



Media statement for immediate release

Ofqual decision will impact children with speech, language and communication needs

Ofqual's decision this week to stop speaking and listening assessments from counting towards final grades in GCSE English and English language will severely disadvantage students with recognised speech, language and communication needs, according to The Communication Trust and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT).

Anne Fox, Director of The Communication Trust said: 'This move will damage one of the most important drivers for ensuring that speaking and listening is given due consideration in secondary education, at a time when oral communication is becoming more important within the workplace and wider economy than ever.

'It will also significantly reduce the incentive for oral communication to be taught in schools as it will no longer be part of what schools and teachers are held accountable for. This in turn will lead to oral communication losing its importance in the classroom.'

RCSLT and The Communication Trust fear that, if the speaking and listening assessment no longer contributes to a grade, speaking and listening will be given less emphasis in the classroom. This will diminish the role and importance of spoken language, which is the foundation for literacy.

The organisations are particularly concerned about the impact on students with speech, language and communication needs. Some of these students will perform better on reading and writing than on speaking and listening. Others, however, will perform better on speaking and listening – perhaps because of the support they have received in school. It would be unfair for the hard-won spoken language skills of students in the second group not to be reflected in their grades.

The organisations have today jointly written to Ofqual Chief Regulator Glenys Stacey to express their disappointment and concern and to reconsider the decision.

For further information contact Anne Fox on 07868 453358.

Notes to editors

About The Communication Trust

The Communication Trust is a coalition of nearly 50 leading voluntary sector and community-based organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication. It does this by raising awareness, influencing policy, promoting best practice among the children's workforce and commissioning work from our members. It harnesses collective expertise to support the children's workforce and commissioners to meet the speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) of all children and young people. Visit: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

About RCSLT

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists is the professional body for speech and language therapists in the UK and has more than 16,000 members. One of its aims is to improve access to speech and language services and outcomes for children with communication difficulties. Visit: www.rcslt.org