

Press Release – Embargoed: 00.01hours Monday January 16th

The UK national charity for stammering welcomes final report from the Communication Champion for Children

The British Stammering Association welcomes the report from outgoing Communication Champion Jean Gross, and is calling for more specialist support for children who stammer before the age of five.

The British Stammering Association echoes Jean Gross’s call for the nation to get children’s language and communication right before the age of 5. The charity argues that stammering is not seen as a priority, which leads to gaps in services for school-aged children.

Norbert Lieckfeldt, chief executive of the British Stammering Association, said: “We are seeing evidence of service cuts across the country with specialist posts not being filled, growing waiting lists and falling numbers of referrals. This is deeply concerning. If a child is stammering early and prompt intervention could help them to recover completely. Failing to intervene is forcing these children to a lifetime of stammering. We know these are the children who will often struggle to make friends and are more likely to be bullied.

“Joint commissioning is crucial, as Jean Gross highlights in her report, as it results in better services for children with communication difficulties. For some areas it is looking bleak. For example, in Newham the whole Primary Care Trust has ceased commissioning for school-age children who stammer. These services are vital and our worry is that it could happen in more and more areas as the cuts take hold.”

The BSA helpline (0845 603 2001) is available with advice and support for any parents concerned about their child having a problem with stammering. You can also visit their website at www.stammering.org

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For further information

For more information, please contact Norbert Lieckfeldt, Chief Executive of the British Stammering Association on 07908685215.