

Speech and language therapy

This is also known as Voice and communication therapy. Anyone who currently accesses treatment can be referred for therapy by any of the clinicians in the team.

Effects of hormones on the voice

Oestrogen hormone therapy does not affect the size or function of the larynx and vocal folds so pitch is unaltered. Instead, voice change is achieved through exercises and training within the therapy, together with regular outside practice from the individual. Voice change takes consistent practice to acquire.

Testosterone hormone therapy promotes growth of the vocal folds over several months which produces a lower pitch of voice.

Initial appointment

This is an information gathering appointment for both yourselves and the therapist, and an opportunity for patients to discuss their concerns and hopes about their voice and communication and what they would like to achieve. During this appointment, we will:

- Take a case history related to your communication goals
- Listen carefully to your voice to ensure it is working healthily
- Take a baseline recording of pitch
- Explain how the voice works, the process of voice change and what is possible
- Provide initial exercises and advice about home practice
- Make a plan for how many follow-up sessions are required

Therapy Model

Individuals will be offered up to five therapy appointments at monthly intervals to assist the process of voice practice and change.

For those seeking to *feminise* their voice, help will be offered to:

- raise pitch to a comfortable degree without strain
- achieve a brighter resonance
- explore intonation patterns
- use a feminine voice on the phone
- project voice over background noise
- cough at pitch

For those seeking to *masculinise* their voice, help will be offered to:

- understand the effect of testosterone on the voice by measuring pitch and tracking the changes over time
- develop a stronger breath support needed for larger vocal folds created by testosterone therapy
- access increased chest resonance
- explore intonation patterns



For those identifying as *non-binary*, therapy goals will be individualised according to what you are hoping to achieve in your gender expression through:

- work on pitch, resonance and intonation
- communicative power and personal presence

Voice Groups

After individual one-to-one sessions where vocal skills are taught, a voice group programme will be offered from January 2018. Groups will be made up of no more than 10 members. This will be an opportunity to consolidate your vocal skills and generalize them in a wider communicative setting.

An Introductory course in Voice and communication therapy is offered to those who are waiting for their initial appointment. This is an opportunity to learn more about how voice works, the differences in voice and communication across the gender spectrum and how you can protect your voice when experimenting with different gender presentations.

Voice and communication change is a process. It takes time to achieve and consists of small changes which add up to a significant difference. We aim to help you achieve a voice which feels congruent for you. Your commitment to practice the exercises given is an essential part of the process. It is designed to be a supportive, collaborative, enjoyable and confidence-building process.