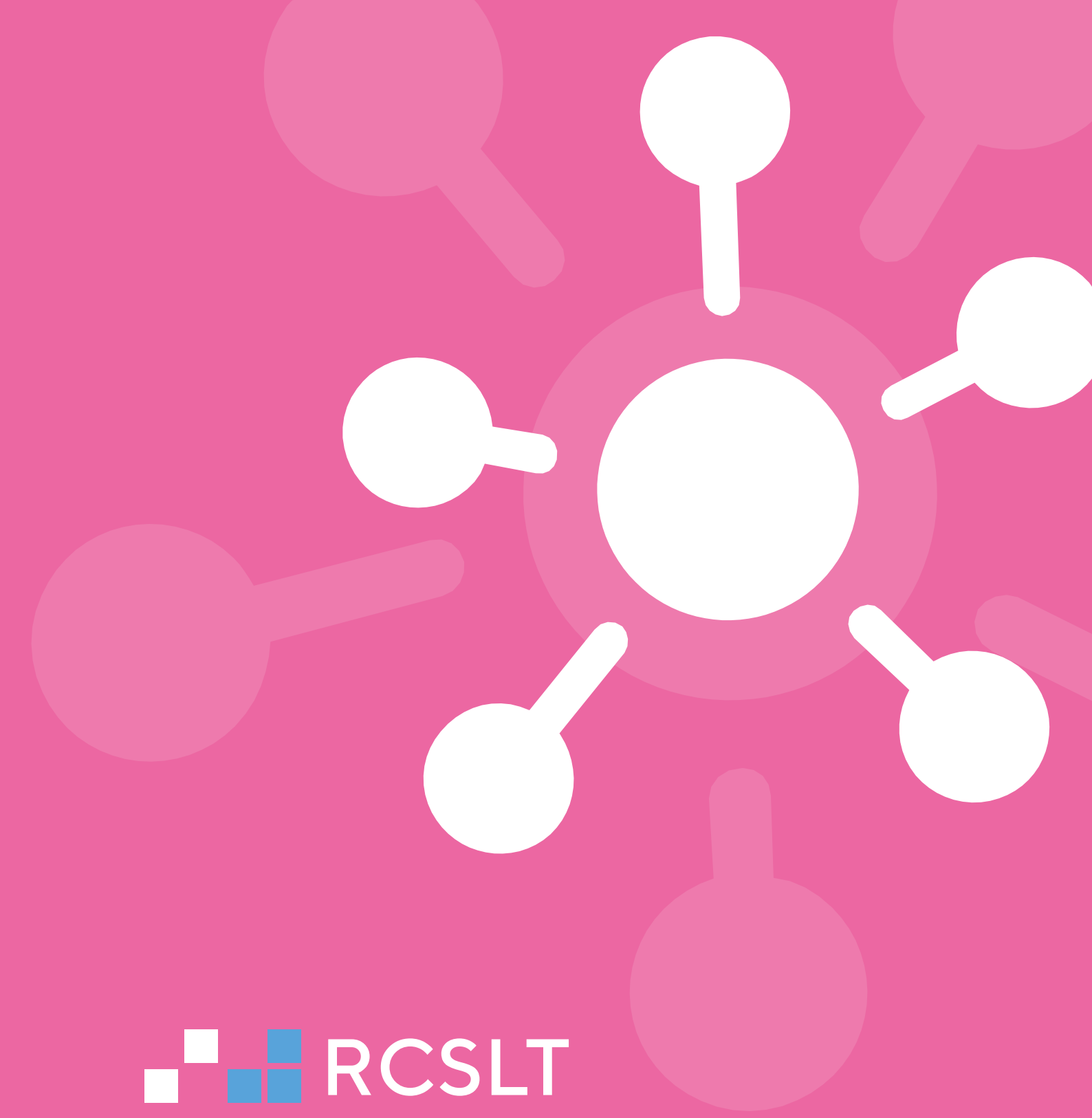

RCSLT

Professional Development Framework

March 2023

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Foreword

In April 2022, RCSLT embarked on an ambitious UK wide programme of activities, supported with funding from Health Education England. The programme's objectives were to support the modernisation and development of a workforce fit for the 21st century and the RCSLT set out to deliver those objectives for all four nations of the UK. The RCSLT Professional Development Framework is one of the key outcomes of the programme and one that I am very proud to introduce in this foreword.

The framework is a resource that has been co-created by and for speech and language therapists. We have developed what I believe to be a truly innovative and modern structure by which existing skills and experience are recognised, and learning and professional development needs are identified, at all career levels, across all settings.

One of the most pioneering aspects of the framework is that it positions practitioner wellbeing as a business imperative, placing it front and centre. Furthermore, embedded in the framework are the key principles of continuing professional development and lifelong learning, keeping it relevant, appropriate for its users and beneficial for the profession and those impacted by it.

Author and lead on this work, Dr. Stephanie Tempest, came to us from outside the profession, although still part of our AHP community, bringing with her an open mind and a subjective, fresh perspective. Stephanie shared her reflections:

"It has been a privilege to lead and collaborate on this project, which has involved working with and learning from many RCSLT members from across the UK, in a range of settings and at different career stages. As a first edition, I am proud of the resource we have developed together.

Safe and effective practice requires us, as Allied Health Professionals, to continue to develop both professionally and personally. This framework offers a structure to support growth across practice, learning and education, research, and leadership and management. It also recognises the central importance and the need to focus on practitioner wellbeing, inclusion and diversity, impact, co-production and sustainability.

My experience has taught me that the success of any framework depends on how it is used in practice. I have also learnt that a particular strength of frameworks, such as the RCSLT Professional Development Framework, lies in the conversations that occur from engaging with them. My hope is that this framework is used as a supportive, flexible resource (rather than a pseudo-mandatory tick box exercise) to provide inspiration, offer validation and support reflection, with a view to enabling fulfilled careers and to ultimately benefit the people we serve."

