NHS
Health Education England

Evidence Brief: Speech and Language

Contents

Produced by the HEE Knowledge Management team Evidence Briefs offer a quick overview of the published reports, research, and evidence on a workforce-related topic.

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Key publications – the big picture

Supporting the training and development of speech and language therapy assistant practitioners RCSLT Position Statement, 2022 , Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
In collaboration with the 13 other allied health professional organisations, the RCSLT raised this wide variability in a joint position statement. The statement calls for all AHP support workers to have equitable access to "consistent and sustainable funding for education and professional development opportunities to support safe and effective patient care" and for "UK-wide career development and progression frameworks for AHP support workers, with universal access to funding for training".

Urgent action needed to meet growing healthcare demand, 2022, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
Our members, people having speech and language therapy, patient organisations and charities continue to raise the alarm about how speech and language therapists will tackle ever lengthening waiting lists.
This is an issue which began long before the pandemic with people already struggling to access the vital speech and language therapy, they, and their families need.

The Allied Health Professions (AHPs) Strategy for England, NHS England, 2022
This strategy is a catalyst for change. Wherever you work, every member of our AHP community has a part in realising our collective ambitions through its delivery. I therefore encourage you to take a moment to consider how the AHP community can enable the change required to deliver future care today.

Bercow: 10 Years On, 2021

Bercow: Ten Years On is a report on the state of provision for children's speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) in England. The report has been published by I CAN , the children's communication charity, and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT).

We need to talk: Access to speech and language therapy, 2019 Children's Commissioner UK
This report is the first time data has been brought together to show how much local areas spend on SLT services. This was previously hidden – there is no publicly available, reliable information about what is being spent, and there is no single body to hold to account for that spending.

HEE Star

More resources and tools are available in the AHP Quick Reference Guides Upskilling section of the HEE Star. Alternatively, search for 'Allied Health' in the search bar.

Statistics

HCPC Diversity Data Report 2021: speech and language therapists
This factsheet provides the key EDI information for the speech and language therapists and how the demographics of this group compare to the demographics of HCPC registrants overall.

HEE National Data Programme

HEE staff can look at the National Data Warehouse (NDL) SharePoint site to find out more about datasets and Tableau products.

Published Peer Reviewed Research

Leadership, coaching and education

Mentoring Underrepresented Students in Speech-Language Pathology: Effects of Didactic Training, Leadership Development, and Research Engagement, 2022 *Abstract only**
Forty-six participants in three cohorts completed the yearlong program in three consecutive years. Positive outcomes included program completion, degree completion, student perceptions of program benefit, completion of innovative community-engaged and research projects, and dissemination of scholarly work.

Professional diversity in leadership – Inclusion of the smaller professions., 2022 *Abstract only**
There are 14 Allied Health Professions (AHPs) in England with approximately 170,000 AHPs working within the NHS. Physiotherapists represent the largest group of AHPs with approximately 61,000 registered with the Health and Care Professions Council, whilst Prosthetics and Orthotics represent the smallest profession with approximately 1000 registrants.

Not too little, not too much: supervisor perceptions of work-readiness of speech-language pathology graduates, 2021 *Abstract only**
The four themes captured the skills that the supervisors perceived as critical for graduate work-readiness:

Independence; Attitude; Teamwork; and Learning. A tension was identified within these themes, as supervisors' understanding of work-readiness was bounded by an expectation that graduates are able to moderate how they transfer and apply their graduate skills in their workplace according to the complexity of client needs and the workplace setting.

A qualitative study exploring experiences and challenges of combining clinical academic training with family life, 2021
Although people manage to find ways to successfully combine clinical academic roles with family life, findings highlight a need to identify ways of supporting and encouraging trainees with caring responsibilities.

'How did he say that?' interpreting students' written reflections on interprofessional education scenarios with speech language therapists, 2021 *Abstract only**
Student reflections showed that they had found the experience very beneficial, with comments focusing on the interpreters' code of ethics; understanding each other's roles and how these differ in the SLT context; collaboration between professionals; competence; and the importance of practice for problem-solving.

Who Coaches the Coaches? The Development of a Coaching Model for Experiential Learning, 2021
We recommend practices for coaching that can support gains for students and faculty in experiential, project-based, interdisciplinary courses.

Why shouldn't we do that on placement if we're doing it in the real world? Differences between undergraduate and graduate identities in speech and language therapy, 2020 *Abstract only**

Data analysis revealed that undergraduate professional identity was characterised by dependency, self-centredness (as opposed to patient-centredness), and a naïve role concept. Graduate identity on the other hand included expectations of self-sufficiency, patient-centredness and a more nuanced perception of the professional role.

