RCSLT webinar – Giving Voice to Bercow: Ten Years On
Wednesday, 16th May 2018

Derek Munn, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, RCSLT

Well, good afternoon, everybody and welcome to today’s RCSLT webinar, Giving Voice to Bercow Ten Years On. Thank you very much for joining.

My name is Derek Munn; I’m Director of Policy and Public Affairs here at the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. And I’m delighted to be joined this afternoon by Caroline Wright, Policy Adviser at RCSLT and one of the leading people behind the Bercow Ten Report, and Gillian Rudd, who is a Senior Lecturer at Birmingham City University and who’s been doing outstanding work in promoting the report through social media and other influencing tools.

The webinar will be 45 minutes long; there will be questions at the end. You should be able to see a chat button on the right-hand side of your screen, which you can use to send messages, and a Q&A button if there’s anything you’d like us to answer. We may not be able to take all the questions in the session, but we will do our best to make sure that an answer goes online to everything.

This event is being recorded and you’ll see the recording of it go up on the RCSLT website as soon as possible. And my colleague, Kaleigh Maietta, is online right now, so if you have a problem with sound or vision or slides then use the chat function and Kaleigh will be able to help you.

So if you’re good at multitasking, there are Twitter hashtags as well. There’s #rcsltwebinar and #bercow10. And we hope that, after this webinar, you will obviously have heard about the findings of the Bercow: Ten Years On report and its implication, but also have heard some practical ideas for how to get involved in the Bercow10 campaign.

So I’m delighted to hand you on now, to talk about the findings of the report, to Caroline Wright.

Caroline Wright, Policy Adviser, RCSLT

Thank you very much, Derek.

Bercow: Ten Years On is an independent review of provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs, or SLCN, in England in 2018.

The review was undertaken by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists in partnership with children’s communication charity I CAN. In case you’re wondering why the name, well, Bercow: Ten Years On marks a decade since the publication of the Bercow Report, which was chaired by MP John Bercow, and published in 2008. We started collecting evidence for this review in January 2017 and through a combination of surveys, focus groups, oral and written evidence, we collected the views of more than 2,500 people. Those people included professionals, such as speech and language therapists, teachers and early years practitioners; commissioners of speech, language and communication support; employers of young people; parents and carers; and, most importantly of all, children and young people.

As well as online surveys, we held focus groups with children and young people with SLCN and we asked them about the support they receive and what they like and don’t like about it. They told us that they liked it when people encouraged them and made things fun. They liked it when people made it easy for them to ask questions, when they used pictures and visual support, when they checked that they had understood and when they gave them choices and time to talk.
They didn’t like it when there was too much teacher talk, when teachers shouted, when they had to work in silence or when there was lots of writing.

Parents and carers shared many negative experiences of accessing support, with services described variously as poor, dreadful and frustrating. In a survey of 635 parents and carers of children with SLCN, almost three-quarters said it was difficult to get help for their child. To take a look at some of the statistics that sit behind that, 42% said their child’s SLCN was noticed too late; 54% had to wait more than six months to get the support they needed; and 52% said their families’ overall experience of speech, language and communication support was poor.

What did people have to say about speech and language therapy specifically? One of the most striking statistics from the review was that only 15% of survey respondents said that speech and language therapy was available as required in their local area. We also had concerns about a loss of leadership in the speech and language therapy profession, with more than two-thirds of NHS speech and language therapy services surveyed saying they had seen a reduction in the number of specialist speech and language therapy roles within their service in the past 10 years.

From all the evidence we gathered, five key themes emerged which provide the structure for the report. The first theme is communication is crucial. We know that communication is crucial to children’s life chances to education, employment, relationships and wellbeing. Yet awareness of its importance among the general public and decision-makers is not sufficient.

As a consequence of this, strategic system-wide approaches to supporting SLCN are rare. Very often, SLCN does not feature at all in national or local policies. Overall, we found that services are inaccessible and inequitable. Too often, support for children’s SLCN is commissioned based on the available resources rather than what is needed and this leads to a situation where the support a child receives depends on where they live.

To make a difference, support should be based on evidence of what we know works, but we heard about services which were being cut back in ways that were not evidence-based. For example, one service only offered a very basic drop-in support to children who were over the age of five. We think the result of all this is that too many children with SLCN are being missed. They’re not having their needs identified, or even when they are they’re not getting the vital support they need.

Under each of these five themes, the report contains recommendations for national, government and system leaders. Each of the recommendations are specific, realistic and impactful. They’ve been tested with practitioners on the ground to ensure they really would make a difference, and with the relevant agencies involved to ensure they’re practical and achievable.

