

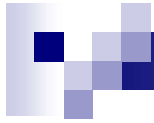


Impact of COVID-19 on people with speech and language difficulties

3 December 2020

#APPGSLD





Thank you!



Thank you!



People

- Impact on children & young people

Practitioners

- PPE for speech & language therapists
- #AGPAlliance

People & Practitioners

- NHS Funding Act
- Coronavirus Act
- Domestic Abuse Bill
- Medicines and Medical Devices Bill

Impact on communication and swallowing



- People recovering from COVID-19 will have **communication, voice, swallowing and respiratory** needs & potentially **cognitive issues**
- People who are **hospitalised** and who have life saving interventions such as mechanical ventilation, intubation or tracheotomy experience **long-term challenges**
- Symptoms continue over **weeks and months**
- A **multidisciplinary team**, with speech and language therapists, is crucial to support **long-term rehabilitation**



Impact on adults



- SLTs were **redeployed** to support people with the virus in the first phase
- Community therapy only provided to people with **“urgent” needs**
- Thousands of adults received **no speech and language therapy**

Impact on adults – RCSLT member survey



- **Access to speech and language therapy**
 - Referrals down by 28% in April – May
 - 72% said there were adults on their caseload who had not received intervention since the start of the pandemic
- **Impact on outcomes**
 - 44% reported a deterioration in speech, language and communication skills* for many or some of the adults that they support
 - 43% reported a deterioration in swallowing function* for many or some of the adults that they support
 - 36% reported an increase in challenging behaviours* for many or some of the adults that they support
 - (**since the start of the pandemic*)

Impact on adults: what others have reported



Many therapy services were scaled back (inc. SLT, OT & physiotherapy)

- 72% of people with **neurological conditions** had appointments cancelled
- 70% of people with multiple sclerosis have **not seen or spoken to a therapist**
- 55% of stroke survivors had **speech and language therapy cancelled**
- 39% of stroke survivors received absolutely **no speech and language therapy** all year

Impact

- Increase in mental health problems and deterioration in physical health
 - 75% of people with MS Society said that they were aware of a **deterioration in the mental or physical health** directly due to not accessing therapy during lockdown


The @RCSLT's @KGadhok is pleased to be a signatory of this letter to @Jochurchill4. Everyone has the #RightToRehab - #rehab services need to restart fully & rehabilitation workers need to be protected from redeployment.



 **RCOT Campaigns, Policy & Public Affairs** @PublicAffRCOT · 23 Nov

We have written to Health Minister @Jochurchill4 to ask for the protection of rehabilitation support.

Rehab services need to restart fully & rehabilitation workers need to be protected from redeployment.

Have a read of our joint letter 

#RightToRehab

[Show this thread](#)

Jo Churchill MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care
Department of Health and Social Care
26 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

20 November 2020

Dear Minister,

Winter Planning and the Second Wave: Protecting Rehabilitation Support

As the NHS and Social Care sector start to grapple with winter pressures and the second wave of the virus, it is essential that those who are most vulnerable receive the rehabilitation support they require to avoid the long-term impact on their health and wellbeing. Rehabilitation is playing a vital role in the recovery from COVID-19, as well as being a pillar of essential support for those with long-term or progressive conditions, physical injuries and poor mental health.

I am therefore writing to you to ask that rehabilitation services are supported to restart fully, that health and care professionals working in rehabilitation are protected from redeployment unless absolutely necessary and that there is suitable space, equipment and resources available to provide support.

Demand is only going to grow – we continue to expect a tsunami of demand for rehabilitation support in the coming weeks, months and years. For example, recent data suggests that 91% of people living with ‘long covid’ will require rehabilitation in some form. The varied and persistent symptoms of post-COVID syndrome have left thousands of people struggling to manage their day-to-day activities, including going to work and caring for their families.

