

JUNE 2020

Well it feels like months since members of the Improving Access to Communication Services and Support Programme has written anything for the SEND newsletter but that doesn't mean that we have gone into total hibernation during this lockdown period.

Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Social, Emotional, Mental Health

As many of you will be aware there has been an increasing international focus on the link between speech, language and communication needs and social, emotional, mental health. Research has shown that

- 81% of children with formally identified emotional and behavioural disorders have significantly below average language abilities (Hollo, A, Wehby, J.H. and Oliver, R.M. (2014).
- 45% of young people referred to mental health services had a higher order language impairment (difficulties with understanding inference and abstract language) compared to 15% of young people in a comparison group (Cohen, N., Farnia, F. and Im-Bolter, N. (2013).
- Children and young people with communication difficulties are at increased risk of social, emotional and behaviour difficulties and mental health problems. So, identifying their speech, language needs early are crucial for the health and well-being (NICE Quality Standard- Early Years: promoting health and wellbeing in Under 5s).

➔ Supporting children and young people's mental health services

During Mental Health Awareness Week in May the RCSLT published a number of resources to help raise awareness of this issue. For example:



Supporting children and young people's mental health services

<https://www.rcslt.org//media/docs/RCSLTCYPMHSA4Digital.pdf?la=en&hash=ADEF0D30638C3E9623E151BC96FDD9BBCA532ADC>

Just prior to Covid-19 the SEND Board initiated steps to hold a multiagency workshop to consider what would be required to improve our support for children, young people and adults with SLCN and SEMH. An initial date for the workshop was set and then, understandably, stood down due to Covid-19. However, we are currently in discussions with Devon Children and Families Partnership to agree how and when to proceed. Please watch this space as we would really appreciate your input!