

**Born Talking: Using birth cohort data  
about speech, language & communication  
to inform policy and practice**  
*An ESRC seminar series*

Jan McAllister  
*Event 1*  
*London*  
*15<sup>th</sup> January 2015*



**Born Talking**

# The team

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# Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

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Bercow, J. (2008). *The Bercow Report: A Review of Services for Children and Young People (0–19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs*. Department for Children, Schools and Families.

# Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

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A child with speech, language and communication needs might:

- ✦ Have speech that is difficult to understand
- ✦ Struggle to say words or sentences
- ✦ Not understand words that are being used, or instructions that they hear
- ✦ Have difficulties knowing how to talk and listen to others in conversation



[http://www.ican.org.uk/What\\_is\\_the\\_issue/About%20SLCN.aspx](http://www.ican.org.uk/What_is_the_issue/About%20SLCN.aspx)

# Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)



## Chapter One: Communication is crucial

### The issue

*"Speech, language and communication is the most important thing in all our children ...  
It's their key to life"*

*Parent of a five year old child*

Bercow, J. (2008). *The Bercow Report: A Review of Services for Children and Young People (0-19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs*. Department for Children, Schools and Families.

# Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)



The screenshot shows the website for The Communication Trust, with the tagline 'Every child understood'. The page is titled 'Importance of communication' and features a navigation menu with 'Projects', 'Policy and practice', 'Resources', and 'Latest News'. A large image of three children is at the top. The main content area includes a sidebar with links like 'What do we do?', 'Importance of communication', 'Who we are here to support', 'Who are our supporters?', 'Previous projects', 'Contact us', and 'Testimonials'. The main text explains that communication is key to many things we want for ourselves and our children, and that it's fundamental to children's development. It also notes that children with speech, language communication needs (SLCN) are at high risk of difficulties with reading, writing and spelling.

## SLCNs

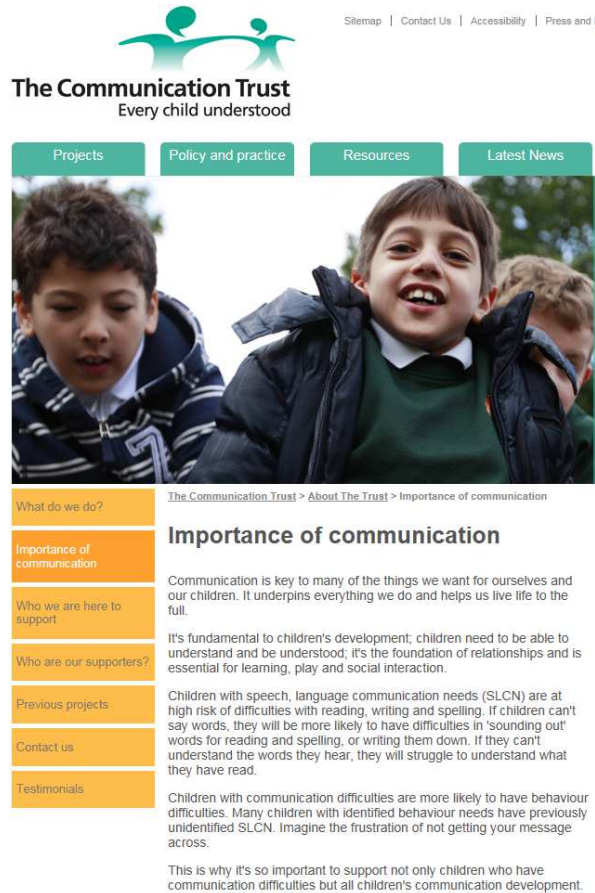
- ✦ Affect over 1 million children
- ✦ Often persistent
- ✦ More common in areas of poverty

[http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/2612/communication\\_difficulties\\_-\\_facts\\_and\\_stats.pdf](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/2612/communication_difficulties_-_facts_and_stats.pdf)

January 22, 2015



# Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)



The Communication Trust  
Every child understood

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Projects | Policy and practice | Resources | Latest News

**Importance of communication**

Communication is key to many of the things we want for ourselves and our children. It underpins everything we do and helps us live life to the full.

