

POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (PPA) TEAM IMPACT REPORT

OCTOBER 2019 – SEPTEMBER 2020



KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Government ministers and officials
- Parliamentarians and Assembly Members
- Arms-length bodies
- Local government representatives
- Service users and service user organisations
- Service providers
- Professional bodies across education, health, care and justice
- RCSLT members

PRIORITY AREAS

- 1.COVID-19
- 2.Workforce and the NHS
- 3.Inclusive communication and communication access
- 4.Anti-racism, diversity, and careers
- 5.Mental health
- 6.Support for children with SEND/ASN/ALN
- 7.Devolved elections
- 8.Primary care
- 9.BuddyChat
- 10.Mental capacity
- 11.75th anniversary

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

20+

Parliamentary questions
tabled across the four
nations

1,383

Emails sent by members to
candidates during the UK
General Election campaign

1,940

New followers on the
@GivingVoiceUK Twitter
account

12

Twitter takeovers to mark
awareness days on the
@GivingVoiceUK account

11

Organisations that joined
the RCSLT to form the
AGP Alliance

4

Organisations that joined the
RCSLT to campaign on
extended prescribing rights

COVID-19: UK-WIDE AND IN ENGLAND

UK-WIDE

- Delivered guidance for students and universities at the start of lockdown at pace and continued support and liaison over the whole period between HEE and universities to respond to queries. ➔ **Able to take on comments from HEIs about issues and problems to help influence resulting guidance**

ENGLAND

- Submitted evidence to the Independent Sage inquiry into face masks and face coverings ➔ **Quoted in the final report**
- Engaged with the Cabinet Office on face coverings and highlighted the needs of people with communication needs ➔ **The Cabinet office accepted our argument and altered their policy as a result**
- Jointly lobbied NHS England/Improvement and the DHSC to introduce transparent face masks for use across health and social care for speech and language therapists ➔ **The Government agreed and introduced the ClearMask into NHS Supply Chains as a pilot product**
- Responded to the Health and Social Committee Inquiry into "Delivering Core NHS and Care Services during the Pandemic and Beyond," and supported the AHPF to respond to the same inquiry ➔ **Improved our visibility and exposure with the committee**
- Submitted to NHS England on the role of speech and language therapy services in England supporting vulnerable children and young people during the COVID-19 pandemic ➔ **Officials fed back that this had been well received by the Minister and raised the profile of speech and language therapy**

COVID-19: IN SCOTLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

SCOTLAND

- Lobbied on transparent face masks and represented RCSLT on national project panel and pilot leadership group ➔ **Breatheasy Mask is now to be tested and all 6 pilot sites to cover multiple SLT care groups**
- Correspondence with Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Children and Young People on access to schools ➔ **Scottish Government set up "Health in Schools" group to consider AHP access**

WALES

- Became a member of Welsh Government task and finish group on impact of COVID-19 on early years services ➔ **New Welsh Government Child Development Fund funds additional support to address concerns about developmental delays in speech, language and communication, and personal and social development**
- Responded to the Health, Social Services and Sport inquiry on COVID and met with the chair of the committee with CSP and RCOT ➔ **The chair agreed that separate strand of the committee inquiry will focus on rehab**

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"Our speech and language therapists are stepping up. They are going above and beyond their normal work and supporting the frontline battle against COVID-19 as part of our overall response."

– Minister of Health NI,
Robin Swann

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Lobbied jointly with Action on Hearing Loss for clear face masks ➔ **Minister agreed with need, raised awareness on communication needs and role of RCSLT**
- Influenced via GMU radio, BBCNewsline, and a letter to the MOH regarding dysphagia assessment as an AGP ➔ **SLTs on the frontline had informal access to the level of PPE they deemed appropriate**
- Responded to the PHA consultation on Rehab ➔ **Contributions were included in the final document**

WORKFORCE AND THE NHS

ENGLAND

- Continued to promote apprenticeships, help identify and promote solutions to problems, provide certainty through guidance development and highlight funding opportunities ➔ **RCSLT guidance was prepared and consulted on, and the University of Essex announced it will run the apprenticeship from 2021**

SCOTLAND

- Produced a briefing for members on the new Integrated Health & Social Care workforce plan ➔ **Enabled members to understand the emerging context for local and regional workforce planning affecting SLT services with commitments to look at AHP training and workforce data**
- Coordinated and supported management of the RCSLT response to Black Lives Matter ➔ **Statement was received well by membership across all levels of seniority and led to the creation of a dedicated work stream on anti-racism**

