



# JOB of the Week



**Job name:** Speech and Language Therapist

**Job description:** Speech and Language Therapists are responsible for the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of speech, language, fluency and voice disorders caused by disability, injury or illness.

**Tasks you will undertake in the job:** As a Speech and Language Therapist you'll:

- Assess, test and diagnose a client's condition;
- Design and initiate appropriate rehabilitation and/or remedial programmes of treatment;
- Treat speech and language disorders by coaching and counselling clients or through the use of artificial communication devices;
- Attend case conferences and liaise with other specialists such as doctors, teachers, social workers and psychologists;
- Counsel relatives to help cope with the problems created by a patient's disability;
- Write reports and maintain client caseloads.

## Apprenticeships, skills and career development:

There are a growing number of degree apprenticeships. Apprenticeships give you the chance to earn a living while gaining your qualification. Your employer and the government will pay the tuition fees, so apprenticeships aren't eligible for student grants.

Academic qualifications aren't everything. You'll need to be able to motivate and reassure people of all ages using your excellent communication skills. You'll also need to be able to problem solve and show real leadership and organisational skills. You'll also need to be happy working alone and as part of a team.

Once you've qualified, you'll have annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) check-ins, where we'll discuss your career aspirations and plan how we can help you to achieve them, so you're always moving forward. You may choose to specialise in a particular area of practice such as cleft and lip palate, people with swallowing difficulties or learning disability. Other options include teaching or research.



## Skills required for this job (core competencies):

Communication	Resilience	Organisation	Teamwork
Problem Solving	Initiative	Creativity	Digital literacy

## Academic Requirements for Speech and Language Therapists:

Entrants require a recognised graduate or postgraduate degree that encompasses both theory and clinical practice. Successful completion of these courses leads to eligibility for a certificate to practice and membership of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. Full membership is granted after completion of a year of supervised, post-qualifying experience.

**Salary:** Speech and Language Therapists are typically paid a starting wage of £31 720, this increases with experience; the average salary in the UK is £28 758



**Working hours:** Working hours are usually around 35 hours per week (variable). It is likely that you will work during some evenings and weekends (the average working week in the UK is 37.5 hours per week)

## Qualifications to become a Speech and Language Therapist:

To get on to an speech and language therapy degree course you usually need: two or three A levels, along with five GCSEs (grades 9-4), including English language, maths and science or alternative qualifications, including:

BTEC, HND or HNC which includes science / relevant NVQ / science-based access course / equivalent Scottish or Irish qualifications.

If you already hold a relevant first degree, you can apply for an accelerated postgraduate programme in speech and language therapy. These courses usually last two years.

## What you'll do as a Speech and Language Therapist

Variety is one of the most exciting things about being a speech and language therapist. As well as helping patients with a variety of conditions, you'll work in a multi-disciplinary team in different settings from hospitals to community clinics to patients' homes. You'll help children with a variety of conditions including:

mild, moderate or severe learning difficulties / language delay / specific difficulties in producing sounds hearing impairment / cleft lip and palate/ stammering / voice disorders / selective mutism developmental language disorder.

You'll help adults with:

communication or eating and swallowing problems following neurological impairments and degenerative conditions, including stroke, head injury, Parkinson's disease and dementia / voice problems / mental health issues / learning difficulties / physical disabilities / stammering / hearing impairment

You would also work closely with teachers and other health professionals, such as doctors, nurses and psychologists. You may also supervise the work of speech and language therapy assistants.

**This job in the future:** The workforce is projected to grow 6.9% over the period to 2027, creating 1,500 jobs. In the same period, 52.8% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 11,300 job openings.

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