It's fundamental to children's development; children need to be able to understand and be understood; it's the foundation of relationships and is essential for learning, play and social interaction.

Children with speech, language communication needs (SLCN) are at high risk of difficulties with reading, writing and spelling. If children can't say words, they will be more likely to have difficulties in 'sounding out' words for reading and spelling, or writing them down. If they can't understand the words they hear, they will struggle to understand what they have read.

Children with communication difficulties are more likely to have behaviour difficulties. Many children with identified behaviour needs have previously unidentified SLCN. Imagine the frustration of not getting your message across.

This is why it's so important to support not only children who have communication difficulties but all children's communication development.

## SLCNs are associated with difficulties affecting

- ✦ Literacy
- ✦ Educational attainment
- ✦ Behaviour
- ✦ Crime & offending
- ✦ Mental health

[http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/2612/communication\\_difficulties\\_-\\_facts\\_and\\_stats.pdf](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/2612/communication_difficulties_-_facts_and_stats.pdf)

# Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

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## The Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication



The Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication

Economic impact

Hartshorne M. (2006). *The cost to the nation of children's poor communication*. London: I CAN.



# Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

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Research & services

Bercow, J. (2008). *The Bercow Report: A Review of Services for Children and Young People (0–19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs*. Department for Children, Schools and Families.

## Speech & language research is often...

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- ✦ Based on small samples
- ✦ Based on clinical samples
  - ✦ Unrepresentative?

# Representativeness?



- ✦ Australian study
- ✦ Predictors of seeking clinical help
  - ✦ Parental concern
  - ✦ Higher SES
  - ✦ English-speaking
  - ✦ Child characteristics – boys, twins

Child: care, health and development  
Original Article  
doi:10.1111/cch.12022

## Who gets help for pre-school communication problems? Data from a prospective community study

J. Skeat,<sup>††</sup> M. Wake,<sup>\*†‡</sup> O. C. Ukoumunne,<sup>§</sup> P. Eadie,<sup>\*\*\*</sup> L. Bretherton<sup>‡¶</sup> and S. Reilly<sup>\*†‡</sup>



# What is a birth cohort?

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## A type of longitudinal study

- ✦ Data collection starts around time of birth
- ✦ Regularly throughout life
- ✦ Typically a large sample
- ✦ Typically a very large number of variables
  - ✦ Health
  - ✦ Education
  - ✦ Socioeconomic factors etc
- ✦ Many are community samples

## Examples of birth cohorts

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### Some UK birth cohorts – national samples

- ✦ 1958: National Child Development Study (NCDS)
- ✦ 1970: British Cohort Study (BCS)
- ✦ 2000: Millenium Cohort Study (MCS)
- ✦ 2014: Life Study

## Examples of birth cohorts

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*UK, regional, e.g.*

Avon Longitudinal  
Study of Parents  
& Children

Growing up in  
Scotland

*UK, national, e.g.*

NCDS  
BCS70  
MCS  
Life Study

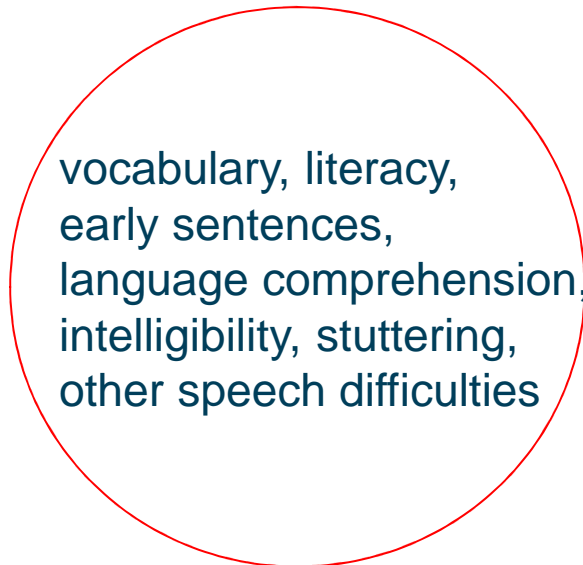
*Non-UK e.g.*

Early Language in  
Victoria Study  
(Australia)



