



Paddy Moriarty

Clinical Specialist
Speech and Language
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Can you give us a brief outline of your work history?

As a Band 5, I worked with children with learning difficulties before moving across to adult services, mainly hospital-based but with some community clinic work as well. I then took up a Band 6 post split between the Adult Learning Disability Team and the Brain Injury Team before going full-time in Brain Injury. I then moved up to a Band 7 role, still with the Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation Team, where I help people with communication and/or swallowing difficulties.

What made you decide this career path?

At school, I enjoyed English, where we analyzed how language was used to tell a story. I also liked Maths, which relies on systems and rules – both of these interests are a great foundation for working with language and communication. I knew a bit about the job as I'd actually attended Speech and Language Therapy when I was a child, so I knew it would be a great way to merge the parts of English and Maths that I found appealing.

How did you train for this role/educational route?

I did a degree in Law and Accountancy, thinking it would tap into the parts of English and Maths that interested me, but it just wasn't 'me'. I took a few years out and then went back to the University of Ulster and did a 3-year BSc in Speech and Language Therapy.

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

You need to be comfortable meeting new people on a regular basis and getting to know them. It's useful to be both analytical and creative, working out why something is difficult and coming up with ways to overcome it.

What does a typical day involve?

Every day is different! I usually have a mixture of swallowing or communication assessments and therapy sessions, with time set aside in the afternoon for catching up on notes and other admin. I might also do some e-Learning, deliver some training, or engage in multi-professional work (which any member of the team can do), like an initial assessment or concussion clinic.

What do you like best about your job?

The variety it offers – no two days are the same. It's a real privilege to work with people who trust me to help them move forward with their lives. I also love the balance between being creative and being analytical.

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

Try to speak to a few different people already in the profession as it's so varied depending on where you end up working. Be open to any opportunity that comes up at Band 5 level, as that will help you decide where to focus your energies when you're ready to move up to Band 6 and beyond.