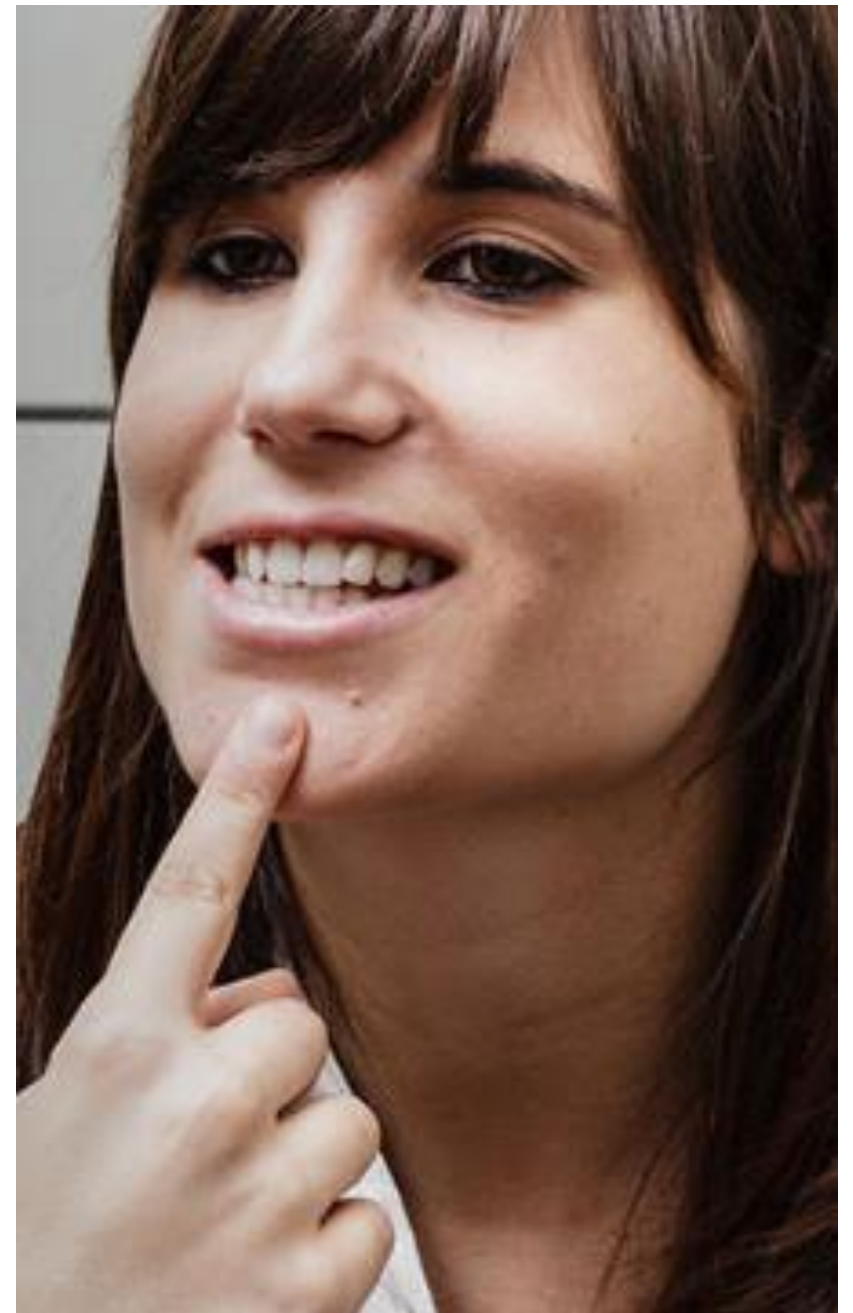


Working as a...

Speech and language therapist



Case studies

- This is Toby
- Toby is 18
- He has severe Autism and cannot communicate using speech
- He is angry and upset
- He is very thirsty and wants a drink
- He knows he wants a drink but he cannot ask for one
- Linda is helping him
- She does not know he wants a drink
- She doesn't get him one
- He gets more and more angry
- How else could Toby tell her?



- **This is Sarah**
- **She is 62**
- **She has had a stroke which has affected her facial muscles and her memory**
- **Sarah has not lost any information in her head- she knows what she wants to say and wants to chat to her husband and her friends**
- **Sarah's speech is slow and unclear, and sometimes she forgets words**
- **Sarah can improve both her speech and her memory with treatment**
- **How could Sarah be helped?**



- This is John
- John was born with a medical condition known as cleft palate
- His mouth and tongue did not form properly in the uterus
- John will have surgery but will require help to eat and drink and speak
- What type of support will he require?



