

Post-19 Therapy Policy

Therapy Policy

1. Our Vision

1.1 BeyondAutism is a charity dedicated to empowering people with autism to lead fuller lives through positive education experiences, training for the people who work with them and support for their families and carers.

2. Our Values

2.1 At BeyondAutism we are:

- Dedicated to delivering excellence – By developing expertise, outstanding services and positive engagement, always seeking to go above and beyond expectations.
- Committed to Applied Behaviour Analysis – By contributing to research and ensuring our staff continually develop and share best practice that ensure aspirational outcomes for people with autism are achieved.
- Respectful – By embracing diversity, showing integrity, acting with compassion and always treating people with dignity.
- Proud to challenge – By listening, changing thinking, shifting attitudes and educating.

3. Our Service

3.1 We want to see our students prepared for adulthood with a skill set that enables them to have choice and control over where and how they live, what they do and with whom. We believe that adults with autism should;

- Have a voice;
- Be involved in decision making;
- Be able to contribute to society as active citizens.

3.2 Through an individualised personal curriculum, our students follow a programme of study that best prepares them for adulthood, focusing on the skills required for independent or supported living, training and employment, health and wellbeing and community participation. By providing just enough support we are preparing our students for their lives after education.

3.3 BeyondAutism Post-19 is part of BeyondAutism, a registered charity. We provide education, outreach, training and support to children, adults and families affected by autism across the UK and abroad. BeyondAutism Post-19 operates across London and receives students from all local authorities within a reasonable travelling distance.

3.4 BeyondAutism Post-19 teaches adults aged 19–25 years old with autism and related communication disorders. The service is registered with the Department for Education as a special post-16 institution. Our approach is underpinned by the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Verbal Behaviour (VB). Our learners follow an individualised programme focused on developing communication and independent living skills in preparation for adulthood. Through partnerships with other organisations, our students spend around 50% of their week working and learning in their local communities.

3.5 The service includes a multi-disciplinary team approach, involving Broad Certified Behaviour Analysts, Qualified Specialist Teachers, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists.

4. Introduction

4.1 BeyondAutism Post-19 have access to the therapists within the other BeyondAutism services. These include Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) and Occupational Therapists (OT) who work in conjunction with ABA/VB approaches to promote students' skills and abilities by providing opportunities and strategies for optimal learning and participation.

4.2 The goal of Therapies at BeyondAutism Post-19 is to provide person-centred and individualised intervention for skill acquisition, maintenance and generalisation. This is done in liaison with service staff, parents and other professionals working with each student, to address challenges in communication, social interaction, engagement, functional living skills, occupational performance and sensory processing.

4.3 OT's and SaLT's use Applied Behavioural Analysis principles and strategies to support their sessions. These may include pairing, i.e. building therapeutic rapport and positive reinforcement.

4.4 Interventions used are evidence based and are formulated from assessment results. Targets are prioritised based on need and this guides IEP target setting. Therapists then devise a therapeutic programme of activities or recommend strategies which are personalised to each student so that they can maximise their potential as well as have the best experience at the service. Therapy programmes consist of activities that the students complete with the therapists directly as well as indirectly with their one to one tutor at the service and in the community in association with their ABA/VB programme.

4.5 All the students at the service are assigned a named therapist to complete their assessment, intervention and evaluation. Therapists may work across the whole organisation. Therapy staff at BeyondAutism Post-19 fulfil the assessment and therapy needs for each pupil as specified in their Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). They conduct regular reviews to update targets and formally report on the student's progress, annually through annual reviews and upon the service's or parents' request.

4.6 Both OT's and SaLT's adopt a multi-disciplinary team approach and foster inter-disciplinary working focusing on student outcomes. The multi-disciplinary team are all relevant professionals who must be involved when discussions or decisions are being made about a student, resources or approaches in teaching. When planning student outcomes for an IEP, a termly multi-disciplinary meeting must take place before the targets are confirmed. The team must also be updated with any significant changes to their circumstances, including specific care plans, risk assessments and behaviour plans.