I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this resource. The input offered throughout the framework's production has been thoughtful, creative and insightful. In particular, I would like to personally thank Stephanie for her extraordinary skill and insight, as well as colleagues Vicky Harris, Mark Singleton and Kelly McCann who have been critical in the evolution of this impressive and important document. We hope that this framework will provide the underpinning support that is needed for a 21st century SLT workforce.

Judith Broll
Director of Professional Development, RCSLT

Section one

The RCSLT Professional Development Framework

1.1 Introducing the RCSLT Professional Development Framework

This section introduces:
- Why this framework is important
- What is included in the framework
- What it is and what it isn't

Safe and effective practice is dependent on us continuing to learn and develop throughout our professional careers (Health and Care Professions Council, 2023). The RCSLT Professional Development Framework provides a structured format to support individuals, managers (including Allied Health Professions (AHP) managers), and organisations to identify the learning and professional development needs of speech and language therapy practitioners across the whole career span, in all sectors, and all UK countries.

The framework is designed to:
- be used flexibly to guide practitioners, teams, and organisations
- be used as a whole or in parts, returning to it at different times within your career
- identify existing knowledge and skills with individuals and teams
- inspire future learning for knowledge and skills development
- provide a structure to support the CPD Diary (where appropriate)

The RCSLT Professional Development Framework has been designed by and for the speech and language therapy profession (see appendix one). It articulates the **five core components** (practitioner wellbeing, impact, inclusion and diversity, sustainability, co-production) and **four domains of practice** (professional practice; facilitation of learning; evidence, research and innovation; and leadership and management) for learning and professional development (see Figure 1a and the Glossary). Each domain has several **subthemes** (see Figure 1b) with **detailed topics** to enable you to evaluate your current **professional development level** (see Figures 3 and 4 for foundation, proficient, enhanced, advanced, expert levels), to identify your existing knowledge and skills and your future learning and development areas.

Completing the framework is not a mandatory requirement and no formal sign-off is required; nor is it about pay, terms and conditions of employment, performance management or fitness to practise. It is not a training needs analysis tool. Rather, it provides a structure to guide you towards areas of learning and professional development for your career because service users expect us to have up-to-date knowledge and skills (Broughton & Harris, 2022).

In short:
The RCSLT Professional Development Framework supports all practitioners and managers to identify existing knowledge and skills and areas for future learning and development.

Figure 1a: the RCSLT Professional Development Framework at a glance

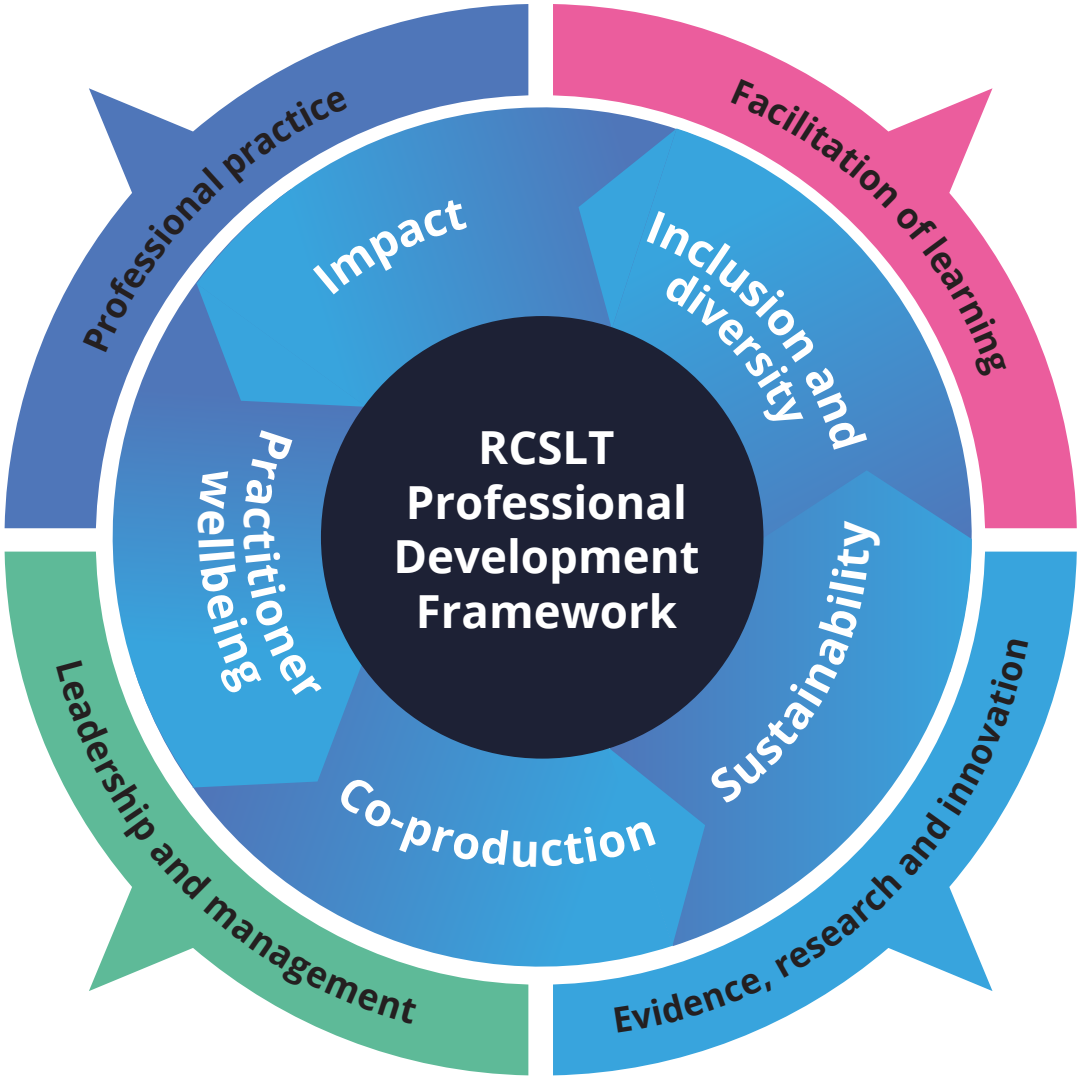
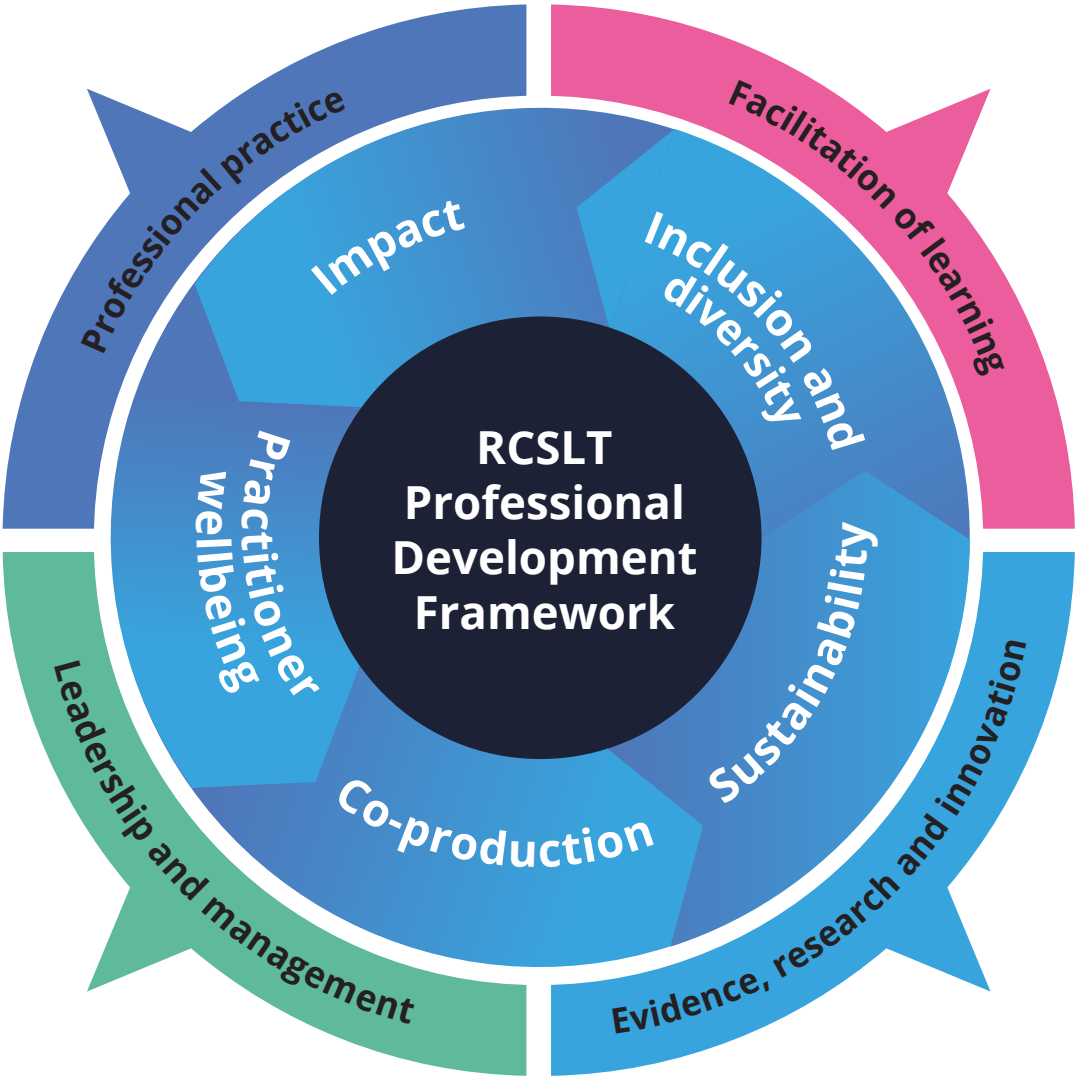


