

Speech and language therapy assistant

Speech and language therapy assistants may prepare rooms and equipment, help patients during appointments, write reports and update patient records.

This page has information on the role of a speech and language therapy assistant including entry requirements and skills needed.?

Working life

As a speech and language therapy assistant, you'll support registered?speech and language therapists [1].



You will help people who have difficulties with:

- producing and using speech
- understanding language
- using language
- feeding, chewing or swallowing
- a stammer

- their voice

You will work with adults and children with a range of conditions including:



- stroke [2]
- learning disability
- neurological disorders, such as Parkinson's
- cancer of the mouth and throat
- head injury
- hearing loss and deafness
- cleft palate
- dementia

In many cases, you'll support the patient's carers too. Some speech and language therapy assistants use their knowledge and skills in other languages to offer a bilingual service. They speak to patients in their own language.

Who will I work with?

As well as speech and language therapists [1], you'll work closely with teachers and other health professionals, such as doctors [3], nurses [4] and psychologists [5].?

Where will I work?

You may work in hospitals, mainstream and special schools, community clinics or patients' own homes.

Entry requirements?

There are no set entry requirements for speech and language therapy assistants. Employers expect good numeracy and literacy and some experience or qualifications in health or social care. Employers may ask for GCSEs in English and maths. They may ask for NVQ, BTEC or an equivalent qualification in health and social care.

Employers often ask for relevant work experience. Even where this is not specified, it would be an advantage if you have worked in health or social care, either in paid employment or voluntary work.

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Skills and personal characteristics needed?

Speech and language therapists need to:

- be able to work with people of all ages
- enjoy using language and communication to help people
- be able to motivate people
- be able to reassure people
- enjoy working alone or as a member of a team

You'll also need

- excellent communication skills
- ability to motivate people
- organisation skills
- ability to explain treatment to patients

Training and development

You will receive appropriate training in order to do the job, including an introduction to the department and its procedures.

You may be offered the chance to study for qualifications such as:

- the NCFE CACHE level 2 Certificate in Healthcare Support Services
- the NCFE CACHE level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Support

Speech and language therapy assistants can become associate members of the Royal College of Speech and Language Specialists [6] (RCSLT). The RCSLT runs courses, conferences and seminars where speech and language therapy assistants can update their skills and network with others doing similar work.

- Pay and conditions

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Speech and language therapy assistants working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change [7] (AfC [8]) pay system. You would typically start on AfC [8] band 2. With further training and experience, you could apply for positions at band 3 or as an assistant practitioner [9] at band 4.

Most speech and language therapy assistants in the NHS work standard hours which are likely to be around 37.5 a week. They may work some evenings or weekends.

Terms and conditions will usually be different for speech and language therapy assistants working outside of the NHS.

- Where the role can lead

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With experience, you could become a team leader supervising the work of other speech and language therapy assistants.

You could apply to train as an assistant practitioner or with the necessary qualifications, as a speech and language therapist.

- Job market and vacancies

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Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on [NHS Jobs \[10\]](#) and some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations on [NHS Choices \[11\]](#).

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the NHS values apply in your everyday work.

Find out more about NHS values [\[12\]](#).

- Further information

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- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists [\[13\]](#)

Other roles that may interest you

- Occupational therapy support worker [\[14\]](#)
- Occupational therapist [\[15\]](#)
- Speech and language therapist [\[16\]](#)
- Experienced paramedic [\[17\]](#)

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/speech-and-language-therapy-assistant>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/speech-and-language-therapist>

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Stroke>

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/anaesthesia>

[4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing>

[5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies>

[6] <http://www.rcslt.org/>

[7] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Agenda_for_Change

[8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC>

[9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/assistant-practitioner>

[10] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

[11] <http://www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/howthenhsworks/authoritiesandtrusts/Pages/Authoritiesandtrusts.aspx>

[12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>

[13] <http://www.rcslt.org.uk>

[14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare->

team/clinical-support-staff/occupational-therapy-support-worker

[15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/occupational-therapist>

[16] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/speech-and-language-therapist>

[17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/experienced-paramedic>