# Examples of data in the national UK cohorts

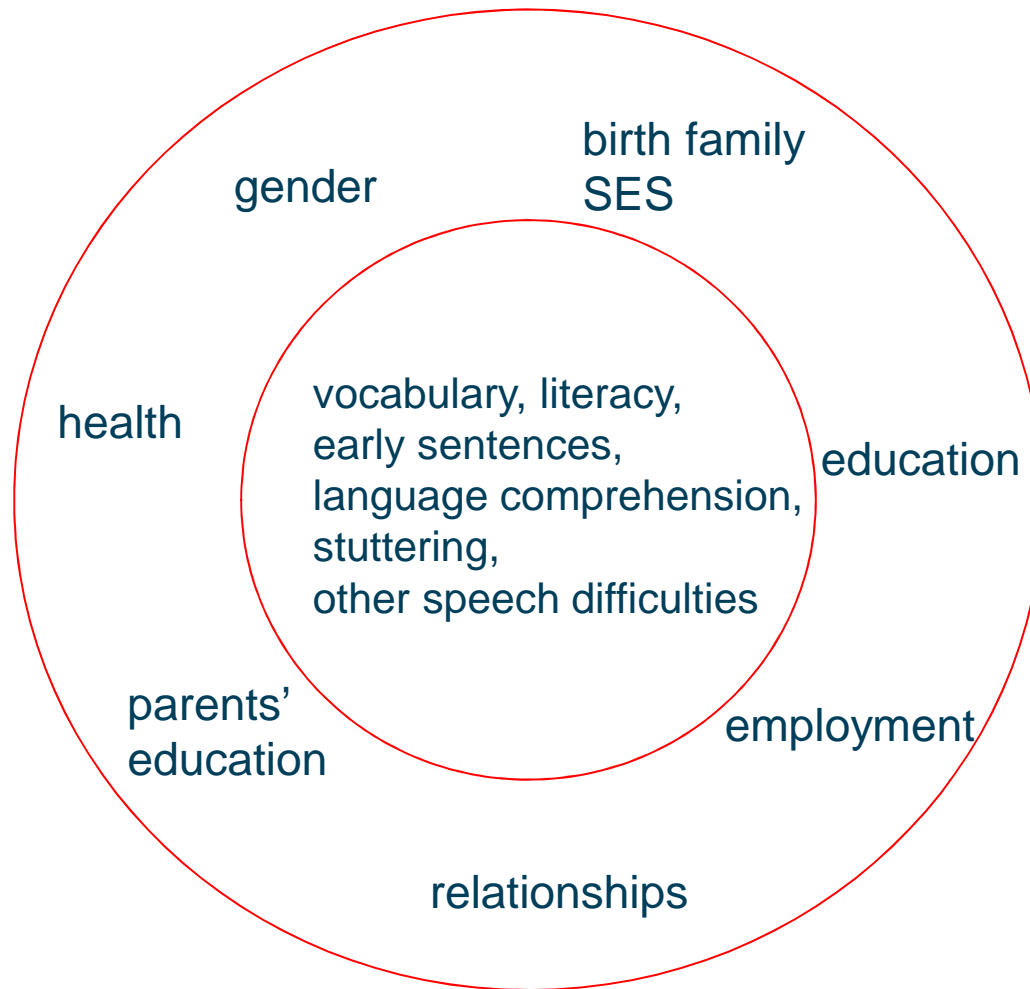
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A large red circle is drawn around the text 'vocabulary, literacy, early sentences, language comprehension, intelligibility, stuttering, other speech difficulties'.

