



Laura Coakes

Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist

Health and Care Professions Council number: SL02547

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists registration number: RC0013549

Personal Profile

I have over 20 years' experience of working with children and young adults with speech, language and communication needs. I have a broad experience base of working within statutory services (NHS) and within the independent sector in both the UK and Australia. I am experienced at working in a range of settings, including client's homes, the community, multi-disciplinary clinics, nursery, primary and secondary mainstream schools, and specialist provisions. I have specialist skills in the field of complex communication difficulties and alternative and augmentative communication. I am passionate about working with families and the wider team to enable children and young people to reach their potential. I am experienced in developing and providing training to a range of audiences on a variety of topics and am a dynamic presenter. My personable nature and enthusiasm enable me to build strong working relationships and engage others. My creativity and ability to play and use humour, makes for fun and motivating therapy.

I live in and cover the North East of England.

Professional Qualifications

1994-1997 – [Leeds Metropolitan University](#) - BSc Hons: 2:1 Clinical Language Sciences (Speech and Language Therapy)

1999-2001 – [University of Surrey Roehampton](#) – Postgraduate Diploma In Play Therapy

2004 – [Approved by RCLST](#) – Postgraduate Qualification Developmental Eating, Drinking and Swallowing Disorders.

Employment History

[ATtherapy, Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist · February 2021 - Present](#)

In this position I support individuals with complex communication needs associated with a neurological disability. I have a particular passion for the development and use of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) systems. I also support individuals who have eating, drinking and swallowing impairments.

[North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist · November 2017 - December 2020](#)

In this position I provided assessment and intervention to children and young adults with complex communication needs. This included children with physical, medical, learning and/or sensory difficulties and children with Autism Spectrum Conditions. Skills targeted were expressive and receptive language, speech sound difficulties, social communication, eating, drinking and swallowing, and AAC systems. I worked jointly with the parents/carers and the team around the child to identify goals and deliver care plans. I made onward referrals and worked collaboratively with other professionals or specialist agencies, for example the Regional Communication Aids Service. I completed comprehensive written reports including mealtime management plans and contributed to the development and review of Education Health Care Plans. In this position I developed a practical understanding of Quality First Teaching, The SEND Reforms (2014) and SEND code of practice.

[Neural Pathways, Consultant Speech and Language Therapist · Oct 2016 – April 2017](#)

I provided assessment and therapy to children and adults who had communication difficulties and/or eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties associated with a brain injury.

[St Giles Society Inc. Hobart, Tasmania, Senior Speech Pathologist · January 2012-October 2016](#)

Therapy Plus Team, Neuro-Ortho Team & Early Intervention Team (Caseload children and young adults with disabilities).

Provision of assessment and therapy to children and young adults with complex communication needs associated with a neurological disability, children with developmental speech, language and communication difficulties and children and young adults with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties. Joint working with other members of the allied health team including assessment, goal setting and therapy sessions.

[Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Highly Specialist Bank Speech & Language Therapist · March 2014 – May 2014](#)

Working within mainstream primary schools, nurseries and homes I provided assessment and intervention to children who had communication difficulties and/or dysphagia associated with a disability.

[WA Country Health Service March, Senior Speech Pathologist · 2009 – Jan 2012](#)

Planning, co-ordinating and evaluating the Speech Pathology Service, including liaison with other health teams and education to ensure effective provision and care pathways. Organisation and management of the service to ensure equitable provision to a large geographical area and culturally diverse caseload. Management of a paediatric and adult caseload. Provision of training to parents/carers and professionals on a range of topics including parent-child interaction, speech and language development, key word signing, laryngectomy management, dysphagia and AAC strategies.

[Locum contracts for WA Country Health Service, Queensland Health, Katherine Region Aged and Disability Service, Senior Speech Pathologist \(Specialist Generalist\) · Feb 2006 – March 2009](#)

I undertook several locum contracts of varying lengths. These all involved working with children and adults with a diverse range of speech, language and communication difficulties. This included 9 months working within an adult community rehabilitation team with adults with acquired neurological conditions.