[An optimal environment for placement learning: listening to the voices of speech and language therapy students](#), 2020 *Abstract only**
This study supports quality assurance within the practice education of student SLTs and highlights aspects of an optimal learning environment that practice educators can strive to develop. In parallel, this study points to the need for improved supports from university personnel and placement site managers, and an increased need for student preparedness and self-reflection.

[Capitalising on the transformational opportunities of early clinical academic career training for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals](#), 2020 *Abstract only**
Stakeholders need to recognise that a cultural shift about the purposes of research training from a transactional to transformative approaches is required to facilitate the development of NMAHPS clinical academics, to enable them to contribute to innovative health and patient care.

[Evaluating a specialist education programme for nurses and allied health professionals working in older people care: A qualitative analysis of motivations and impact](#), 2020 *Abstract only**
Understanding the motivations to undertake a specialist gerontological programme and the impacts on practitioners and older people care and services will help inform the continuing professional development agenda for nurses and allied health professionals working in this field of practice.

[Counselling training for speech–language therapists working with people affected by post-stroke aphasia: a systematic review](#), 2019 *Abstract only**
Training in generic counselling skills and brief psychological approaches with support from mental health professionals in the stroke workplace enabled speech–language therapists to feel knowledgeable, skilled and confident to address the psychological well-being of people affected by post-stroke aphasia.

[Towards a theoretical framework for Integrated Team Leadership (IgTL)](#), 2018 *Athens log in required**
This paper presents a framework for the leadership of integrated, interprofessional health, and social-care teams (IgTs) based on a previous literature review and a qualitative study with professional and nonprofessional staff based in eight community teams in the United Kingdom.

Community, primary, secondary and tertiary care

[An initial framework for use of ultrasound by speech and language therapists in the UK: Scope of practice, education and governance](#), 2022
The framework provides an adaptable model for supporting expansion of ultrasound across a range of Speech and Language Therapy specialities. By taking an integrated approach, this multifaceted solution provides the foundation for those with speech, voice and swallowing disorders to benefit from advances in imaging-informed healthcare.

School-based allied health interventions for children and young people affected by neurodisability: a systematic evidence map, 2022 *Abstract only**
Our interactive evidence map can be used to help stakeholders prioritise the interventions most in need of further evaluation and implementation research, including tiered models of universal, targeted, and intensive allied health support.

An integrated care systems model approach for speech and language therapy head and neck cancer services in England: service development and re-design in Cheshire and Merseyside, 2022
ICMs put the patient at the centre of care and have reported benefits for experience of care and clinical outcomes. Navigating organisational structures is complex. The Buurtzorg model provides a practical and theoretical framework to support organisational change.

Cultural and Linguistic Practice with Children with Developmental Language Disorder: Findings from an International Practitioner Survey, 2021 *Abstract only**
The paper highlights both the universal importance of cultural and linguistic competence in managing young children's needs and indicates that in most cases professionals do not think they have the necessary expertise to work with cultural and linguistic diversity.

Principles and philosophies for speech and language therapists working with people with primary progressive aphasia: an international expert consensus, 2021
The seven subthemes were knowing people deeply, preventing disasters, practical issues, professional development, connectedness, barriers and limitations, and peer support and mentoring towards a shared understanding.

Regional variation in practitioner employment in general practices in England: a comparative analysis, 2020
This study provides analysis of a more detailed and complete primary care workforce dataset than has previously been available in England. In describing the workforce composition at this time, the study provides a foundation for future comparative analyses of changing practitioner deployment before the introduction of primary care networks, and for evaluating outcomes and costs that may be associated with these changes.

What helps and hinders the provision of healthcare that minimises treatment burden and maximises patient capacity? A qualitative study of stroke health professional perspectives, 2019
Our findings have important implications for the design and implementation of stroke care pathways, emphasising the importance of removing barriers to health professional provision of person-centred care.

The role of speech and language therapists in the intensive care unit, 2019
Speech and language therapists support and enhance the process of laryngeal weaning alongside the rehabilitation of speech and swallowing as part of the multidisciplinary team. Examples are provided of the types of interventions that are used and technological innovations that may enhance rehabilitation of oropharyngeal impairments.

