

A teal abstract graphic featuring a speech bubble shape in the upper right and flowing, organic lines that sweep across the page from the bottom left towards the top right. The graphic is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be visible through it.

Speech, Language and Communication

The Context; policy and practice

The Trust: Five year strategy



Vision

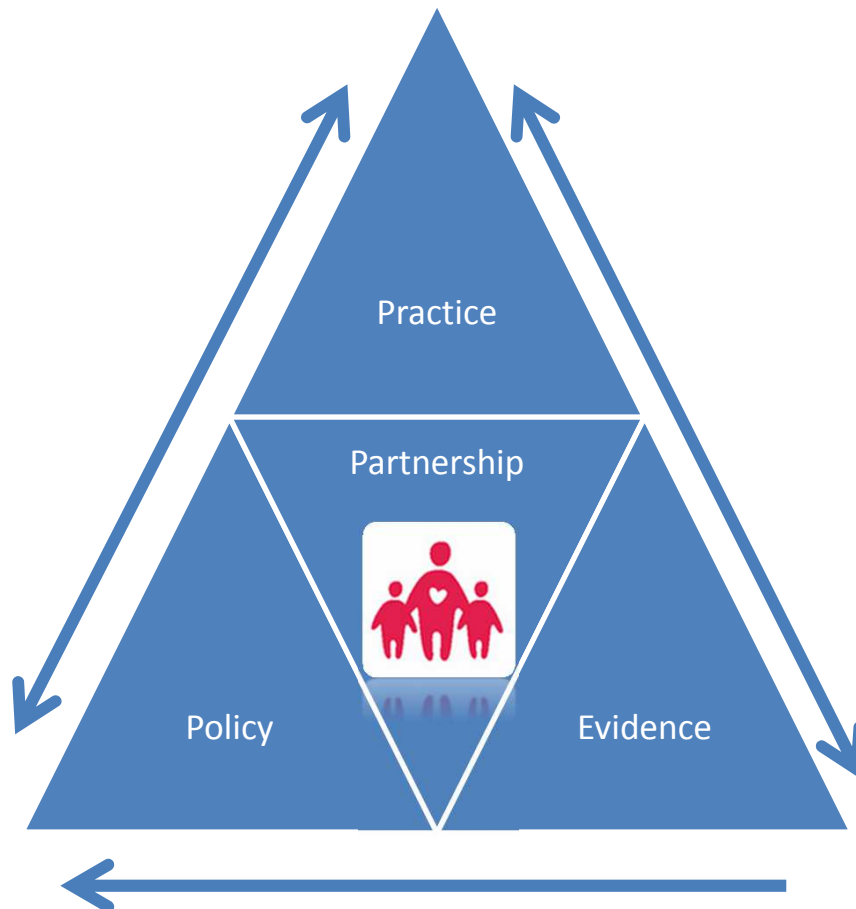
- All children are supported to communicate to the very best of their ability

Mission

- working together to build skills, knowledge and confidence in the children's workforce, built on a foundation of good practice, robust evidence and effective policy

Principles and roles of TCT

Principles



Role

1. Collecting and collating, translating, sharing the evidence
2. Using evidence to influence policy
3. Using evidence to support practice
4. Contributing to the evidence base
5. Communicating key messages
6. Harnessing, harmonising and maximising collective voice

Recent history

A TINY BIT OF HISTORY

...children's ability to communicate, to speak and to understand [is] taken for granted (Bercow)

A tiny bit of history



6 years ago...The Bercow Review of services for children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

Recommendations under 5 themes:

- Communication is crucial
- Early identification and intervention is essential
- A continuum of services designed around the family is needed
- Joint working is critical
- The current system is characterised by high variability and a lack of equity



Since Bercow

POLICY CONTEXT

Changes to all areas of public policy

- Education
 - Changing role of Local Authorities; expansion of academy and free school initiatives
 - More control for Head Teachers; budgetary changes
 - National curriculum changes
 - Changes to accountability, assessment
 - SEND reforms
- Health
 - Changes in commissioning
 - Patient choice - health watch groups
 - Health and Well Being Boards
 - Impact on speech and language therapy services



Some positives and negatives...

- **Communication** more central to the EYFS
- The Ofsted inspection framework – includes **communication**
- Changes to curriculum – **spoken language** included, though detail gone
- Changes to GCSE – **speaking and listening** not integral to grading
- Teacher standards include **articulacy**
- Difficult to influence **child health outcomes**

SEND reforms...

Lots of positives...BCRP evidence reflected in some areas; graduated response, CYP influencing decision making, 4 broad areas including **communication and interaction**

- **However**....legal requirements are weaker for the many children and young people with speech, language and communication needs who will not need an EHCP, but will continue to need targeted or specialist support.

We need to continue to evidence the need for support for all children with SLCN in order to achieve positive outcomes



To influence policy we need...

- To present a clear evidence based narrative
- To ease understanding of a complex issue
- To dissolve myths around speech, language and communication
- To be able to demonstrate how a focus on this area could make a difference



Influencing policy

- We use
- Any information from the evidence base; what works sites, academic papers, cohort studies, etc
- Any information from available data, e.g. education statistical returns
- Grey literature and information in the media
- Feedback and information from practitioners in our networks and projects
- Linking with partners collating evidence
- Using our own work
- To tie in our issue with policy makers' priorities; meeting with decision makers, feeding into APPGs, select committees, etc

Influencing policy

- **We want...**
- The workforce to have better knowledge and skills
- A greater understanding of communication generally and SLCN specifically
 - Prevalence
 - Impact
 - Solutions
- Children to have access to the right support at the right time to enable them to communicate to the best of their ability
- A policy context that allows this to happen in a planned, systematic and sustainable way

