



Design and analysis of the survey

The survey was launched at the start of November 2020 and ran until the start of February 2021. It was designed over the summer of 2020.

Consultation on survey questions

Consultation on the questions to be included was undertaken with service user organisations over the summer of 2020. The RCSLT is very grateful for the feedback it received from:

- Action for Stammering Children
- Afasic
- Autistica/Embracing Complexity Coalition
- CICS (Children's Cochlear Implant Support Group)
- CLAPA (Cleft Lip and Palate Association)
- Communication Matters
- I CAN
- Motor Neurone Disease Association
- MS Society
- NDCS (National Deaf Children's Society)
- Stamma
- The Stroke Association

We also received feedback on the questions from service users.

We are also grateful to speech and language therapists Najma Timms and Sian Critchett for their advice.

Accessibility of the surveys

From the start, the RCSLT wished to remove any potential communication barriers to people telling us about their experiences.

We wanted to ensure that the survey would enable people with communication and swallowing needs to tell us their stories in whatever communication style suited them. The RCSLT was also clear: where people were not themselves able to tell us about their experiences, their loved ones and carers could do so on their behalf. We also wished to hear about their experiences too, because access to SLT does not affect only

people with communication and swallowing needs. It also affects their families and carers.

Therefore, between September and November 2020 the RCSLT worked with speech and language therapists and others to make the survey both accessible to everyone, no matter how they communicate, and available in a range of inclusive formats, including Easy Read, aphasia-accessible and Talking Mats.

The speech and language therapists included:

- Viki Baker
- Lois Cameron
- Natalie Elliott
- Catherine Harris
- Dr Caroline Haw
- Laura Holmes

Others who helped with accessibility included:

- Lucy Westcott, the Learning Disability Participation Lead at the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Melanie Derbyshire and Caitlin Longman (a speech and language therapist) from the Stroke Association

The RCSLT also received further advice and support on accessibility from speech and language therapists Dr Abi Roper and Martina Curtin.

The RCSLT is deeply grateful to Viki, Lois, Natalie, Catherine, Caroline, Laura, Lucy, Melanie, Caitlin, Abi and Martina for all their help, advice and support with the survey and its promotion.

We are pleased to have extended the deadline of the Talking Mats survey until 30 June 2021 so we can also hear from people about their experiences of the current lockdown.

Survey formats

All versions of the survey were available in electronic format, via Google Forms. They were also downloadable from the RCSLT website in Word and PDF. A QR code was made available linking to the survey web page. The survey was also available in Welsh.

Recognising that not everyone has the same level of digital access, paper versions of all the surveys were available on request.

Testing of the surveys

The surveys were tested with service users, both parents of children and young people aged 0-18 and people who were having or had had SLT.

The RCSLT is very grateful to:

- Dave Harford and Steve Hermon, two parents who tested the survey.
- Toby Hewson and Helen Hewson (nee Quiller) who both use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) for their input and help in testing accessibility on screen readers.
- The Stroke Association, which tested the aphasia-friendly survey with people with aphasia. We owe particular thanks to Janet Rockliffe and Heidi Matthews, both of whom have aphasia. Janet and Heidi took part in two sessions, each 90-minutes long, as well as a third session to review the final survey.

Promotion of the surveys

The survey was promoted to RCSLT members in a direct, personal email, through social media and in its e-newsletter. There was extensive promotion on Twitter via @RCSLTpolicy and @GivingVoiceUK.

Service user organisations disseminated the survey to their beneficiaries through a variety of means, including Twitter, Facebook, online fora, and in newsletters and magazines.

Analysis of survey findings

The survey findings were analysed and this report has been put together by Peter Just, Padraign O'Flynn and Dr Judy Clegg BSc, PhD, FRCSLT.

Judy is a speech and language therapist by background and now works at the University of Sheffield where she is Head of the Division of Human Communication Sciences. She leads research into the speech, language and communication needs of vulnerable children and young people, and teaches the next generation of speech and language therapists. Judy is a Fellow of the RCSLT and a Trustee of ICAN, the children's communication charity.

The RCSLT owes a massive debt of gratitude to Judy for her tireless support of this project and for giving so generously of her time and advice in the design of the survey, the analysis of the survey findings and in the writing of this report.

Judy was supported in analysing the findings by Padraigin O'Flynn, the RCSLT's External Affairs Assistant. With a background in research methods from the fields of politics and economics, Padraigin designed the format of the surveys and led the data collection process. Padraigin also led on the data analysis by identifying, extracting and collating the key data from the survey for the descriptive analysis.

Peter is the RCSLT's Head of External Affairs and led on engagement with charities and service users in the development, design and promotion of the survey. Along with Judy and Padraigin, he authored this report.