



IASLT | *The Irish Association of
Speech + Language Therapists*

The IASLT welcomes the publication of the Mental Health Commission final report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

The IASLT welcomes this week's publication of the Mental Health Commission's CAMHS report.

Commenting on the report IASLT Chairperson Aine Lawlor said:

“Speech and Language disorders often overlap with social, emotional and behavioural challenges in childhood. Language is involved in every aspect of mental health assessment and treatment. Research has evidenced an association between a young person’s communicative competence and their mental health. Many referrals to CAMHS have unidentified communication difficulties. Timely access to Speech and Language therapy is urgently needed. SLTs need to be recognised as core members of the team and identified by the Mental Health Commission as such. We thank Dr Finnerty for her work on this report and the opportunity to meet with her as part of this review to represent IASLT’s views”.

In light of this report IASLT agrees with the identified actions and recommends:

- Staffing allocations as set out in Vision for Change do not reflect the requirements for the Speech and Language Therapy profession and these should be reviewed. We were reassured to see the CAMHS report reflect this suggestion.
- There is a lack of career progression leading to difficulties with retention. We need to incentivise SLTs and to support them along a career pathway that recognises the development of specialist skills. IASLT supports the development of additional clinical specialist roles and establishment of advanced practice roles for SLT within CAMHS to further evidence-based practice, research activity and specialist education in this field.
- Practice tutors are required to support ongoing student placements which in turn will support recruitment.



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IASLT continues to express concern in relation to the under development of SLT in adult mental health and adult mental health in intellectual disability services and are concerned in relation to what happens to service users when they turn 18 and have no service available to transition into. There are a very small number of SLTs working in adult Mental Health services nationally, with no adult specific SLT managers and SLT is not part of the adult ADHD model of care.

Access to the full range of multi-disciplinary supports in mental health services is vital for adults and children. All children have a right to enjoy the highest attainable physical and mental health standards under Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Ireland in 1992. We must address the issues raised in this report and restore trust in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Ireland.

To note: IASLT is the recognised professional organisation for Speech and Language Therapists in Ireland. It establishes and maintains professional standards and represents Speech and Language Therapists at national and international levels. Membership represents over 1100 Speech and Language Therapists. Our vision is that ‘Everyone will have the right to live well, irrespective of communication or eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties.’

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