



RCSLT response
to
Public Health Legislation in Scotland: a Consultation
Jan. 2007

RCSLT welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

On reading the consultation document it is apparent the particular legislation under review is not directly relevant to Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) practice.

However RCSLT wish to alert those carrying out the consultation to the needs of people with communication support needs (CSN) in Scotland. It is estimated there are 250,000 people with CSN in Scotland including the following groups;

- **People with literacy difficulties** e.g. travellers, so called “hard to reach” communities, people living in areas of deprivation.
- **Older people** – who are more likely to have sensory impairments and literacy difficulties.

People who have

- o Had a **stroke** (10% of people will have CSN following a stroke)
- o Sustained a **head injury / traumatic brain injury**
- o **Mental illness including depression**
- o **Dementia and Alzheimer’s**
- o **Progressive neurological conditions** e.g. Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neurone Disease, Parkinson’s.
- o **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (or “Autism”)**
- o **Learning disability**
- o **Cancers – oral and laryngeal cancers, brain tumours**
- o **Cerebral Palsy**
- o **Sensory impairments**

RCSLT ask that the needs of the CSN population are considered in all public health legislation particularly in reference to any obligations on authorities to inform, advise (e.g. through helplines) or warn members of the public in respect of physical or other environmental hazards they may encounter.

Public health information, advice and warnings must be made “communication accessible” to all of Scotland’s citizens and legislation should reflect this requirement.

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