
Speech and Language Therapy Service

What is a Speech and Language Therapist?
Speech and Language Therapists are specially trained to understand how speech, language and swallowing skills are developed.

Why may your child need a Speech and Language Therapist?
The Speech and Language Therapy service may be able to help if:
- Your child is not talking
- Your child finds it difficult to understand what you say
- Your child’s speech is difficult to understand
- Your child has a stammer

A Speech and Language Therapist may be helpful if your child has difficulty feeding. This may appear a little strange having a Speech and Language Therapist particularly when your child is very young. However the Speech and Language Therapists can be very helpful as the mechanics we use for speech are the same as those we use for feeding.

How will the Speech and Language Therapist help?
The Speech and Language Therapist will assess your child’s needs, this will involve talking to you as parents and other professionals such as the nursery or school who know your child well.

The Speech and Language Therapist will advise you on the best way of helping your child develop their speech and communication or on the safest way of feeding your child if this is an issue. The Speech and Language Therapist may also give the same advice to the school, nursery and others who care for your child so that everyone can help and do the same thing.

As parents you are often the people who really do the therapy with your child the Speech and Language Therapist will continue to assess and monitor your child’s progress and make sure that the advice is up to date.

How do you get help from this service?
You can ask any professional working with your child to make a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy service. They can only make this referral with your consent. You can also refer your child yourself by telephoning the department.

How to contact
Speech and Language Therapy Service
The Health Centre
Caroline Street
Hartlepool   TS26
9LE   Tel:   01429 267901
Paediatrician

A Paediatrician is a ‘Children’s Doctor’ who specialises in the treatment and care of children. Your child’s paediatrician will consider all of your child’s health and developmental needs and may need to refer to other paediatricians who specialise in different aspects of your child’s health difficulties. Your child’s main paediatrician will continue to be the main contact with your child and manage their holistic needs rather than just parts of them. For example your child may need support from a specialist in one of the regional hospitals if they have a heart problem or difficulties with breathing. Your child's main paediatrician will probably be based at University Hospital of Hartlepool.

Community Paediatricians

Community Paediatricians take a particular interest in children’s developmental progress and have a specialist interest in problems that can be managed in a community rather than a hospital setting, such as toileting or behaviour. They will work with other professional and therapists to look at your child’s holistic needs and what, if any, additional support they may need in the school setting.

How to contact

The community paediatric team are based at:
Caroline Street Health Centre
Caroline Street
Hartlepool TS26 9LE
Tel: 01429 267901

Paediatric Dietician

What is a paediatric Dietician?
The paediatric dietician is a specialist dietician who works with children.

Why may your child need a dietician?
Your child may need support from a dietician because they are either overweight or because they are having difficulty gaining weight. The paediatric dietician may work closely with you, your child and other professionals such as the speech therapist, paediatrician and community paediatric nurse looking at all aspects of feeding and diet.

How to contact

The paediatric dieticians are based in both the University Hospital of Hartlepool and the University Hospital of North Tees.
Telephone:
North Tees Service - 01642 624769
Hartlepool Service - 01429 266654
As a parent caring for a child who has additional specialist health needs at home can be a challenge and a bit scary. Usually you will be taught the skills you need to look after your child before you leave hospital and will use them to care for your child with the backup of the nurses on the ward. Taking your child home from hospital and caring for your child without that constant support is more difficult. The community nursing team will meet you and your child before you leave hospital and will be there to support you when you go home.

**Who is the service for?**
The service is for children who have chronic illness; this covers a range of conditions such as, epilepsy, children with breathing difficulties and children who need tube feeding.

**How can the team support you?**
The team will agree with you the level and type of support you feel would best meet your needs. This can be a combination of:

- Home visiting
- Telephone contact
- Nursing support at home.
- Advice and ongoing training
- Providing supplies of medical equipment.

The aims of the service are:
1. To enable children with illnesses that persist for a long time to remain within their own homes for as much time as possible
2. To prevent hospital admission and to promote early discharge of children following hospital admission.

**How to contact**
The Community Children’s Nursing Team is based at University Hospital of Hartlepool
**Tel:** 01429 522807
Paediatric Continuing Care Respite Health Care Team

This is a small team of three Health Care Assistants (HCA) who are trained and managed by the Community Children’s Nursing team who are based at the University Hospital Hartlepool.

The HCAs are trained to a high level and have experience working with children who have a range of complex medical needs. This may include caring for children who need tracheostomy care, gastrostomy care, specialist feeding needs etc.

The HCAs work with children in their own homes either supporting parents/carers in caring for their child or caring for the child leaving the parent/carer free to have a short break from caring.

This service is offered as part of a child/families package of care agreed as children’s additional needs are identified.

