

**Getting it right for communication - right support, right place, right time:
our response to the Department for Education's SEND Review Green Paper
July 2022**

Action area 4: Early intervention

What we've heard from parents and carers

"Unless you get early intervention you are creating issues for the future that could have been easily avoided with the correct amount of support at an early age... if I hadn't taken charge (and had the ability to go private) [it] would have cost FAR more financially and to society as a whole than frontloading the required support for 3-4 years when needed."

"Access to speech and language therapy is crucial. Therapy affects children's life chances and mental health. Fail now and the impact and ongoing service need is catastrophic."

What we've heard from charity partners – STAMMA

"Stammering in children and young people is a risk factor for mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression. For young children who stammer, early intervention, particularly with support and information for the adults around the child, can be vital in ensuring that children grow and develop into confident, effective communicators. On our helpline, we hear all too often from desperate parents, who are seeking guidance on how they can best support their child, yet are waiting 12 months or more for an initial consultation with their local speech and language therapy service."

What we've heard from charity partners - CLAPA

"SEN supported children and young people are a lost patient group, which many cleft patients fall under."

What we've heard from speech and language therapists

"On multiple occasions I've worked with young people and families who have told me if only their communication difficulties had been picked up earlier then they wouldn't have spent years being passed around other health, education and social care services. Some ending up admitted to psychiatric wards, some ending up detained in police custody. They tell me they'd have been able to get on with their education and achieve what they wanted to in life."

“For many local authorities the criteria for an EHCP application is a severe speech, language and communication need that education settings are struggling to support - children shouldn’t be left to struggle to this point to receive support.”

Too many services are commissioned only to provide support for children and young people with an education, health and care plan. This must change. Services must be commissioned to work in ways which support prevention and early intervention. It is important to recognise that early intervention doesn’t end in the pre-school years. It spans the whole age-range from 0-25.

In particular, speech and language therapy must be available to children and young people on SEN support in all areas. Too often it is not.

Providing timely speech and language therapy to children and young people on SEN support may mean some of them will not need an EHCP. It should result in improved outcomes for the child, a better experience for the family, and reduced pressures within the wider system.

In January 2022 Minister Quince said that the review would be [“looking at ways to support mainstream settings to identify and get support to children and young people more quickly, through making best use of precious expertise such as speech and language therapists.”](#)

Unfortunately, the Green Paper proposals do not deliver on this aspiration.

Action required: the Government must enable service transformation to ensure that all services deliver evidence-based care across the continuum of universal, targeted and specialist support, delivering improved outcomes for children and young people.

[Read the full RCSLT and ASLTIP joint policy statement](#)