

The *Bercow: Ten Years On* report, published in March 2018, reviewed support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) in England and found an inequitable and inaccessible system. The report made 47 recommendations to national leaders. One year on, significant progress has been made, but there is much more still to do.

### ☆ **Key successes**

17 of the 47 recommendations have been achieved. Key successes include:

- ✓ Experts in speech, language and communication have worked with the Department for Education and Public Health England on closing the word gap.
- ✓ Government are developing clear messages and information for parents about supporting early language development.
- ✓ Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission have been asked to design a further programme of local area SEND inspections, and inspectors have been trained in SLCN.
- ✓ The Government's SEND System Leadership Board will focus on joint commissioning.
- ✓ Public Health England has commissioned a training programme for health visitors which will include information on identifying and supporting SLCN.

### **But more needs to be done**

This significant progress is welcome. But much more needs to be done to improve the life chances of the 1.4 million children and young people in the UK who have speech, language and communication needs.

### **5 Five key areas:**

Urgent action is required in five key areas:

1. **Joint commissioning:** This is key to ending the postcode lottery for children with SLCN; national leadership and increased accountability are needed to ensure joint commissioning happens on the ground.
2. **Support for long-term speech, language and communication needs:** While the Government has taken welcome steps to support early language development, there has been little action for children with long-term SLCN who need support during and well beyond their early years.
3. **Professional development of those working with children and young people:** School and college staff need to be supported to know how to develop children's language and communication skills, as well as how to identify pupils with SLCN.
4. **Incentivising schools:** Schools need to be supported to give speech, language and communication the priority it deserves, through guidance and in the inspection framework.
5. **Vulnerable groups:** All practitioners working with children and young people at higher risk of communication needs need to receive training, and speech and language therapy services should be specially commissioned for these groups of young people.



### **Speak up for communication and speech, language and communication needs**

We all have a role to play in speaking up for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs, their families and the professionals working with them.

The dedicated Bercow: Ten Years On – 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Update web page includes a range of resources to support you: <https://bit.ly/2TVHnxS>