The recommendations aim to ensure strategic, systemic change from the top down. Without this, any changes run the risk of being short-term and dependent on one single person or administration remaining in post.

However, we also learnt through the review that some of the most powerful changes happen when there are inspirational teams or passionate individuals who make changes happen at a local level. So the Bercow: Ten Years On website contains calls to action for local leaders, as well as bold first steps that everyone can take, supported by downloadable resources.

The report touches on many areas, so whatever you’re interested in or whichever age group you work with there should be something in the report that is relevant to you. Today, I'm going to pick out what the report says on these specific topics on the slide, so you can easily relate it to your area of work and to the interests and priorities of other people who you might want to influence; whether they’re family members, colleagues, commissioners or your local MP. I’ll also highlight resources on the Bercow: Ten Years On website that relate to these areas.

One of the biggest changes over the last 10 years is the increasing complexity of the commissioning landscape in both health and education. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given these changes, our review
found that joint commissioning arrangements for SLCN were patchy. And, according to our survey, nearly 40% felt that commissioners’ understanding of speech, language and communication required significant improvement.

Encouragingly, our review did find examples of excellent joint commissioning, such as in Liverpool and Worcestershire. But, in order to ensure that these are the rule rather than the exception, the report recommends that NHS England and the Department of Education should work together to provide a clear definition of joint commissioning and fund a training programme on commissioning for SLCN. You can find a specific briefing about Bercow: Ten Years On for commissioners on the website, and this includes individual actions that we encourage commissioners to take.

In the early years, there is some good news. We found examples of excellent local practice in Warwickshire, Kirkby, Stoke and Southend, to name just a few. 68% of people who completed our survey said the expertise of early years and school staff to identify and support children and young people’s speech, language and communication was satisfactory or better, with almost half saying it was good or excellent. And this was an increase on the same question from 2008. But despite this, as I mentioned earlier, 42% of parents and carers said their child’s SLCN were noticed too late. And given that a survey of health visitors found there were 2,000 fewer health visitor posts over the last two years, there is an even greater risk that these children won’t be identified in the early years.

So our recommendations to national government to improve the skills and knowledge of the early years workforce include that the Department for Education should make speech, language and communication a core requirement of the level 2 qualifications for an early years assistant and that Public Health England should provide practitioners with guidance about the red flags that indicate communication and language concerns. There are also actions that early years leaders can take themselves to improve support, such as comparing data about national prevalence of SLCN with the incidents in their own setting. And there’s a step-by-step guide on the website to help settings to do this.

Beyond the early years, education policy puts very little emphasis on spoken language. Since the publication of the original Bercow review, spoken language has been removed from the grading of GCSEs in English and English language, and this sends a signal to schools that spoken language is not a priority. The table you can see on this slide shows that while there are mandated checks on communication at age two and during the reception year, beyond that, spoken language is not measured or reported on consistently. And this is backed up by our survey, which found that 53% of people did not feel that the way children learn in school supports their spoken language development.

So while there are examples of individual schools doing fantastic work and an increasing number of schools that are commissioning or employing their own speech and language therapists, this is by no means happening across the board, with the consequence that the support a child receives depends not just on where they live, but also on where they go to school.

So to make sure that all schools prioritise speech, language and communication, the report recommends that Ofsted should consider how spoken language is taken into account in its inspection framework. And also that the Department for Education should ensure that newly qualified teachers have the knowledge and understanding of how to support speech, language and communication.

There are a range of actions that we would like school leaders to take; for example ensuring that a senior leader takes responsibility for speech, language and communication. For teachers and other school staff, there are lots of ideas for bold first steps you can take, with supporting resources on the website, such as a checklist that you can use to audit your school against the features of effective school-based practice.

Specifically on the issue of special education and disability, we looked at recently published evidence, including two reports on SEND that were published in 2017. One was our own RCSLT
report, based on a survey of our members, and the second was a report by the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted based on their first year of local area SEND inspections. Both reports found that there were particular concerns around access to therapy services, support for children without EHC plans and support for young people aged 18-25. Throughout the review, we heard again and again that the Ofsted and CQC joint local area inspections were a powerful lever for change. So our report recommends that these inspections should continue beyond the current five-year cycle, and that all inspectors should be trained so that they can effectively challenge local areas about their support for children and young people with SLCN.