Figure 1b: the RCSLT Professional Development Framework with Subthemes

Professional practice
- Communication
- Eating, drinking and swallowing
- Safe, effective, high-quality practice
- Ethical and values-based practice
- Autonomy and accountability

Facilitation of learning
- Supervision and coaching
- Teaching and mentoring
- Creating learning resources, environments and opportunities
- Self-awareness and development
- Lifelong formal and informal learning



Leadership and management
- Effective teamwork
- Promote the profession
- Lead change
- Self-management
- Compassionate and inclusive leadership at all levels

Evidence, research and innovation
- Evidence-based practice
- Quality improvement and outcomes
- Research engagement
- Entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship

1.2 Who is this framework for and how can it be used?

This section introduces:
- The primary audiences for the framework
- Ways it is of interest to broader secondary audiences
- Ways to use it in practice

Primary audiences – registered speech and language therapists and managers (including managers from different professions, operational and strategic managers)

The RCSLT Professional Development Framework provides a profession-specific resource to support career conversations, including at any transition point e.g. newly qualified practitioner. It also helps you think about the transferable knowledge and skills you bring from previous and current paid roles, voluntary roles, and life experiences, including as an experienced therapist as you advance your career. It can be used in the processes that support professional development including but not limited to:

- Appraisals / individual performance reviews
- Supervision (one-to-one, group and peer), mentoring or career coaching
- Preceptorship for newly qualified practitioners
- Return to practice
- Personal statements for job applications including promotions within and beyond the profession
- Articulating advanced and expert level (transferable) knowledge and skills for career progression that transcends professional boundaries e.g. at the senior management and executive level
- Preparation for the HCPC audit
- Moving sectors e.g. into a diverse role, academia, or a leadership role
- Developing a portfolio career
- Active retirement planning (Sainty, 2018)

Similar frameworks for other AHP professions have shown they can be used to maintain **professional identity** when working in a generic role or diverse setting (Morais et al, 2018), including senior, executive level roles and as the structure to identify **team learning and development opportunities** as part of supporting and providing tailored CPD activities to staff teams (Silcock & Dunn, 2019).

Of interest to - service users, support workers, students, and people interested in a career in speech and language therapy

The framework shows that the profession values and recognises the importance of continuing professional development and lifelong learning to provide safe, high-quality services that people, especially service users, can trust. It also shows a commitment to investing in learning as a benefit for a fulfilled career.