WALES

- Secured agreement from Health Education Improvement Wales to fund a second SLT course in North Wales ➔ **Created greater opportunities for SLTs to train in Wales and through the medium of Welsh**
- Issued a joint response with other AHP bodies to consultation on the Level 4 Therapy Assistant Apprenticeship ➔ **Part of workforce transformation to enable AHPs in Wales to work at the top of their licence in line with prudent healthcare models – now approved and issued**
- Developed All Wales Dysphagia training and competency programme. ➔ **Provides a consistent all Wales approach**

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Secured uplift of five undergrad places for September 2020 ➔ **Opened further opportunities for SLT students**
- AHPfNI pursued Workforce of AHPs in Rehab, CAHPO lead, and AHP leadership at Public Health Agency

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS



COMMUNICATION ACCESS UK LAUNCH

- New disability symbol and accreditation scheme launched for the whole UK
- *Wales*: HEI Wales staff became the first Government body to receive training
- *Northern Ireland*: Stroke Association NI was one of the first adopters of the symbol, and the CAUK launch was covered in the Irish News and on CoolFM.



Communication Access UK
Inclusive communication for all

SCOTLAND

- Lobbied MSPs and Ministers and across parties to make the case for and to begin process of establishing Inclusive Communication Law. ➔ **MSP launching consultation on an Inclusive Communication (Scotland) Bill, in the RCSLT's first-ever attempt to create primary legislation**
- Gave oral evidence to Scottish Parliament Equality and Human Rights committee about impact on people living with communication disadvantage ➔ **Inclusive Communication was addressed in full in Committee's letter to Cabinet Secretary asking for widespread action**
- Lobbied on Consumer Scotland Bill which set up a new consumer body for Scotland ➔ **Consumer Scotland is legally bound to implement quality inclusive communication approaches throughout its consumer protection activities**

ANTI-RACISM, DIVERSITY AND CAREERS

UK-WIDE

- Worked to improve our careers promotion and diversify our imagery ➔ **"Become an SLT" pages are the second most visited on the RCSLT website**
- Set up a working group structure on careers and diversity ➔ **Engaged members and actioned a survey on gender diversity, creation of the new student network, and collection of more diverse images and careers stories.**
- Coordinated and supported management of the RCSLT response to Black Lives Matter ➔ **Statement was received well by membership across all levels of seniority and led to the creation of a dedicated work stream on anti-racism**
- Responded to queries from members and potential students ➔ **Large personal impact for members and students we supported**

“*Lessons start next week and I'm really excited to get stuck in! Thank you for your help and advice over the last year or so, I've found it really helpful and supportive.*”

