Speech and language difficulties: where we are in 2020

5 February 2020

#APPGSLD
Thank you!
Recap of 2019

08/03/2019

Dear Prime Minister,

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs

As Chair and Co-Chairs of All-Party Parliamentary Groups and organisations interested in young people’s health and education, we are writing to urge you to do more to keep up the over 10% of children and young people – some 1.4 million in the United Kingdom – who have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

All Prime Minister’s Questions on 21 March 2018 you said: “We do not want to see any child held back from achieving their potential, and that includes ensuring that children with speech, language and communication needs and their families get the support they need.”

We share the unison you expressed and were pleased to see the recent first anniversary progress report on Barcoo: Ten Years On – an independent review of the state of provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs detail the encouraging action that the Government has undertaken in the past year on this issue. In particular, we were pleased to see the Department for Education’s focus on closing the gap and the decision to reform assessment and special educational needs and disability inspections from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

This is very welcome, but as the progress report makes clear, there is still much that needs to be done if the 1.4 million children and young people with SLCN and their families that our APPG represent are to be properly supported to achieve their potential both in education and in life. In general, some of the tasks that are to be reduced.

Children with speech difficulties need ‘urgent action’

Schools should be given incentives to prioritise the speech, language and communication needs of children, say MPs

My name is Helen and I am a Social Work...
Further evidence 1/2

- 57% of areas in England reported a real-terms decrease in spending between 2016/17 and 2018/19.
- £16.35 spent on each child in the top 25% of areas.
- 58p spent on each child in the bottom 25% of areas.
- Next steps
Further evidence 2/2

- SLCN now most common type of primary need for pupils with SEND – 22%
- SLCN now most common of primary need for pupils on SEN support – 23%

Source: School census, January 2019
Policy developments 1/2

Children and young people’s mental health:

- 81% of children with social and emotional disorders have previously unidentified communication needs

- Children with mental health problems are five times more likely to have problems with speech and language
Policy developments 2/2

Learning disability and autism:

- NHS Long Term Plan
- Government training programme
- Baroness Hollins’ Bill
Looking ahead to 2020…
Mental health reform

What’s the issue?
- Over 80% of people with mental health problems have impairment in language
- 30% of people with mental health problems have swallowing difficulties
- 30 times more likely to die of choking if you have schizophrenia

What’s the risk?
- Inaccurate referrals & assessments
- Inaccessible interventions, especially if verbally delivered
- Waste of public funds due to failed interventions
- Patient safety
National Disability Strategy

- Communication disability is one of the most common disabilities
- It can be largely invisible
- It impacts a significant proportion of the UK’s population:
  - 1 in 5 of adults experience a communication difficulty
  - Over ten percent of children and young people with long term communication need
Royal Commission on Criminal Justice process

- 60% of young people
- Similar figures in adult population
- Engagement with the criminal justice process
- Ageing prison population
NHS Funding Bill & NHS Long Term Plan

- **Better lives** for people with speech & language and swallowing difficulties

- **NHS Long Term Plan**: speech and language therapy – a profession in short supply

- **Shortage Occupation List**: DHSC – increasing demand on speech and language therapy, particularly in mental health
Other Bills and policies

- Medicines and Medical Devices Bill
- Review of the care system
Thank you!
Any questions?