

Welcome

Housekeeping

Topic: 'Plugging the evidence base gap – important research in speech and language therapy'

Programme:

Some excellent speakers and time to discuss the topics.

This morning:

Focusing on the evidence base itself – looking at new evidence, why we need the evidence, how we collect the evidence and what the gaps are.

This afternoon:

Focus shifts to how we as clinicians use the evidence base, how do we work in an evidence based fashion, how do we create a culture in which supports the delivery of evidence based care.

Discussion sessions: think about what RCSLT should be doing to support the profession in both aspects – developing the evidence base and using the evidence base. RCSLT is a members organisation, so whenever we say, what do you want RCSLT to do, we're also asking, how can you help – what can you do to help the organisation deliver. So we're looking not only for your suggestions but also offers of help.

RCSLT officers in discussion sessions listening and making notes, so do give voice to your ideas. Caroline Pickstone, our incoming Councillor of Research and development will be picking this up later this afternoon.

AGM at lunchtime: come and participate

After lunch: Debate about research capacity building in the profession - take the opportunity to challenge some of the funders about how money is allocated.

Before I hand over to Professor Paul Carding, our opening keynote, I want to share with you one of the recent challenges that the organisation faces and ask for your help. Our policy officers have been very successful at getting meetings with the people in HM Treasury and the DfES. They are sympathetic to our lobbying for more funds, in this case, to be targeted towards support for children with disabilities. But for them to take things forward, they need evidence that SLT makes a difference. Here are some of the questions that we face:

Slides:

Does speech and language therapy prevent deterioration of a person's communication

Do children who have prompt access to SLT have improved outcomes

Does early intervention save money by preventing the need for more costly interventions at a later date

What impact does speech and language therapy have on a child's educational success

Does speech and language therapy improve a child's social relationships

Does speech and language therapy prevent the re-offending rate in young offenders

What are the long terms financial implications of not providing SLT

Does SLT training for other professionals and carers reduce the longer term costs of care for an individual

What is the financial impact of providing basic communication training for support workers and carers.

Some very challenging questions and difficult to provide evidence. If RCSLT is to represent the profession we need to be able to access evidence that can make these kind of arguments. The officers in HQ are looking for support in gathering that evidence together.

Professor Paul Carding is going to pick up this theme now in his presentation: Relevant evidence: the importance of research to speech and language therapy. This is our opening keynote and the Founder's lecture. The Founder's lecture was proposed by my predecessor Caroline Fraser and Council agreed that each year we should have the founder's lecture in honour of one of the leader's of the profession.

This year, we honour Sandra Robertson, who was a Chair of RCSLT and a great worker for the profession and who presented RCSLT with the Chair's chain of office.

Professor Paul Carding:

A long time supporter of RCSLT, serving on Council and leading the research Committee and playing a leading role in the development of services in Voice and ENT.

Based in Newcastle at the Freeman Hospital and at the University of Newcastle,

Professor of Voice Pathology,

Course director for the Masters programme in dysphonia and dysphagia and

Consultant to the Royal Shakespeare Company.