

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ELECTION 2021

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists asks the next Scottish Government and Parliament to pass and fund an 'Inclusive Communication Nation' law and action plan

THE VISION

Passing and funding an 'Inclusive Communication Nation' law and action plan will make communication with public services as easy as possible for everyone.

Inclusive communication enables people to use whatever ways of understanding and expressing themselves they find easiest. For example, if a person cannot read and write they should be able to access services in other ways – such as receiving information in pictorial or video format, or filling in forms via video chat or over the phone rather than in writing.

WHAT WILL IT INVOLVE?

An Inclusive Communication (Scotland) Bill would, for example, require Scottish public authorities to consider the importance of communicating in an inclusive way, and in doing so implement inclusive communication approaches to all their communications.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Scotland will reap social and economic benefits if people can communicate more easily with services across health, social care, social security, education, employment, sports, justice, arts, financial services, and more.

Who experiences communication disadvantage?

100%

of people with **autistic spectrum disorder**

100%

of people with **dementia**

80%

of people with a **learning difficulty**

At least **30%**

of people who have had a **stroke**

60%

of **young offenders**

80%

of **young people not in employment, education or training**

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WHO WILL BENEFIT?

Inclusive communication is good for everyone. No one ever complained a public service was too easy to understand or to get your point across to – but people often complain that services are poor at communicating.

Communication disadvantage is strongly associated with poverty – communication and literacy difficulties are experienced most in our poorest communities, as made explicit in the government’s own Attainment Agenda.

COVID-19 showed all of us the importance of clear, easy to understand communication with the public, and how it can literally save lives. The communities who were hit worst by COVID-19 also experience the highest levels of communication disadvantage. Inclusive communication should be a core part of Scotland’s recovery and renewal by ending the inequalities characterised by communication exclusion.

DID YOU KNOW?

*People with communication difficulties are at higher risk of **mental health** problems.*

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST AND HOW WILL IT BE PAID FOR?

An Inclusive Communication Nation law and action plan would be paid for by saving on the enormous costs of communication breakdown. A cost-benefit analysis by Fraser of Allander Institute, conducted in March 2021, states:

- “There is evidence to support that, over the medium to long run, there are likely to be sufficient savings that make investment in Inclusive Communications to be **cost neutral or cost saving to the public sector.**”
- “The benefits have the potential to compound and have long-lasting impacts on the quality of life of an individual, all of which could lead to savings for the public sector – for example, through **reducing the need for costly crisis interventions**, enabling more independence, improving appropriate uptake of public services and response to advice they provide, and lessening reliance on public services.”
- “Theory and evidence support the supposition of **substantial or full cost recovery in the medium to long term.** This policy can be seen as an example of preventative spend.”

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