

**From the Chief Executive  
Steve Jamieson MSc BSc (Hons) RN**

The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP  
Department for Health and Social Care  
39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

18 April 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

***Supporting and helping to deliver the Major Conditions Strategy***

I am writing as the new Chief Executive of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) to offer our support in helping to deliver the Government's Major Conditions Strategy.

The strategy will affect the lives of the millions of people living with speech, language and communication needs and eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties in England.

Speech and language therapists are experts in all the conditions covered by the strategy, including cancer, stroke, dementia, mental ill health, and upper airway disorders.

As you will know, around one in five people will experience a communication difficulty at some point in their lives and over five percent of the general population have swallowing difficulties (dysphagia). This percentage is much higher among older people, and in people with conditions covered by the strategy, such as stroke, Parkinson's, dementia, and head and neck cancer.

Speech and language therapists also play a critical role in prevention, timely access to treatment, rehabilitation and longer-term support and recovery. Having access to the right workforce with the right skills at the right time is key to improving the lives of all people living with communication and swallowing needs and their families.

However, for too long health inequalities have persisted. These have exacerbated existing speech, language and communication inequalities, particularly in areas of social disadvantage and amongst certain ethnic groups. Addressing these is critical to improving longer term health and wellbeing of the population, both supporting people with major conditions and reducing the risk of people developing one or more of the major conditions in the first place.

The RCSLT has engaged and helped to inform the condition specific proposals developed by your officials over the past year. We are, therefore, very keen to continue to work with them to develop the Major Conditions Strategy.

We would welcome an early opportunity to discuss with you or one of your ministerial colleagues how best we can support this piece of work – to help to improve support for everyone living with communication and swallowing needs, and their families, so their needs are identified in a timely way and that they can receive the vital speech and language therapy that they need.

I look forward to hearing from you and will be writing again shortly on planning for the speech and language therapy workforce, about which we have already alerted your officials.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Jamieson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Jamieson MSc BSc (Hons) RN  
Chief Executive

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