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Introduction: International research (Anderson, Hawes, & Snow 2016) has consistently found high levels of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) amongst young people in contact with the criminal justice system. These SLCN may occur with co-morbid intellectual and/or other developmental disabilities. Speech and language therapy services are now provided in the majority of young offender institutions (YOI) in England. However, little is known about how these services are provided.

Methods: A survey was conducted, followed by a semi-structured interview with the lead clinician in each YOI in England. Six months of service provision data was also collected from each site.

Results: All services were providing 1:1 assessment and interventions for a range of different speech, language and communication needs. Benefits could be seen in more universal service provision, but resource and regime issues were seen as barriers. It was felt that the speed of change and levels of pressure were higher in this field than in other clinical settings.

Implications: Speech and language therapy services in this setting should be led by experienced clinicians with high levels of support. Where resources are limited, careful consideration should be given to as where these are targeted.

Keywords: communication support needs, custody, service delivery, youth offending