



Speech and Language  
Therapy transforms lives

**GIVING  
VOICE**  
...as an  
independent  
practitioner



The RCSLT's Giving Voice campaign is demonstrating how speech and language therapy makes a difference to people with speech, language and communication needs, their families, and the wider society. We are showing what speech and language therapy is and the positive impact it has. Giving Voice is also demonstrating that this vital service is cost-effective and value for money.

## Why get involved?

**All speech and language therapists and our service users will benefit** from better understanding of speech language and communication difficulties.

**You have great stories to share** and, as an independent therapist, you are free to work directly with your service users and the local press to tell personal, memorable stories about how speech and language therapy transforms lives.

**Develop professional skills** by engaging with local media and collaborating locally with others involved in Giving Voice plus build your own links with local commissioners.



## Boost your performance

“For ASLTIP members, the Giving Voice campaign has emphasised unity within our profession. Whatever our area of practice, we have succeeded in coming together to campaign. All independent therapists should seek to be on this journey with our RCSLT colleagues.”

Hilary Gardner, Chair ASLTIP, Lecturer in Human, Communication Sciences, Sheffield University

## Things you can do

**Exercise your democratic rights** and arrange to meet your local MP or councillor to explain the basics of speech and language therapy.

**Collaborate with other local therapists to run awareness-raising events.** The community will be interested to know which services are available.

**Pitch patient stories to the local press and make reference to the campaign.** Tell the story of your working life, explaining how SLT transforms lives!



## Top 5 campaign tips for SLTs working in independent practice

1. **Be true to your identity:** passionate about the needs of people with communication and swallowing difficulties, keen to promote the work you do.
2. **Be opportunistic:** include Giving Voice in promotional work you're already undertaking. Who did you work with when you set yourself up in independent practice? Could they help again with the campaign?
3. **They work for you:** look up your local politicians' surgery times and arrange to give them an introduction to speech and language therapy. Why not get practical, and explain how they could make their offices and surgeries more communication accessible?
4. **Social media matters:** if you're not already relying on social media to promote your work, explore the Giving Voice campaign channels to get started. Linking your campaigning activities with your business via social media can help to raise awareness of both.
5. **People power:** think beyond your professional network. Do you have links with schools, religious groups or sports groups who could work with you to show that communication is key?

## Media star

Lucy Lawson was one of the first therapists working in independent practice to spot the benefits of combining the Giving Voice campaign with her own promotional activity. Lucy appeared in the York Press in an interview headlined, 'Hope that King's Speech changes attitude towards stammering'.

## Singing SLTs' praises!

Alex Wheldrake works at the independent hospital Vista Healthcare in Hampshire. As soon as she was in post, Alex set up a patient choir to raise awareness of the importance of communication both to hospital colleagues and the wider community: Communication Rocks (see photo overleaf). Launched at a fun-filled event in the hospital grounds, the choir went on to win the 2012 Giving Voice Service User Award. The choir sign and sing all their songs and have special Giving Voice T-shirts to wear.

Visit: [www.givingvoiceuk.org](http://www.givingvoiceuk.org) to download more campaign materials, order merchandise and report back on your local activity.

For more information or campaigning advice, contact Ele Buckley, the RCSLT's Campaign Manager.  
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