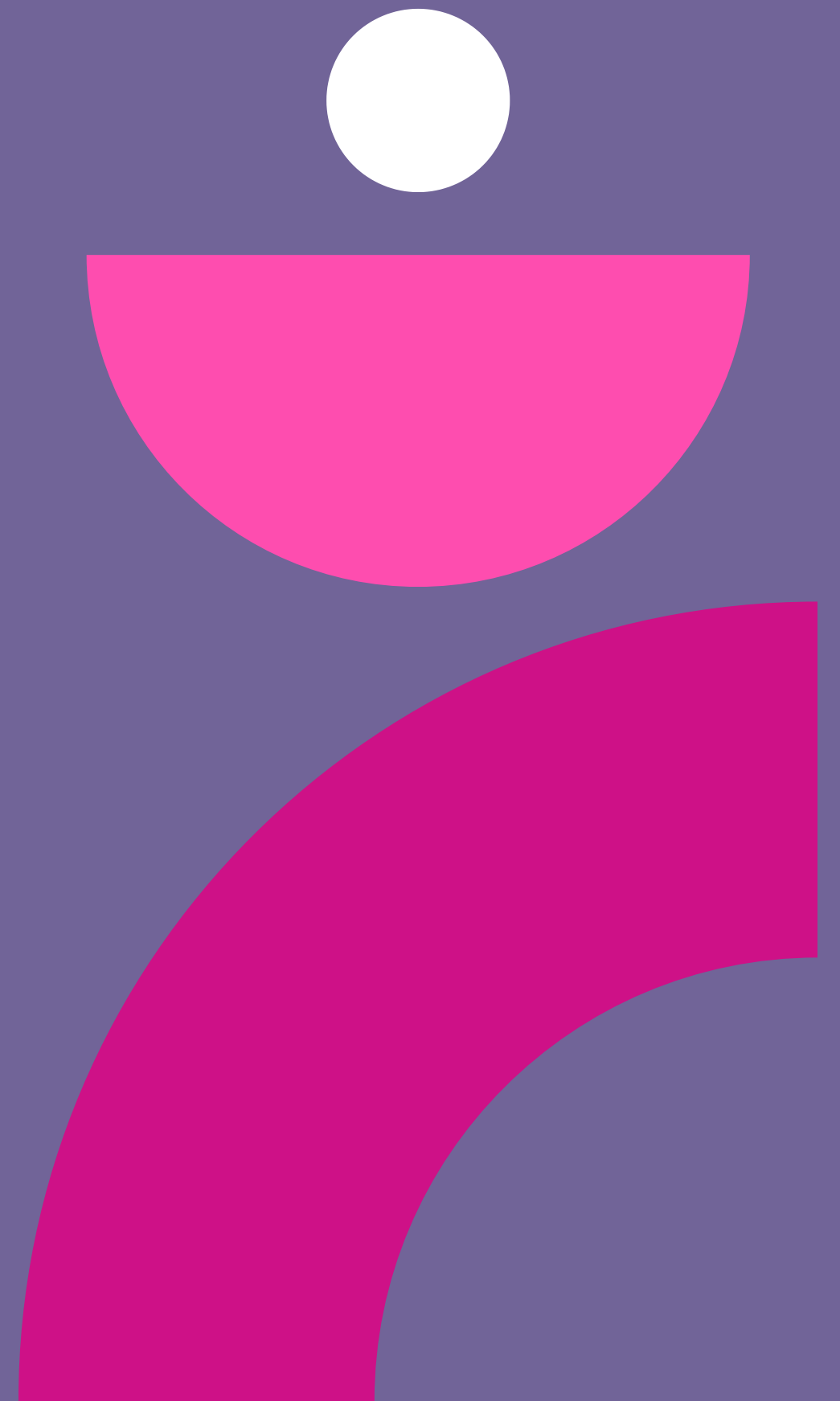




Selective Mutism Support with TCT

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What is selective mutism?

SERVICE OUTLINE

For anyone experiencing selective mutism (now also known as situational mutism), speaking is terrifying—it is a phobia of talking. They are not being ‘shy’ or ‘rude’; they simply cannot speak. Imagine being asked to sing in front of a packed audience at the Royal Opera House with no training—the fear you would feel and the likelihood of no sound coming out.

