



Luke Dowd

Speech and Language
Therapist

Can you give us a brief outline of your work history?

I started in my first post roughly six months after graduating and have been in this post for four months. I work as a Paediatric Speech and Language Therapist in a community clinic setting.

What made you decide this career path?

I originally worked within the trust as an Administration Officer. During this job, I realised that being a therapist was what I wanted to do, and I was lucky enough to be in a multidisciplinary team where I was able to talk to a range of professionals about their job. Speech and Language Therapy was the most interesting and decided to pursue this career.

How did you train for this role/educational route?

When I decided to pursue this path, I did not meet the qualification criteria for my degree. I applied for the Southern Regional College's "Adult Learning Science" course. After completing this, I enrolled onto the SLT degree in Ulster University.

What qualities are required for your job – personal and professional?

The two primary qualities a Speech and Language Therapist needs are to be empathetic and patient. Understanding how your clients and their relatives feel is crucial for providing the best level of care. Knowing where families are coming from and what their priorities are helps ensure that you can cooperate with them in the most effective manner.

What does a typical day involve?

On a typical day in the community clinic, I will see children who are accompanied by a parent/carer, and we work together to achieve specific speech and language and agreed functional goals which are individual to each child's needs. Goals can vary greatly, each child is unique and you will often have to work towards goals you've never targeted before!

What do you like best about your job?

I love that each child is unique and there's always something different. Being encouraged to try new strategies and plans keeps the job interesting and stops you from getting bored! It's also highly rewarding to know that you've helped people achieve meaningful goals which improve their quality of life.

What advice would you give anyone thinking of doing your job?

I would say do it! Reach out, try to speak to a Speech and Language Therapist and ask them any questions you have. There are so many areas and specialisations within this profession that there's bound to be one that interests you.