

POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (PPA) TEAM IMPACT REPORT

OCTOBER 2020 – SEPTEMBER 2021

PRIORITY AREAS 2020-2021

- 1.COVID-19 pathway
- 2.COVID-19: Effects on other services
- 3.Apprenticeships and workforce planning
- 4.Anti-racism, diversity and careers
- 5.Devolved elections: Scotland and Wales
- 6.Mental health
- 7.Building back better: Services after COVID-19
- 8.Poverty and exclusion
- 9.Rehabilitation
- 10.Inclusive communication

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

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

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

43

Charity partners who helped shape the #RCSLTvision

30,000+

People that have done Communication Access UK training

64,916

Views on the 'Become an SLT' webpage, one of the most visited pages

93,773

Impressions on the selective mutism #GVTwitterTakeover

80+

Organisations that endorsed the Building back better policy calls

480

Letters sent to MSP candidates during the Scottish election

COVID-19 PATHWAY

UK-WIDE

- Lobbied Government to introduce transparent face masks to support SLTs' work with people with communication support needs ➔ **Government agreed to introduce transparent face masks**
- Involved in product specification, product requirements, priority guidance and user feedback testing for transparent face masks as a trusted partner to DHSC, NHSE, Scottish Government and Welsh Government ➔ **Advice for Scotland's priority guide was accepted and added to the national publication**
- Lobbied and engaged with NICE ➔ **Met with the NICE director to discuss the long-term effects of COVID-19 guidelines and the findings of the RCSLT Long COVID survey, after which guidelines were changed to add SLT**

ENGLAND

- Secured representation on NHSEI Long COVID taskforce and Long COVID subgroups ➔ **Highlighted SLT voice across Government workstreams**

WALES

- Provided oral evidence and submitted written evidence to the Welsh Parliament Health and Social Care Committee on Long COVID ➔ **COVID and non-COVID rehab on the list of priorities for this Senedd term**

COVID-19: EFFECTS ON OTHER SERVICES

ENGLAND

- Sent joint letter to Children's Minister Vicky Ford MP with RCOT, CSP, the Disabled Children's Partnership and British Academy of Childhood Disability asking for children's therapists to be protected from redeployment ➔ **Received response from Vicky Ford confirming that children's therapists should not be redeployed**
- Engaged with NHSEI to request that an equivalent letter be sent to Health Trusts ➔ **Suzanne Rastrick issued a similar letter**
- Met with Children's Minister Vicky Ford alongside RCOT, CSP, the Disabled Children's Partnership and BACD to discuss challenges around delivery of therapies to children and young people with SEND during COVID-19 ➔ **Cross-government working group issued a joint document for schools, health providers and families to clarify expectations around the delivery of specialist interventions in education settings**
- Supported the Alzheimer's Society with the development of their report "Addressing deterioration in people with long-term conditions during the pandemic" by aiding development of campaign calls and writing a chapter on SLT ➔ **Report published including RCSLT calls and detail on SLT, and used to take our policy work forward**

“

"Working with partners, we remain committed to ensuring that children and young people with SEND receive the therapeutic provision they need throughout the COVID-19 outbreak."

– Vicky Ford MP, Children's Minister

”

WALES

- Published joint letter with RCOT, NSPCC and Save the Children asking for children's therapists to be protected from redeployment, which was supported by a separate letter from the Children's Commissioner for Wales ➔ **Received confirmation from Welsh Government that children's therapists should be protected from redeployment**

APPRENTICESHIPS AND WORKFORCE PLANNING

ENGLAND

- Confirmed that University of Essex and Birmingham City University will offer the SLT apprenticeship from 2022-2023, and University of Sheffield were successful in their apprenticeship procurement ➔ **Support for universities and employers as well as work with HEE and the apprenticeships working group have led to positive developments in apprenticeship provision**
- Engaged with Health Education England by attending AHP updates and submitting evidence and demand estimates to their strategic workforce review ➔ **HEE have awarded RCSLT significant funding to undertake specific workforce-related projects**



WALES

- Backed the creation of a second undergraduate course in Wales at Wrexham Glyndwr ➔ **New research opportunities will be available, and the growth of a sustainable workforce in mid and north Wales will be supported**