We also want individual schools to review their SEN information reports and consider whether they make it clear how their school supports pupils with SLCN. If you’re a speech and language therapist who works in schools, there is a resource on the website that can help you to talk to the schools you work in about this.

On mental health, we know there are important links between SLCN and mental health and evidence shows that more than eight out of 10 children with identified emotional and behavioural disorders had significantly below average language ability, which had not previously been identified. And yet, this is another area where the importance of speech, language and communication is not recognised. So the report calls on the government to strengthen the place of speech, language and communication in its proposals to transform children and young people’s mental health provision. And we list a number of specific ways that the government could do this.

We’ve produced a briefing about the links between SLCN and mental health and what Bercow: Ten Years On says we should do about this, which you can find on the resources page of the Bercow: Ten Years On website.

We also know that there are particular groups that have a much higher risk of having SLCN – upwards of 50% – such as children excluded from school, those in the care system or in the youth justice system. But our evidence found that opportunities to identify these young people’s SLCN were often missed. There are good examples of innovative approaches to identifying and supporting SLCN in these groups of young people, such as ‘No Wrong Door’ in North Yorkshire. And we want to see this good practice spread more widely. We recommend that government departments should ensure that practitioners who work with children and young people in settings with a known high prevalence of SLCN must be trained in recognising and responding appropriately to communication needs and ensure that speech and language therapy can be accessed as required.

Social mobility is another area where the review draws on existing evidence. This link is increasingly being recognised by those in government, and the Department for Education’s recent social mobility action plan includes an ambition to close the word gap in the early years. But we think more can be done, and the report includes six specific recommendations for how the strategy could be strengthened, such as including communication and language as a focus for the next round of pupil premium awards. We believe this would incentivise schools to prioritise speech, language and communication.

Research and evidence is an area of clear progress over the last 10 years, with the Better Communication Research Programme and the What Works Database being two big steps forward in building the evidence base around SLCN. But our review found that while we now have strong evidence in terms of prevalence and interventions, our evidence around service models is not as strong, and the evidence we do have is not always accessed by those who commission services.

Our report recommends that the Education Endowment Foundation should make a five- to 10-year commitment to design and fund a school-based SLCN evaluation programme. And we also call on the Department for Education to continue to fund the What Works Database.

Since the report was published on 20 March, there has been a lot of activity on social media and the report has been discussed at national conferences and local team meetings. The day after the launch of the report, Nick Smith MP asked a question about the report at Prime Minister’s
Questions, in response to which Theresa May welcomed the report and committed to look very carefully at what it says and respond in due course.

So how can we keep the momentum going? Well, please do visit the website www.bercow10yearson.com, where there is lots of information and resources to support you to make change happen locally. And if you do take a bold first step, please visit the Taking Action page on the I CAN website to tell us what you’ve done and the impact it’s had.

I’m now going to hand over to Gillian, who’s going to talk about practical ideas for how to get involved in the Bercow Ten campaign.

Gillian Rudd, Senior Lecturer, Birmingham City University

Thank you, Caroline. And hello everyone.

So knowing what you know now, how do you move forward with campaigning and influencing? What I hope to do today is give you some food for thought and some ideas for you to get started with, or some inspiration about how to continue if you’re already on your way.

From my perspective, and in the context of my clinical experience, the findings of the report were disappointing, but not surprising. I know that across the UK there are thousands of brilliant people working hard to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people. I also know that there are barriers and challenges on the ground that cannot be easily overcome by individuals and that there needs to be systemic change in order to provide the service that we want to deliver, as regularly and consistently as the evidence base describes and as service users deserve.

The Bercow 10 Report is central. It summarises the issues and provides clear recommendations for change, as detailed by Caroline. But that, in itself, is not enough. We as therapists, assistants, parents, family members, young people, teachers, commissioners and other stakeholders need to work together to call for change; to explain to decision-makers that these issues are important, that the recommendations need to be implemented and that change needs to happen sooner, rather than later. We are the pieces of the puzzle that build the case and every contribution is important.

With that in mind then, I’ve divided my suggestions up into three groups, which you can dip into and share with others, depending on the time that you and they have available.

So for people who are just getting started on campaigning and influencing, or who have little time available, these are some really quick wins which can be implemented in just five minutes.

Firstly, the summaries provided on both the website and in the Royal College Bulletin are excellent. If you want to give people an overview of the report and its findings, but think that the full report would be overwhelming, or would go in red, consider directing them to one of these very accessible alternatives. You could send the two-page summary to colleagues via email, print copies and put them in your staffroom and/or put a copy up on your noticeboards.