Speech, Language, and Communication in a Public Health Context: A UK Perspective with Potential Global Application - An Opinion Piece, 2019 *Abstract only**
This opinion piece discusses speech and language therapy in the context of public health, clarifies the terminology, and proposes different approaches to demonstrate its influence

associated with its objectives. The content has been informed by a Working Party of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (2017-2018).

Role progression and development

Impact of COVID-19 on digital practice in UK paediatric speech and language therapy and implications for the future: A national survey, 2022
During COVID-19, paediatric SLTs' recognition and acceptance of how technology can augment practice has accelerated, with particular value being placed on inclusivity, choice, training, resources, leadership and indication of effectiveness.

Speech and language therapy service provision in spinal injury units compared to major trauma centres in England: Are services matched? 2022 *Abstract only**
This study identified variations in the levels of speech and language therapy staffing, seniority, service delivery and access to instrumental assessments for dysphagia between major trauma centres and spinal injury units. None of the services complied with national staffing recommendations.

Scoping opinion: Speech and language therapists' views on extending their role to the urgent ear, nose and throat pathway, 2021 *Abstract only**
Clinical implications of this study Expert SLTs communicated strongly that SLTs would be a beneficial addition to the 2ww assessment clinic for patients with dysphonia and dysphagia. For this role to be piloted and implemented successfully, their concerns around increased responsibility, potential for litigation and missed diagnoses need to be addressed.

Outcome measurement in speech and language therapy: a digital journey, 2020

This project illustrates that the implementation of a digital solution is about more than introducing new technology. This is part of a larger system change, and working collaboratively to identify what data to gather, how to gather it and make use of the information, along with consideration of the practicalities and minimising the barriers to implementation, is essential.

Relationship between labour force satisfaction, wages and retention within the UK National Health Service: a systematic review of the literature, 2020
Pay was found to influence satisfaction, which in turn affected retention. An increase in wages alone is unlikely to be sufficient to ameliorate the concerns of NHS workers.

What are the implications of climate change for speech and language therapists? 2020 *Abstract only**
Despite other challenges currently facing SLTs, climate change and its increasing effects on communication disorders and dysphagia is difficult to ignore. SLTs owe it to their clients, the wider community, low- and middle-income countries, the economy, and the future to take action.

Speech-Language Pathology Management for Adults With COVID-19 in the Acute Hospital Setting: Initial Recommendations to Guide Clinical Practice, 2020
Speech-language pathologists play a critical role in the assessment, management, and treatment of patients with COVID-19. Several important considerations need to be made in order to meet the needs of this unique patient population.

Developing a consolidated research framework for clinical allied health professionals practising in the UK, 2020
The consolidated framework was entitled 'Shaping Better Practice Through Research: A Practitioner Framework' by

stakeholders, thus emphasising its ambition to embed research activity into practice.

[Building clinical academic leadership capacity: sustainability through partnership](#), 2018 *Abstract only**
A national clinical academic training programme has been developed in England for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals but is insufficient to build a critical mass to have a significant impact on improved patient care.

Workforce perspectives and mental health

[Perspectives on speech and language pathology practices and service provision in adult critical care settings in Ireland and international settings: A cross-sectional survey](#), 2022 *Abstract only**
SLP input in CC is limited in terms of dedicated posts, multidisciplinary team (MDT) involvement, consistent management approaches and training opportunities internationally. Implications of findings are discussed.

[Joining the workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic: views of Allied Health Profession students](#), 2022 *Abstract only**
Although the transition from student to practitioner continues to be a stressful period, only a minority of participants reported COVID-19 as an explicit stressor.

['There's this big fear around palliative care because it's connected to death and dying': A qualitative exploration of the perspectives of undergraduate students on the role of the speech and language therapist in palliative care,](#) 2022 *Abstract only**
This study revealed that undergraduate student speech and language therapists collectively agree that there is a role for speech and language therapy in palliative care. Although

students acknowledged that speech and language therapists can make a positive difference to patients' lives, and academic lectures were positively received, insufficient exposure to palliative care has resulted in fear, uncertainty and a lack of confidence amongst student speech and language therapists.

[Wellbeing and coping of UK nurses, midwives and allied health professionals during COVID-19-a cross-sectional study](#), 2022 *Abstract only**
This workforce would benefit from additional support/services to prevent further deterioration in mental health and wellbeing and optimise workforce retention.

[Well-being, job satisfaction, stress and burnout in speech-language pathologists: A review](#), 2020 *Abstract only**
This is the first review using a systematic approach to focus on well-being, satisfaction, stress and burnout in SLPs and suggests more work needs to be done to help identify and improve the well-being of the workforce.

