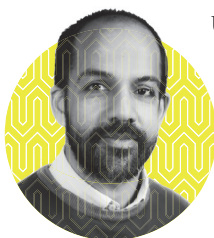


A strategic focus

Amit Kulkarni and Kathryn Moyse on what the RCSLT's strategic vision means for speech and language therapy research and outcomes



The RCSLT's new strategic vision for the profession was launched earlier this year (see: bit.ly/3mlwSUm). Intended to guide the RCSLT's activities for the next five years (2022–2027), the vision was informed by horizon-scanning activities with a wide range of stakeholders, including members, service user partners, RCSLT staff, researchers, and others. The strategic plans of influential partners – ie, organisations whose agendas will inform ours, and vice versa – also played a key role. Some notable inclusions were from the UK government, the NHS, and the Council of Deans, along with a number of organisations with an explicit focus on health research, such as



UK Research and Innovation and the National Institute for Health and Care Research. This careful strategic planning resulted in the identification of eight key priority areas for the RCSLT: equality, diversity and inclusion; co-production; funding and recovery; innovation and excellence in research and clinical practice; workforce development; profile and opportunity; member engagement; and organisational excellence.

Vision

As part of the organisation's strategic planning, the RCSLT research and outcomes team considered the worlds of speech and language therapy data and research. We drew from the information gathered as part of the broader process to

develop the following vision statement, which will keep us focused on work of strategic priority across all eight areas of the RCSLT vision: **'To use, and support others to use, a data-driven, evidence-based approach across RCSLT priority initiatives and within clinical practice.'**

This vision will guide our work, but what kind of things does it mean we will actually be working on in practice?

Priorities

Sitting alongside our five-year vision, the RCSLT one-year operational plan articulates the work we'll be focusing on in 2022–2023 in order to deliver our vision.

The one-year operational plan for research and outcomes spans all eight areas of strategic focus detailed in the RCSLT vision, reflecting the importance of ensuring research and outcomes runs through all the work carried out by the organisation. There are too many workstreams to list in their entirety,



The operational plan spans all eight areas of strategic focus

but we've listed here some of the key deliverables for the upcoming year:



Equality, diversity and inclusion

- Evaluate the attitudes, confidence and educational experiences of SLTs in meeting the needs of diverse populations, in being anti-racist, and in working to ensure representation in the profession.

- Pilot the collection of additional data items (eg ethnicity and social deprivation) through the RCSLT online outcome tool (ROOT) that will support services with monitoring and addressing health inequalities and unwarranted variation in outcomes.



Co-production

- Co-produce specific research questions in learning disabilities with service users with learning disabilities and jointly submit them to funders.
- Support the RCSLT to draw from research evidence in our developing approach to service user involvement and engagement.



Funding and recovery

- Continue to support and build research evidence on the impact of the pandemic on speech and language therapy services, and the profession as a whole.
- Establish a ROOT professional network to facilitate the sharing of learning and best practice on outcome measurement across the membership.



Innovation and excellence in research and clinical practice

- Review the evidence on effective ways to support allied health professionals (AHPs) to use an evidence-based approach to practice and draw from these findings to implement a way forward for supporting the profession.
- Embed the routine measurement of outcomes across the profession through events, workshops, the development of resources and case studies, while continuing to support members to use the ROOT.



Workforce development

- Support a systematic review of the impact of AHP research engagement on healthcare process and outcomes.
- Facilitate the collection of data on the presentation, management and outcomes of individuals with speech and language therapy needs associated

with COVID-19, and the role and value of SLTs.



Profile and opportunity

- Engage in an update of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guideline manual and share updates with colleagues and members as appropriate.
- Actively seek opportunities to influence UK-wide about the value and impact of speech and language therapy using the ROOT database.



Member engagement

- Use the @RCSLTResearch Twitter handle and RCSLT research newsletter to promote resources relating to research, evidence-based practice and outcome collection to all members and to actively link members with an interest in these areas to relevant opportunities.
- Empower the speech and language therapy profession to utilise ROOT data to demonstrate the value of services.



Organisational excellence

- Finalise the RCSLT professional development workload prioritisation protocol and use this systematically to prioritise research and outcomes team workload.

The above offers a snapshot of the many things the RCSLT's research and outcomes team will be working on over the year – and this is only in the first of the five years of the vision. We would love to hear your feedback on our plans, or for you to join one or more of our initiatives. If you're interested or want to know more, email amit.kulkarni@rcslt.org and kathryn.moyle@rcslt.org. We look forward to working for and with you over the coming years, and to the developments on the horizon in the world of speech and language therapy research and outcomes. 

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