- This is Amelia
- Amelia is 7
- She has Down's Syndrome
- Amelia loves to chat but as her tongue is larger than average and her teeth further apart, her speech is unclear – people find it difficult to understand her. She cannot say the sounds 's' 'f' and 'th'.
- Amelia has learning difficulties and her speech is similar to that of a 2 year old- she uses single words
- How can we help Amelia to speak more clearly?
How can we encourage her to talk in longer sentences?





Demonstrating speech sounds and getting clients to practice them using different activities



Teaching people to use sign language to communicate, such as Makaton



Recommending and proving training on speech software like ipads



Providing the right
equipment to help someone
to be able to eat and drink
more successfully.

Are you interested in....?

- Communication – how/why we communicate, who with, using what methods and how to help people who find communicating difficult
- Working with vulnerable people such as very young, old, disabled, ill, people with learning difficulties and making a real difference to their lives
- Working in a team with others; clients, parents, carers, teachers, hospital staff, other therapists
- Being respected as a healthcare professional and thinking creatively to plan and deliver programmes for people to follow
- A career which is varied and has many different elements and in which you can progress
- Being responsible for your own workload, attending meetings, planning therapy sessions, writing reports



What does the job involve?

Your tasks will vary depending on your client and the nature of the problem.

However, you'll typically need to:

- identify the speech and communication difficulty or disorder;
- assess the cause and nature of the problem, for example, congenital problems (such as cleft palate) or acquired disorders after a stroke or injury;
- You will also advise on problems with eating, drinking, chewing and swallowing
- devise and deliver a suitable treatment programme, working on a one-to-one basis or in groups, to enable each of your clients to improve as much as possible;
- advise carers on implementing a treatment programme and train other professionals in therapy delivery
- monitor and evaluate your clients' progress
- write confidential client case notes and reports
- manage a caseload while taking into account priority cases, waiting lists, successful outcomes, referral and discharge of service users



What do you need?

You will need to have:

- excellent communication and listening skills - to relate to people of all ages and backgrounds and to motivate clients and gain trust. Clients may be uncooperative because they're frightened, frustrated or disorientated by their situation;
- patience - progress may be slow, involving repetitive exercises to aid clients who have problems memorising, processing and retaining information;
- creativity and problem-solving skills - to design programmes appropriate to different learning styles and communication issues;
- the ability to work in a team - for interacting with other professionals;
- organisational skills and flexibility - to deal with a range of clients in varied settings;
- the ability to be at ease in a clinical environment;
- qualities such as empathy, assertiveness, tact, a sense of humour and physical and mental stamina.
- Driving licence



What does the salary look like?



Starting £21,000
Middle £34,000
Senior £40,000



What qualifications are needed?

Strong GCSE results

Strong A Levels – preferable in related areas

Good choices are: Sciences/English/MFL/Music/Humanities/Psychology/Sociology

Undergraduate Degree in Speech and Language Therapy (3-4 years)

Or

Degree in relevant subject like Science, Medicine or Psychology plus a conversion course

You must qualify and be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

What are the working hours like?

Typically you would work for the NHS, based at or visiting hospitals, schools, individual homes etc for 37.5 hours a week



It is possible to be an independent/ private speech therapist



Work experience

It is essential to gain work experience so that

- a) You know the job is right for you and you have the correct skills
- b) You can stand out in a very competitive market

- **Visit/ observe a speech therapist**
- **Work in retail developing your own communication skills**
- **Work or volunteering with young children, people with learning difficulties, old people such as helping at a nursery or retirement home**
- **Observe or help people who teach English to foreign people, other languages, a musical instrument**
- **Support at a sports/drama/music/art group where you have to communicate with others**
- **Mentor younger students/ help at homework club- developing your skills of communication, patience, problem-solving**

Career prospects and development

- In your first year you will have a mentor who you will work with and be able to learn from
- Lots of access to courses and new ideas and theories
- Specialise in areas which interest you
- Can be promoted to different levels and different responsibilities
- Work around the country and potentially other countries
- Work in schools, hospitals, rehab centres, nursing homes etc...



Good to know...

- Jobs are available throughout the UK, although there are more opportunities in cities.
- You can work in a range of settings, for example hospitals, health centres, day-care centres, rehabilitation units, schools or pre-schools, a client's home, prisons or young offenders' institutions. It's possible to work in several different locations during the week.
- Depending on where you work, you may need to travel between client visits.
- With experience, you can take on freelance work or become self-employed.
- Competition is fierce and you need to be well qualified, passionate and hard-working



Related careers

- Speech and language assistant
- Teacher or teaching assistant - particularly in Special Educational Needs
- Social worker
- Carer (for people with disabilities or the elderly)
- Nanny/ nursery nurse
- Doctor/ nurse
- Occupational therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Nutritionist
- Counsellor
- Psychologist or psychiatrist



Carly Fleischmann

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMBzJleeOno>