



APPENDIX

This is a selection of surveys by other organisations that have reported similar themes to the RCSLT survey.

Cerebral palsy

Cerebral Palsy Scotland also published a report in September 2020. *Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 Restrictions for people with Cerebral Palsy* found that:

- The largest issue for people was access to support for their physical health (physiotherapy, occupational therapy and SLT).
- 58% of people reported difficulty in accessing support from these services.
- 47% said that appointments with the health professionals they normally see about their CP have still not resumed.¹

Dementia

In July 2020, the **Alzheimer's Society** published *The impact of COVID-19 on People Affected by Dementia*. Based on almost 2,000 respondents affected by dementia, this found that:

- Since being forced to stay isolated and inside their homes, more than 4 in 5 (82%) reported a deterioration in people with dementia's symptoms.
- Of those who had seen a decline, around half reported increased memory loss (50%) and difficulty concentrating (48%). More than 1 in 4 (27%) said reading and writing has become more difficult, and 1 in 3 said the same for speaking and understanding speech (33%). Worryingly, more than a quarter had seen a loss in the ability to do daily tasks, like cooking or dressing (28%).²

In September 2020, the **Alzheimer's Society** published *Worst hit: dementia during coronavirus*. This stated:

¹ <https://cerebralpalsyscotland.org.uk/life-after-lockdown-survey-results/>

² <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/news/2020-07-30/lockdown-isolation-causes-shocking-levels-decline-people-dementia-who-are-rapidly>

- National UK governments needs to set out a clear strategy to enable people affected by dementia to recover from the effects of the pandemic, including rehabilitation to counteract effects on cognitive or physical functioning, support for mental and physical health, and speech and language therapy.³

Head and neck cancer

In January 2021, The Swallows revealed that:

- A decline in urgent referrals for cancer (70% decrease) during the initial lockdown.
- A decline in chemotherapy attendances (40% decrease) during the initial lockdown.
- For certain cancers, these declines had only partially recovered.⁴

Learning disability

In June 2020, the **Northern Ireland Assembly's All Party Group on Learning Disability** published *Briefing Paper on the Impact of Covid-19*. This found that:

- 82% of parents reported a decrease in speech and language therapy support.⁵

In November 2020, **MENCAP** published a survey to mark 8 months since the start of lockdown. This found:

- Nearly 9 in 10 people with a learning disability have still not have all their social care support reinstated
- Almost three-quarters of family carers surveyed are worried that there are more cuts to care packages to come.⁶

³ <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/Worst-hit-Dementia-during-coronavirus-report.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.theswallows.org.uk/the-forgotten-cancer-in-the-fight-against-covid-19/>

⁵ <https://northernireland.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/APGLD%20Briefing%20Paper%20on%20Impact%20of%20Covid-19%20June%202020.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.mencap.org.uk/press-release/i-am-only-human-and-if-i-cannot-get-break-then-i-will-break-myself-eight-months-first>

Multiple sclerosis

In September 2020, the **MS Society** published findings from a survey of allied health professionals delivering rehabilitation to people with progressive neurological conditions in the UK. This found that:

- 76% of respondents said they were aware of a deterioration in the mental or physical health of their patients due to not accessing rehabilitation therapies during lockdown.
- 44% said their service had cancelled more than half of their appointments for people with progressive neurological conditions.
- 34% said the phone or video appointments they had provided in place of in-person appointments during the pandemic were 'not quite as good' for the patient as in-person appointments and 33% said they were 'much less useful'.
- Half of respondents said they had been able to see less than 25% of their patients with progressive neuro conditions in person during the pandemic.
- When asked to estimate the severity of the deterioration they were aware of in their patients, 49% of respondents reported they had seen severe deterioration in some of their patients.⁷

Neurological conditions

In July 2020, the **Neurological Alliance** published a report on ***Restarting services for people with neurological conditions after the COVID-19 pandemic and planning for the longer term.*** This argued:

- Swallow assessments carried out virtually by speech and language therapists might not be accurate and therefore pose a potential risk to clients.
- Some people with neurodevelopment conditions (NDCs), such as autism, can struggle to engage and communicate effectively about their symptoms during virtual as opposed to face-to-face consultations.⁸

⁷ <https://www.mssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/MS-Society-Survey-of-AHP-rehabilitation-professionals-September-2020-%281%29.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.neural.org.uk/news-07-07-2020/>

Parkinson's

In July 2020, **Parkinson's UK** published a report with **Lancaster University** on the impact of Coronavirus restrictions on people affected by Parkinson's. This found that:

- 57% of SLT appointments were cancelled – this ranged from 56.2% in England, 60.9% in Scotland to 76.5% in Wales.
- Reduced frequency of appointments were reported by 12.4% in England, 4.3% in Scotland and 5.9% in Wales; 11.4% for the UK overall.
- Four people in Northern Ireland reported having these appointments and 1 said they were cancelled and one reduced in frequency.
- Online or telephone appointments were also not frequently offered for physiotherapy, occupational therapy or speech and language appointments (70.9% UK overall).⁹

Stammering

In April 2020, a survey of speech and language therapists undertaken by **Stamma** found that:

- Although many speech and language therapists (78%) are still working with people who stammer, a big proportion of NHS Trusts (43%) were providing only a very limited service which may not stretch to any contact for new referrals.
- 10% of speech and language therapists have been redeployed to frontline NHS roles on hospital wards and in the community.¹⁰

Stroke

In September 2020, the **Stroke Association** published ***Stroke recoveries at risk***, a survey of almost 2,000 stroke survivors and their carers. This found that:

- 39% of stroke survivors who had a stroke this year said they had not received enough rehabilitation therapies, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy

⁹ <https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/news/how-have-coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions-impacted-people-affected-parkinsons>

¹⁰ <https://stamma.org/news-features/impact-covid-19-stammering-services>

and speech and language therapy. This figure is even higher (56%) for those who had their stroke just before the pandemic (in January or February).

- 53% of all stroke survivors who responded to the survey also had therapy (including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and SLT) cancelled or postponed, and nearly half (49%) have also had some or all home care visits cancelled or postponed.
- 28% have had therapy (including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and SLT) online or over the phone.¹¹

Children and young people

In May 2020, a survey of families of disabled or seriously ill children undertaken by **Family Fund** found found:

- 77% of families had lost SLT support following the COVID-19 outbreak.¹²

Also in May 2020, the **Disabled Children's Partnership** published ***Left In Lockdown***. Based on the responses over 4,000 families of disabled children this found that:

- 66% of families reported their child had speech language and communication difficulties.
- Parents reporting an increased caring load, both for themselves and for their disabled children's siblings. Parents feel exhausted, stressed, anxious and abandoned by society. In many cases, the support families previously received has now stopped. Many families are seeing declines in both mental and physical health. Parents are particularly concerned about the pressure of children's behaviour and mental wellbeing; managing home-schooling; and what will happen to their children if they contract Covid19. The little support that had previously been provided for families has often stopped altogether. Children's friendships; learning and communications; mental and physical health; and emotions and behaviour have all been negatively impacted.¹³

¹¹ <https://www.stroke.org.uk/stroke-recoveries-at-risk-report>

¹² <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/news/health-and-wellbeing-of-disabled-children-at-risk-under-pandemic-as-government-announces-extra-10-million-funding-for-children-with-complex-needs>

¹³ <https://disabledchildrenspartnership.org.uk/left-in-lockdown/>

In July 2020, **Ulster University** published ***Understanding Parents' experiences of home-schooling in Northern Ireland*** found that:

- 58% of parents reported that their children receive SLT in class.
- Only 3% of parents felt most confident supervising speech and communication.
- 6% of parents felt least confident supervising speech and communication.¹⁴

In a ***COVID-19 series: briefing on early years*** in October 2020, based on interviews with leaders in early years settings, **Ofsted** found that:

- Almost all providers said that the pandemic had significantly impacted the learning and development of children who had left and subsequently returned.
- Many children needed more support to make friends and mix with others outside of their home – including with communication skills like turn taking.
- Some providers said they needed to focus on language and communication, because they had identified that children were now less likely to start a conversation or comment on things during play.
- Concerns that the pandemic may widen inequalities – 29% of leaders reporting that communication and language had fallen behind, but 21% saying it had actually improved due to parents having more time for interactions with their child in some households.
- Increasing delays in accessing support for SLT. These were often for existing diagnoses but also for new referrals.¹⁵

In February 2021, the **Disabled Children's Partnership** published ***THE LONGEST LOCKDOWN – The experiences of disabled children and their families during lockdown 3***. This found that:

- 70% or more children could not access therapies such as occupational therapy, physical or physiotherapy, play therapy, SLT or music therapy.
- 72% of families reported that their EHCP or SEN plan had been negatively affected during the pandemic, with 67% stating that they were getting some or none of the support detailed.
- The most common reported disabilities were autism spectrum disorder (69.1%), learning (66.1%), speech, language and communication difficulties (59.4%).

¹⁴ <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/coronavirus/research/impact/understanding-parents-experiences-of-home-schooling-in-northern-ireland>

¹⁵

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/93383/6/COVID-19_series_briefing_on_early_years_October_2020.pdf

- 16% of children receiving SLT at school continued to access this service during the first lockdown. 30% have received SLT during lockdown 3. Therefore, 70% of families are still not experiencing pre-pandemic levels of support.¹⁶

Also in February 2021, **Special Needs Jungle** published the findings of a survey of over a thousand parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This found that:

- Nearly two-thirds of parents/carers of learners with EHCPs reported that their child's legally binding provision had not been fully restored.
- Fewer than 1 in 5 parents explicitly confirmed that all provision in their child's EHCP had been fully restored – most of the rest weren't sure.
- NHS-delivered therapies such as SLT, occupational therapy, and hydrotherapy were all areas where parents were most likely to report that no legally-binding provision had been restored.
- For those children on SEN Support, without an EHCP, just 8% of parents/carers confirmed all the special educational needs support their child had prior to the spring lockdown in 2020 was now back in place. Almost three-quarters of these said some or all of their child's SEND support had been withdrawn – not just therapies, but also large quantities of teaching assistant support.¹⁷

In June 2019, the **Children's Commissioner for England**, Anne Longfield, published a major report on access to speech and language therapy. ***We Need To Talk*** revealed a postcode lottery of support:

- The top 25% of areas spent at least £16.35 per child, while the bottom 25% of areas spent 58p or less per child. Amongst children with an identified speech and language need, the top 25% of local authorities spent at least £291.65 per child, with the bottom 25% of local authorities spending £30.94 or less.
- Local authority spend per child is highest in London at £7.29, and high in the South East of England (£5.73) and East of England (£4.83). It is lowest in the East Midlands (£0.34), the West Midlands (£0.90) and Yorkshire and Humber (£1.18).
- The North of England has the highest CCG spend per child (£17.61) followed by London (£17.14). The lowest CCG spend per child is in the Midlands & East NHS region (£10.20) followed by the South of England (£13.54).

¹⁶ <https://disabledchildrenspartnership.org.uk/the-longest-lockdown/>

¹⁷ <https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/provision-denied-disabled-children-report/>

The report also showed that spending on SLT services is actually falling in many parts of the country:

- Only 1 in 4 areas (23%) saw a real-terms increase in spend per child between 2016/17 and 2018/19. Nearly 3 in 5 areas (57%) saw a real-terms fall in spend per child.
- Almost two-thirds (63%) of areas saw local authority spend per child decline in real terms while over three-quarters (77%) of areas experienced a decline in CCG spend per child in real terms.¹⁸

In February 2021, the **Children's Commissioner for England** called for the levelling up on spending on SLT in her report, ***Still Not Safe***.¹⁹

¹⁸ <https://bit.ly/3en6976>

¹⁹ <https://bit.ly/3cfaCWX>