At the same time, people managing long-term conditions have been denied access to essential rehabilitation support. A recent survey by the MS Society found that almost 75% of people with MS could not see a rehabilitation professional when they needed to between start of the first lockdown and August.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of the population has become deconditioned and frail – a recent survey by Age UK has highlighted the loss of mobility and balance among many older people as a result of social distancing and the lack of mental stimulation and socialising has resulted in cognitive decline. A survey conducted by Alzheimer’s Society also revealed 52% of people affected by dementia reported deterioration in symptoms. All of these factors combined create a worrying situation that we cannot risk getting worse for their physical, mental and emotional health.

We recognise that the second wave will place great demand on acute services and that

 Alan Scott, CEO, Royal College of Occupational Therapists	 Kate Lee, CEO, Alzheimer's Society
 Anne Middleton, CEO, Chartered Society of Physiotherapists	 Neil Andrews, CEO, MS Society
 Dr Stephen Griffiths, CEO, British Heart Foundation	 Julie Light, CEO, MIND Association
 Kevin Gadhok, CEO, Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists	 Mark Spragg, CEO, RHM
 Alan Johns, Head of Inclusion, Age UK	 Kay Bennett, CEO, Arthritis UK & British Lung Foundation

 Liam O'Toole, CEO, Nervous Anxieties	 George Carr, CEO, Neurological Alliance
 Sarah Mistry, CEO, British Acoustic Society	 Sarah Mistry, CEO, The Black Start Charity
 Stephen Alpin, CEO, British Association of Spinal Rehabilitation	 Jane Dixon, CEO, Centre for Older Ageing
 Dr John Burt, British Society of Rehabilitation Sciences	 Sarah Longstaff, CEO, Adult Care and Policy Hub
 Professor Dawn Bellon, Later Life Training	 Simon Lambert, L. Rehabilitation Workers Professional Network



The realities of working during the year

- Community therapist
- Head and neck cancer specialist



Impact on children and young people: RCSLT member survey



■ Early identification

- Referrals down by around 50% in April – May

■ Access to speech and language therapy

- 90% said there were children on their caseload who had not received intervention since the start of the pandemic

■ Impact on children and young people

- Around 1/3 (31%) reported a deterioration in children's speech, language and communication skills
- Nearly half (47%) reported an increase in challenging behaviours

Ofsted findings from early years settings in October 2020



- The pandemic had **significantly impacted the learning** and development of children.
- Many **children needed more support** to make friends and mix with others outside of their home.
- Children were **now less likely to start a conversation** or comment on things during play.
- **Widening inequalities** - 29% of leaders reported that communication and language had fallen behind, but 21% saying it had improved.
- **Increasing delays** in accessing support for speech and language therapy.



Vicky Ford MP @vickyford · 13 Nov

My letter to the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

Therapists provide vital support to children with SEND, they are allowed to be back in schools & should deliver medical services as usual & should not be redeployed.

@PublicAffRCOT @RCSLT @thecsp @DCPcampaign



2025-2026/2024-2025

Vicky Ford MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families
Parliamentary Buildings, 11 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT
Tel: 020 747 5000 www.parliament.gov.uk

Jill Scott
Chief Executive, Royal College of Occupational Therapists
By email: scottj@rcot.org.uk

13 November 2020

Dear Jill,

Thank you for your letter of 26 October, about the position of therapy for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) when either planning of health services during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. I would be grateful if you could share a copy of this reply with your co-signatories.

May I begin by saying you and your co-signatories will in these challenging times. We are very grateful for all the work that your organisations are doing to support children and young people with SEND, now more than ever.

We recognise that, for many children and young people with SEND who require health services such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and other community health services, limited or altered provision throughout the COVID-19 outbreak will have been extremely challenging for them and their families and carers. Young people, their families and carers, and the professionals working with them, may be particularly concerned about the national restrictions that were introduced from 5 November, and will also be seeking further reassurance on the continuation of services and support.