The thought of speaking triggers physical and mental symptoms that are not easily overcome. The more pressure and expectation there is to talk, the worse it becomes.

Selective mutism is not stubbornness, a means of control, or a refusal to speak. It is situational because social demands vary in different environments and with different people.

It can present in different ways, but you may observe some of the following:

- Absence of or limited verbal communication
- Physical symptoms of anxiety
- Hypervigilance
- A frozen facial expression due to fear
- Fight-or-flight responses
- Ability to communicate through non-verbal means
- Speaking to certain people in specific situations





How can we help?

Our support is provided by two therapeutic teams: Speech and Language Therapy and Psychology. As each young person we support presents in their own unique way, we allow for flexibility in the services we offer.

It is important to us that our support feels right for the young person at the centre of the process.

Speech and Language Therapist role:

- Language support if required
- Social interaction support if needed
- A total communication approach at home and school to reduce the pressure to communicate

Psychology role:

- Psychoeducation on understanding and managing selective mutism as a phobia
- Anxiety management
- Parental support if required



How is support from TCT offered?

- We begin by offering a 60-minute session to meet and gather information with both the psychologist and speech and language therapist.
- Following this initial session, the therapists will meet to discuss the best ways to support the family. They will produce a joint summary report with recommendations, which may include a variety of strategies that can be implemented at the clinic, at home, or at school, as needed.
- If appropriate, we can offer follow-up sessions with the psychologist and/or speech and language therapist. If both professionals are working with the family, they will liaise as required to ensure coordinated support.
- As part of our support, we provide a resource pack for the young person, along with information to help educate and inform others.

Where do we offer this support?

We have friendly, comfortable, non-clinical rooms at our clinic. However, we understand that this setting may not be suitable for all young people, so we will discuss with each family where and how they would prefer to meet the therapists.

Fees

For fees, please refer to our Fees and Services document.

Frequently asked questions

Will my child be expected to talk to you during the initial consultation?

The simple answer is no.

How will you work with my child if they cannot speak to you?

Our therapists are highly experienced in providing a range of age-appropriate ways for young people to communicate.

How many sessions will it take for my child to start talking?

The honest answer is that it varies. We find it more helpful to think of it as a process rather than a fixed timeline. With the right support, we hope that your child will gradually begin to feel more able to speak in different situations and environments.

If we don't do anything, will they 'grow out of it'?

Selective mutism is a phobia, not a choice. Without support—both environmental and direct—children are unlikely to overcome it on their own.

How do we explain selective mutism to others?

It's important that key adults understand that selective mutism is not a choice. It is a phobia that triggers a fight, flight, or freeze response, meaning the child is unable to speak in certain situations rather than refusing to do so.



Introducing Our Specialist Team

Sarah Lord BSc (Hons), MRCSLT
Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist

Sarah qualified from University College London with a degree in Speech Sciences in 2004. She is a member of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and registered with the Health Professions Council. Her extensive experience includes working with a range of speech, language and communication difficulties in both children and teenagers. Sarah has worked in community clinics, early years settings, mainstream school, specialist education and college environments.

She is passionate about supporting children and their families through the process of developing functional communication and interaction skills. Sarah strongly believes that children learn more when they enjoy what they are doing rather than seeing it as hard work, she therefore always endeavours to make assessment and therapy as fun and child-focused as possible.





Introducing Our Specialist Team

**Dr Vicky Mullan BSc (Hons) PGCE DEdPsych
Educational Psychologist**

Vicky is registered with the Health Care Professionals Council and a member of the Association of Educational Psychologists. She qualified as a secondary school science teacher in 2015 before studying to become an Educational Psychologist at the University of Southampton in 2017.

Vicky worked as an educational psychologist for two years at a local authority before beginning work at TCT. She currently works part-time for the local authority alongside her role with us. Her favourite part about her job is meeting the children and young people and hearing about the way they see the world.

She has a passion for working with children and young people with social emotional and mental health needs and completed her thesis looking at the influence of self-esteem on the mental health of young people who had been bullied.

Vicky loves working with children and young people of all ages and works in a variety of different ways depending on what is needed in the situation. She is always keen to gather the views of the young person, parents and school staff and will support you in working together to create an environment where the young person can thrive and achieve their goals.

 FOR FURTHER DETAILS OR TO MAKE A BOOKING

Contact us

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