Students and people interested in a speech and language therapy career can use the framework to understand and consider their future continuing professional development. It provides learning topics to inspire you to think about your own career progression and the opportunities you may wish to explore.

1.3 Using the framework – points to consider

This section introduces:

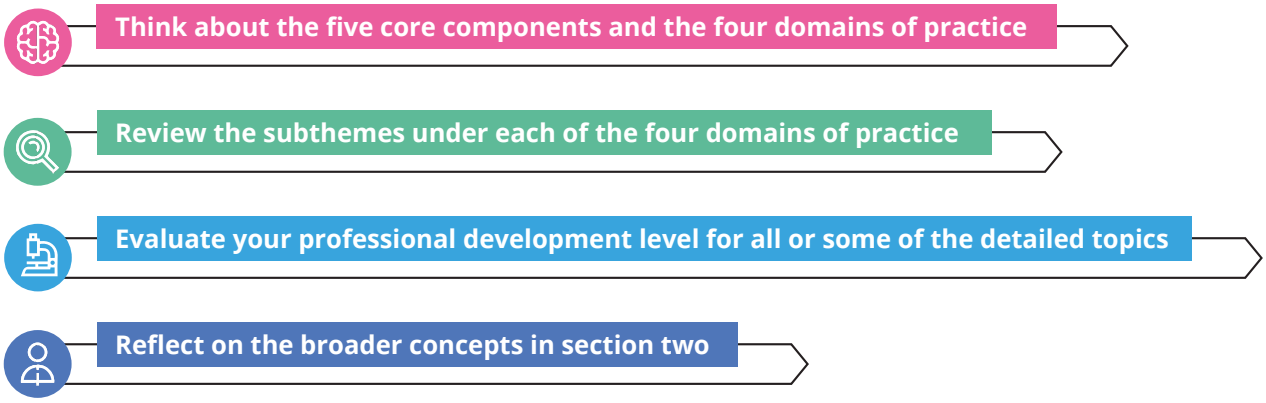
- Suggestions on how to start using the framework
- Suggestions on different levels to engage with the framework – depending on time pressures and desired outcomes

To start with, familiarise yourself with the structure including:

- **Five core components** (practitioner wellbeing, impact, inclusion and diversity, sustainability, co-production)
- **Four domains of practice** (professional practice; facilitation of learning; evidence, research and innovation; leadership and management)
- **Professional development levels** (foundation, proficient, enhanced, advanced, expert)

There is no right or wrong way to use the RCSLT Professional Development Framework – it has been designed to be used flexibly to meet your needs (see Figure 2). Depending on the time you have, you can do all or some of the following and use the outcome when planning your learning, career development and progression plans.

Figure 2: different ways to use the framework



- Each of the core components and domains of practice do not need equal weighting and attention. You may find you want to shine a light on aspects at different points in your career e.g. a move into education will see a greater focus on facilitation of learning, or a leadership secondment with a national arm's length body will see a greater focus on leadership and management.

- You can work through the framework on your own or you may want to map yourself into it with a trusted colleague or critical friend. As with most frameworks, it is the conversations they start that can be the most illuminating and support deeper reflection and learning on your own professional development.

- It can be used as a tool within supervision but, if your supervisor is also your line manager, this dynamic may affect the nature of the discussion and is one to notice.

- Use the detailed topics as starting points to identify courses and other learning opportunities e.g. secondments to support your career progression.

- Return to the framework at different stages of your career to review your progression and identify new topics for learning and development.

1.4 The five core components

This section introduces:

- The five core components that act as guiding values within the RCSLT Professional Development Framework
- Definitions for each of the five core components
- Reflective questions to support your learning and professional development

The five core components in the RCSLT Professional Development Framework are:

a. Practitioner wellbeing
b. Impact
c. Inclusion and diversity
d. Sustainability
e. Co-production

In this section, each component is taken in turn, defined and presented with a small set of reflective questions. These are offered as a starting point for conversations about the core components in relation to your practice, learning and professional development.

1.4a Practitioner wellbeing

"Practitioner wellbeing includes attention to and support within the workplace for health, effective work, values/ principles, collective/social opportunities, personal growth, lifestyle choices and financial wellbeing." (Adapted from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 2022).

As individual practitioners, not all of the elements in the definition will feel within our control to address and we will need to consider what is within our sphere of influence. It is important to recognise that investing in wellbeing requires an integrated approach across all levels of an organisation (CIPD, 2022). Organisational decision-makers need to recognise that health and wellbeing can impact on an employee's ability to learn, develop and improve their practice (Scottish Social Services Council, 2014).

There are several aspects to consider within the seven elements defined by the CIPD for practitioner wellbeing when supporting your own or other people's health and wellbeing at work including:

- **Health –** physical health, physical safety, mental health, emotional health, psychological safety
- **Effective work –** working environment, supportive line management, work demands, autonomy, change management, pay and reward
- **Values/principles –** Values-based leadership, ethical standards, inclusion and diversity
- **Collective/social –** employee voice, positive relationships
- **Personal growth –** career development, lifelong learning, creativity
- **Good lifestyle choices –** physical activity, healthy eating within the workplace
- **Financial wellbeing –** fair pay and benefit policies, retirement planning, employee financial support

Reflective questions:
Think about the definition of wellbeing and the seven elements in relation to your own current knowledge and experience.

- What does wellbeing at work look like for you?
- What is within your control to keep doing?
- What is within your control to improve or start doing?
- What is within your control to stop doing?

1.4b Impact

"Impact includes knowing how we make a difference and showing how we know we make a difference, as speech and language therapists and as part of the AHP community. It includes our ability to positively influence and bring about change, across all Four Domains of practice and across all sectors and roles in which we work." (Council for Allied Health Professions Research (CAHPR), 2019; NHS Education Scotland, 2021)

As individuals and as a profession, our aspirations include identifying how we make a difference and how we show that difference for ourselves as individual practitioners, and with different groups of people who are affected by the services we provide, including but not limited to:

- Service users
- The public
- Prospective and current speech and language therapy students
- Colleagues
- Decision makers
- System leaders
- The media
- Other key audiences (British Association Social Workers (BASW), 2018 pg4; RCSLT, 2022)

Reflective questions:
Think about the definition of impact in relation to your own current knowledge and experience across the different groups of people you work with.