[Forth Valley Primary Care NHS, Speech and Language Therapist progressing to Advisory Specialist Speech and Language Therapist · Aug 1997 – Jan 2006](#)

Management of children with speech, language, eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties in education settings, community clinics and home. This included children with moderate, severe and multiple and profound learning difficulties with associated physical, visual, hearing impairment, autism spectrum conditions and/or social emotional and mental health difficulties.

[The AAC Research Unit, The University of Stirling, Scotland, Research Speech and Language Therapist \(Talking Mats\) · Jan 2005 – Jan 2006](#)

Part time research project investigating the use of Talking Mats as a tool to elicit the views of children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

[Self Employed Speech and Language Therapist & Play Therapist · October 2004 – Jan 2006](#)

Consultancy work for the Communication Aids for Language & Learning Centre, University of Edinburgh. Provision of workshops to parents/carers and professionals on the development of communication passports and adapting communication environments.

Provision of play therapy and courses offering a brief introduction to play therapy, its uses for children with disabilities, the barriers to play and how to facilitate play for children with disabilities.

Training

- Derbyshire Language Scheme (Hampshire NHS Trust)
- Makaton Beginners, Intermediate, Advanced Courses (Forth Valley NHS Trust).
- Creating A Communicative Classroom (Carol Goosens')
- Certified Hanen "It Takes Two to Talk"
- Accredited Talking Mats Trainer (Talking Mats)
- Care Aims (Kate Malcomess)
- Paediatric feeding (Anthea Maserai, Speech Pathology Australia)
- Clinical Stroke Leadership Programme (WA Country Health Service)
- Aphasiology Symposium, (University of Queensland)
- PECS Level 1 (PECS Australia)
- Phonological Awareness, Language & Literacy (Gail Gillon) Speech Pathology Australia
- Literacy and Learning in Early Primary School Years, Promoting Literacy Development (Diana Rigg).
- Sensory Processing (Occupational Therapy, WA Country Health Service)
- Lidcombe Programme (Lidcombe Centre, Australia).
- LAMP (Language Acquisition Through Motor Planning) (St Giles Society, Australia/Centre for AAC and Autism)
- Using iPads for AAC (Jane Farrell)
- Revolutionising Assessment and Access with Eye Gaze (Inclusive Technology Ltd)
- Dysarthria, Language and Communication in Children: assessment and management (Manchester Metropolitan University)
- Leadership Training (Neural Pathways)
- LAMP webinars (Centre for AAC and Autism)
- SEND Health & Education (North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust).
- Managing Infant Feeding in the Community (Guys and St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust)
- Brick by Brick program Facilitator Training (Play Included)
- PDD Communication Book Training (CPEC, Regional Communication Aids Service).

Publications

"It's My Book" - Creating Ownership of Communication Passports" (Coakes, Drysdale, Little) Platform Presentation: Communication Matters Conference (2003)
Publication: Communication Matters April 2004 Vol 18 No 1

"Fine Fine Fine!" Consulting Children with Social, Emotional, Behavioural and Communication Difficulties"

Platform Presentation: Speech Pathology Australia's National Conference 2006 & AGOSCI conference 2007.

"Passport to Communication" (Millar & Coakes)

Platform Presentation: AGOSCI conference 2007.

"Communication Passports; A Family Power Tool in Action" (Sturzaker, Sturzaker and Coakes)

Platform Presentation Joint with An AAC User and family: AGOSCI conference 2009.

"Making AAC Happen in Remote Western Australia" (Coakes & Moore)

Platform Presentation: Speech Pathology Australia Conference 2011 & AGOSCI conference 2011.

"Remote Service Development: Increasing Accessibility and Equity for Indigenous Clients" (Coakes)

Platform Presentation: Speech Pathology Australia Conference 2011

"Making Changes Brick by Brick; building fun, friendships and communication skills at school"

(Coakes & Daniewska-Lodyga) Presentation: Communication Matters Conference 2022

Additional Skills

My continuing professional development and post-graduate training has enabled me to gain an extensive amount of clinical experience working with children with communication difficulties, including those with:

- Specific disorders e.g. Down Syndrome, Fragile X, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder etc.
- Physical difficulties e.g. Cerebral Palsy
- Global Developmental Delay
- Speech sound difficulties
- Language Delay
- Hearing and Visual impairment
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Social communication difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Conditions
- Eating, drinking, and swallowing difficulties



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