

How to contact us

The Children's Development
Centre
B-Block, 3rd Floor
Queen Mary's Hospital
Frognaal Avenue
Sidcup
Kent
DA14 6LT

T: 020 8302 2678 ext 2770/2774

E: oxl-tr.slt-admin@nhs.net

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Bexley Paediatric Feeding Team: information for referrers

Bexley Specialist Children's Services

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This leaflet is for health professionals who would like to refer a child or young person to the paediatric feeding service. It introduces the team, explains the problems we can help with, who we work with and the support we offer.

Introducing our service

The paediatric feeding service is provided for children with complex needs aged 0-19 years, presenting with at least one of the following:

- an impairment of their oral-motor skills (including the swallow), leading to difficulties in developing a normal eating and/ or drinking pattern. This may be related to:
 - structural abnormalities
 - neurological impairment
 - a complex, chronic developmental or health problem.
- receiving their nutrition / hydration non-orally, eg via naso-gastric tube/gastrostomy.

Children with eating and drinking difficulties of behavioural origin are not considered to be appropriate referrals, although it is recognised that this may

become a secondary issue, resulting from any of the factors listed above.

Should the eating/drinking difficulties be behavioural, a range of parenting services is available. These are for children up to the age of five (school reception year). These may include play experiences to explore different senses such as messy play, supportive fun-based cooking groups in children's centres, or age-appropriate opportunities for children to build their general skills and confidence. Specific programmes on offer to support parenting issues which can present as food refusal are also available. For behavioural eating/drinking difficulties please complete a parenting services referral form.

Parents and carers can also access support and advice from their health visiting team, preschool or childminders.

Health visitors can provide a parenting services referral form.

What is the purpose of the multi-disciplinary feeding clinic?

This is a clinic where professionals work collaboratively with the child and family to assess the child's difficulties with eating and drinking and devise a treatment plan.

Who are the core members of the team?

The clinic may include two or more of the following professionals depending on the child's needs:

- community paediatrician
- speech and language therapist
- dietitian
- community nurse
- health visitor
- occupational therapist
- physiotherapist.

Where will the clinic be held?

The clinic is held in the Children's Development Centre, B-Block, Queen Mary's Hospital.

How to refer

Please contact us to request a referral form. The Children's Development Centre on 020 8302 2678 ext 2770/2774.

Parental consent is necessary for making a referral.

Please note that referral to the service needs to be made by a health professional.