

Alanna O'Connor

CORU Registration Number: SL02511

Member of the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT)



Personal Profile

I am a passionate, creative therapist from Co. Kerry in the Republic of Ireland. I graduated as a Speech and Language Therapist from Manchester Metropolitan University (UK). My UK-based training gave me access to innovative, up-to-date education and skills. Combining this with my experience working in the Republic of Ireland, I bring a unique blend of knowledge and experience when working with a broad spectrum of individuals.

Throughout my career, I have been dedicated to helping service users to communicate using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). My aim is to provide person-centred, diverse therapy. I understand the importance of supporting an individual in all aspects of their life including at home and school, accessing employment or engaging in their community.

I am experienced in working with children and young people with complex communication needs. I thrive when working collaboratively with a wider team of professionals to provide the best therapy possible.

Professional Qualifications

2011-2015 Manchester Metropolitan University

BS (Hons) Speech Pathology and Therapy

2018- Present Manchester Metropolitan University

PgCert Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Training Provided

- Elklan Communication Supports for Severe Learning Difficulties (Accredited)
- Elklan Communication Supports for 5-11s (Accredited)
- Parent workshops (various topics including Elklan courses, sign language, visual supports, Hanen programmes, AAC)
- Teacher workshops (various topics including transition to school, Colourful Semantics, AAC, visual supports)

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Training Received

- Language Acquisition through Motor Planning – *Central Remedial Clinic*
- Lamh Module 1 – *IASLT*
- British Sign Language (Level 1) – *Signature*
- AAC CPD Day – *Trinity College Dublin*
- Liberator devices and software – *Liberator*
- Lowtech AAC Study Day – *ACE Centre North*
- Communication Matters Conference (2015)
- LAMP Workshop
- An Introduction to Alternative and Augmentative Communication – *ACE Centre North*
- Palin PCI Stammering Intervention – *Action for Stammering Children*
- Hanen More Than Words – *IASLT*
- Elklan Total Tutor Training Package – *Elklan*
- Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule 2nd Edition (ADOS-2) – *Trinity College Dublin*
- DIR Floortime – *Training Ways*
- Attention Autism – *Middletown Centre for Autism*
- Chronic Aspiration: A Paediatric Focus – *Central Remedial Clinic*
- Issues in the Assessment and Management of Feeding Difficulties in Babies and Children – *Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin*
- Our Ladies Children's Hospital dysphagia shadowing
- Refresh Your Life Resilience – *AOTI*
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation – *Red Cross*
- Children's First – *Barnardos*
- European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)

Work Summary:

ATtherapy and Independent 2019 – Present

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist

I provide home-based speech and language therapy for children and young people in Tralee and North Kerry. This includes assessment, intervention, programmes and training based on the individual's needs. I also provide accredited Elklan Communication Supports courses locally, offering training to teachers and SNAs in Kerry. In my role at ATtherapy I support clients with complex needs including AAC and specialise in brain injury.

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Enable Ireland (Kerry Intervention and Disability Team) - 2019 - present

Senior Speech and Language Therapist

The service provides intervention for children and young people 0-18 years old with disabilities or complex needs. My caseload is broad and varied with children of different ages and diagnoses. This includes children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, Down Syndrome, intellectual disability, developmental delay and Cerebral Palsy among other diagnoses. The team comprises of Speech and Language Therapy (SLT), Occupational Therapy (OT), Physiotherapy, Family Support Services, Social Work and Nursing who provide a co-ordinated family-centred service.

Interventions and strategies offered included Lámh, parent training programmes, Hanen intervention programme and strategies, speech sound therapy, core vocabulary therapy, language development (e.g. Colourful Semantics), switch skills, low tech communication aids (e.g. picture exchange), high tech aids (e.g. Tobii Indi, iPads), and support strategies and advice (e.g. reducing background noise).

Muiriosa Foundation (Kildare Network Disability Team) 2016 – 2018

Speech and Language Therapist

The service provides support for service users with disabilities from birth to 18 years old. I worked as part of the 0-5 Early Years interdisciplinary team. I provided uni- and multi-discipline therapy to provide family-centred support and meet the speech, language and communication needs of the service user.

Muiriosa Foundation (Kildare Network Disability Team) 2017

Assistant Speech and Language Therapist

The position involved supporting in Speech and Language Therapy within the team. Responsibilities included facilitating individual therapy, implementing therapy programmes, developing therapy resources, supporting in group therapy sessions, and facilitating parent training with multiple professions from the inter-disciplinary team.

On my return to Ireland, I completed a Period of Adaptation to demonstrate sufficient practical skills in the management of Feeding Eating, Drinking and Swallowing (FEDS). This involved 40hrs directly supervised FEDS assessment and intervention, related indirect work, and written logs/reports (word count ~28'000 words).

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The Seashell Trust is a special school and college for children/young people with complex needs and severe learning disabilities. I worked in a split post between the site's school and college with clients between 5 and 23 years old. The role included planning direct therapy, indirect therapy, parent support, contribution to goal setting, annual reviews. The model of service required close multidisciplinary work.

Additional Skills

Training – I believe that supporting the team around a child or young person results in the best outcome for that child or young person. I am confident in delivering training both to individuals, family and staff as needed.

Flexibility – With the changing needs of the service user, therapy and its format may need to adapt. Sometimes, we require creative solutions. One of my therapeutic strengths is my ability to adapt to changing circumstances flexibly and creatively. I feel this flexibility allows me to respond to and manage the pressures of service provision.

Person-Centred – When setting goals or therapy plans, I believe that the individual should be at the centre of the decision-making process. I work to actively involve the individual and their family to collaborate in guiding goal setting and planning.