Royal College also have poster templates that they can email to you, which you can print and display at work and in the community. These summarise the focus of the report and how individuals can find out more.

Many of you will have already heard about the government petition that was submitted the day that the report was released, and thank you to everyone who has already signed this. As you can see from the screenshot on the left-hand side, we’re using the petition to ask government to implement the recommendations from the report, as well as asking MPs to support the findings. We’ve had a fantastic response, with people signing from all over the country, and a current total of over 6,000 supporters. The middle image you can see on the slide is the petition map, which is automatically updated every time somebody signs to support the petition, with the darker areas indicating constituencies with the most signatures. It’s a great way to get an overview of the level of interest in your area and measure the progress of your campaigning.
Special congratulations to Epsom and Ewell, Charnwood in East Surrey, who are leading the way on signatures, and well done to everyone who’s been sharing the petition and supporting people to sign, including Sheffield Giving Voice on Facebook and everyone in the Twitter community. If you haven’t already signed, this is a really quick win. You can find the petition by following the link in the slide. This can also be found on the Bercow: Ten Years On website and via your favourite search engine if you type in ‘Bercow 10 petition’. Once you’ve signed, please share it with family, friends and other contacts and ask them to sign, too.

We’re now nearly two months into the six-month window for collecting signatures, and well on our way to the 10,000 mark which will trigger a written response from government. If we can get to 100,000 signatures, the petition will be considered for a debate in parliament.

What if you have a little bit more time, or you want to get more involved? Well, one of the things that you can start doing with the knowledge you already have is to start conversations with others about the report, its findings and the recommendations. Tell anyone who will listen: colleagues, family, even your hairdresser. We say that communication is everybody’s business and that too few people know what speech and language therapy is, so let’s change that. You could also think in a more strategic fashion about who would really benefit from reading the summary and/or the full report, and consider sending it outside of your initial circle to key stakeholders, such as commissioners, managers, other professionals and parent groups.

One thing that you might find useful is spending some time exploring the Bercow 10 website, so that you become more familiar with the resources and feel more comfortable signposting others to what’s available.

15 minutes would also be enough time for you to contact RCSLT and ask to take part in the Bercow 10 Relay. We’ve had some fantastic photos taken with the bubble and shared on social media so far. You can see some examples of these on the slide. On the left-hand side are Dave Harford and Megan David from Worcestershire. In the middle, we have an amazing photo with the Bubble from the NAPLIC Conference in Birmingham. And on the right-hand side, we have a photo taken by Rochdale ‘RANS Talk to Learn’ Team at their recent SLC strategy group meeting.

With 30 minutes or more, you can use the additional time to plan and be even more strategic in your campaigning. Take some time to reflect on the strengths of your service. What practice can you highlight and share in order to raise awareness of the potential benefits of speech and language therapy and celebrate current successes? Who can you tell about these? If you’re working in an organisation with a communications team, get in touch with them and ask what opportunities are available. Consider writing something about how Bercow 10 relates to your area, your service and your work and share this as widely as possible. If your service was featured as an example of good practice in the report, you already have a ready-made good news story, so make sure you tell local press about this. As you can see, Worcestershire have done from the screenshot on the left-hand side.

Put a slot on your meeting agenda to talk about the report, its relevance and its implications, and use the resources on the website to calculate how many children in your area have speech, language and communication needs and how many are likely to not be getting the support they need.

You can use this information to share with stakeholders and decision-makers, including your local MPs. Think about writing to your local MPs and inviting them to meet with you, or to visit your setting or service. There’s a great template on the website that you can use for this, and you can personalise it to make it as relevant as possible to you and your area.

Also don’t be afraid to be creative and generate new ideas and opportunities. Many people talk about speech and language therapy being both an art and a science, so let’s use our creativity as a strength. Could there be some Bercow Ten ‘artivism’ maybe? If you have an idea, but you’re not
really sure about it, or you want to talk it through, Royal College would be really happy to support you with this, so just send them an email or give them a call.

Using social media in either a personal or a professional capacity can be a fantastic way to maximise the impact of your work. It also provides some unparalleled opportunities to develop your awareness of related activity at a local, national and international level and to network and share best practice with others. Lots of different options are available, but Twitter is particularly useful for sharing information widely and quickly and for contacting people you wouldn’t otherwise have easy access to.

I’m not going to spend a lot of time on this, other than to say if you’re not on Twitter do consider joining and if you are on make sure you attach the hashtag #bercow10 to your campaigning Tweets and use this to search for other people’s work.