- What does impact at work look like for you?
- What is within your control to keep doing?
- What is within your control to improve or start doing?
- What is within your control to stop doing?

1.4c Inclusion and diversity

"Inclusion and diversity involves valuing differences and engaging in continuous learning and development to promote greater equality, diversity and inclusion for all, and embed anti-racism within the profession and in service provision." (Advisory, Conciliation an Arbitration Service (ACAS), 2022; RCSLT, 2022)

As individuals and as a profession, our aspirations include:

- A more diverse student population and workforce, across all protected characteristics, at all levels of seniority, who are valued and can bring their whole selves to work
- Everyone, including those from underrepresented groups such as members from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background, who are LGBTQ+ or who have a disability, are fully included in the profession
- Culturally and linguistically inclusive, co-produced services, made accessible to all
- A profession empowered to tackle racism and discrimination in our services and society
- A profession that works proactively to reduce health inequalities and the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage on service users (RCSLT, 2022)

Reflective questions:
Think about the definition of inclusion and diversity in relation to your own current knowledge and experience.

- What does inclusion and diversity at work look like for you?
- What is within your control to keep doing?
- What is within your control to improve or start doing?
- What is within your control to stop doing?

1.4d Sustainability

"Sustainable healthcare delivers high quality care without damaging the environment, is affordable now and in the future and delivers positive social impact, that works for both people and the planet." (Centre for Sustainable Healthcare, 2022; NHS England, 2022; United Nations, 2022)

As individuals and a profession, our aspirations include to:

- invest in processes to support sustainability
- lower our carbon footprint (RCSLT, 2022)

The United Nations list 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2020) which are vital to create greener, more inclusive economies and stronger, more resilient societies:

Reflective questions:
Think about the definition of sustainability and the UN goals that are relevant to your workplace. In relation to your own current knowledge and experience, consider the following:

- What does sustainability at work look like for you?
- What is within your control to keep doing?
- What is within your control to improve or start doing?
- What is within your control to stop doing?

1.4e Co-production

"Co-production is not just a word, it is not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find shared solutions. In practice, co-production involves people who use services being consulted, included, and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them. When co-production works best, people who use services and carers are valued by organisations as equal partners, can share power, and have influence over decisions made." (Think Local Act Personal National Co-production Advisory Group, 2022)

As individuals and a profession, our aspirations include:

- Co-production with service users, their families, and carers, embedded in all aspects of our work including through the use of shared decision-making tools and processes
- Embedding co-production with and securing the endorsements of service user organisations in all aspects of our work
- A profession that works together to build a society that is communication inclusive

(Adapted from RCSLT, 2022)

Reflective questions:
Think about the definition of co-production in relation to your own current knowledge and experience.

- What does co-production look like in your work context?
- How can you support people with communication difficulties to participate meaningfully in co-production?
- What is within your control to keep doing?
- What is within your control to improve or start doing?
- What is within your control to stop doing?

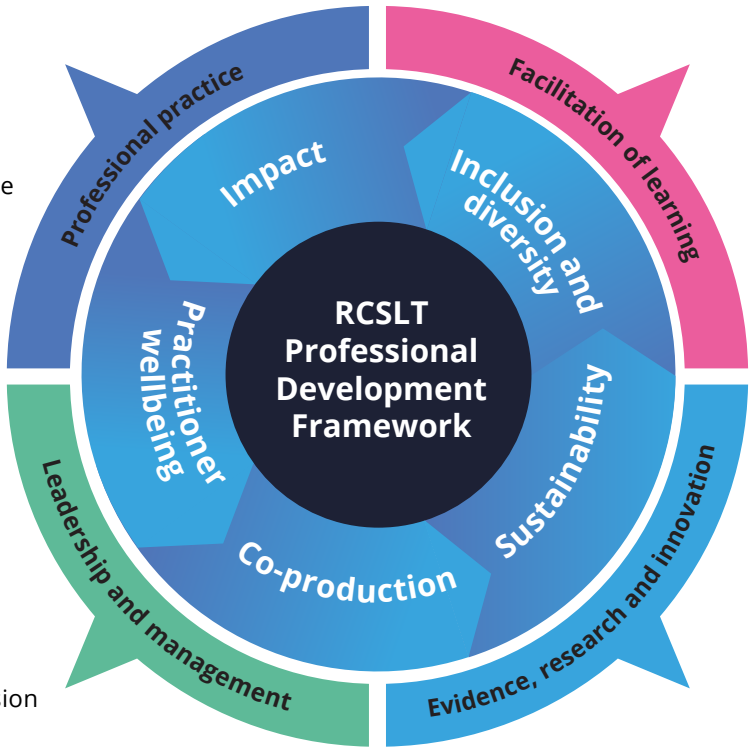
1.5 Four domains of practice and subthemes and self-evaluation

This section introduces:
- The four domains of practice
- The subthemes that sit within each domain of practice

1.5a The four domains of practice and subthemes

Each of the four domains of practice (professional practice; facilitation of learning; evidence, research and innovation; and leadership and management) has several subthemes, with aligned detailed topics. You can use the subthemes and the detailed topics as part of your self-evaluation. The five core components (practitioner wellbeing; impact; inclusion and diversity; sustainability; and co-production) have been woven through the four domains of practice, subthemes and detailed topics to embed them across all areas of learning and development.

