

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICE

The Kerry Branch of Down Syndrome Ireland first began providing a speech and language therapy service in 2006 and this service continues to provide vital services to children and adults with Down syndrome across the county today. Therapy is provided on a fee for service basis but financial assistance is available for any families for whom payment is an issue. Any child or adult with Down syndrome can avail of the speech and language therapy service.

Locations for SLT service provision

The branch has a main office located in 28 Moyderwell, Tralee and this is where the SLT service is based. The speech and language therapists also travel to outside clinics in Killarney, Listowel, Cahersiveen and Kenmare as well as schools in Tralee, Listowel and Killorglin.

While the majority of our clients are from Kerry, we do see some children and adults who are not from Kerry but live close to the border and for whom it is more convenient to travel to Kerry to obtain SLT services.

Frequency and Cost

Therapy is offered on a monthly, fortnightly or weekly basis depending on the needs and age of the child or adult and the parent's wishes. Therapy sessions are currently run in half hourly slots and the cost per session is €30.

Services Provided

Our service provision is based mainly on direct, individual therapy sessions for the child or adult. Parents can either sit in and observe or take part in sessions or can wait outside. Parents are vital members of the team in carrying out activities at home to achieve generalisation of therapy goals.

Speech and language therapy can have benefits for an individual's communication skills at any age. We have seen infants as young as 6 months to begin an early intervention programme and we have also seen adults to assess their communication needs and put in place any supports or therapy to enhance and optimize their communication skills.

Our speech and language therapists also provide home and school programmes, school visits and consultation with teachers, SNAs, key workers and other professionals on request. Many of our children are also receiving SLT services from state providers such as the HSE or Brothers of Charity and our SLTs link in with the therapists from these organisations to ensure collaborative practice.

The areas which may be targeted in a speech and language therapy programme include:

- speech intelligibility;
- understanding of language;
- expression of spoken language;
- vocabulary development;
- grammar and syntax;
- oral motor skills;
- eating, drinking and swallowing;
- fluency;
- conversation skills and pragmatic language (social use of language);
- literacy.

The speech and language therapy service is constantly developing to meet the needs of our children and adults and ensure that a quality service is provided to all. We are in the process of setting up and planning social communication groups for our adult clients and similar groups will become available to our adolescents and school-aged children in the future.

Below are links to information leaflets on what is involved in speech and language therapy sessions for children aged 0-3, preschool-aged children, school-aged children and adolescents, and adult clients:

[Speech and Language Therapy – 0-3 years](#)

[Speech and Language Therapy – preschool-aged children](#)

[Speech and Language Therapy – school-aged children and adolescents](#)

[Speech and Language Therapy - adults](#)

Our Speech and Language Therapists

DS Kerry currently employs one full-time and one part-time speech and language therapist to provide SLT services for our members.

[Marian Dunleavy, BSc \(Hon\), MIASLT](#)

Our full-time speech and language therapist is Marian Dunleavy. Marian is from Currow and lives in Castleisland. Marian completed her speech and language therapy degree in University College Cork and graduated in June 2009. Marian worked as an SLT in the Central Remedial Clinic in Dublin from October 2009 until May 2010 before returning home to begin work with DS Kerry in May 2010. Marian sees children and adults for therapy in Tralee, Killarney and Listowel.

[Michelle Foley, BSc. \(Hon\), MIASLT](#)

Our part-time speech and language therapist is Michelle Foley. Michelle is from Killorglin and also completed her speech and language therapy degree in University College Cork. Michelle graduated in June 2011 and began working with DS Kerry in August 2011. Michelle sees children and adults for therapy in Killarney, Kenmare, Listowel, Cahersiveen and Killorglin.

[Further Training Completed](#)

DS Kerry is committed to providing continuous professional development for our therapists to ensure a quality service and our SLTs have attended the following training courses and study days for the benefit of our children and adults:

Marian

- Hanen programme for parents, It Takes Two To Talk (September 2010)
- Promoting Literacy for Children with Intellectual Disability (September 2010)
- Down Syndrome Education Conference, Speech and Language In Depth (October 2010)
- Talk Tools Level 1: A three-part treatment plan for oral-motor therapy (January 2011)
- Speech Development in Children with Down syndrome (August 2011)
- Picture Exchange Communication System – PECS (September 2011)
- Lámh Modules 1 and 2 (May and November 2011)

Michelle

- Lámh Module 1 (November 2011)
- IASLT Conference (November 2011)

Contact us

If you would like to set up an initial assessment appointment or would like to discuss your child's speech and language needs, you can contact our full-time speech and language therapist, Marian Dunleavy, on 085 7136232.