

**Children's Commissioner's report
Parliamentary questions**

7 Geraint Davies – 26 June 2019

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference the June 2019 report of the Children's Commissioner, We need to talk: access to speech and language therapy, if he will meet with the Local Government Association to discuss the implications for his Department's policies of the findings of that report.

Nadhim Zahawi

We are committed to ensuring more effective support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). Ministers from the Department for Education (DfE) regularly meet with local government to discuss issues relating to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including SLCN.

On 20 May 2019, we held the first SEND ministerial roundtable meeting between ministers from the DfE, Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and key SEND stakeholders to help inform future SEND policy. We will also be using these meetings to help inform the SEND System Leadership Board which aims to improve joint working and strategic commissioning for all children and young people with SEND, including those with SLCN.

On 20 June 2019, the government issued a letter to I CAN and The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. That letter responded to the Bercow One Year Anniversary update report, and was co-signed by ministers from the DfE, DHSC and the Ministry of Justice. The letter reaffirms our commitment to supporting children and young people with SLCN, and sets out the key action the government is taking to address SLCN. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

<https://bit.ly/2XLSij2>

6 Geraint Davies – 26 June 2019

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference the June 2019 report of the Children's Commissioner, We need to talk: access to speech and language therapy, if he will meet with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to discuss the implications for his Department's policies of the findings of that report.

Nadhim Zahawi

We are committed to ensuring more effective support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). Ministers from the Department for Education (DfE) regularly discuss issues relating to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including SLCN, with ministers from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and other government departments.

On 20 May 2019, we held the first SEND ministerial roundtable meeting between ministers from the DfE, DHSC and key SEND stakeholders to help inform future SEND policy. We will also be using these meetings to help inform the SEND system leadership board which aims to improve joint working and strategic commissioning for all children and young people with SEND, including those with SLCN.

On 20 June 2019, the government issued a letter responding to the 'Bercow: Ten Years On' first anniversary update report, which was co-signed by ministers from the DfE, DHSC and the Ministry of Justice. The letter reaffirmed our commitment to supporting children and young people with SLCN.

<https://bit.ly/2J873Dn>

5 Geraint Davies – 26 June 2019

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference the June 2019 report of the Children's Commissioner, We need to talk: access to speech and language therapy, if he will meet with NHS Clinical Commissioners to discuss the implications for his

Department's policies of the findings of that report.

Caroline Dinenage

The Government recognises that speech, language and communication skills are a primary indicator of child wellbeing. Officials from the Department will discuss the Children's Commissioner's report with NHS Clinical Commissioners at the next opportunity.

<https://bit.ly/2XxjIJ9>

4 Lord Wigley – 24 June 2019

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Children's Commissioner We need to talk: Access to speech and language therapy, published on 11 June; and whether they intend to provide a response.

Lord Agnew of Oulton

On 20 June 2019, the government released a joint ministerial letter responding to the 'Bercow: Ten Years On' first anniversary update report. The letter reaffirmed our commitment to supporting more effective commissioning of communication support. The NHS long-term plan recognises the importance of speech and language therapists (SLTs) and proposes that local areas design and implement models of care that are age appropriate, closer to home and bring together physical and mental health services. Our national workforce group for allied health professionals (AHPs) will be making specific recommendations, in particular for those professionals in short supply, such as SLTs. The chief allied health professions officer will further develop the national AHP strategy into action to focus on the delivery of the NHS long-term plan.

We are aware of the concerns about the adequacy of funding for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in England, including those with speech, language and communication needs. On 3 May 2019, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education announced a call for evidence from schools, colleges and local authorities to consider how the SEND and alternative provision financial arrangements in England could be improved. The call for evidence is attached and can be accessed at the following link: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/funding-for-send-and-those-who-need-ap-call-for-ev/>.

<https://bit.ly/2XbvoSK>

3 Geraint Davies – 12 June 2019

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 7 of the June 2019 report of the Children's Commissioner, We need to talk: access to speech and language therapy, what steps he is taking to ensure that health and education services jointly deliver support to prevent children from falling through the gaps between different providers of services in their area.

Caroline Dinenage

Communication support particularly benefits from a joint commissioning approach. The NHS Long Term Plan recognises the importance of speech and language therapists and proposes that local areas design and implement models of care that are age appropriate, closer to home and bring together physical and mental health services.

Since May 2016, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission are inspecting local areas on the effectiveness with which clinical commissioning groups and local authorities work together in joint commissioning arrangements, to support the needs of children with special educational needs and disability, which would include their commissioning of therapies.

We are keen to work with the Children's Commissioner's Office on the issues of expenditure data.

<https://bit.ly/2Zo3dwA>

2 Geraint Davies – 12 June 2019

Speech Therapy: Children

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 7 of the June 2019 report of the Children's Commissioner, We need to talk: access to speech and language therapy, what plans he has to tackle local variations in spending on speech and language therapy; and how that spending will be monitored by his Department.

Caroline Dinenge

Communication support particularly benefits from a joint commissioning approach. The NHS Long Term Plan recognises the importance of speech and language therapists and proposes that local areas design and implement models of care that are age appropriate, closer to home and bring together physical and mental health services.

Since May 2016, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission are inspecting local areas on the effectiveness with which clinical commissioning groups and local authorities work together in joint commissioning arrangements, to support the needs of children with special educational needs and disability, which would include their commissioning of therapies.

We are keen to work with the Children's Commissioner's Office on the issues of expenditure data.

<https://bit.ly/2wQdlBV>

1 Paul Farrelly – 11 June 2019

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report of the Children's Commissioner published 11 June 2019 entitled We need to talk: Access to speech and language therapy, what steps he is taking to end the postcode lottery in funding for speech and language therapy for children.

Caroline Dinenge

The NHS Long Term Plan recognises the importance of speech and language therapists and proposes that local areas design and implement models of care that are age appropriate, closer to home and bring together physical and mental health services.

The Department for Education with Public Health England is investing £1.9 million in training for health visitors and early years practitioners to promote speech, language and communication.

<https://bit.ly/2WE4UEo>