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Wrote to Minister for Health and submitted oral and written questions regarding workforce and undergraduate places ➔ **Minister has indicated commitment to developing an AHP workforce implementation plan and is seeking funding solutions**
- Co-authored media statement released by AHPFNI and recorded local radio statement regarding workforce concerns ahead of winter pressures and COVID-19 surge ➔ **Highlighted concerns regarding redeployment of SLTs during winter surge**
- Co-signed AHPFNI manifesto asks ➔ **Ongoing awareness raising at AHP level**

ANTI-RACISM, DIVERSITY AND CAREERS

UK-WIDE

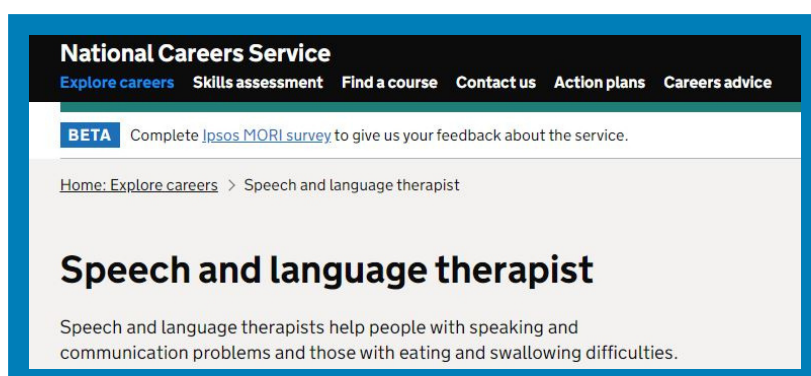
- Engaged with DfE regarding changes to the SLT description on the [National Careers Service webpages](#) → **Pages updated to more accurately reflect the profession**
- Developed, tested and published new [health inequalities resource](#) → **Received positive feedback, including that the Royal Society for Public Health included it on their AHP Hub**
- Published a [joint statement with HEIs](#) on equality, diversity and inclusion in admissions and the student experience → **Feedback from universities that applicants were encouraged by the statement**
- Supported two virtual careers events → **Focus on and potential to reach a more diverse group of future SLT students**
- Influenced HEE and the Council of Deans to take a system approach to decolonising the curriculum for student AHPs → **Work beginning this autumn**
- Gathered information and encouraged sharing of EDI approaches between HEIs → **Good practice now shared with and between HEIs**
- Launched disability working group → **Guidance on supporting disabled SLTs in the workplace published and online network opened**

“I've just watched [an RCSLT informational video] and it's made me want to become a SALT even more! I'm a mature student having left a career in event organisation to retrain in SALT, it's a big change but I feel more confident now that this is the right path for me.”

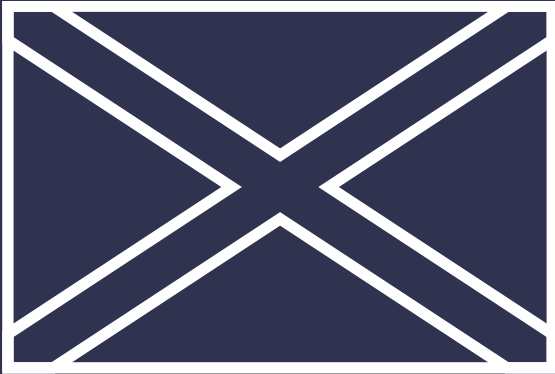
– Student, health careers fair

ENGLAND

- Lobbied Sir Simon Stevens about the inclusion of SLT in the #WeAreTheNHS campaign → **Received a reply stating that SLT would be included in future work**



DEVOLVED ELECTIONS

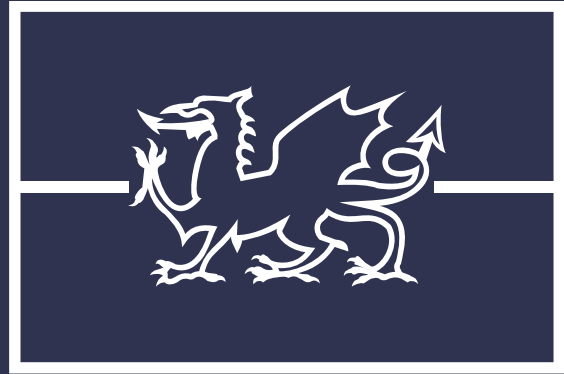


SCOTLAND

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

Four out of five Scottish Parliament election manifestos supported RCSLT manifesto asks on rehab and inclusive communication.



