Speech and language therapist

Speech and language therapy is an exciting and varied career. It offers you the chance to make a difference, a high degree of flexibility and excellent employment prospects. You’ll work with patients every day to help improve their care and their lives.

Speech and language therapy could be the right profession for you if you enjoy science, education, languages, linguistics or medicine,

"It was humbling to be able to see the difference you can make as a speech and language therapist to someone’s life when they are at their most vulnerable." Max Elswood, student speech and language therapist.

Read Max’s story in full. [1]

Working life

Speech and language therapists provide life-changing treatment, support and care for children and adults who have difficulties with communication, eating, drinking and swallowing. You’ll help people who, for physical or psychological reasons, have problems speaking and communicating. Patients range from children whose speech is slow to develop, to older people whose ability to speak has been impaired by illness or injury. It also includes treatment for those who have difficulty with eating or swallowing.

What you’ll do as a speech and language therapist

Variety is one of the most exciting things about being a speech and language therapist. As well as helping patients with a variety of conditions, you’ll work in a multi-disciplinary team in different settings from hospitals to community clinics to patients' homes.

You'll help children with a variety of conditions including:

- mild, moderate or severe learning difficulties
- language delay
- specific difficulties in producing sounds
- hearing impairment
- cleft lip and palate
- stammering
- voice disorders
- selective mutism
- developmental language disorder [2].
You'll help adults with:

- communication or eating and swallowing problems following neurological impairments and degenerative conditions, including stroke [3], head injury, Parkinson's disease and dementia
- voice problems
- mental health issues
- learning difficulties
- physical disabilities
- stammering
- hearing impairment

You would also work closely with teachers and other health professionals, such as doctors, nurses and psychologists. You may also supervise the work of speech and language therapy assistants.

**How to become a speech and language therapist**

To become a speech and language therapist you’ll need to train and study at degree or postgraduate level. A degree apprenticeship has also been approved.

**Entry requirements**

To get on to an speech and language therapy degree course you usually need:

- two or three A levels, along with five GCSEs (grades A-C [4]), including English language, maths and science

or alternative qualifications, including

- BTEC, HND or HNC which includes science
- relevant NVQ
- science-based access course
- equivalent Scottish or Irish qualifications

If you already hold a relevant first degree, you can apply for an accelerated postgraduate programme in speech and language therapy. These courses usually last two years.

Each institution sets its own entry requirements, so it’s important to check carefully. You can find the speech and language therapy courses to suit you on our Course Finder. [5]

**New annual payments**

You’ll receive at least £5,000 a year to help fund your studies, through the NHS Learning Support Fund. The best part? You won’t have to pay a penny back.

**Degree apprenticeship**

There are a growing number of degree apprenticeships. Apprenticeships give you the chance to earn a living while gaining your qualification. Your employer and the government will pay the tuition fees, so apprenticeships aren’t eligible for student grants.
Must-have skills

Don’t forget – academic qualifications aren’t everything. You’ll need to be able to motivate and reassure people of all ages using your excellent communication skills. You’ll also need to be able problem solve and show real leadership and organisational skills. You’ll also need to be happy working alone and as part of a team.

Training and career development

Once you’ve qualified, you’ll have annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) check-ins, where we’ll discuss your career aspirations and plan how we can help you to achieve them, so you’re always moving forward. You may choose to specialise in a particular area of practice such as cleft and lip palate, people with swallowing difficulties or learning disability. Other options include teaching or research.

You could also do further training and an advanced clinical practitioner or move into management. As head of a local speech and language therapy service you would be responsible for a team of staff and for managing a budget.

Pay and conditions

Your standard working week will be around 37.5 hours. As an speech and language therapist, you’ll be paid on the Agenda for Change (AFC) pay system [6], typically starting on band 5.

You’ll also have access to our generous pension scheme and health service discounts, as well as 27 days of annual leave plus bank holidays.

- Live vacancies
  Expand / collapse
  - View Vacancy [7]

Speech and Language Therapist

Glan Clwyd Hospital, Rhyl, LL18 5UJ

- Salary:
  £24,907 - £30,615 per annum

- Type:
  Fixed term

- Employer:
Speech and Language Therapist

Ormskirk, L39 2AZ

- **Salary:**
  
  31,365 to 37,890

- **Type:**
  
  Fixed term

- **Employer:**
  
  Virgin Care

Specialist Speech & Language Therapist

Scarborough/Bridlington, YO12 6QL

- **Salary:**
  
  £31,365 - £37,890 pro rata

- **Type:**
  
  Permanent

- **Employer:**
  
  York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Band 7 Speech & Language Therapist
Atherton & Oldham, M46

- **Salary:**
  
  £38,000 - £40,000 + Benefits

- **Type:**
  
  Permanent

- **Employer:**
  
  Elysium Healthcare

  - View Vacancy
  - View Vacancy [11]

Bank Speech and Language Therapist
Ormskirk, L39 2AZ

- **Salary:**
  
  17.01 per hour

- **Type:**
  
  Bank

- **Employer:**
  
  Virgin Care

  - View Vacancy
  - View Vacancy [12]

Bank Speech and Language Therapist
London, Various, SW1P 2PF
Salary:

£13.79 PH Basic

Type:

Bank

Employer:

Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust

View Vacancy

Other roles that may interest you

- Speech and language therapy assistant [13]
- Podiatrist [14]
- Occupational therapist [15]
- Occupational therapy support worker [16]

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/speech-and-language-therapist