



**Avril Nicoll**

## **PhD student NMAHP Research Unit**

### **What does your current role involve?**

Developing a theory about practice change in speech and language therapy for a PhD using qualitative methods. I hope it will help therapists and services reflect critically on their situation and make more informed decisions.

### **What was your first role after graduating?**

A community generalist. I had my own community clinic, ran groups with a senior therapist, and did 3 month rotations at a rehabilitation unit, a child development centre and a special needs school. A fantastic start.

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

I thought I wanted to work just with people with aphasia, but ended up loving the variety and responsibility of mixed community posts.

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

Luck more than design. I've been a community generalist in rural and city settings, Councillor for Student Affairs and Golden Jubilee Coordinator for RCSLT, publisher and editor of Speech & Language Therapy in Practice magazine, a user representative, a research assistant and a PhD student. I wonder what's next?!

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

By being endlessly curious rather than strategic. SIGs (now CENs), travel bursary for parent child interaction therapy, diploma in public relations and news writing courses. A Masters by Research was vital for the PhD, and there is always more reading / twitter / webinars / study groups than time allows.

### **My advice to students looking to get into my current area of work:**

A PhD can be disorientating and lonely, so get good people around you.  
A clinical academic route might be more secure than a full-time PhD.  
It's never too soon to start writing.

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