[Perspectives of speech and language therapists in paediatric palliative care: an international exploratory study](#), 2020 *Abstract only**
This study confirms that SLTs internationally have a role in the management of communication and swallowing impairments in a PPC context. However, whether current training and resources adequately support SLTs in this role remains questionable.

[UK speech and language therapists' views and reported practices of discourse analysis in aphasia rehabilitation](#), 2020 *Abstract only**
Clinicians were highly engaged and relatively active in at least some aspects of discourse analysis practice. Interventions that target individual clinicians as well as organizations and systems

are needed to improve the uptake of discourse analysis in practice.

Dysphagia and mealtime difficulties in dementia: Speech and language therapists' practices and perspectives, 2020
The results provide valuable insight into the issues facing SLTs practising in this area. The SLTs surveyed considered dysphagia a core part of their role when supporting people with dementia; however, respondents' views on mealtime difficulties varied. This highlights the need to establish consensus guidelines on the SLT's role in order to avoid variations in service delivery that could negatively impact the health and well-being of people with dementia.

Burnout syndrome in speech-language pathologists and audiologists: a review, 2020
The few studies which examined the prevalence of BS in speech pathologists obtained somewhat different findings. The small number of studies and wide variety of instruments used to assess BS in speech pathologists prevent the development of a systematic review with more robust statistical procedures to examine the occurrence of burnout in this professional category.

Association between burnout and sense of coherence among speech and language therapists: an exploratory study in Italy, 2019
The Anova test showed that job tenure was not associated to job burnout. The T-test showed that speech and language therapists having a low SoC exhibited significantly higher emotional exhaustion, higher cynicism, and lower professional efficacy (t=-7.190 d.f.=215 p<.001) when compared to those having a high SoC.

"Guiding them to take responsibility": exploring UK speech and language therapists' views of supporting self-management of aphasia, 2019 *Abstract only**
Making the transition to longer-term adaptation, adjustment and condition management is a complex and challenging task which is likely to require tailored support for many SSWA and their families. Supported self-management may help to facilitate this process; however, SLTs require a structured and clearly defined approach and training to assist implementation in practice.

What helps and hinders the provision of healthcare that minimises treatment burden and maximises patient capacity? A qualitative study of stroke health professional perspectives, 2019
Barriers and facilitators to the provision of healthcare that minimises treatment burden and maximises patient capacity were reported under five themes: healthcare system structure (e.g. care coordination and autonomous working); resources (e.g. availability of ward nurses and community psychologists); knowledge and awareness (e.g. adequate time and materials for optimal information delivery); availability of social care (e.g. waiting times for home adaptations or extra social support) and patient complexity (e.g. multimorbidity).

Diversity and inclusion

Diversity in the profession, 2022
The speech and language therapy student population is much less ethnically diverse than the student population as a whole.

"Raising the curtain on the equality theatre": a study of recruitment to first healthcare job post-qualification in the UK National Health Service, 2022

The Healthcare Workforce Equity + Diversity Lens we have developed can help to 'raise the curtain on the equality theatre' and inform more inclusive approaches to recruitment such as contextualised recruitment or effective allyship between employers and universities.

Speech-Language Pathology Graduate Admissions: Implications to Diversify the Workforce, 2020 *Abstract only**
Based on results obtained as well as knowledge from admission considerations for other professional degree programs and trends in the field, the authors present promising undergraduate supports and holistic admission processes to recruit diverse students to graduate programs.

The challenge of diversity in the allied health professionals, 2020 *Abstract only**
Although the Allied Health Professions (AHPs) are a diverse range of professions in terms of their skill set. The workforce which makes up the professions lacks diversity.

Competency Frameworks

Allied Health Professions' Support Worker Competency, Education, and Career Development Framework, 2021, HEE
Health Education England (HEE) has published this AHP Support Worker Competency, Education and Career Development Framework to maximise the contribution of the AHP support workforce to delivering safe and effective care.

The standards of proficiency for speech and language therapists, HCPC
In August 2022, we updated our standards of proficiency for the first time since 2015. The changes, which will come into effect on 1 September 2023, have been made following an extensive period of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders.

Development of a digital competency framework for UK Allied Health Professionals, 2020
This framework has been developed to support the enhancement of digital competence (knowledge and skills associated with digital technology in practice) for all allied health professions from band 3 to band 9. It is intended to be a developmental and supportive tool that can enable all staff to meet their digital potential.

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