

Decision-Making Guide



SLC Paths

Introductory Notes

Boroughs across Greater Manchester commonly refer to the GM communication and language pathway*. It is a guide that shows how decisions about the support offer for families and young children are made in relation to the universal, targeted and specialist offer, and in relation to the identification of early SLCN.

You can find a picture of the model on the next slide.

Our decision-making guide builds on this model while specifically focusing focus on what happens during the enhanced WellComm visit and making links to the three methods that practitioners use to gain insights about early SLCN:

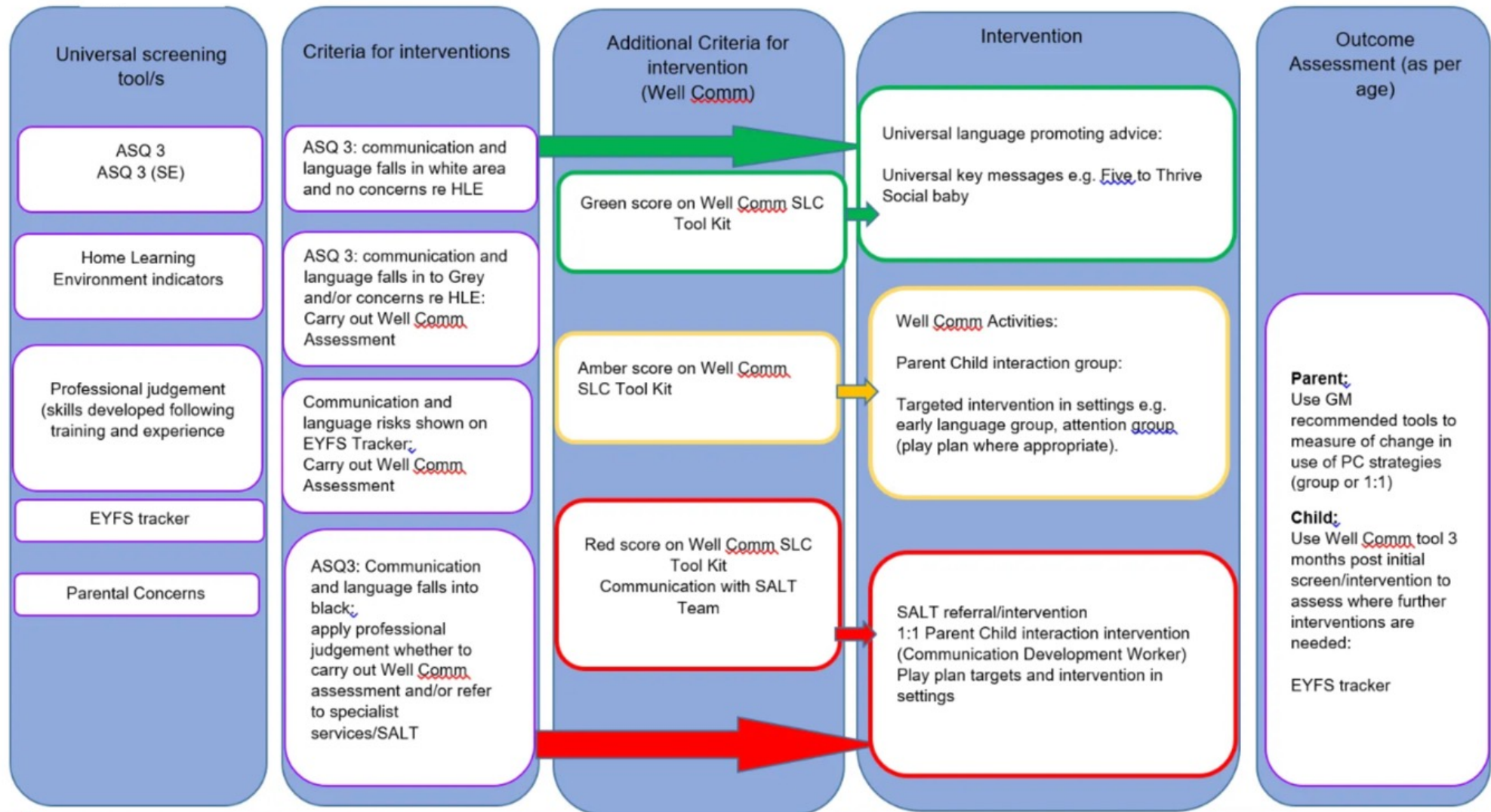
- the WellComm screening,
- conversations with the family, and
- informal observations of the child in interactions

This decision-making guide therefore is developed to be used in combination with the WellComm tool, and the conversation and observation guide in our toolbox.

