



Speech and language therapy advanced practitioners: from opportunity to reality

9 July 2026





Welcome and housekeeping

Steve Jamieson
CEO, RCSLT



Housekeeping

- Justyna Szeller (RCSLT Host) is on hand to help with any **technical queries**; you can get in touch with her via the **chat button**
- You can send in **questions** to our speakers today by using the **Q&A button**
- This event is being recorded and will be made available on the RCSLT website and RCSLT YouTube channel

Speakers

Jo Fitzgerald

Senior Policy Advisor, Department for Education (DfE)

Beverley Harden

Deputy Chief AHP Officer, NHSE

Julie Hoodless

Head of SEND, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside

Philippa Wright

Chief of Allied Health Professionals. NHS England - London Region

Dr Krystina Stanway

Director of Professional Development & Innovation, RCSLT

Kathryn Moyse

Outcomes and Informatics Manager, RCSLT

Sarah Childs

Designated Therapies Professional Manager, National SEND Team (NHSE)



Background to SaLT AP roles

Jo Fitzgerald

Senior Policy Advisor, Department for Education
(DfE)





Advanced Practitioner roles

Beverley Harden

Deputy Chief AHP Officer, NHSE



SaLT Advanced Practice role in Education, SEND and Workforce Development and Practice



This is a strategic, population level, clinical Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) role focused on strengthening the SaLT workforce for education settings and system improvement. It is not an extension of local service delivery.

Employers will need to design and recruit to:

- **A Minimum 1 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) per ICB footprint**
- **Minimum band 8a Advanced Practice role operating across education, SEND local area partnerships and Integrated Care Systems**
- This role is explicitly aligned to the [NHSE Multi-professional Framework for Advanced Practice \(2025\)](#) and reflects a level of practice underpinned by the four pillars of practice, clinical, leadership and management, education, and research. If consultant level alignment is required, it will map to the NHSE [Multi-professional consultant-level practice capability and impact framework](#).

Purpose of the Role – the post holder will:



- Provide strategic, population-level clinical SaLT leadership to improve outcomes for children and young people (0–25) with speech, language and communication needs
- Strengthen the SaLT workforce pipeline across education settings through placements, apprenticeships and educator/supervisor/mentor capacity and capability
- Increase access to SaLT expertise within mainstream education
- Provide strategic, population-level SaLT leadership within the ICB footprint to enable delivery of SEND reform.
- Work with commissioners and system partners to embed evidence-based, scalable solutions which improve access to speech and language expertise in mainstream education settings
- Provide innovative strategic clinical leadership and influence for education and workforce development across the system, working with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), providers and partners to strengthen workforce supply, capability and sustainability in Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT).

Key Responsibilities

- As a clinical expert, increase access to high quality speech and language expertise within mainstream education settings
- Build a sustainable SaLT workforce in education by working with speech and language training providers and mainstream education settings to expand trainee placements in education settings, innovative trainee supervision models and develop education career pathways so that mainstream education settings are a core destination for the profession.
- Strengthen inclusive mainstream education by working with delivery partners and mainstream education settings to enable earlier identification and support for speech, language and communication needs, improving pupil outcomes and educational participation.
- Operate as strategic leader by working with education settings, local authorities and other SEND partners to support the delivery of SEND reform
- Use data, system insight and evaluation to, shape scalable, solutions to develop SaLT workforce pipeline for mainstream education settings and system development

What is out of scope?

The role should not be:

- A clinical capacity or backlog post
- Focused on individual casework (e.g. EHC needs assessment advice and SEND tribunal)
- Supplementing existing therapy services

Out of scope

- Provision of advice, assessment and intervention for individual or groups of children
- Adult health services post 25.
- Separate work streams relating to isolated projects on support workers or small-scale apprenticeship communications.
- Management duties in locally delivered therapy services e.g. complex case management and dealing with complaints.

Pillar 1: Education, Training and Workforce Development

- Provide innovative strategic clinical leadership and influence for education and workforce development – Placement quality, apprenticeships, workforce capacity and pipeline development

Pillar 2: Professional Leadership

- Operate as a system leader across education, health and care, working in partnership with local authorities, Integrated Care Boards, NHS and independent providers, education settings (0–25 years) and parent carer forums to enable inclusive, collaborative working and clarity of roles across the system.