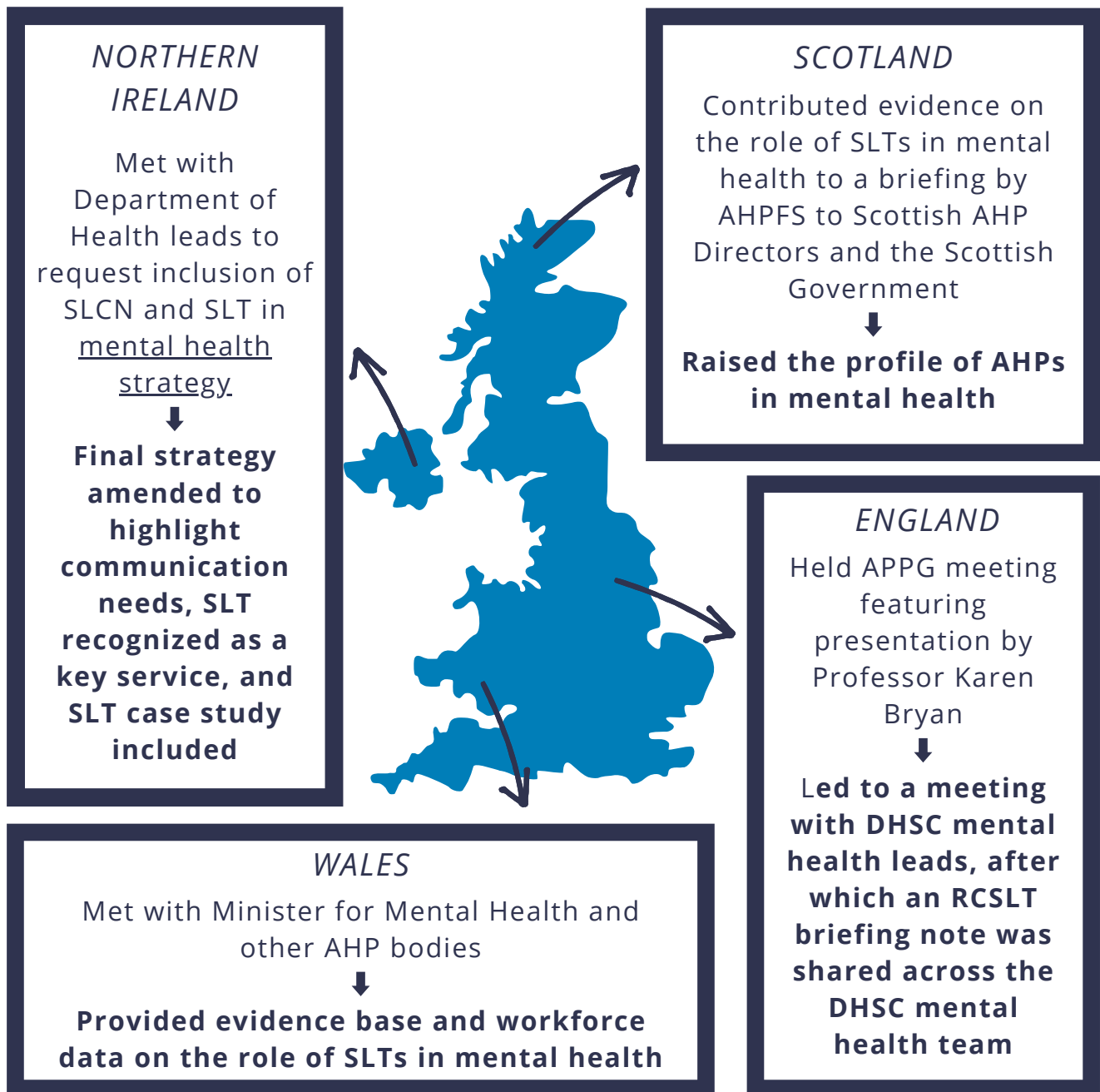
WALES

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

Three main party manifestos mentioned increasing the number of AHPs in the workforce.