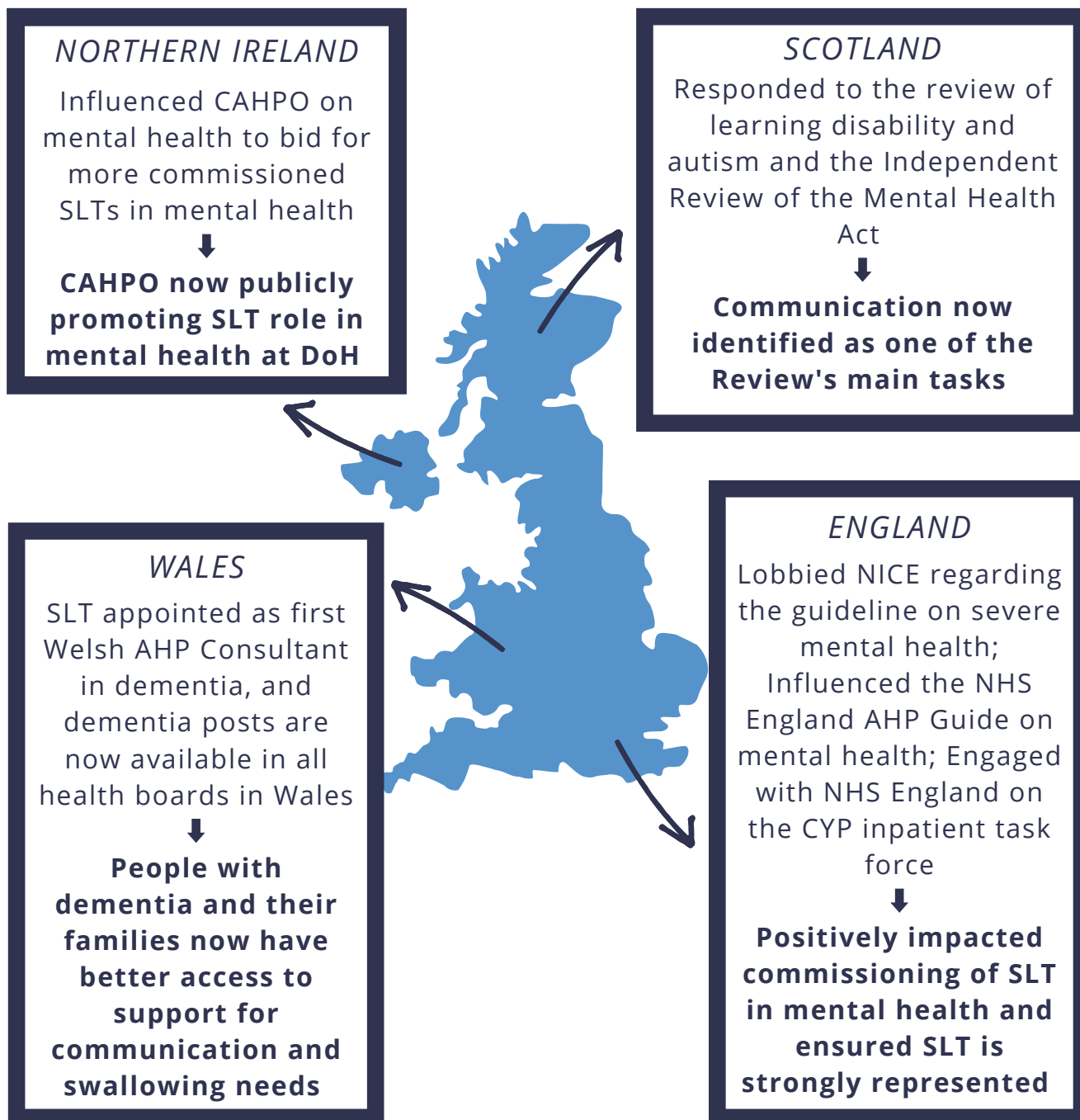
– current SLT student

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SCOTLAND

- Included in a joint AHPFS letter to Cabinet Secretary calling for action to promote anti-racism in the health service ➔ **Supported the development of networks for black and minority ethnic healthcare professionals**

MENTAL HEALTH



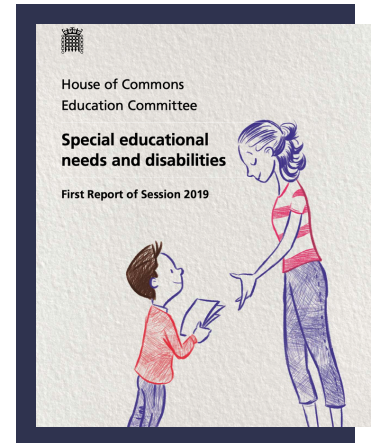
UK-WIDE

- First-ever virtual keynote address with Dr. Karen Bryan OBE to mark World Mental Health Day
- Launch of policy calls as well as factsheets for children & young people and adults during Mental Health Awareness Week

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SEND/ASN/ALN

ENGLAND

- Secured mention of importance of speech and language in Westminster debate on SEND funding
- Engaged with Government and agencies to highlight disparities in access to speech and language therapy for children and young people in England with long term SLCN ➔ **SLCN has been identified as one of the priority areas in the Children's Transformation Programme as part of the NHS Long Term Plan**
- Submitted written and oral evidence to the Education Select Committee inquiry into special educational needs and disability ➔ **The report includes several references to RCSLT evidence and recommends that government should prioritise the mapping of cold spots in therapy provision across the country, and set out a strategy to address this**



SCOTLAND

- Submitted to the Scottish Parliament Committee Inquiry Report on Secure Care ➔ **SLT provision in Secure Care recommended in committee report, and the lead agency approached RCSLT and leading members for review and advice on provision**