Pillar 3: Expert Clinical Practice

- Act as clinical expert and advisor to commissioners, education, health and local authority partners, ensuring Allied Health Professional (AHP) expertise informs system design, commissioning decisions and service development.
- Work collaboratively across system partners to drive workforce capability in early identification and intervention, referencing evidence-based practice and population health/needs principles in education settings

Pillar 4: Research, Audit and Improvement

- Provide strategic leadership for evaluation, audit and quality improvement, strengthening the evidence base for SaLT expertise within education settings and informing workforce planning, commissioning and service delivery.



Early Adopters

Julie Hoodless

Head of SEND, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside

NHS Cheshire & Merseyside

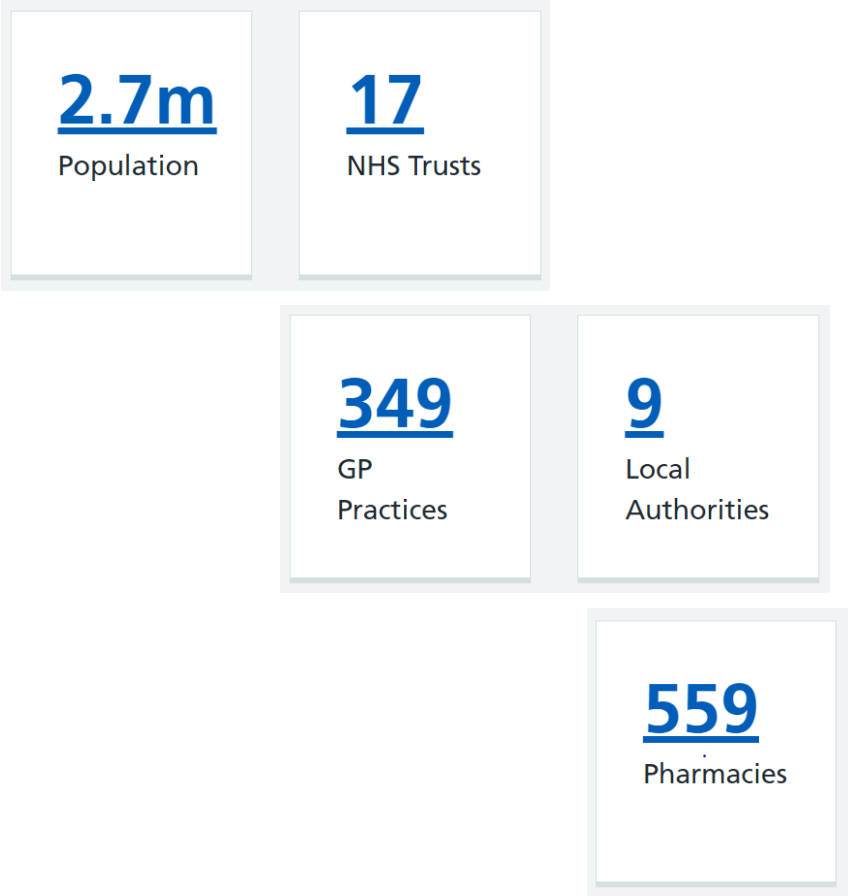
NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board

Speech and Language Therapy Advanced Practitioner

- The C&M approach so far
- Leading, defining and being accountable
- Role positioning and function
- Prospective candidate

Next Steps

NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board



- Funding stream for SaLT AP sits within EAH & LA SEND Transformation Fund that flows directly to local authorities
- All local areas recently submitted Local Area SEND Reform Plans
- C&M ICB SEND Reforms Group (HOS, Commissioning, Finance, ND Programme Leads) reviewed all C&M plans
- Added ICB row to DfE QA Framework to provide baseline for reviews – both draft and final Local SEND Reform Plans
- Proposed proportionate funding of SaLT AP shared with LAs
- ICB Chief Executive sign-off was approved following:
 - evidence of intention to jointly commission
 - commitment re ICB funding for clinical components of EAH
 - reference to the SaLT AP role

- Verbal agreement achieved for the LA proportionate funding of the C&M SaLT AP role(s) in June 26
- Options appraisal paper submitted for presentation DCS forum July 26 – four options for the SaLT AP role(s)
- Previously provided costings support approval of the **preferred option** – for C&M 2 x 1.0wte AfC Band 8b SaLT APs – Liverpool City Region and Cheshires & Warrington footprints