Consider joining in with conversations and other people’s campaigning activities, such as the hashtag #10WordChallenge from Warwickshire; and you can see the photos from that Tweeted out by Deborah Powers, and an example of that on the right-hand side of your slide.

Once you’re more comfortable with the platform, think about Tweeting decision makers and other influential people in order to raise awareness. We’ve had a great response from MPs. There’s an example on the left-hand side there from a Yorkshire MP, Philip Davies, and on the previous slide from Edgbaston’s Preet Kaur Gill. But we’ve also had support from others, including the actor Michael Sheen, the poet Michael Rosen, and the business owner and activist Gina Miller, who shared her own family’s experience of speech and language therapy.

This is the final thought that I’d like to leave you with. Without wanting to sound like a supermarket, it really is a case of every little helps. And so I invite you to be part of the change. As Dr Margaret Mead once said, ‘never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has’.

I look forward to working with you all and hopefully to some questions. So I’m going to pass back to Derek now, our Chair.

_Derek Munn, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, RCSLT_
Thank you very much.

Thank you very much, Caroline, and thank you very much, Gillian. We have some questions that people have already sent in, so I’ll begin with those, if I may? And perhaps to you first, Gillian. A colleague has asked about feeling that she lives in a part of the country where there really isn’t much going on in respect of Bercow 10 or anything else. And she says, how do we start to raise awareness in parts of the country that feel that they’re out of the loop on this?

_Gillian Rudd, Senior Lecturer, Birmingham City University_
Great question. So I think what you’re looking at there is an opportunity. So you can be the first person to start talking about it in your area. And I think the other thing that I would say is it might be that there are people in your area, and there’s a few of you and you don’t know about each other yet. So the first thing I would say is to get in touch with the College and let them know that you’re interested in campaigning. And get started on some of the ideas that you heard about in the presentation today. So sign the petition. Think about joining Twitter. Think about doing some of the quick wins, and writing to your MP as an interested constituent. It might feel like you’re alone at times, but you really aren’t. There is a huge network of us campaigning and influencing and interested in this. So come join us.

_Derek Munn, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, RCSLT_
Thank you. Caroline, is there anything you’d want to add?
**Caroline Wright, Policy Adviser, RCSLT**

No, just really to echo Gillian to say, we would be absolutely delighted for anyone to get in touch with us if they would like to join the campaign. And we can help you, we can provide you with tools. We can put you in touch with other people, either locally or across the country, who want to do similar things as you. So please don’t be shy, get in touch.

**Derek Munn, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, RCSLT**

Thank you. I’m aware that sometimes I’ve... people have said to me, oh, Derek, there aren’t any Giving Voice champions in my area. To which we go, well, there’s one now if you’re willing to be that person and that’s how it begins.

I’m delighted to say that we’ve got at least one clinical commissioning group commissioner on the webinar today. And she’s asked how she as a CCG commissioner can support the implementation of the recommendations.

Caroline?

**Caroline Wright, Policy Adviser, RCSLT**

Well, thank you very much for joining us. I think that is a good first step, certainly. I would like to say to commissioners that we understand you have your own objectives and supporting children’s speech, language and communication is a way that you can meet your own objectives. So do have a look at the Bercow: Ten Years On website. There is a specific webpage for commissioners that has links to useful guidance on commissioning for SLCN and also a specific briefing which provides you with a short overview of the report. We know that commissioners are very busy people, so it’s really a one-pager that will tell you the key things that you need to know.

We would encourage you to share any information about the report, or the resources on the website, with other commissioners that you work with, or any commissioning networks that you’re part of. We’d be really grateful for your support with that.

If you think that you are an example of good practice in commissioning for SLCN, then please get in touch with us; we’d be delighted to share that information on the website. And, really, you are an expert on what would be most effective in influencing commissioners. So if you’ve got an idea, please get in touch with us and we’d be really happy to support you to implement it.

**Derek Munn, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, RCSLT**

Thank you very much.

Gillian, I wonder if there’s something I could ask you? We quite often hear from people who say that they are concerned that they can’t undertake campaigning in their professional role. Now, you’re one of the Royal College’s most experienced member campaigners, so do you have any advice to offer on that?

**Gillian Rudd, Senior Lecturer, Birmingham City University**

Yeah, I totally empathise with the position that some people find themselves in, that it’s not always possible to campaign within your work role. What I would say to you is that absolutely doesn’t stop you campaigning and influencing as a person.