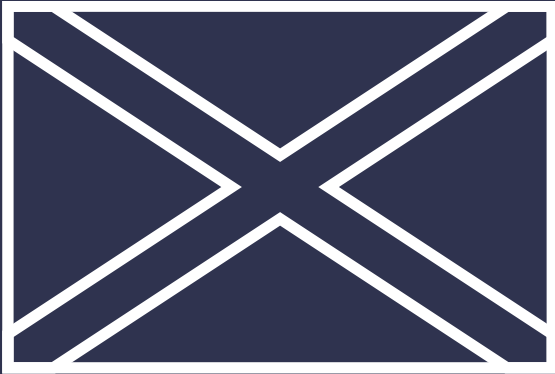
WALES

- Worked with Care Inspectorate Wales and Welsh Government to implement training for inspectors to help boost the importance of SLC within childcare settings
- Worked with Welsh Government to develop the cross portfolio Talk to Me: Speech, Language and Communication Delivery Plan 2020-22. Two SLTs have been seconded to Welsh Government as national co-ordinators to drive progress.

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Invited by Department of Education to co-produce an update to the Special Educational Needs Resource File on speech, language and communication needs ➔ **Secured SLT reference to lead**
- Presented to AGPASD ➔ **AGPASD wrote a letter to the Department of Justice on screening SLCN and ASD in justice**

DEVOLVED ELECTIONS

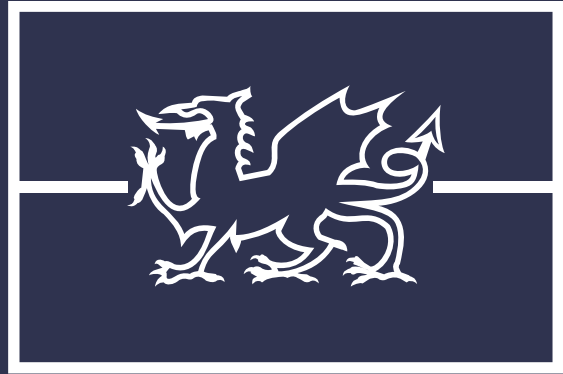


SCOTLAND

Policy asks:

- 1.Right to rehab
- 2.Inclusive communication strategy backed by law
- 3.A speech, language & communication strategy that ensures no child or young person misses out due to communication disadvantage

Party lobbying has begun, and there is informal support for the inclusive communication ask from a number of parties.



WALES

Policy asks:

- 1.Delivering on ambitions of SLC delivery plan
- 2.Committing to the right to rehab campaign (in partnership with AHP colleagues)
- 3.Driving forward progress on delivering multidisciplinary teams within primary care

Welsh election calls have been published and shared with manifesto leads in all main political parties.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

PRIMARY CARE: Scotland

- Provided oral and written evidence to Scottish Parliament Primary Care Inquiry by RCSLT, on behalf of AHPFS

BUDDY CHAT: Northern Ireland

- Secured high profile key stakeholders ➔ **Project steering group includes Public Health Agency, Education Authority, Stranmillis and St Mary's universities with critical friend roles from parent representatives and SLT experts**

MENTAL CAPACITY: England and Northern Ireland

- Continued to support the development of Code of Practice for the Liberty Protection Safeguards with a seat at the expert advisory group. ➔ **Ensured that our lobbying asks remained up-for-discussion and were not forgotten**
- Maintained a close relationship with the DHSC to ensure that our lobbying asks remained in view after the Mental Capacity Act was passed and that we had other opportunities in the forthcoming consultations to take these asks forward. ➔ **Ensured we had a voice, maintained a good relationship, took forward our asks, kept up pressure with our lobbying asks, made progress with asking for SLTs to be added to the list of AMCPs**
- RCSLTNI continued as a member of the Department of Health mental capacity reference group ➔ **Ensure communication needs are considered where necessary in training and resources**

75TH ANNIVERSARY: Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

- Parliamentary motion celebrating anniversary of Dr Anne McAllister founding the Glasgow School of Speech Therapy ➔ **Signed by 23 MSPs, highlighting the historical contribution City of Glasgow has made to the profession**
- Facilitated celebrations in Welsh Local Health Boards ➔ **Highlighted importance and contribution of the profession as Health Boards also shared content via social media**
- Set up regional working group in Northern Ireland ➔ **Collected memorabilia and held a regional celebration poetry competition**

INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT POLICY

UK-WIDE

- Influenced Government's Hospital Food Review to include importance of SLT

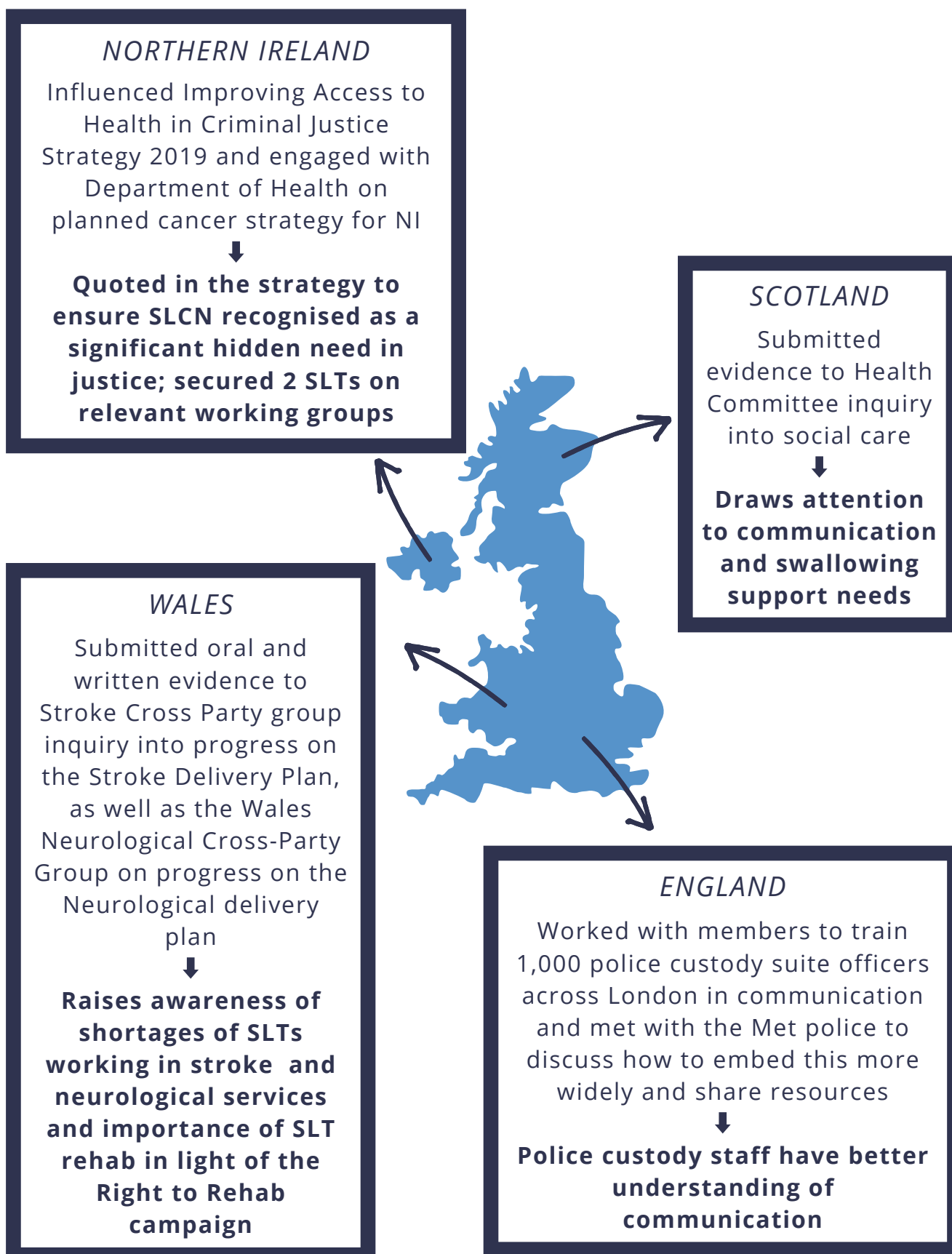
ENGLAND

- Engaged with NHS England AHP Guides in learning disability and respiratory care to ensure that they contained many examples of SLTs ➔ **Collected examples to show the value of SLTs as part of a strong workforce team supporting people to improve outcomes, whilst producing cost saving**
- Increased the reach of RCSLT's The Box and hosted a meeting for a group of Finnish researchers who have bought The Box to use in their nation ➔ **Support more people in the justice system with communication difficulties**
- Responded to the Justice Select Committee's inquiries into the ageing prison population as well as children and young people in custody ➔ **Recommendation was accepted and evidence quoted in the Justice Committee's report, "Children and Young People in Custody"**
- Member of QAB, influencing, supporting and guiding the Registered Intermediary Scheme ➔ **Bringing professional and quality oversight**
- Chaired the ACP in learning disability and autism