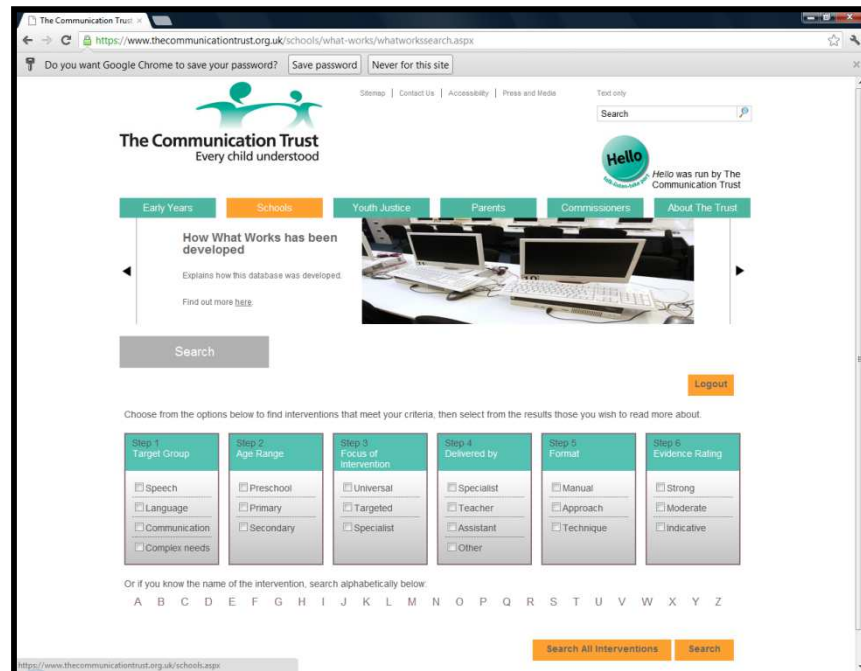
Current picture

EVIDENCE IN PRACTICE

National Focus on evidence based practice

- **NICE** ; guidance around clinical excellence
- **Educational Endowment Foundation**; finding out what works for children receiving pupil premium funding
- **Early Intervention Foundation**; looking at evidence for early intervention
- **What Works data base** for SLCN; based on BCRP work and developed in partnership with the Communication Trust

What works data base



The screenshot shows the 'What Works' search interface on the Communication Trust website. The page is titled 'The Communication Trust Every child understood' and features a navigation menu with categories: Early Years, Schools, Youth Justice, Parents, Commissioners, and About The Trust. A 'Hello' message indicates the user is logged in. Below the navigation, there is a section titled 'How What Works has been developed' with a 'Find out more [here](#)' link. A search bar is present, and a 'Logout' button is visible. The main content area is titled 'Choose from the options below to find interventions that meet your criteria, then select from the results those you wish to read more about.' It contains six filter panels: Step 1 Target Group (Speech, Language, Communication, Complex needs), Step 2 Age Range (Preschool, Primary, Secondary), Step 3 Focus of Intervention (Universal, Targeted, Specialist), Step 4 Delivered by (Specialist, Teacher, Assistant, Other), Step 5 Format (Manual, Approach, Technique), and Step 6 Evidence Rating (Strong, Moderate, Indicative). At the bottom, there is a search bar with the text 'Or if you know the name of the intervention, search alphabetically below:' and a list of letters A-Z. Two buttons, 'Search All Interventions' and 'Search', are located at the bottom right.

Appetite for evidence

- Over 8,000 people signed up to the what works for children with SLCN data base since it launched, with numbers continuing to grow
- There are challenges...gaps between policy, evidence and practice

Testing out evidence in practice

Interventions
from What
Works
Delivered
through a
framework of
professional
development



Funded by
the EEF; a
randomised
control trial
across 62
schools

Explaining the potential impact...to practitioners and local leaders



- Children with SLCN get 5 A-C GCSEs 12.9%
- The attainment gap between pupils with SLCN and that which all pupils achieve (with and without SEN) 56%

Still lots to do

CHALLENGES

Challenges of Terminology...e.g....in our education system

- Ofsted framework
- Expert panel for national curriculum
- Literacy framework (gone)
- New curriculum guidance
- Teacher standards
- School census data
- New code of practice (2014)
- Research / speech and language therapists

Communication skills

Oral language / Oracy

Speaking and listening

Spoken language

Articulacy

SLCN

Communication and Interaction

Terminology nightmare

Where is our language to talk about communication?

Challenges in commissioning

- There continues to be inequity of provision regionally
- A lack of understanding of SLCN at least partly as a public health and equalities concern, particularly for youngsters living in social deprivation
- The existence, effectiveness and availability of specialist services in different local areas often varies dramatically
- Often not as a result of any robust needs assessment or outcomes focus
- The same is true of the prioritisation of different groups and ages of children.
- Due to this and other factors, needs often go unmet

Challenges of identification

- **School data analysed as part of the BCRP found only 1.6% of pupils across mainstream schools are identified as having SLCN.**

Whilst BCRP showed identification has increased, many pupils' needs are still not being identified....



Challenges in influencing Education



- Challenges in promoting early identification and prevention
- Evidencing importance of quality workforce in early years
- Challenges in evidencing progress and impact on attainment
- Schools in particular mostly interested in attainment
- Speech and language interventions impact on speech and language – educational attainment may be further down the road
- Suggestions in election campaigning that spend on education won't be protected
- We need to encourage a long term view...can be tricky.

Challenges influencing Health



“We need to stop thinking of spend on healthcare for children and young people and instead think of investing in the health of children and young people as a route to improving the economic health of our nation.”

The Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) 201231

Some current drivers for policy

- Early identification
- Better outcomes for children in areas of deprivation
- Best start in life
- Resilience, character
- Health and Wellbeing
- Better attainment
- Implementation of SEND reforms