- Lead within the multiple SEND systems across the ICB footprint
- Feed into regional and national networks to support the gathering of evidence around this role
- Set a workforce strategy that focusses on the pipeline for SaLT into education settings through student placements, apprenticeships etc.
- Lead across professional boundaries and hold delivery partners to account eg. commissioners, providers, education settings
- Influence the further development of the evidence base for the effectiveness of SaLT in mainstream settings

- In C&M, SaLT AP(s) will be senior health leader role(s) in the central ICB SEND team alongside ICB Designated Clinical Officers for SEND
- Line management and clinical supervision proposed to be provided by ICB Head of SEND (SLT by profession). Peer support from DCOs – all clinical professionals – nurses and AHPs
- Multi-agency and partnership working will be key. Role(s) will need to connect into nine C&M Local Area SEND Partnerships and the work streams that aim to increase expertise in mainstream education settings
- From a population needs perspective, it must link with ICB strategic commissioning colleagues to influence commissioning of SaLTs beyond individual local areas, building upon existing commissioning arrangements
- Works with local Higher Education Institutes and feeder pathways to influence future SaLT workforce pipeline and training of SaLTs to ensure expertise in inclusive mainstream education approaches

- Knowledgeable about the **current SLT workforce** and ambitious to maximise the SLT workforce pipeline across educational settings for the future
- Recruit in line with the **four pillars**: expert clinical practice, professional leadership, education training and workforce development, and research, audit and improvement.
- Emphasis will be on **professional leadership** – knowledge skills and experience to deliver strategic, population level clinical leadership to improve outcomes for CYP 0-25 with SLCN
- Understanding of **strategic commissioning** and the current C&M landscape of commissioned SaLT services with the ability to design system-level responses
- Looking to attract candidates who are committed to **making a lasting difference** to meeting the speech, language and communication needs of the 0-25 population across Cheshire and Merseyside

- Agreement for proportionate funding from the nine LAs for the preferred SaLT AP proposal
- Await DfE direction regarding the role and the publication of content to inform a SaLT AP job description/person specification
- Await outcome of nine C&M Local SEND Reform Plans in terms of approval and timescales for the release of funding
- Commence SaLT AP recruitment

Julie Hoodless

Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
NHS Cheshire and Merseyside