SCOTLAND

- Published 2 reviews of impact of AAC law in Scotland - one from perspective of AAC Users, one from SLT perspective ➔ **Motion for Debate to be lodged in Parliament on AAC provision in Scotland**

INFLUENCING OTHER POLICY



POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

ENGLAND

- Continued engagement on the Medicines and Medical Devices Bill regarding prescribing responsibilities, including joint working with BIOS, BDA, RCOT, and SoR



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"As the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists has made clear, it is hoped that, alongside reform proposals in the NHS long-term plan, this Bill will help to ensure the provision of adequate services for people with communication difficulties and swallowing needs."

– Lord Bradley

- Mentioned in debates on the NHS Funding Bill (Lord Bradley), Coronavirus Bill (Lord Ramsbotham), and educational opportunities for working class children (Lady Morris)

- Sent letter to Andrea Leadsom MP following announcement of the DHSC's Early Years Health Development Review ➔ **RCSLT invited to join expert advisory group as part of the review**

WALES

- Organised drop in session for Members of the Senedd to attend for launch of RCSLT Wales Manifesto ➔ **Raised profile of RCSLT and asks with MS via successful engagement with approximately 20 Members in attendance**

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Secured 13 political meetings, 10 written questions tabled by MLAs, and 6 oral questions ➔ **Influenced on key asks and raised awareness about SLT and SLCN**

RAISING AWARENESS AND CAMPAIGNING

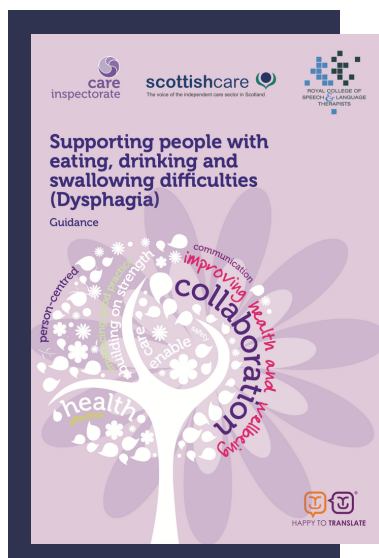
UK-WIDE

- Joined up to the Right to Rehab / Community Rehabilitation Alliance to campaign with others on the right to rehabilitation. ➔ **Strengthening our relationship with a range of organisations and campaigning with one voice**
- Published a factsheet on alternative provision ➔ **Raised awareness of the role of SLT in alternative provision, including amongst DfE officials**
- Updated factsheets on the Five Good Communication Standards and Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH); co-branded factsheets with CLAPA and MNDA
- Formed the AGP Alliance with partner organisations to call for a review of the list of Aerosol Generating Procedures ➔ **Ensure all healthcare professionals have access to appropriate PPE**



ENGLAND

- Held the RCSLT Stroke webinar, with Sue Pownall, Pam Enderby and the CEO of the Stroke Association ➔ **Had over 500 attendees, strengthened relationship with the Stroke Association**
- Publicised resources to support influencing for General Election 2019 ➔ **Members contacted parties, candidates, and MPs to promote policy calls and inclusive communication asks**



SCOTLAND

- Marked Swallow Awareness Day with a Parliamentary Motion and launch of joint RCSLT, Care Inspectorate, and Scottish Care Guidance
- Co-ordinated joint publication of inaugural AHP Positive Impact Stories Compendium 2020 on AHP Day 2020 ➔ **Retweeted by government and stakeholder organisation leaders alike**

WALES

- Successful virtual Voicebox Cymru event held with Senedd Deputy Presiding Officer

PPA TEAM AMBITIONS FOR 2020-2021

COVID-19 and its impacts, including:

- The COVID-19 pathway including Long COVID
- Effects on other services, including children's
- Poverty and exclusion
- Workforce planning, apprenticeships and ACP
- Rehab: primary care & community
- Influencing, supported by the service user survey

Anti-racism, diversity and careers promotion

Inclusive Communication and CAUK

Devolved nations elections

Mental health

Also of interest:

- A narrative around dysphagia
- The UK Government disability strategy