Professional practice
- Communication
- Eating, drinking and swallowing
- Safe, effective, high-quality practice
- Ethical and values-based practice
- Autonomy and accountability



Facilitation of learning
- Supervision and coaching
- Teaching and mentoring
- Creating learning resources, environments and opportunities
- Self-awareness and development
- Lifelong formal and informal learning

Leadership and management
- Effective teamwork
- Promote the profession
- Lead change
- Self-management
- Compassionate and inclusive leadership at all levels

Evidence, research and innovation
- Evidence-based practice
- Quality improvement and outcomes
- Research engagement
- Entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship

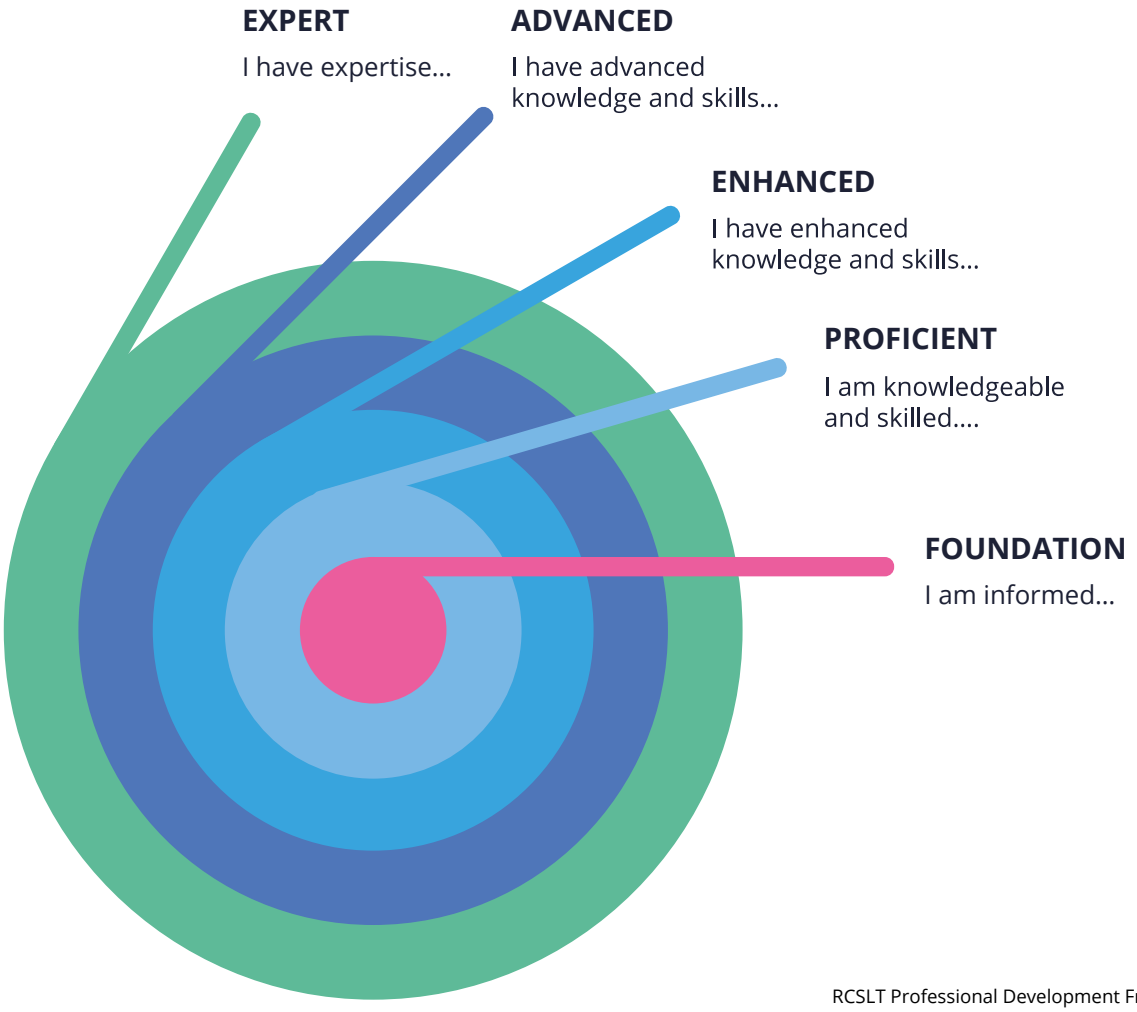
1.5b Professional development levels: self-evaluation with the four domains of practice

This section introduces:

- A method to support you to evaluate your professional development levels across the four domains of practice
- Broad definitions for each level
- The codes for the different levels which are used as abbreviations in the detailed topics

There are five professional development levels as outlined in Figure 3, each with short and longer descriptions and a code to use within the framework. There is also a 'not applicable now' box (framework code N/A now) as not all of the topics will be relevant to you at the current stage of your career, depending on your opportunities, choices and priorities. The inclusion of this box means you can capture topics you may wish to revisit at a later date. Figure 4 provides further details about what the levels may look like in practice.

Figure 3: The professional development levels and codes



Professional development level	Short description	Framework code
Foundation	I am informed	**Fdn**
Proficient	I am knowledgeable and skilled	**Profic**
Enhanced	I have enhanced knowledge and skills	**Enh**
Advanced	I have advanced knowledge and skills	**Adv**
Expert	I have expertise	**Exp**

The professional development levels are adapted from and based on work originally proposed by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) and subsequently developed into health and care by Benner (1982). You are invited to reflect on your level of knowledge and skills with each detailed topic, appreciating that any form of self-evaluation is based on the view we have of ourselves at that moment in time. We must consider the impact of not being consciously aware of our level of ability or a cognitive bias which leads us to overestimate our capability when undertaking self-evaluation. For further information on this, search for the hierarchy of competence model or the Dunning-Kruger effect (while appreciating there are critiques available on both concepts too).

Figure 4 offers broad examples on how people at each developmental level may use their knowledge and skills in practice, across settings and sectors (based on work by Leary, 2019).

