

MANIFESTO 2022



This manifesto seeks to raise the importance of speech and language therapy, why it matters and how vital it is to meeting the health needs of people in Northern Ireland. If supported, speech and language therapists (SLTs) can help to address some of the most difficult pressures facing the health and social care system in Northern Ireland now and in the future.

Speech and language therapy transforms lives. SLTs support people with communication, swallowing, eating and drinking difficulties at every age and stage of life. They work with babies who have feeding difficulties, children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), and adults who have had a stroke or have been affected by neurological conditions, including dementia.

To ensure that SLTs can meet the needs of all people with communication and swallowing difficulties in Northern Ireland we are asking for your support to:

1. MAXIMISE THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY WORKFORCE

- Support development of the workforce to address capacity and skills gaps through increased undergraduate commissioning and further training for advanced and specialised SLT roles.
- Support director level representation of allied health professionals (AHPs) across our health and social care structures to ensure parity with medical and social care colleagues.

2. ENSURE EQUITY OF PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS (SLCN)

- Boost every child's early language development to ensure children get the best start in life and a fair start at school.
- Require the health and education departments to plan together in a strategic, accountable and consistent way to benefit the special educational needs (SEN) framework, services and area planning.

3. CREATE A COMMUNICATION INCLUSIVE NORTHERN IRELAND

- Mandate CAUK training across all public-facing services: **[communication-access.co.uk](https://www.communication-access.co.uk)**
- Ensure that NI adult safeguarding legislation enshrines communication support for all people in NI who require it, guaranteeing that the most vulnerable adults in our society can communicate their needs, wishes and feelings.