

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY
CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SUPPORTING PEOPLE AT MEALTIMES

COMMUNICATION

- Are residents offered a choice of food/ drink appropriate to their level of cognition/ understanding? Are visual menus available for people?
- Are residents greeted when they enter the dining room?
- When food/ drink is served- is it accompanied with appropriate verbal comment by server (e.g. here's your fish and chips)?
- Is social communication BETWEEN residents encouraged?
- Do staff engage in social communication WITH residents?
- Make eye contact
- Use a gentle tone of voice
- Tell the person about their food.
- If supporting the person with feeding get down to the person's eye level in a position where they can see you clearly.
- When feeding are staff focused on the individual they are feeding and not having a conversation with someone else?

ENVIRONMENT

- All tables arranged with place settings with 4 people or less?
- Appropriate background music/ is the TV on/no distracting background noise from kitchen?
- Tablecloths/ tablemats used/ Appropriate colour contrasts for table settings/Condiments on table?
- Appropriate standard of cleanliness?
- Appropriate level of lighting?
- Appropriate room temperature?

POSITIONING

- Ensure the person is sat upright when offering food and drink.
- Make sure they are fully AWAKE.
- Ensure the person remains upright for approximately 30 minutes after eating and drinking.
- Ensure the person's head is not extended back when eating and drinking.
- Ensure the person is in the midline and not slumped to one side.
- Consider referral to physiotherapy for advice on positioning and/ or occupational therapy for advice on specialist seating if appropriate.