



King's Speech 2026:

RCSLT analysis

13 May 2026

Introduction

The [King's Speech was delivered on Wednesday, 13 May 2026](#). It set out the Government's legislative plans for the year ahead. It also includes other non-legislative policy proposals.

Below is a summary of announcements that are relevant to people with communication and/or swallowing needs and their families. In these areas, and more, speech and language therapists have a key role to play in delivering the legislative and non-legislative changes that the Government wishes to make.

We look forward to working with MPs and members of the House of Lords, our members, people having speech and language therapy, and partner organisations to influence these Bills and policies so that they improve the lives of the people with communication and/or swallowing needs and their families, including through maximising the contribution and impact of speech and language therapy.

Education

The Government plans to introduce an Education for All Bill. The Bill is designed to 'raise standards in schools and introduce generational reforms of the special educational needs system', as set out in the Government's consultation document: SEND Reform: Putting Children and Young People First.

It aims to transform support for children and young people with SEND by providing early access to support close to home and ensuring all schools, nurseries and colleges deliver the education that all children and young people deserve. The Government says it hopes to build a truly inclusive education system that works for every family.

The [background briefing notes to the speech](#) reference speech and language therapy three times in this context. These include in relation to:

1. mainstream settings having access to specialist services – 'This will mean that early years, school, and college settings can quickly access specialist services such as speech and language therapists.'

2. the Government's proposed 'Experts at Hand' service – 'The Government will also invest £1.8 billion over the next three years to create a new national offer called "Experts at Hand", wrapping professionals such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, and occupational therapists around mainstream settings.'
3. waiting lists for children and young people – 'In January 2026, the number of children and young people on a waiting list for speech and language therapy was 65,540'.

The RCSLT's response to the Government's consultation will highlight how we think the proposals can be strengthened to better support children and young people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference.

The RCSLT is also coordinating a response to the consultation from the SEND In The Specialists coalition. This will highlight the central importance of investing in and improving workforce planning for the specialist workforce supporting those with SEND.

Health and Social Care

The Government plans to introduce an NHS Modernisation Bill. The Bill aims to:

- Create a new Single Patient Record to enable joined-up care and empower people through the NHS App
- Transfer NHS England's functions into the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to cut bureaucracy and restore democratic accountability
- Strengthen local accountability through Integrated Care Boards
- Streamline the patient safety landscape
- Embed the patient voice in national decision-making through a new Patient Experience Directorate in DHSC

Beyond just legislation, if the Government wishes successfully to modernise the NHS and the way that health and social care services are delivered, it needs to go further.

Examples include workforce planning for the speech and language therapy workforce. This must be improved, as must investment in the profession, and its recruitment, retention, and continuing professional development. These are just some of the tests that the [RCSLT and ASLTIP will be applying to 10 Year Workforce Plan](#). They also include removing the barriers that prevent the professional development of speech and language therapists, and their ability better to support the people they work with. This includes removing the legal bar to

speech and language therapists being able to train as independent prescribers. It also includes enabling them to train to be Multi Professional Approved Clinicians.

Justice

The Government plans to introduce a Courts Modernisation Bill. The Government says the Bill is the first step in putting Sir Brian Leveson's report on criminal courts into law, bring the service into the 21st century, ensuring timely and fair justice for all. The Bill will include measures to prevent victims of sexual offences being unfairly undermined in court and introduce measures to strengthen and clarify the special measures available to vulnerable and intimidated victims and witnesses, to help them give their best evidence to the court.

To make that a reality, and to ensure the criminal justice system overall is fit for purpose, it is essential that communication disability, difficulty, or difference is identified and appropriately responded to, including through access to speech and language therapy and registered intermediaries where required.

Other measures

Representation of the People Bill

The Bill aims include making British democratic traditions stronger, safer and more inclusive, and introducing tougher measures to tackle harassment and intimidation of candidates, campaigners, and electoral staff. It includes a number of provisions that are relevant to the RCSLT- and STAMMA-led Inclusive Parliament coalition, and we hope that it will ensure that British democracy is more inclusive of and accessible to signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference, and that those who sign or have communication disability, difficulty, or difference who wish to stand as candidates are not harassed or intimidated.

Welfare system

The Government plans to respond to the Milburn Review and to the Timms Review to support both young people and disabled people in getting work and participating in society. For these aims to be successful, the Government must also invest in speech and language therapy services. Many young people and people with disabilities may communicate differently or with difficulty and that can affect education, employment, and independence. Increasing investment in speech and language therapy services would help ensure that people receive the communication support they need to access and sustain employment, contributing to greater economic security and inclusion.