MENTAL HEALTH



UK-WIDE

- Built the RCSLT mental health professional network ➔ **Active, growing network with 120 members**
- Worked to promote Mind Your Words Learning Journey to external stakeholders ➔ **Increased awareness of the links between mental health and SLCN in children and young people**

#BUILDBACKBETTERSLT REPORT

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- The image shows the front cover of a report. The top half is a solid green rectangle. Below this, the text 'RCSLT REPORT' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The bottom half of the cover is white. In the center of this white section, the title 'Speech and language therapy during and beyond COVID-19: building back better with people who have communication and swallowing needs' is written in a large, black, sans-serif font, arranged in five lines. At the bottom left of the white section, there is a logo consisting of a cluster of blue and black squares of varying sizes, forming a stylized shape. To the right of this logo, the text 'THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPISTS' is written in a small, black, sans-serif font, arranged in four lines.



- Coordinated a letter to the Prime Minister from over 80 sector organizations, asking him to implement the recommendations in the *Building back better* report ➡ **Secured a response from the Government**

- Supported a speech and language therapist and two parents to table a petition calling on the Government to fund improved support for people with communication and swallowing needs ➔ **Received 10,000 signatures in less than a month, which led to a Government response**

- Supported coordination of [a letter](#) to the Prime Minister and Chancellor ➡ **Signed by 22 APPGs and called on the UK Government to improve support for people with communication and swallowing needs by improving funding for SLT**

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

POVERTY AND EXCLUSION: UK, Wales, Northern Ireland

- Responded to the exacerbation of pre-existing inequalities through COVID-19, including digital exclusion and service user survey on access to service ➔ **Produced resources on health inequalities**
- Seconded two SLTs to Welsh Government to drive progress on the [SLC Delivery Plan](#) ➔ **Secured additional funding for services and increased training on SLCN in early years settings**
- Provided written and oral evidence to the expert panel on Educational Disadvantage in Northern Ireland ➔ **Secured mention of SLT and a recommendation with a focus on early years language development**

REHAB: England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland

- Wrote to NHSE calling for the appointment of a national rehab lead and the establishment of a national rehab strategy ➔ **Secured a national rehab lead with monthly meetings to brief and inform them**
- Worked with Right to Rehab coalition to influence Scottish Government ➔ **Target in most recent programme for government that all adults who require rehabilitation will have timely access to the right services in the right place by the end of 2025**
- Responded to the Senedd Health Committee consultation on priorities ➔ **Rehabilitation included as a priority**
- Joined Rehab Alliance NI ➔ **Increased SLT voice in AHP discussions**
- Tabled questions on rehab services in the NI Assembly ➔ **Raised awareness of SLT role in rehab and risks of redeployment**

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION: UK, Scotland, Northern Ireland

- Launched Communication Access UK in November 2020 ➔ **5,000 organisations and individuals signed up; a multinational, a football club, and an NHS Trust accredited; training delivered to over 30,000**
- Featured in [UNHCR report](#) as a tool to improve communication accessibility for refugees with communication disabilities ➔ **Increased international profile of CAUK**
- Worked with Camphill Scotland to develop an Inclusive Communication Bill ➔ **Scottish Government have included in their programme for government a commitment to consult on a new duty to develop accessible and inclusive communications**
- Partnered with Stroke Association to launch CAUK in Northern Ireland ➔ **Increased public awareness of the importance of inclusive communication for all public services**

INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT POLICY

ENGLAND AND WALES

- Responded to consultation on women in prison ➔ **Invited to join the national programme overseeing the review of women's health in prisons**

ENGLAND

- Engaged with peers and the Home Office on the Domestic Abuse Act and its statutory guidance ➔ **Speech, language and communication needs referenced throughout the statutory guidance and included as a specific intersectionality**
- Worked with Public Health England to inform policy on speech, language and communication in the early years ➔ **National guidance for commissioners published with significant input from RCSLT and members**
- Responded to the Government's white paper on sentencing and invited to provide written and verbal evidence to the neurodiversity review ➔ **RCSLT quoted in the final published report, which contains a commitment to include communication awareness in training for prison staff**