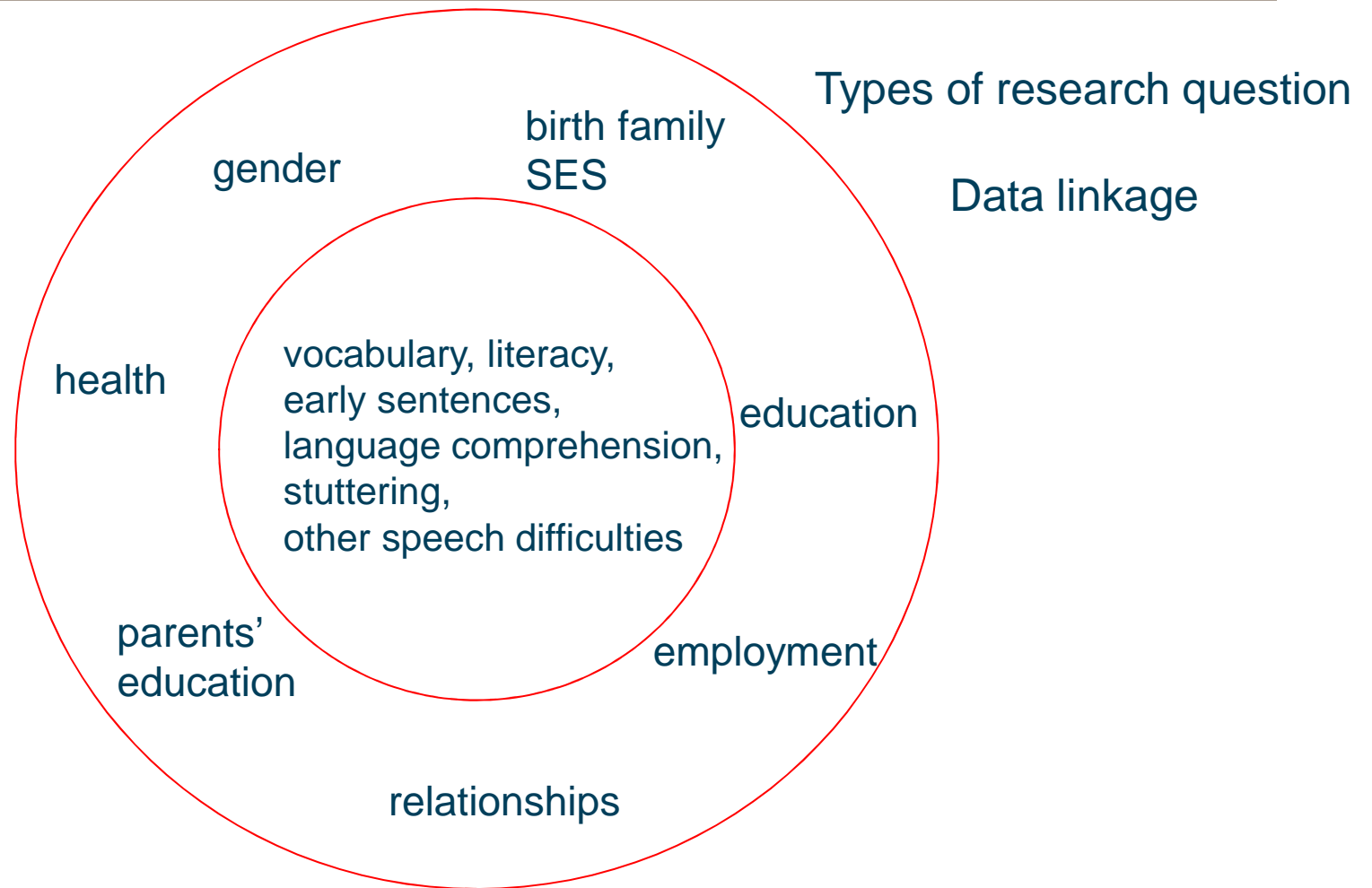
vocabulary, literacy,  
early sentences,  
language comprehension,  
intelligibility, stuttering,  
other speech difficulties

Consultation with  
stakeholders

# Examples of data in the national UK cohorts



# Examples of data in the national UK cohorts



## Students and practitioners

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**Some datasets are available for secondary data analysis – potential for**

- ✦ Research-led teaching in education, speech & language therapy, etc
- ✦ Practitioner-led research

