Raising the profile of the SLT profession to the public

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Why are you raising public awareness?

• Because it’s a good thing – for public health, for the community, for your team, for your service
• To improve service users’ lives
• To educate the local community about using your service
• To persuade decision-makers to fund, or not to cut
• To win allies for the future (MPs, local media)

Raising awareness should not be haphazard, it should be part of an influencing plan.
How we influence: Stakeholders and tactics
Key stakeholders and targets

Who do you think our key stakeholders are?

Politicians
• Sympathetic to local issues and can make representations to departments or ministers on behalf of constituents
• Distinguish between minister, backbencher and constituency roles

Commissioners / decision-makers / budget-holders
• Plan and pay for SLT services
• Ensure clear and positive knowledge of the work of SLTs

Councillors and local authorities
• Make key decisions about local services
• Leaders of each political group are vital to gaining cross-party support

Other stakeholders: service users and service user organizations, other professions, media and the public
Stakeholder analysis

- Keep satisfied
- Manage closely
- Monitor
- Keep informed

- Low interest
- High interest
- Low power
- High power
Style and tactics

- Insider vs. outsider
- Proactive vs. reactive
- Constructive vs. confrontational
Evidence isn’t everything

Scientists think ‘but the evidence says…’

However, for decision makers:

• What am I legally required to do?
• What mandates have I been given?
• Can I afford it?
• What will my stakeholders think?
Avenues for influencing

Social media: campaigns, videos, challenges
Events: demonstrations, presentations, webinars
Media: local press stories, trade press, adverts

Consider **who** you are trying to influence and **what about**. A bake sale and a riot both raise public awareness, but in very different ways – what is the best **avenue** for your purpose?
How do you do it?

Consider the power of numbers and stories, human interest and images.

The media want drama, conflict or novelty.

Ethics and permissions.

Getting the message right.
Influencing:
A current RCSLT example
Gathering evidence: Building back better survey

Nov 2020 – Feb 2021: over 500 responses from children and adults across the UK

Accessible formats: EasyRead, aphasia-friendly, Talking Mats, Welsh language

Gathered service users’ experiences of speech and language therapy access during the first national lockdown
Setting the stage: Immediate influencing

Publication of the Building back better report

Sector letter to the Prime Minister urging the Government to implement the report’s policy calls – signed by a coalition of over 80 organizations

Letter to parliamentarians sharing the results of the survey and asking them to support the report’s policy calls

Presentation on the survey findings by Dr. Judy Clegg at the APPG on Speech and Language Difficulties
Beyond RCSLT: Maintaining a sector coalition

Partner organizations involved in survey design, supported survey distribution and promotion

Sector letter showed broad support for policy calls

Continued sector support via online promotion and citations in partner publications – Oracy APPG report, Neuro Rehab Times, Cochlear Implanted Children’s Support Group magazine, Moving Forward Stronger (Alzheimer’s UK)
Supporting members: Tools for local influencing

Breakdowns by condition (in progress), by nation (complete), and by region in England (in progress)

Videos and social media graphics highlighting key figures

Online tools for SLTs and non-SLTs to email their local MPs asking them to support better access to speech and language therapy and to implement the report’s policy calls

Toolkit with guidance on engaging with your local MP and printable speech bubbles to pledge support
#BuildBackBetterSLT: Reaching wider audiences

From SLTs…to students…to community members…to pets!

RCSLT
Keeping the momentum up: #FundSLT petition

#FundSLT petition on Parliament website calling on the Government to fund improved support for people who have communication and/or swallowing needs

10,000 signatures achieved, Government have issued a response

Continued online campaign to reach 100,000 signatures, which would secure a debate in Parliament
Bringing it home: Your local influencing skills
What does local influencing mean to you?

Who are the **people** / **structures locally** that it is important for you to influence?

What role might **public awareness raising** play in this?

What **vehicles** and **tactics** might work best?
Honing a message: the elevator pitch

An elevator pitch has three main parts:

- **Introduction**: who you are and what your job is
- **What you do**: a succinct summary of your work/service
- **Take home message**: informing your stakeholder of the difference you make to service users and your organization
Taking action: the elevator pitch

Here are some tips for preparing your elevator pitch:

- Write in your own words
- Be yourself
- Keep it natural
- Avoid jargon – use everyday language understandable to a layperson
- Try to keep it as near to 200 words as possible
Taking action: the elevator pitch

If you had **thirty seconds** to sell a stakeholder on supporting speech and language therapy services…

What would you say?