Figure 4: Professional development knowledge and skills at different development levels

Professional development level	What this looks like (short version)	People at this development level may use their knowledge and skills to:
Foundation	I am informed	• Apply and critically analyse • Make decisions within protocols and processes • Manage rapidly changing events within specific situations
Proficient	I am knowledgeable and skilled	• Apply and critically analyse • Use reasoning to justify deviating from protocols when appropriate • Manage a range of situations in different contexts
Enhanced	I have enhanced knowledge and skills	• Critically evaluate and create • Manage risk and function in an unpredictable environment • Make complex decisions • Seek guidance for major decision making
Advanced	I have advanced knowledge and skills	• Critically evaluate and create • Manage extensive risk in unpredictable environments • Make decisions which involve high level of complexity
Expert	I have expertise	• Critically evaluate and create • Manage extensive risk across a system • Make decisions which involve high level of complexity

1.6 The detailed topics

This section introduces:

- Detailed topics for each subtheme within the domains of practice
- A worksheet format to help you capture your professional development level for individual topics (Fdn, Profic, Enh, Adv, Exp)
- A worksheet format to identify areas for learning in the future (N/A now box)

1.6a Professional practice

Communication	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
P1a. Undertake culturally responsive assessment of communication with service users in daily life (impairment, activity, participation, wellbeing)						
P1b. Undertake culturally responsive management of communication with service users in daily life (impairment, activity, participation, wellbeing)						
P1c. Undertake culturally responsive evaluation of communication with service users in daily life (impairment, activity, participation, wellbeing)						
P2. Use inclusive communication, utilising public health strategies and messages with service users, carers and families to enable effective partnerships						
P3. Use effective communication and engagement to establish informed consent with service users, carers and families to ensure maximum participation in decision making						
P4. Engage in inclusive communication with colleagues at all career levels and across sectors to enable effective partnerships						
P5. Use effective communication skills to negotiate, mediate and influence others including active listening, non-verbal communication, empathy, respect and engaging in courageous conversations						

Eating, drinking and swallowing	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
P6. Utilise public health strategies and messages including health promotion, related to eating, drinking and swallowing						
P7. Coproduce, manage and review care plans that are holistic, evidence-based and values-based and focus on the dignity, self-respect, wishes and preferences of the service user with regards their eating, drinking and swallowing						
P8. Consider health and safety aspects when working with service users with eating, drinking and swallowing needs						
P9a. Undertake culturally responsive assessment of eating, drinking and swallowing (impairment, activity, participation, wellbeing)						
P9b. Undertake culturally responsive management of eating, drinking and swallowing (impairment, activity, participation, wellbeing)						
P9c. Undertake culturally responsive evaluation of eating, drinking and swallowing (impairment, activity, participation, wellbeing)						

Safe, effective, high-quality practice	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
P10a. Make effective use of culturally responsive assessment processes and tools available within my setting relevant to speech and language therapy, advocating for additional resources as needed						
P10b. Make effective use of culturally responsive intervention and management processes and tools available within my setting relevant to speech and language therapy, advocating for additional resources as needed						
P10c. Make effective use of culturally responsive evaluation processes and tools available within my setting relevant to speech and language therapy, advocating for additional resources as needed						
P11. Work autonomously and as part of a multi-disciplinary team including in evolving areas of practice e.g., upper airways management						
P12. Utilise professional judgement, critical thinking, reasoning and decision-making						
P13. Engage in partnership working including active listening and recognising the central role of the service user (and carers and families where appropriate)						
P14. Understand and manage complexity within the context of my work						

Ethical and values-based practice	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
P15a. Engage in person-centred practice with service users, families and carers using non-judgemental, values-based approaches						
P15b. Engage in person-centred practice with self and colleagues using non-judgemental, values-based approaches						
P16. Understand and apply principles of empowerment and personalised care to enable shared decision-making						
P17a. Engage in cultural humility within my practice with service users, families and carers including with linguistically diverse people, marginalised, under-represented and / or disadvantaged people and populations						
P17b. Engage in cultural humility within my practice with self and colleagues including with linguistically diverse people, marginalised, under-represented and / or disadvantaged people and populations						
P18. Advocate for service users, using a variety of communication methods and interpersonal skills						
P19. Incorporate strengths-based principles to meet identified needs						
P20. Understand and critically reflect on the power afforded to me in my role and the impact this has on my professional relationships						

Autonomy and accountability	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
P21. Remain within the professional scope of practice in my specific role and setting, including within evolving areas of practice						
P22. Take responsibility and accountability for my decisions, actions and omissions						
P23. Adhere to regulatory, legal and ethical frameworks that govern my practice including those for service user safety and risk management / enablement						
P24. Know, adhere and contribute to the development and implementation of local, regional and national policies, statements, guidance and governance frameworks						
P25. Evaluate the impact of my practice e.g. health or quality benefits to service users, experience for service users, staff and / or colleagues, improved governance and / or safety, cost benefit analysis, enhanced digital approaches and / or better social capital						

1.6b Facilitation of learning

Supervision and coaching	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
F1. Support practice-based learning and assessment for pre-registration students and apprentices						
F2. Provide supervision (e.g. one-to-one, group, peer) and assessment for support workers and the registered workforce						
F3. Know, critically appraise and apply theories and strategies to be an effective supervisor / coach to ensure safe and effective practice, reflection, practitioner wellbeing, continuing professional development and career opportunities						
F4. Know and apply theories and strategies to be an effective supervisee / coachee to ensure safe and effective practice, reflection, practitioner wellbeing, continuing professional development and career opportunities						
F5. Actively participate and seek opportunities to engage in supervision (including various types e.g. management supervision, peer supervision, group supervision) or other forms of learning support e.g. supporting preceptorship or return to practice colleagues						
F6. Use supervision, coaching and other forms of professional development support to challenge complacency, actions and ways of thinking that may not be in the best interests of the people I serve						
F7. Act as a resource for individual practitioners, service users, teams and organisations (including the professional body) outside my own setting in relation to supervision and coaching						

Teaching and mentoring	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
F8. Know, critically appraise and apply learning theories and strategies to support my personal and professional development						
F9. Know, critically appraise and apply learning theories and strategies to support others to identify, monitor and enhance their personal and professional development						
F10. Know and apply implementation and evaluation techniques for educational interventions						
F11. Act as a resource for individual practitioners, service users, teams and organisations (including the professional body) outside my own setting in relation to teaching and mentoring						