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A Collaborative Approach

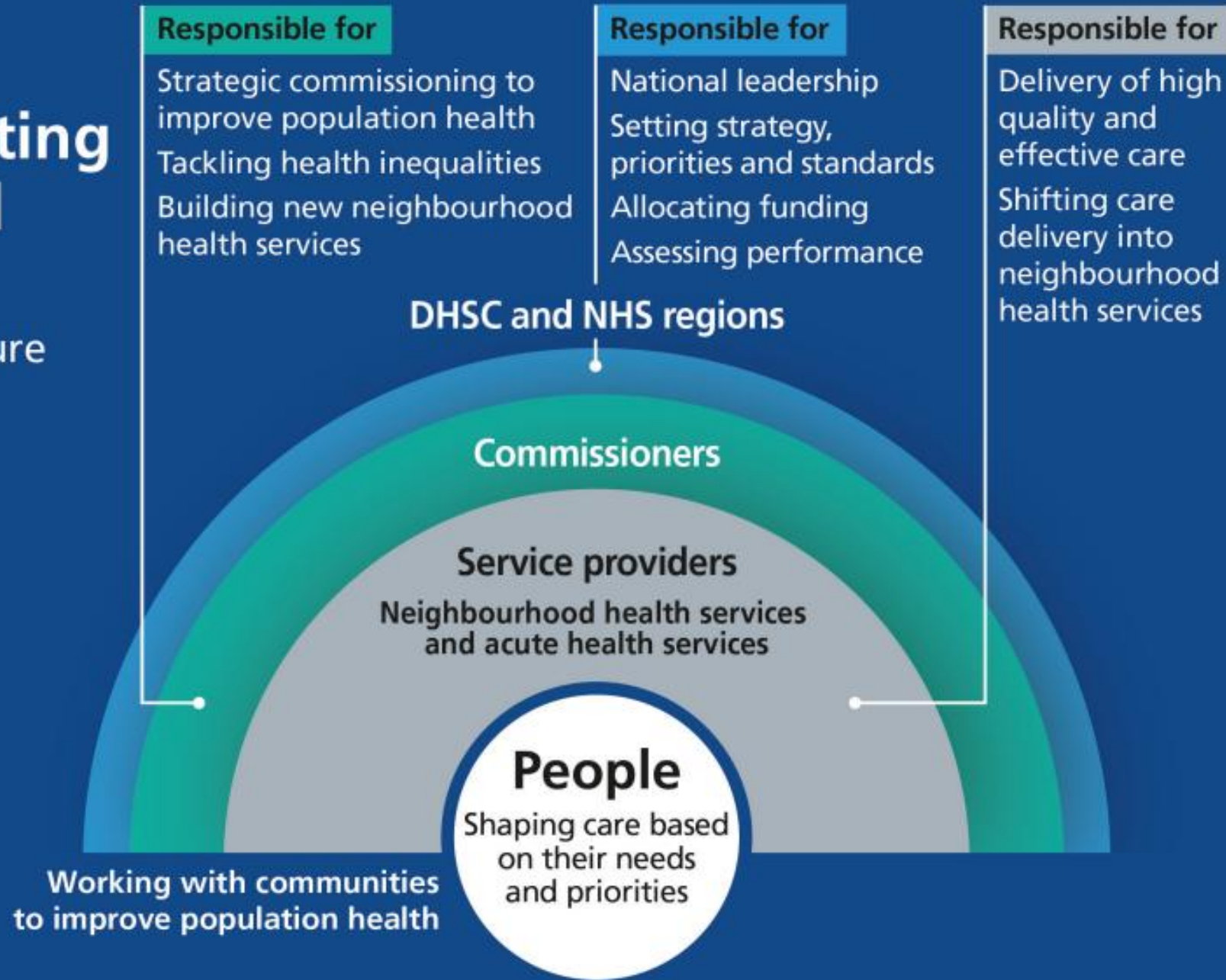
Philippa Wright

Chief of Allied Health Professionals
NHS England - London Region



New operating model

System architecture



Core functions

- The model ICB document sets out the core functions of ICBs under the four headings opposite
- Same principles apply to the strategic elements of the AP SLT role with collaboration across health and local authority partners

Model ICB - System leadership for improved population health

4. Evaluating impact

Day-to-day oversight of healthcare usage, user feedback and evaluation to ensure optimal, value-based resource use and improved outcomes

3. Delivering the strategy through payer functions and resource allocation

Oversight and assurance of what is purchased and whether it delivers outcomes required

1. Understanding local context

Assessing population needs now and in the future, identifying underserved communities and assessing quality, performance and productivity of existing provision

2. Developing long-term population health strategy

Long-term population health planning and strategy and care pathway redesign to maximise value based on evidence





Support for roles from RCSLT

Dr Krystina Stanway

Director of Professional Development & Innovation,
RCSLT

Kathryn Moyse

Outcomes and Informatics Manager, RCSLT



Community of Practice

To create a connected and influential network of Advanced Practitioner Speech and Language Therapists who champion excellence, collaboration and innovation in the implementation of SEND reforms, ensuring that every child and young person with speech, language and communication needs can achieve their full potential.

Key Objectives

- Promote a consistent understanding and application of SEND reform principles.
- Share evidence-based practice, resources and solutions to common implementation challenges.
- Strengthen leadership skills and strategic influence across health, education and social care.
- Foster collaborative working with local authorities, schools, families and multidisciplinary partners.
- Support the development of inclusive, needs-led and outcome-focused services.
- Identify and disseminate examples of best practice and innovation.
- Provide peer support, professional challenge and reflective practice opportunities.

CPD and Resources

- CPD Minor Grants

CPD grant application will be opening soon, with a proposed deadline of the 5th October. The link to the webpage is here: <https://www.rcslt.org/members/cpd-grants-and-funding/#section-1>

- Clinical Guidance

Delivering Quality Services A-Z <https://www.rcslt.org/members/delivering-quality-services/>

Clinical Guidance A-Z <https://www.rcslt.org/members/clinical-guidance/>

- Learning

Leadership and Influencing elearning <https://www.rcsltcpd.org.uk/>

Podcasts here: <https://www.rcslt.org/podcasts/>

- Centre for Advancing Practice

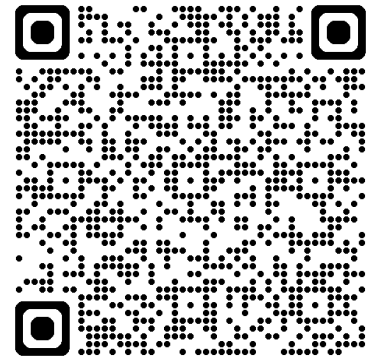
The Centre for Advancing practice also hosts a conference each year, resources can still be accessed from 2021 – 2025.