As you will be aware, NHS England (NHSE) published guidance over the summer period so that community health services, including therapy for children and young people with SEND, could be restored as quickly as possible. On 7 August, NHSE published guidance on implementing phase 3 of the NHS response to the COVID-19 outbreak, which emphasised that the restoration of community health services needed to be prioritised and, furthermore, that focus should be given to improving and addressing health inequalities through service delivery, responding to the needs of the most vulnerable, including children and young people with SEND. A copy of the guidance can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/england>.

In my open letter of 5 November to children and young people with SEND, their

arrangements, for example, to ensure they receive their planned or pre-agreed education, health and care plan.

We are, however, fully aware of the challenges presented by the redeployment of health professionals and specifically with regard to therapists for children with SEND. The department's clear expectation is that therapists should not be redeployed. NHSE's medical directors are the professional lead for therapists and the department continues to work closely with them and Public Health England as they plan for winter and through the period of new national restrictions to ensure that the needs of children with SEND are appropriately prioritised. NHSE are working with the Chartered Health Professional team on this matter. We welcome the fact that the Chartered Nurse and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health have already circulated advice on redeployment requests, as have mental health and learning disability services. I strongly encourage that a similar clear message is given on the redeployment and prioritisation of therapists for children and young people with SEND.

Working with partners, we remain committed to ensuring that children and young people with SEND receive the therapeutic provision they need throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

Thank you for writing about this important matter. We will continue to communicate with you about developments in this area.

Yours sincerely,

Vicky Ford MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Impact on SLTs: member wellbeing survey



- Evidence that **anxiety** levels (having decreased slightly over the first few waves of the research) may be on the rise again.
- Workplace **stress** may be on the rise, with a steady increase in those complaining of **low morale** at work, from 18% at the start to 27% now.
- Difficulties arising from **staff shortages** have risen from 7% to 20%.
- **‘Unfamiliar ways of working’** has been the most challenging aspect of the pandemic
- Most common way in which members have described their work environment is **‘unpredictable’**
- **‘Intense’** has increased in usage throughout the project with 45% now using it
- Pressure is building on members to manage **heavy workloads**.

Impact on access to SLT: service user survey



- **#SLTSurvey** launched on 2nd November after consultation with relevant charities. Closes on 5th February.
 - Did the UK-wide lockdown (March-June) affect your speech and language therapy?
 - If so, what impact did it have on you?
 - What are your thoughts about the future?

Impact on access to SLT: service user survey



- All **ages**, all **conditions**, all **nations** of the UK.
- **Accessible versions**: Talking Mats, Easy Read, and aphasia-accessible.
- Analysis by **@JudyClegg2** from **@HCS_Sheffield** in the New Year.
- Over **300 submissions** to date.

We need your help! Please promote to your service users, local service user organisations & community groups.

#SLTSurvey – what we've heard so far (from parents)

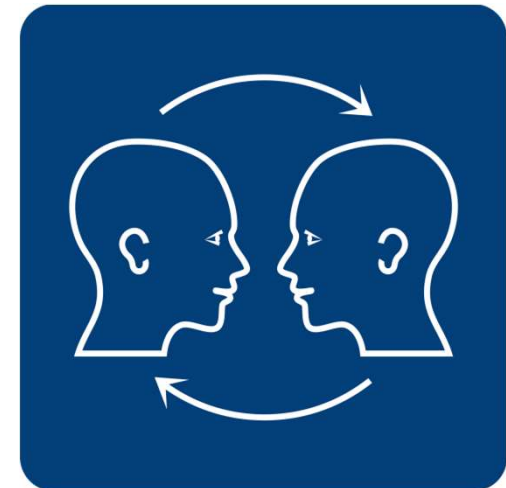


- Most children received **less speech and language therapy** during the UK-wide lockdown.
- Lack of access to therapy **impacted** on children's **mental and physical health, social and home life, and education.**
- For those who received **therapy remotely**, there was **mixed success** – some said it worked well and others struggled.
- Most parents are **worried** about their children getting therapy in **future.**

Communication Access Symbol Project



- Launched on **12th November**
- An **e-learning** package and **accreditation** scheme has been developed
- Since its launch, over **300 organisations** have registered



Thank you!
Any questions?