

Francesca Sephton

RCSLT Registration Number: RC0030916

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Personal Profile

I am a highly motivated and enthusiastic Speech and Language Therapist specialising in the field of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and I am a Clinical Manager at ATtherapy. I lead the AT mentor service at ATtherapy which consists of a team of nine competent communication aid users who are passionate about inspiring others and showing them what is possible. The service provides mentoring support for others who use AAC and advice and training for the team around them. I am also a Smartbox trainer and deliver training days across the country as part of this role. I help to manage and support the AT Start Up Support package which is offered by communication aid companies following device purchase. I have experience of presenting at conferences such as Communication Matters and Acquired Brain Injury Forum for London, clinical excellence networks such as the North West AAC CEN and study days and shows such as the Autism show. I am currently participating in research with Manchester Metropolitan University regarding literacy and AAC. I complete expert witness assessments and reports. I am qualified in the field of dysphagia and also support individuals with eating and drinking difficulties.

Professional Qualifications

2008-2012 The University of Sheffield - 1st class degree in Speech Science, Tracey E Cox Memorial Prize for achievement.

2015 - Manchester Post Basic Dysphagia Training Course

Training

I regularly attend AAC and dysphagia clinical excellence networks, AAC information days and courses, and attend AAC meetings with differing specialist departments and companies. I also have undertaken the following training courses:

- Witness Familiarisation Courtroom Skills by Bond Solon
- PODD (Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display) training
- Supporting early communication skills in readiness for voice output
- Text based voice output communication systems
- Grid 3 Expert training day
- Level 5 Chartered Management Institute Training
- Mental Capacity Act Training
- Acquired Brain Injury Training (Headway)
- Colourful Semantics Training

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- Intensive Interaction Training
- Talking Mats Training
- Approach and Team Teach Training
- Clinical Practice Educator Training
- Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP)
- Bricks for Autism – Lego based training facilitator
- Signalong Training
- Makaton training, enhanced
- Picture Exchange Communication System training
- An introduction to developing management capabilities (Elcons management)
- Safeguarding
- Talk Tools level 1
- PROACT SCIP (behaviour support and physical intervention)

Work experience

2016-present ATtherapy, independent company providing specialist support for individuals with brain injury. In January 2022 I was promoted to Clinical Manager.

In my role at ATtherapy I provide specialist assessment and intervention for people who need AAC including paper-based/ no-tech (e.g. eye pointing, using sign, communication books), mid-tech devices (e.g. a communication tool operated with batteries which gives a voice output) and electronic communication aids accessed by a range of methods e.g. switches and eye gaze. I am experienced in setting up Assistive Technology to ensure the individual can access their AAC to support them not only to communicate but develop their independence and assert control over their environment. I work with clients within the home, at school/ college and often out in the community with the AT mentor service to ensure the individual is able to communicate effectively across a range of settings. I work with a number of client groups including individuals with an acquired/developmental brain injury, autism and learning difficulties. I provide dysphagia input for individuals who have feeding difficulties. I have set up a speech and language therapy service in a number of schools at ATtherapy. I manage and coordinate the AT mentor service and support the AT Start-up Support package.

2014 – 2016 Bridge College, specialist college for young people with a range of complex communication difficulties. This role involved; developing Outreach services, writing and delivering staff training, presenting at Clinical Governance forums and conferences (Communication Matters and National Teachers Conference at Manchester College), participating in service evaluation and AAC pathway development, working with individuals with dysphagia and supervision of junior members of the team and AAC volunteers. I was secretary of the North West AAC CEN and I sat on the committee for the North West RCSLT Hub. I also have sat on the committee for 1Voice as I set up the 1Voice Manchester branch.

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2013-2014 – Speechwise – private speech and language therapy service. I worked as a speech and language therapist with two children, one learning to use LAMP.

2012-2014 Landgate School for children and adolescents with ASC and Willow Grove School for primary school aged pupils with social, emotional and mental health. Part of my role at Landgate involved participating in some research of the efficacy of yoga and Lego therapy intervention with this client group.

2011-2013 Time Specialist Support Services for children, adolescents and adults with ASC. I worked as a support worker and provided some voluntary speech and language therapy as part of a project entitled the 'Communication Project'.

2010 – Arbour Court Care Home. In this role, I worked with adults with dementia and eating and drinking difficulties in a healthcare assistant capacity.

At college, I worked on a voluntary basis in Wargrave House School, specialist school for children with ASC.

Additional skills

Communication skills – I currently work within a Multidisciplinary Team and I have good team-working skills to enable me to work in the best way with an individual to ensure they achieve the best of their potential. I can write comprehensive reports to support onward referral or provide detailed information for parents/carers and other professionals.

Innovative Assessment and Intervention – I have experience of combining theoretical knowledge with various assessment methodologies and interventions and I feel I am skilled at employing innovative ways to gather assessment data and deliver input for those individuals with complex communication needs.

Reflective – I am continually reflecting on my practice and engage in frequent activities to continue my professional development.

Interpersonal Skills – I am skilled at communicating sensitive information to others and modifying my communication to ensure that what I am saying is accessible (for parents/carers, staff or the individual with a communication difficulty). This supports me when delivering training.

Motivated – I am motivated to work as a speech and language therapist and provide the best possible communication solution for an individual using a person-centered approach.