



Vanessa Hayward

**Head of Speech & Language
Therapy
Cwm Taf University Health Board**

What does your current role involve?

Leading a team of 65 SLTs, HCSWs and admin staff, who work across adults and children's services. I also do some teaching at Cardiff Met University SLT degree course.

What was your first role after graduating?

A mixed post in Rotherham, working in a number of settings with adults and children.

At what stage did you decide which area of the profession you wanted to work in?

During my final year at University, but I wanted to work in adults and children's services to make sure my heart really lay in adult work.

How did you progress from your first role to your current job?

I took up a short term post in Worcester where there were more adult sessions available, followed by a full time adult post based in Abergavenny. I then moved to Shrewsbury to a more senior adult post with a great deal of variety, across acute and community as well as the opportunity to develop a taste of management. A lecturer post came up in Cardiff and was too good an opportunity to miss, especially as it involved organising the placements and providing a placement in a local hospital. However the pull back to management was too strong and so I applied for a Head of Adult SLT service and Deputy Head post in Merthyr Tydfil where I have been since and am now Head of Service.

How have you used CPD to help you progress in your career?

I always take any opportunity to develop myself and continue learning, both formal and informal and often pay for this myself though I have been afforded some great opportunities in my posts including a funded MSc in Health Service Management which has helped me acquire my current post.

My advice to students looking to get into my current area of work:
Be flexible and take any opportunities on offer. Do lots of reading around the area, whether clinical or managerial and focus your learning. Push yourself and don't be afraid to do things out of your comfort zone-you will surprise yourself!

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