[Advancing practice conference - Advanced Practice](#)

Outcomes and impact

- The RCSLT will be supporting the Community of Practice to identify a standardised way of measuring outcomes.
- We will be looking to build on the RCSLT's outcomes guidance and frameworks, and other existing approaches to measurement.
- This will complement the overall evaluation of the project.
- We welcome your insights to help inform the approach – please get in touch with your suggestions:

kathryn.moyse@rcslt.org





Next steps

Sarah Childs

Designated Therapies Professional Manager,
National SEND Team (NHSE)



Next steps for ICBs

Along with their local authority colleagues, ICBs will need to agree:

- The funding approach with their LAs
- The banding and WTE required for their area
- Where the SEND Partnerships will position the role
- How it will interface with the local SEND partnerships
- How the SaLT AP will be supported, managed and supervised
- What local networks the role will need to link with
- A communications plan that will attract the right applicants
- NHS England will be in touch with ICBs to invite them to be an early adopter. ICBs on this call are welcome to contact their NHS England regional SEND lead to volunteer

Next steps for potential applicants

In preparation you might want to consider the following questions:

- What are the elements of this role I find most interesting?
- How does this fit with my existing knowledge, skills and experience?
- What support might I need?
- What do I need to know about the SEND reform?
- How can I find out more about the local area SEND partnerships in the ICB footprint?

Panel Q&A

Chair:

Steve Jamieson

CEO, RCSLT

Panellists:

Sarah Childs

Designated Therapies Professional Manager, National SEND Team, NHS England

Katie Cooper

National Head of Multi-professional Advanced Practice, NHS England

Julie Hoodless

Head of SEND, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside

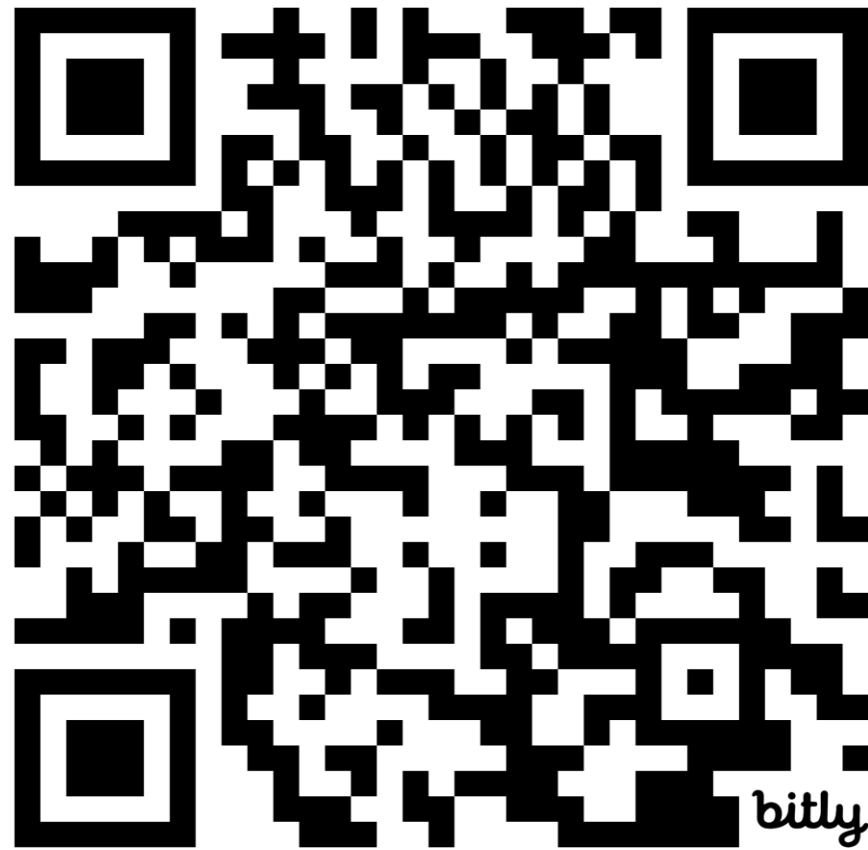
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Chief of Allied Health Professionals NHS England - London Region

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Evaluation





Thank you



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