

Lord Timpson
Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice
Ministerial Correspondence and Support Team,
9th Floor, 102 Petty France,
London
SW1H 9AJ

Dear Lord Timpson,

14 October 2024

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) in the youth justice system

Congratulations on your appointment and I wish you all the very best in this important role.

In May 2023, the Equality and Social Justice Committee published **60% - Giving them a voice: Speech, language and communication needs in the youth justice system**.¹ It found that at least 60 per cent of young people involved in the youth justice system have a speech, language or communication difficulty, compared with an estimated 10 per cent for children and young people as a whole. We made a series of recommendations aimed at addressing our findings. In response the Welsh Government accepted three of our recommendations, accepted in principle a further two, and rejected two.²

Since publication of the report we have been keen to hold the Welsh Government to account for progress and have exchanged views several times in correspondence.³ Our most recent letter (a copy of which is enclosed) asked for the Welsh Government to respond to additional issues highlighted by

¹ Equality and Social Justice Committee, **60% - Giving them a voice: Speech, language and communications needs in the youth justice system**, May 2023

² Equality and Social Justice Committee, **Response by the Welsh Government, agenda item 4.4**, 12 June 2023

³ All previous correspondence is listed on the inquiry page under "issue history"
<https://business.senedd.wales/mgIssueHistoryChronology.aspx?llid=39105&Opt=2>

the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT).⁴ The RCSLT's concerns include uncertainty regarding the future of Turnaround Programme funding beyond its scheduled end in March 2025. We note that several SLCN therapists have been employed across Wales due in part to Turnaround Programme funding, however no announcement has been made for funding arrangements post March 2025. We would be grateful if you could please confirm arrangements for a successor to that programme including whether funding can be secured over a multi-annual timeframe.

We also would welcome your view on how to foster greater engagement and collaboration with Welsh Government on these matters at both ministerial and officials level. We hope that you will be able respond positively to our request for information. We would appreciate a response at your earliest convenience and no later than by 8 November 2024.

With thanks and kind regards,



Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

⁴ Equality and Social Justice Committee, [Correspondence from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists](#), agenda item 4.1, 30 September 2024