

Please reply to: info@mikeyswishfoundation.org and ceo@rcslt.org

The Rt Hon. Andy Burnham MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

30 July 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

Improving access to speech and language therapy

Many congratulations from all of us in the Invest in SLT campaign on being appointed Prime Minister. We very much look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead.

As you know from when you addressed the Mikey's Wish Family Day in June 2024, we are very grateful for your support for the need to improve access to speech and language therapy and for your recognition of the potentially negative consequences for people if they cannot access the support they, their families, and the people working with, and supporting, them, need. As you said so powerfully in your speech, this is an issue that affects people of all ages: babies, children, young people, working age adults, and older people.

It is also central to delivering the vision you set out in Downing Street: of helping more young people into work by changing the education system and giving them more support, more mental health support, and helping people to live well, building a more preventative state, investing in people's success, rather than paying for failure.

These are ambitions we fully share, but to make them a reality, we urge you to publish the Speech and Language Therapy Action Plan that the then Minister of Care, Stephen Kinnock, said the Government would work with us on in March 2025. The Plan would address the issues underpinning the Invest in SLT petition on which you spoke so eloquently in 2024: increased investment in and improved workforce planning for speech and language therapy.

Access to speech and language therapy intervention for those who require it – such as children with Childhood Apraxia of Speech and adults with Primary Progressive Aphasia or people with Cognitive Communication Disorder – helps to improve their outcomes as well as reduce the risks they face. As you know from your time as Mayor of Greater Manchester, speech and language therapists also improve population outcomes by working across local

areas, providing information, advice and training to families and the wider workforce. This can involve helping children be school ready, and developing children's speech, language, and communication skills. It can also involve enabling adults to remain in work or maintain their independence.

Our campaign's call for improved investment in and access to speech and language therapy for people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference, and/or difficulties with eating, drinking and swallowing, is supported by over 50 organisations. As highlighted above, it also directly contributes to your priorities and those of the Government overall. Given its centrality to health and education, we are copying this letter to Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care and Education.

Building on your commitment to work with us to use the learning from Greater Manchester, we stand ready to support you and the Government on the Speech and Language Therapy Action Plan so the impact of what you rightly described as this 'core, essential service' is maximised, and people of all ages are supported to achieve their potential and live the lives they wish to live.

We look forward to hearing from you and with best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Mikey Akers, Founder and trustee of Mikey's Wish Foundation

Louisa Akers, Parent and trustee of Mikey's Wish Foundation

Francesca Beard, Speech and language therapist

Samantha Berry, Someone who has had speech and language therapy

Yas Firth, Parent and trustee of Mikey's Wish Foundation

Dave Harford, Parent

Karen Massey, Speech and language therapist and trustee of Mikey's Wish Foundation

Sharon Oliphant, Parent

Gillian Rudd, Speech and language therapist

Pam Slater, Parent and trustee of Mikey's Wish Foundation

Georgia Wilson, Parent and trustee of Mikey's Wish Foundation

Steve Jamieson, Chief Executive of The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

Members of the Invest In SLT campaign home team

Charlie Ayling, Speech and language therapist

Lorraine Bamblett, Speech and language therapist

Laura Brown, Parent and founder of Spinning World of Autism

Dr Sam Burr, Speech and language therapist

Robin Hurtley, Parent

Joanne Jones, Consultant speech and language therapist, Founder of The Can-Do Approach®

Ruth Rowntree, Speech and language therapist and founder of Speech Apraxia UK

Members of the Invest In SLT campaign advisory group

cc: Health and Social Care Secretary and Education Secretary