SCOTLAND

- Wrote to Minister for Social Care and Mental Wellbeing to engage further on 2020 AAC SLT survey ➔ **Secured a meeting with the minister**

WALES

- Met with five MSs ➔ **Written questions tabled, and two members agreed to undertake CAUK training**
- Responded to the Curriculum and Assessment Wales Bill stage 1 consultation ➔ **Referenced and quoted in the final stage 1 report**

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Met with Minister for Health around role of SLT in mental health and engaged in consultation response with members and officials ➔ **Secured amendments and recognition of communication difficulties as a risk factor in mental health**
- Met with Minister for Justice around women in justice and reform of youth justice, and provided written consultation responses to the Department ➔ **Follow up evidence requested and provided to DoJ policy team**

INFLUENCING OTHER POLICY

ENGLAND AND WALES

- Worked with the Royal College of Psychiatrists to engage with the Quality Network for Learning Disability Services consultation on standards for inpatient mental health ➔ **Succeeded in adding five good communication standards, access to SLT, and screenings for communication and swallowing**

ENGLAND

- Responded to consultation for NICE guideline on looked-after children and young people ➔ **New guideline recognizes high prevalence of SLCN and the role of SLT**
- Supported a social prescribing student champion recruitment scheme through the PHE AHP strategy group ➔ **Eight SLT students appointed as social prescribing champions**
- Supported a project developing a framework for AHPs on health inequalities through the PHE AHP strategy group ➔ **The AHP framework includes an SLT case study**
- Played a leading role in developing the Greener AHPs Hub for the NHS ➔ **SLT centrally placed in resources for environmental sustainability for AHP professions**

SCOTLAND

- Secured two representatives on Public Health Scotland's Accessible Resources Advisory Group for the Place Standards Tool ➔ **Place-based planning in Scotland will be communication accessible**

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Submitted paper to Education Minister's special advisor to provide options for additional spend of £150,000 on early language development ➔ **Raised awareness of how a small amount of money can have a significant impact on early language development**
- Influenced Education Fair Start report ➔ **Secured an early language focus in the Fair Start action plan**

POLITICAL AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

UK-WIDE

- Held workshop with service user organizations to inform five-year vision ➡ **Ensured inclusion of the voice of service users in the vision**
- Tabled a Parliamentary Question about DfE plans to mark DLD Awareness Day ➡ **DfE highlighted the day to schools in its communications**

ENGLAND

- Supported NHSEI to deliver a workshop in the Midlands on delivering integrated services for children and young people with SLCN ➡ **Increased focus on SLCN and understanding of importance of integrated commissioning and delivery in local areas**

