

Solent NHS Trust Children & Young People's Therapy Service

Providing Integrated Therapy Provision

Evie's Story

Setting the scene

5 year old Evie has recently moved to Hampshire and attends a local special school.

Evie has a diagnosis of spastic quadriplegia and has:

Poor swallow

No recognisable words but can make noises

Can understand verbal instructions and shows signs of ability to learn

Visual impairment (partially sighted)

Model of Service Delivery

Evie's therapy needs will be met by the school based therapy team who will work in collaboration with school staff, parents and other health professionals involved in her care.

From the referral information provided we will identify a lead therapist to progress the assessment. In Evie's case from the information given this would be a Speech & Language Therapist (SLT). The lead therapist will set up an assessment session(s) with the relevant therapists in locations appropriate to Evie. We will assess Evie in her home and school environments.

We will gain information from Evie's previous Therapy Service so that we are fully briefed of Evie's current needs and so that Evie's parents don't need to retell their story. We will identify a single therapist to obtain additional information from Evie's parents to 'fill in any gaps' and establish their current concerns/needs. We will establish who else is involved in Evie's care currently, for example, Teacher Advisors for VI /PD, Community Paediatrician, Dietitian, Educational Psychologist, Social Care OT, Social Care etc

Evie will be assessed by our integrated therapy team within the location(s) that are most convenient for her family and are suitable to gain a good understanding of her functional needs. This will include home and school. Our assessments will be undertaken in collaboration with parents, teacher advisors and school staff and may lead to further specialist assessment, e.g. for alternative and augmentative communication.

We would observe Evie participating in a range of functional daily activities including during play, lunch and snack times, participation in curriculum activities, toileting, bathing and sleeping. We may use standardised or more structured assessments to supplement observational assessment depending on Evie's individual needs and her ability to access assessment materials.

We will establish Evie's main areas of need considering safety, feeding, moving and handling, ability to participate functionally in activities, access - physically (seating, positioning, hand skills, toileting) and through communication (how does Evie communicate currently, what other methods may be more effective/efficient and what strategies does Evie respond well to e.g. language levels, choices, objects of reference etc).

As we identify Evie's needs we will also assess the environment around Evie to ensure that her parents and school staff have adequate knowledge and skills to support her physical, functional and communication needs.

We will share our assessment findings with all those involved in Evie's care and outline the impact on Evie's day to day functioning so that joint goals can be determined such as safe swallow, safe moving and handling, effective and efficient means of communication, postural management, participation on activities and independence.

We will listen to Evie's parents and understand their aspirations for her, discuss those aspirations in relation to Evie's current presentation and jointly establish immediate goals to work towards. We will then work together to identify how those goals can be met and who will take a lead for each one. We will ensure that Evie's parents and education staff will be clear from the outset about the individual roles and responsibilities of the team (parents, education staff and therapists).

We will teach effective strategies to support competent, confident care e.g. changes of positioning, adapting textures, pressure on the tongue with the spoon to encourage lip closure, position of play/education material (vision, hand function), giving choices to develop eye gaze or isolated arm movements, using switches to increase participation in songs/stories. We will ensure that Evie is supported with equipment to meet her needs.

We will provide a written report and integrated therapy programme and will empower parents and education staff to manage her needs within naturalistic environments on a daily basis. The therapy plan will enable education staff to differentiate the curriculum

activities to meet Evie's complex physical, visual and communication needs. Our report will contribute to Evie's EHC plan.

We will liaise with other services and agencies involved in her care, for example, the multi-disciplinary feeding team, Social Services OT, orthotics, specialist consultants and wheelchair services.

Once Evie's needs have been identified and equipment, training of staff and strategies put in place to meet her needs, the ongoing therapy input will be predominantly a consultative model with the aim always to empower others to support Evie within her natural environments so that she is able to access and participate in a range of activities.

We will ensure that Evie's parents know how to enable her to participate in home life and that education staff know how to enable her to participate in school life.

We will regularly review Evie's progress to ensure that she continues to have access to equipment which meets her needs, prevents deformity and maintains her optimal level of functioning within daily activities within her home, school and community environments. We will contribute to review meetings as appropriate and support Evie and those working with her at all times of transition, and in particular when she transitions into adult services.

Evie's needs are likely to be on going throughout her life and as such she and her family will need long term support from the therapy service. We will ensure that Evie's family feel that they have a therapy team who are there when they are needed to provide advice and support. We will empower Evie's parents and school staff to manage Evie's needs on a day to day basis and know when to seek specialist support. We will ensure that Evie will have access to packages of care which continue to meet her changing needs.

Pippa Cook, Children's Therapy Service Manager