5. SaLT Role

5.1 The role of the Speech and Language Therapist at BeyondAutism Post-19 is to assess, support and develop the student's functional interaction, communication, speech and language skills. An Inclusive / Total Communication approach is used in order to maximise each student's opportunity to communicate in the way that best suits them. This may be verbally, through Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) systems, such as Makaton sign, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), or using high tech AAC such as Proloquo2go. Students may also use a mixture of these communication methods.

6. OT Role

6.1 Occupational therapists work with students 1:1 and/or in groups to help them promote and develop functional living and vocational skills. OT's use a holistic approach in planning programmes, this means they take into account the student's preferences, social, emotional, sensory as well as physical and cognitive abilities. OT's regularly liaise with staff to find out about the students' occupational performance at the service and in a variety of environments with the aim to remove barriers to learning. By understanding each individual student as a person, their unique characteristics can be then nurtured to help students achieve their aspirations for the future. OT's will often make recommendations with regards to approaches used, strategies or the environment verbally or through annual review reports.

7. Therapy Staff

7.1 The therapy team at BeyondAutism Schools and Post-19 currently consists of a senior therapist for SaLT and for OT. They are supported by individual therapist who work directly with students.

7.2 The SaLT and OT Therapies department have representation on the senior leadership team of the school and work closely with the Post-19 leadership team. Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists are Allied Health Professionals who are regulated by their own respective professional bodies and the Health and Care Professions Council. This means that they adhere to professional and ethical standards of their profession, one of which is to remain informed of recent evidence and research relating to their clinical practice.

8. Assessment and Delivery of therapy input

8.1 Assessment is completed through a range of formal and informal methods to identify the specific needs of each student. These findings are then used to design a functional and individualised OT or SaLT programme for the pupil. Yearly targets are set at the students' annual/EHCP review (or after the assessment period when a student starts at the Post-19 service). Termly targets are set and reviewed through each student's IEP and shorter-term targets are set and reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the term.

8.2 Therapy sessions occur in individual and group settings, in order to meet each student's needs and maximise their learning and engagement. Tutors then practise targets on a daily basis and adhere to recommendations if/when these are agreed by the ABA supervisor or Instructor. Sessions take place in the Hub and across other settings, such as locations in the community.

8.3 Therapy staff work closely with service staff to ensure an integrated approach to the students' needs. This includes regular discussions with senior school staff and the student's tutors.

8.4 Therapy staff provide training to staff as and when required.

8.5 While every attempt is made to ensure that students receive their allocated therapy sessions throughout the day it is not possible for catch up sessions to be completed if the therapist or the student misses a session due to illness or due to required attendance at another event.

9. Reports, EHCPs and Annual Reviews

9.1 A yearly therapy re-assessment will be completed with students receiving direct therapy input and a therapy specific report will be completed following this re-assessment. This will contribute to the student's Annual Review of their EHCP. All reports will include therapy goals and will be sent out to care givers and local authorities prior to the Annual Review meetings. Wherever possible the OT or SaLT working with a student will attend their first Annual Review meeting on joining the service. If attendance is not possible the therapists will liaise closely with those chairing the meeting to ensure that the key messages can be conveyed. Due to time constraints any additional reports will have to be completed during the student's direct contact time.

10. Communication with parents and carers

10.1 The therapy service aims to facilitate a close relationship with the home setting to ensure that goals are relevant to both home and the Post-19 service. Therapists may attend the termly parent IEP meetings in order to discuss IEP targets and current progress as well as the parents' priorities or student challenges when they are at home.

10.2 Parents and care givers are also offered training opportunities through therapy coffee mornings, held at the service.

10.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with BeyondAutism's other policies including, but not limited to, the BeyondAutism's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Last review: March 2019

Date of next review: March 2022

Review group: Post-19 Advisory Board