So obviously we have this divide between our personal and professional life, and you always have to adhere to professional conduct, but you are entitled to undertake activities in your personal life as much as you want to. An example of this is when I go to meet my MP, I do that in my capacity as a constituent. So I do that as myself. I don’t do that in my work role, I do that as myself.

And there’s a lot you can do in that way. So you can sign the petition, you can write a letter to your MP, you can meet with your MP, you can take part in activities, and all of that you can do outside of your work role, and you can do freely. And I think it’s actually really nice when that’s not always possible in work to meet other professionals and to do that outside of your normal working hours. I
think it’s a really great opportunity to meet new people and to connect with other people in the profession.

**Derek Munn, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, RCSLT**

Thanks, Gillian. That’s great. And, yes, you’re right, within your working day you have to adhere to the policies and procedures of your employer and make sure everyone knows what you’re up to. Which doesn’t mean you can’t do… any influencing let’s say. I think the word campaigning sometimes scares people a wee bit. But you’re right, you’re also a private citizen and can do whatever you like.

Thank you for a question that’s just come in asking about the fact that the report only related to England. The original report 10 years ago was set up by the UK government, which means in devolution terms it would only apply to England. And a lot of the recommendations particularly around legal change, regulation, commissioning and finance systems are specific to each nation, so that’s the reason that this report was England only. That said, there’s plenty in it in terms of the evidence received, the experiences of parents, the knowledge of what works, which is undoubtedly useful in all four nations of the UK and beyond. And we know for example that with the last time round Scotland made a lot of use of the Better Communication Research Programme, which came out of the original Bercow. And we’re already in discussions with colleagues in Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland about the value that this report can have for you.

But thank you for that question.

Another question that we’re often asked is around the role of parents, and indeed children and young people themselves, and how we play in the passion and commitment that children and young people and parents have into the work around this. Gillian?

**Gillian Rudd, Senior Lecturer, Birmingham City University**

Great question. So I suppose what I would say to this is I would echo Caroline’s points earlier on, in that children and families are absolutely central to this. They’re central to all of the work that we do. And the reality is that the voice of children and families is so much more powerful than the voices of other people in this process. So I would always much rather a parent or a child or a young person was heard before me, because actually they do know the issues on the ground much better than I do as a Speech and Language Therapist. They know it from a really personal level. And decision makers and commissioners really need to hear those voices.

So I think if you are a parent and you’re interested in getting involved, a lot of the ideas that we’ve talked about today are things that you can do as well. We would be really interested, all of us working on the campaign, all of us doing any sort of Bercow Ten-related work would be really interested in hearing your voice and championing you, and the College and I CAN would be really interested in hearing from you as well. So please do get involved and please do get in touch and we will support and help you as much as possible, because we do want to hear you.

**Derek Munn, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, RCSLT**

Thank you. Caroline, anything to add on that one?

**Caroline Wright, Policy Adviser, RCSLT**

Yes, I mean, I think throughout the review we heard about the importance and the impact that parents and carers can make when they do share their voice. I remember when we spoke to commissioners, they told us that statistics about the impact of speech, language and communication needs were powerful, but even more powerful were personal stories from children, young people, parents and carers. So don’t underestimate the impact that you can have.

Also, just to direct you to some really useful resources that are on the website that we’ve developed in partnership with some parents and parents’ groups, there is an information sheet on how parents’ groups can get involved in the development of local children’s plans. And that’s been written in partnership with a parent who has done just that. So there’s some really useful practical tips there.
There are some discussion starters that you could use to get a conversation going at your local parent carer forum. And there’s also some information on how you could get involved in your local area inspection of SEND when that comes to your local authority. The inspectors are keen to hear from parents and carers and this information gives you some suggestions about how you can get involved.

Derek Munn, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, RCSLT
That’s great. Thank you very much indeed.

That, I think, is all the questions that we need for today. So I will draw us to a conclusion.

Thank you once again Caroline and Gillian for leading us through the Report and the action we can take. And thank you all for coming online and participating. As we mentioned, the transcript and also the questions and answers will go up on RCSLT’s webinar page as soon as possible and we’ll let you know.

If you’ve been inspired and would like to help with the work we’re doing around Bercow 10 nationally, please contact our colleague, Peter Just, and his contact will be in the follow-up email. You’ll see immediately after the webinar ends, just a very quick feedback screen, and we’d be really grateful if you could spare us a minute to give your feedback so we can improve future webinars. And lastly to invite you to join us for our next webinar on 5 June, which will be a joint webinar with the Motor Neurone Disease Association: Living with MND: supporting speech, communication and swallowing.

Thank you and good afternoon.