*<https://medium.com/children-s-centre/gm-pathways-to-talking-627fea01366a>

GM Pathways to Talking

GM Communication and Language Pathway



Underpinned by skills and knowledge of workforce and work with other EY pathways e.g.

Explanatory Notes

By using the WellComm tool, and by having conversations and making observations, practitioners make informed judgements about SLCNs and support offered to families and young children.

Screening methods:

1 WellComm assessment

WellComm score indicates:	child at the level expected for their age	Yes / No
	child slightly below the level expected for their age	Yes / No
	child significantly below the level expected for their age	Yes / No

2 Conversation with the parent

Parent raised concerns about their child's SLCN	Yes / No
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Notes: The parent might specifically have stated their concern about aspects of their child's SLC development, and they might have described behaviour that indicates possible difficulties the child has with expressing or speaking, understanding language or their speech.

Explanatory Notes

3 Observation:

Practitioner observations raise concerns	Yes / No
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Note: Observations come from two sources, a) the observation checklist and b) what practitioners learn by talking to parents.

a) **Scores on the observation checklist indicate a possible SLCN**

The observation checklist (see observation guide) presents 8 observation items. If one or some of the behaviours are absent on the day, this would lead to a 'yes' answer.

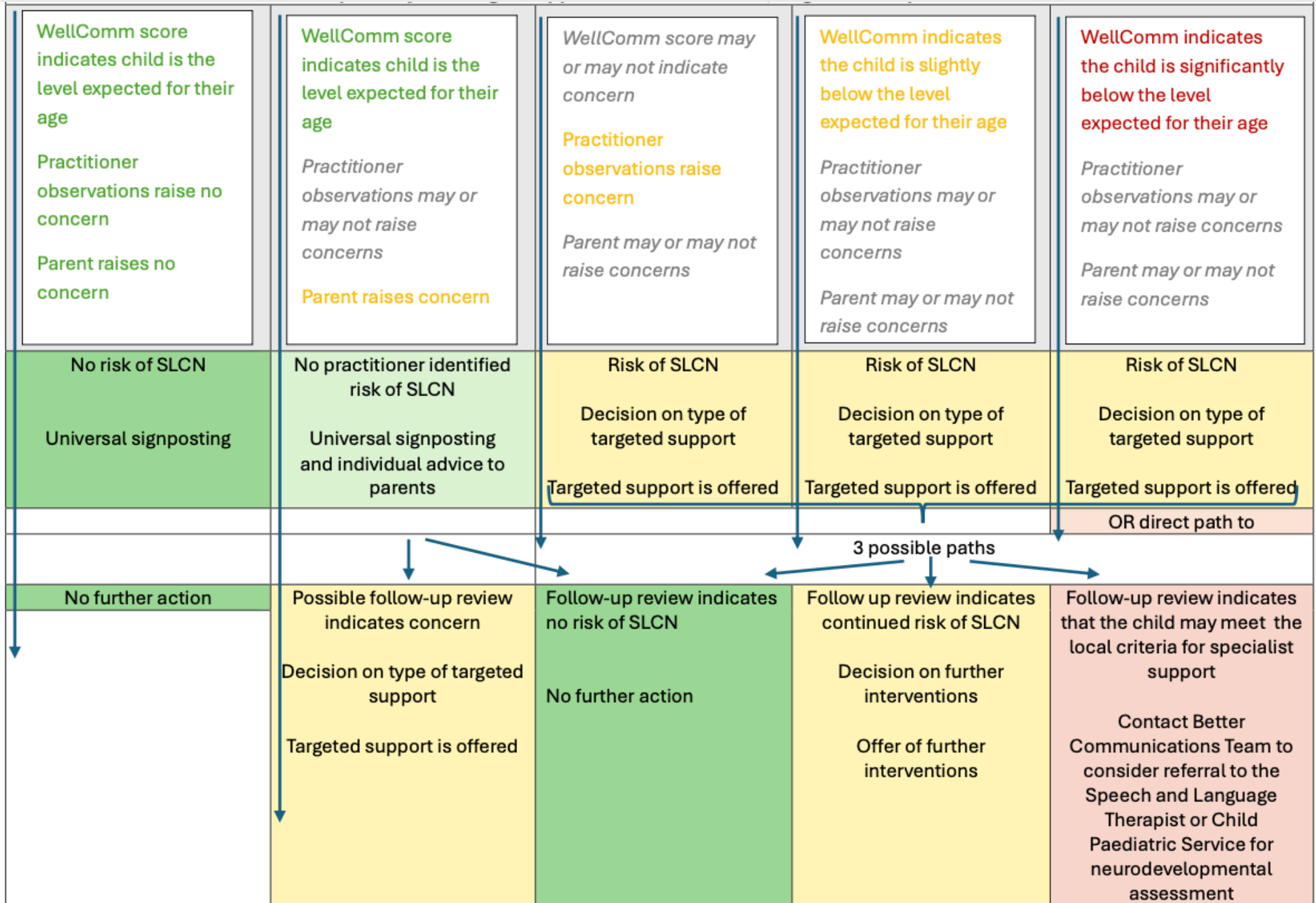
OR

b) The parent might not have raised a concern about the child's SLC development, but **when the parent described the child's speech, communication and language behaviour**, this indicated possible SLCN.

OR

c) The **parent described barriers in relation to the provision of early SLC support for their child**, either in their home environment or outside the home (see more notes in the next slides)

SLC paths leading to support offers at universal, targeted and specialist level



Guidance for decisions about the type of targeted support

Once practitioners identify a possible SLCN, they consider which type of support might best help the child's development.

Targeted support for toddlers SLC focuses on:

Strengthening SLC support at home	Helping parents to embed language-supportive interactions with their child
Strengthening physical opportunities to support SLC development	Helping families to access toys and books and to use the available resources they have to chat and play
Strengthening social opportunities to support SLC development	Helping families to access childcare and social support in the community

McKean and research team (McKean et al., 2022; Newcastle, 2025) have recently developed guidance on choosing the appropriate type of support for families in the context of early language interventions and health visiting. They used the COM-B model and focused on barriers and enablers to the provision of early language support in relation to the key elements Capacity, Opportunity, Motivation.

We have slightly adapted this table for our guidance on choosing support for families in the context of the targeted support offer for families with identified SLCN in Oldham. See next two slides.



Guidance for decisions about the type of targeted support

Strengthening Language Support at Home



	Enablers	Barriers	Decision on the level and type of support
