

## **Recommendations**

- 1. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland should ensure that children's right to speech and language therapy is accepted and prioritised by relevant Government Departments and Commissioners and Providers of Service.**
- 2. The Ministers for Health and Education should make this right a reality by ensuring that policy, planning and service commissioning at a strategic level is strengthened to allow a child centered approach to be developed which meets children's speech, language, communication and swallowing needs.**
- 3. The Ministers for Health and Education should set up a regional Task Force consisting of Government Officials and Commissioners/ Providers of Services with Health and Social Services Boards/Trusts, Education and Library Boards, School Principals, Parents, Carers, children/young people and NGO representatives in order to identify, agree and develop an action plan. This group should consider the following actions:**
  - More indepth, detailed research to identify the full extent of the relevant issues.**
  - Joined up child-centred strategy which incorporates policy; resources, including funding of service and workforce planning; models of delivery; skill mix; service improvement methods.**
- 4. The Task Force should agree maximum waiting times for assessment and follow-up intervention programmes; continuity of SLT programmes to meet the needs of the child; review and evaluation.**
- 5. Specific consideration should be given by the Task Force to SLT provision for school aged children being provided within the curriculum, and a full evaluation of the benefits of the school service being funded and/or managed by the Education sector should be carried out.**
- 6. Speech and Language Therapy Managers should continue to audit and evaluate the services provided, and ensure that good practice is shared.**

**Nigel Williams**  
**Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People**