This service can be contacted via:
The Children’s Community Nursing Service
Children’s Outpatients
University Hospital Hartlepool
Holdforth Road
Hartlepool
TS24 9AH
Tel: 01429 522807
Why would your child need support from the Learning Disability Nursing Team?
The Children’s Learning Disability team can support you and your child in a number of different ways.

Sleep
When your child doesn’t sleep at night and your sleep is constantly disrupted it can be extremely challenging for any parent. Generally there is light at the end of the tunnel as children quickly establish sleep routine and you know that they will eventually sleep through the night.

When you have tried all the general advice from family, friends and your Health Visitor and your child doesn’t establish regular sleep routine you may need support to look at different ways to deal with this. The Learning Disability Service offers specialist sleep assessments to help you do this.

Behaviour
Children with Learning Disabilities may be very challenging in their behaviour; they may not respond the same as your other children to the rules and boundaries you set. The team offer you and your child a behavioural assessment to help you think and decide different ways of managing the behaviour that may work for your child.

Group Work
The service runs a number of specialist groups to help and support children and Young people with a learning disability deal with difficult issues such as:
- Self esteem
- Boys groups
- Girls groups
- Puberty awareness
- Sexual health awareness

Mental health Assessments
The Learning Disability Nursing Team have as part of their service a specialist worker who links in with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). They will work with a consultant psychiatrist and provide an assessment of your child’s mental health if needed.
Toileting
Children with a Learning Disability may have more difficulty and take longer to toilet train. When the usual advice you receive from family, friends and your Health Visitor doesn’t work the Learning Disability Nursing team may offer an assessment of your child’s toileting needs and support you in implementing the advice.

Child Development
If your child has a learning disability the normal pathways of their development may have been interrupted. They may learn the same skills as other children who don’t have a learning disability however it may take them longer and they may need more support from you as parents and carers to develop these skills. The team can work with you and your child by suggesting activities and play to help them achieve their developmental milestones.

Who do they work with?
The team work with children and young people aged 0-18 years of age who have a diagnosed Learning disability.

How do you get help from this service?
You can ask any of the professionals working with your child to refer to the service or you can as parents ask for support yourself.

How to contact
The Children’s Learning Disability Team
Hart Lodge
Jones Road
Hartlepool
TS24 9BD
Tel: 01429 285020
Looking after your child’s mental health is most important as children & young people with good mental health will be more able to:

- Develop emotionally, physically and make progress with their learning.
- Make friends and keep relationships going.
- Feel at ease and happy with themselves.
- Be more aware of and understand what other people need.
- Play and learn.
- Learn what’s right and wrong.
- Sort out and work through problems and learn from the experience.

Most children go through periods of stress or unhappiness at some stage in their lives. Mostly their problems are mild and will improve with support from family and friends. If your child is experiencing more severe or persistent problems they may need help from CAMHS.

**What do CAMHS offer?**

CAMHS is made up of professionals who have a range of different training backgrounds such as:

- Consultant Psychiatrist
- Clinical Psychologist
- Community Mental Health Workers
- Family Therapist
- Primary Health Care Worker.

The CAMHS team has three main roles:
1. Assessment and treatment of children aged 0-18 years with mental health problems.
2. Advice, support and consultation for family members, and professionals from other agencies.
3. Promotion of positive mental health in children and young people.

**How to access**

Usually referrals to CAMHS are through your GP however referrals can be made by other health professionals, Social Workers or Educational Psychologists.

**How to contact**

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
Dover House
1-3 Lynn Street (North)
Hartlepool
TS24 7LX
**Tel:** 01429 285049
Sometimes children and young people become caught between services as it is unclear which would be the most appropriate service to support them. This is particularly difficult if your child has both a learning disability and mental health problem.

The Primary Health Care Worker is based between the Learning Disability Nursing Team and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team (CAMHS).

**What does the worker do?**
In situations when your child may be involved with both the Children’s Learning Disability Service and the CAMHS service the primary health care worker will work with you and your child and help decide which is the more appropriate of these two services for your child.

**What happens next?**
A. If it is clear that the child/young person’s needs for one service out weigh the other they will be directed to that service.
B. If the child/young person has complex needs in both areas the Primary Health care worker may continue to work with them on things like:
   - Helping them work through difficulties associated with bereavement and loss
   - Sleep difficulties
   - Soiling difficulties that are emotionally related.
   - Helping them understand how their thoughts and feelings affect their behaviour and how their behaviour impacts on others.

**How to access the service**
Your child can be referred for the service via one of the professionals involved such as the Paediatrician, GP, Health Visitor or Social Worker.

**How to Contact**
The Primary Health Care Worker has an office base at both:
CAMHS
Dover House
1-3 Lynn Street (North)
Hartlepool
TS24 7LX
**Tel:** 01429 285022

Or
Hart Lodge
Jones Road
Hartlepool
TS24 9BD
**Tel:** 01429 285049
What is a Paediatric Occupational Therapist?
At present in Hartlepool we have one senior Paediatric Occupational Therapist. The therapist works with children aged 0-19 years. They become involved with children who are experiencing difficulty in completing tasks for themselves such as handwriting; toileting bathing or they may have difficulties in co-ordination and perceptual activities.

