



## Ruth Millar

### Band 6 Speech and Language Therapist

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

I started working in the Southern Health & Social Care Trust in a mixed adult-paediatric post for the first six months. This was great as throughout university and when I graduated, I wanted to work with adults. However, I soon realised that my heart actually lay in working with children! I then got a permanent full-time paediatric post and have worked since then across community clinics, Learning Support Classes attached to mainstream primary schools, Special Schools, and more recently, in Sure Start, where I work with families and their children aged 0-4 years old and the wider Sure Start team.

#### What made you decide this career path?

I love working with people and as part of a team and was always interested in working in a healthcare setting. When I was trying to decide what courses to apply for at university, I spoke to a number of people who worked in different roles in the health & social care setting, and connected most with Speech & Language Therapy.

#### How did you train for this role/educational route?

Following my A-Levels, I completed a BSc Honours degree in Speech and Language Therapy at Ulster University.

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

The job requires you to be passionate about what you do; compassionate and empathetic, while at the same time being very resilient; able to multitask and be very adaptable. Communication skills are fundamental to the job, enabling you to connect meaningfully and collaboratively with each individual child, their family, and the wider team around each child. Ongoing reflective practice and the ability to think critically and creatively are essential in continuing to offer a quality, evidence-based service individualized to each child and their family.

#### What does a typical day involve?

My day varies from day to day, which I really like, but mainly involves planning and delivering group or information sessions; coaching parents and staff; working jointly with other Sure Start staff; public health messaging; delivering training; screening children either at home or in Sure Start settings; while also scheduling time to complete admin, training, and attend meetings.

#### What do you like best about your job?

I love working with preschool-age children at such an early and critical stage in their life and development.

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

Speech & Language Therapy can be a very rewarding and fulfilling job with so much scope in terms of client groups and settings. Take time as a student and as a newly qualified practitioner to figure out what your core values are and then find the client groups or work settings that best align with that. Once you find your niche, you can then really deepen your knowledge & skills to connect with that client group and the wider multidisciplinary team in a more knowledgeable and meaningful way.