Parents having the beliefs and feelings of optimism so that they can ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - they can increase their responsive interactions - it is worthwhile to make this change - it is possible within their current circumstances - the child will respond to them if they try - they have a definite intention to try to change - that what they do will make a difference to their child <p>They do not feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - embarrassed using responsive interaction - that people may judge them if they try - overwhelmed by other demands in their life 	<p>There are barriers observed that affect parent beliefs and feelings of optimism. These affect parent capabilities to provide language support.</p>	<p>One-to-one support or group intervention (Talking Tools; Making it REAL)</p> <p>+</p> <p>Individualised advice alongside signposting (e.g. top tips for talking, signposting to universal stay and play sessions at Family Hubs)</p>
Parents having capabilities so they can ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - follow the child's lead and interests - use responsive interaction behaviours and play, book sharing and daily routines - choose developmentally appropriate activities, toys and books - decide on a goal, monitor their behaviour, and stick to a plan 		

Guidance for decisions about the type of targeted support

	Enablers	Barriers	Decision on the level and type of support
 Strengthening physical opportunities to support SLC development			
Physical opportunity	Has access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - books, toys, activities to support responsive interaction - contexts like playgroups, library drop-ins etc to support the use of responsive interaction 	There are barriers observed that fall into this category	Support to access toys and books and to use the available resources they have to chat and play
 Strengthening social opportunities to support SLC development			
Social opportunity	Has access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a family and/or social network to support them emotionally and practically - a social group who also uses responsive interaction in a range of contexts - opportunities to spend time with their child which is rewarding for both the child and the parent/caregiver 	There are barriers observed that fall into this category	Support to access childcare and social support in the community

Guidance for decisions about targeted support for children with significant communication needs

↓ Strengthening parental strategies to support children with significant communication needs

In Oldham, if practitioners observe that a child has significant communication needs (e.g. no eye contact, child is not initiating communication, child is not responding to communication) the family is offered support specifically focused on embedding strategies at home that help children with high needs in this area. This targeted group intervention is called **REAL enhanced**.

References

McKean C, Watson R, Charlton J, Roulstone S, Holme C, Gilroy V, Law J. (2022) 'Making the most of together-time': Development of a Health Visitor led intervention to support children's early language and communication development at the 2-2½ year-old review. *Pilot and Feasibility Studies*.

Newcastle University (2025). Early Language Identification Measure – Intervention. Intervention resources, training and handbook. <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/elim-i/elim-i/elim-ittrainingandhandbooks/>