The therapist will see your child in various settings such as home, school and sometimes the hospital when their needs may have changed considerably following an accident or illness.

Following the assessment they may recommend a programme of activities/exercises you can do with your child to help them.

How can you access this service?
One of the professionals working with your child may refer them to this service.

How to Contact
The Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service
University Hospital Hartlepool
Holdforth Road
Hartlepool
TS24 9AH
Telephone: 01429 522691
Local and Regional Hospitals

The main hospitals you may need to contact with your child:

**University Hospital of Hartlepool**
Holdforth Road
Hartlepool
TS24 9AH
Tel: 01429 266654
Website: www.nth.nhs.uk/

**University Hospital of North Tees**
Hardwick
Stockton-on-Tees
TS19 8PE
Tel: 01642 617617
Website: www.nth.nhs.uk/

**James Cook University Hospital**
Marton Road
Middlesbrough
Tel: 01642 850850
Website: www.southtees.nhs.uk/live

**Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI)**
Queen Victoria Road
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE1 4LP
Tel: 0191 233 6161
Website: www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk

**Newcastle General Hospital**
Westgate Road
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE4 6BE
Tel: 0191 233 6161
Website: www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk

**Freeman Hospital**
Freeman Road
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE7 7DN
Tel: 0191 233 6161
Website: www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk
Wheelchair Voucher Scheme

What is it?
The Wheelchair Voucher Scheme has been designed to increase the choice of wheelchair available for your child. This gives three options:

Option 1 - NHS Option
Any child or young Person who is assessed as needing a wheelchair will be provided with a chair that meets their needs via the National Health Service (NHS) wheelchair services department. The wheelchair provided will be supplied, repaired and maintained free of charge.

Option 2 - Partnership Option
With this option you can choose an alternative to the type of wheelchair you have been assessed as needing. This lets you buy a wheelchair of a higher standard than that which the NHS Wheelchair Services supplies. The voucher will reflect the cost of the wheelchair originally recommended and then you pay the difference in cost.

The NHS will still own the wheelchair and they will repair it and maintain it free of charge. You do have to choose a chair from an ‘approved supplier’ who will have to meet certain standards including quality of service.

Option 3 - Independent Option
This option is similar to the partnership option, the difference being that you will own the chair and be responsible for its maintenance and repair. The voucher will however include an amount towards the chairs repair and maintenance.

Approved Suppliers
Wheelchair Services supervise a list of approved suppliers who reach the criteria for the scheme.

Voucher Period
The voucher period is generally about 5 years however, if your child’s needs change making the wheelchair you have bought unsuitable your child would be eligible for a reassessment of need.
Other things you need to know about the scheme
You cannot exchange the voucher for cash. If you buy a wheelchair privately from a commercial company or individual you cannot claim back the money from NHS Wheelchair services.

The voucher is non-taxable so it will not affect any benefits you are receiving.

What’s not included?
You cannot use the scheme to purchase powered wheelchairs, pressure relieving cushions and special seating systems. These items will continue to be supplied by wheelchair services.

How to apply
If your child already has a wheelchair provided by the NHS wheelchair service contact the local service at Caroline Street directly and request an assessment for an alternative chair under the partnership or independent options. If your child is applying for a wheelchair for the first time you should contact your GP or Physiotherapist who can refer your child to the service.

How to contact
Wheelchair Services
Caroline Street Health Centre
Caroline Street
Hartlepool  TS26
9LE  Tel:  01429 867227
Continence and Nappy Service

Why may you need support with nappies for your child?
Some children may, because of a health difficulty or long term disability, need to wear nappies or continence pads for longer than other children. This can be very expensive.

The service will generally provide you with a maximum of 4 nappies/continence products per day. This will support you in meeting this additional expense by providing products that can be supplemented with products you can purchase on the high street.

What else does the service offer?
The continence advisor can offer your child with an individual assessment helping you work out how best to manage their continence on a day-to-day basis. This may be by providing your child with appliances for use in the community.

When can you access the service?
You can access this service when your child reaches 4 years old.

How do you access the service?
You can ask to be referred to the service by your Health Visitor, School Nurse or Community Nurse who will complete an assessment of your child's continence needs.

Once you have been assessed and you have access to the service you will need to activate your regular order by contacting the dedicated order-line number 01924328747. Your order will be delivered to your home address every 16 weeks.

How to contact
Continence Service
1st Floor
McKenzie House
Kendal Road
Hartlepool
TS25 1QU
Tel 01429 522500
Fax: 10429 273640