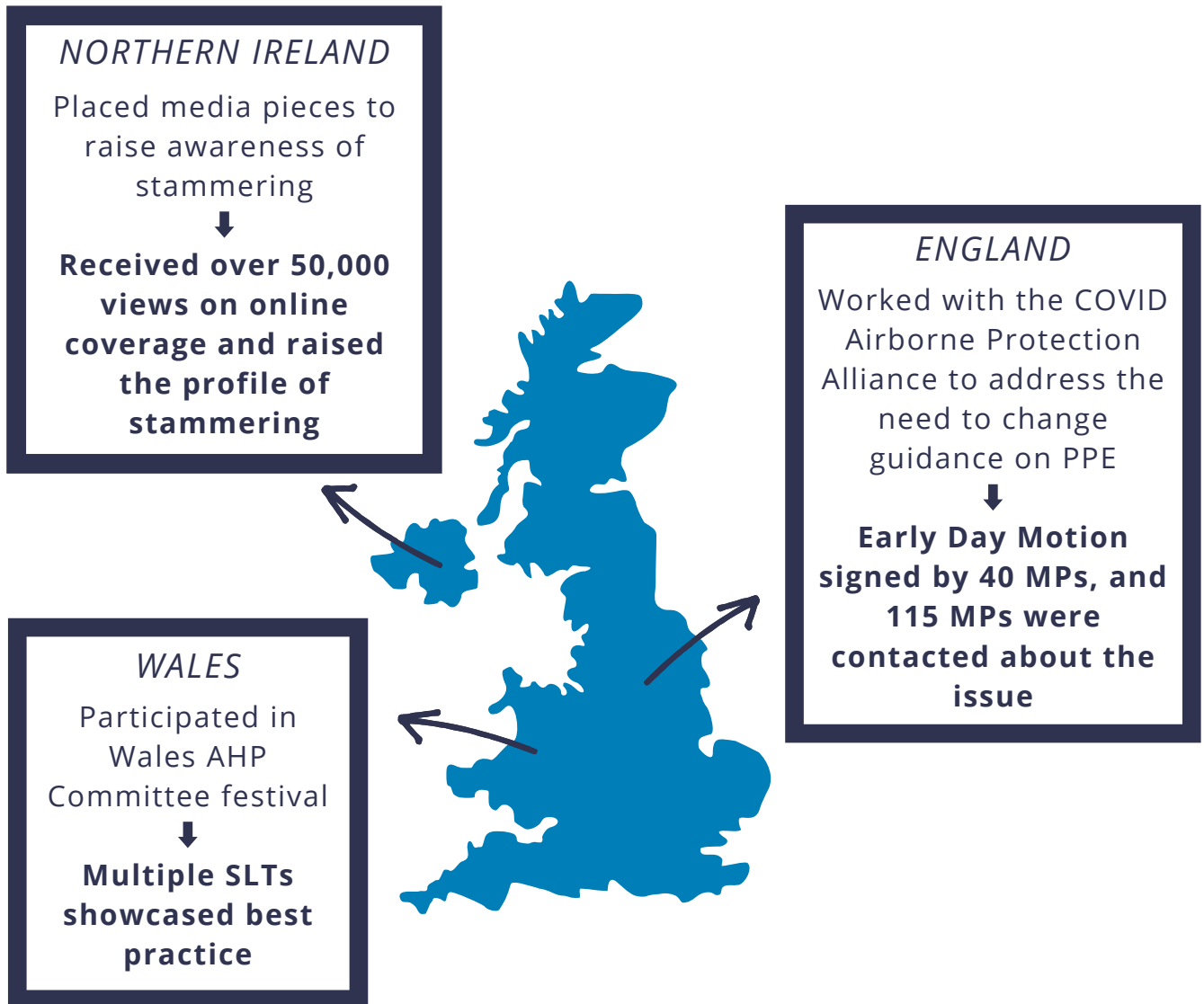
WALES

- Convened a group of royal colleges to investigate opportunities to influence new capacity and demand review of neurodevelopmental services ➡ **Secured meeting with review lead and SLT representation at key workshop**
- Briefed Children's Commissioner on concerns about redeployment ➡ **Concerns raised in evidence session before the Children's Committee**

NORTHERN IRELAND

- Met with Minister for Education to raise profile of SLCN among pupils and pressures on SLT provision for SEN children ➡ **Contacted to provide SLT briefing paper on potential spend options around £150,000**
- Met with chairs and vice-chairs of health, education and justice committees ➡ **Continued awareness-raising of key SLT issues including workforce, SEN, CAUK, and justice, which had a motion for debate tabled**
- Worked with other professional body policy officers to raise concerns with the Health Committee on current proposals for reform of commissioning model ➡ **Increased awareness at committee level**

RAISING AWARENESS & CAMPAIGNING



UK-WIDE AND INTERNATIONAL

- Lobbied four governments to introduce transparent facemasks ➡ **Agreed nationally**
- Published [factsheet](#) on role of SLTs supporting children and young people who have experienced adversity and trauma ➡ **Increased awareness of link between childhood adversity and SLCN**
- Secured interventions for speakers at the Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ➡ **Highlighted RCSLT's growing international influence**

PPA TEAM AMBITIONS FOR 2021-2022

1. **Equality, diversity and inclusion** including active anti-racism, poverty and health inequalities
2. **Workforce** data, strategy, planning, education policy, and apprenticeships
3. **Health & Care Bill** and **Integrated Care Systems**
4. **Mental health** and **neurodiversity**
5. **Rehabilitation**, adult and children's **social care**
6. **Long COVID** and **service recovery**
7. **Devolved nations**: Northern Ireland elections, Welsh language provision, National Care Service (Scotland)
8. **SEND, ALN** and **ASN**
9. **Inclusive communication** and **CAUK**