# Impact of birth cohort research

theguardian

News | Sport | Comment | Culture | Business | Money | Life & style | Travel | Environment

News > Society > Poverty

## Child poverty: study shows fifth of UK youngsters severely affected

Project charting health and education prospects for 14,000 UK children finds child poverty on the rise

Jessica Shepherd, education correspondent  
The Guardian, Friday 15 October 2010



Children play on a burned-out car in Benwell, Tyneside, north-east England, where 40% of seven-year-olds live in poverty, according to a new study Photograph: Ted Ditchburn/North News & Pictures

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Poverty · Child benefit · Children · Social exclusion · Health

### Education

### UK news

### More news

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Ditchburn/North News & Pictures

## THE TIMES Education

News | Opinion | Business | Money | Sport | Life | Arts | Puzzles | Papers

Welcome to your preview of The Times

## Hundreds of pupils aged 5 still wearing nappies





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theguardian

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News > Society > Poverty

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## The Telegraph

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HOME » HEALTH » CHILDREN'S HEALTH

## Bullying at school affects health 40 years later

The effects of bullying last a lifetime with physical, mental and intellectual health still affected 40 years later, a major British study finds



# Impact of birth cohort research

theguardian

News | Sport | Comment | Culture

News > Society > Poverty

## Child poverty: study finds youngsters severely

Project charting health and education of children finds child poverty on the rise

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The Guardian, Friday 15 October 2010



Children play on a burned-out car in Benfleet, Essex. 40% of seven-year-olds live in poverty, according to a new study. Ditchburn/North News & Pictures

THE TIMES

## Child Health

News | Opinion | Business | Money | Sport | Life | Arts | Puzzles | Papers

### Having baby in bed raises cot death risk, NHS warns



Comment | Culture | Travel | Life | Women | Fashion | Gardening | Food | History | Relationships | Expat | Pets | Wellbeing | Expat Health | Pets Health | Britain's

### 40 years later

Study finds physical, mental and intellectual health still affected



# Impact of birth cohort research

theguardian

News | Sport | Comment | Culture

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## Child poverty: study youngsters severely

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Children play on a burned-out car in Benliff, where 40% of seven-year-olds live in poverty, at Ditchburn/North News & Pictures

THE TIMES

## Child Health

News | Opinion | Business | Money | Sport | Life | Arts | Puzzles | Papers

### Having baby in bed raises cot death risk,

- Impact on policy and commissioning



Comment | Culture | Travel | Life | Women | Fashion | Gardening | Food | History | Relationships | Expat | Pets | Wellbeing | Expat Health | Pets Health | Britain's

### th 40 years later

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## Aims of the seminar series include ...

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- ✦ Familiarizing stakeholders with the resources and their potential
- ✦ Introducing some practical skills
  - ✦ Increase research capacity
  - ✦ Use for teaching
- ✦ Consulting with a range of stakeholders to identify research questions
- ✦ Influencing teams collecting birth cohort data

## Structure of the remainder of the series

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- ✦ 5 further seminars in 2015/16
- ✦ London, Norwich, Newcastle and Bristol
- ✦ Content and structure is still to be finalised

# Today's session

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11:15-12:00	Birth cohorts: the funder's perspective	Bridget Taylor (ESRC Senior Policy Manager, Big Data 1 & Life Study)
12:00-12:45	Speech, language and communication in the birth cohorts: what there is and how to access it	Hersh Mann (UK Data Service)
12:45-13:45	Lunch	
13:45-14:30	Speech, language and communication needs: the current landscape	Wendy Lee (The Communication Trust)
14:30-15:15	How to influence commissioning of services: some case histories	Marie Gascoigne (Better Communication)
15:15-15:30	Tea break	
15:30-17:00	Discussion	



## Aims today's session ...

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- ✦ Introduce some basic issues
- ✦ Get your input about
  - ✦ How we should address our aims
  - ✦ What sorts of research questions we should be asking
  - ✦ How birth cohort data/findings could be useful in your work
  - ✦ What the remainder of the series should look like

Any questions or comments?