Creating learning resources, environments, and opportunities	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
F12. Facilitate practice-based learning to support pre-registration students, through the development of resources and opportunities (including through policy development where appropriate)						
F13. Facilitate work-based learning for self and colleagues, through the development of resources and opportunities (including through policy development where appropriate)						
F14. Produce tailored, high-quality resources that contain the information that is needed at the 'right' level for the particular audience including resources co-produced with service users						
F15. Learn and engage in professional networks including online to share knowledge and practice						
F16. Cultivate effective learning environments including online						
F17. Evaluate the application and impact of learning resources, environments and opportunities for myself and others						

Self-awareness and development	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
F18. Use reflective practice including critical reflexivity to benefit the people I serve						
F19. Ask for, process and respond effectively to positive and constructive feedback						
F20. Understand and demonstrate the concept of cultural humility in my practice						
F21. Demonstrate a conscious understanding of my own values, preferences, emotions and thought processes and the impact these have on my behaviour, including my biases						
F22. Recognise and act where performance and practice of myself or others should be celebrated or improved						
F23. Know, critically appraise and use processes and tools to support self-appraisal, self-awareness and development						

Lifelong formal and informal learning	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
F24. Identify, monitor and enhance own knowledge and skills at different stages in my career						
F25. Learn and engage in professional networks including online to enhance lifelong formal and informal learning						
F26. Evidence my commitment to lifelong learning to support the development of the profession and the people I serve						
F27. Reflect on the learning and development process at different times in my career e.g., from novice to expert						

1.6c Evidence, research and innovation

Evidence-based practice	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
E1. Know how to access scientific evidence, clinical expertise and service user preferences to inform practice						
E2. Critically appraise and synthesise evidence from scientific sources, clinical expertise and service user preferences to inform practice						
E3. Implement evidence from scientific sources, clinical expertise and service user preferences to inform practice						
E4. Understand the concepts of ethics, governance, safety, sustainability and informed consent within the research process						

Quality improvement and outcomes	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
E5. Benchmark, design, participate in, analyse and disseminate audits, guideline development and project-based work						
E6. Evaluate the impact of therapy and / or service interventions using appropriate outcome measures or tools						
E7. Undertake quality improvement projects for and with service users, communities and the profession and evaluate the impact						

Research engagement	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
E8a. Initiate, design and undertake research (e.g. question formulation, selection of research methods, data collection and analysis) including practice-based, small and / or large-scale projects						
E8b. Participate in / lead research including practice-based, small and / or large-scale projects						
E8c. Disseminate the impact and outcome of research						
E9. Support myself and others to engage in research at the appropriate level for each person						
E10. Understand and influence the organisational culture to support research engagement						
E11. Critically apply concepts of ethics, governance, safety, sustainability and informed consent within the research process						
E12. Ensure public and patient involvement (including service users, families, carers and community groups) throughout the research process						
E13. Develop and engage in inclusive networks and collaborations to support research engagement						
E14. Apply for and / or signpost others to research or clinical-academic fellowship and funding opportunities						
E15. Contribute to the peer-review processes e.g. conference abstract reviewer, journal reviewer						

Entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
E16. Influence and contribute to innovation and change to support the sustainability of services						
E17. Access and apply for funding to support evidence, research and innovation						
E18. Develop new and different ways of thinking, working or delivering solutions e.g. digital solutions in therapy including to enhance sustainability						

1.6d Leadership and management

Effective teamwork	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
L1. Utilise opportunities and minimise risks of new technologies, digital resources, social media and online networks and communication to enhance teamwork						
L2. Lead, guide and facilitate the development of an effective teamwork culture including across disciplines, which respects and values differences and applies leadership theory into practice						
L3. Inspire shared purpose and vision including via strategy development at local, regional, national and international levels						
L4. Facilitate shared ownership of decision-making						
L5. Understand and value the contributions of different professional roles across career levels, professions and sectors						
L6. Utilise recruitment and retention strategies for staff, students and / or volunteers						
L7. Promote and value diversity within teams						

Promote the profession	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
L8. Influence broader political, social, cultural and economic agendas within my scope of practice						
L9. Actively build and maintain professional relationships to promote the profession and its reputation and support the development and sustainability of it						
L10. Critically evaluate professional boundaries to support new ways of working within the context of organisation, service level or system needs						
L11. Seek opportunities to promote the profession to support the development of the future workforce e.g. career talks						

Lead change	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
L12. Influence, negotiate and navigate professional, service and / or organisational change including understanding the impact it has on my role, utilising theory and evidence to support the change process						
L13. Evaluate (or contribute to the evaluation of) the impact of service re-design or workforce development projects e.g. what people or services have stopped or started doing						
L14. Adhere and contribute to the development of governance structures and local / regional / national guidance						
L15. Contribute to financial, budgeting and workforce planning practices including building business cases						
L16. Engage in systems thinking to consider the wider context including cultural and political considerations and the influence they have on my role						
L17. Use digital literacy knowledge and skills to lead change (or contribute to) e.g. quality improvement, decision support and safety, recording and outcomes, staff and service user experience, sustainability						
L18. Understand the political, social, economic and institutional factors that shape and influence the delivery of speech and language therapy and on my specific role						

Self-management	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
L19. Effectively manage workload						
L20. Effectively resolve and / or manage dissatisfaction and conflict						
L21. Use strategies to effectively manage time for self and others						
L22. Use strategies to effectively manage health and wellbeing for self and others including personal resilience						
L23. Work and learn as part of a team						
L24. Strive to create and maintain a work-life balance that supports my wellbeing						
L25. Sustain and use my imagination, creativity and curiosity to explore options						

Compassionate and inclusive leadership at all levels	Fdn	Profic	Enh	Adv	Exp	N/A now
L26. Use care when holding people to account						
L27. Promote people's strengths and agency to support hope and self-determination						
L28. Contribute to a nurturing and supportive culture where there is a balance between compassion and authority						
L29. Influence the development and maintenance of organisational resilience						
L30. Lead by embracing a wide range of perspectives, differing needs and competing rights						
L31. Effectively manage (or contribute to the management of) staff and actively promote the rights and responsibilities for myself and others e.g. in relation to bullying, equity of opportunity, equality, diversity and inclusion, and health and wellbeing in the workplace						

Section two

Learning, development and career progression

2.1 Aligning this framework with others within and beyond the profession

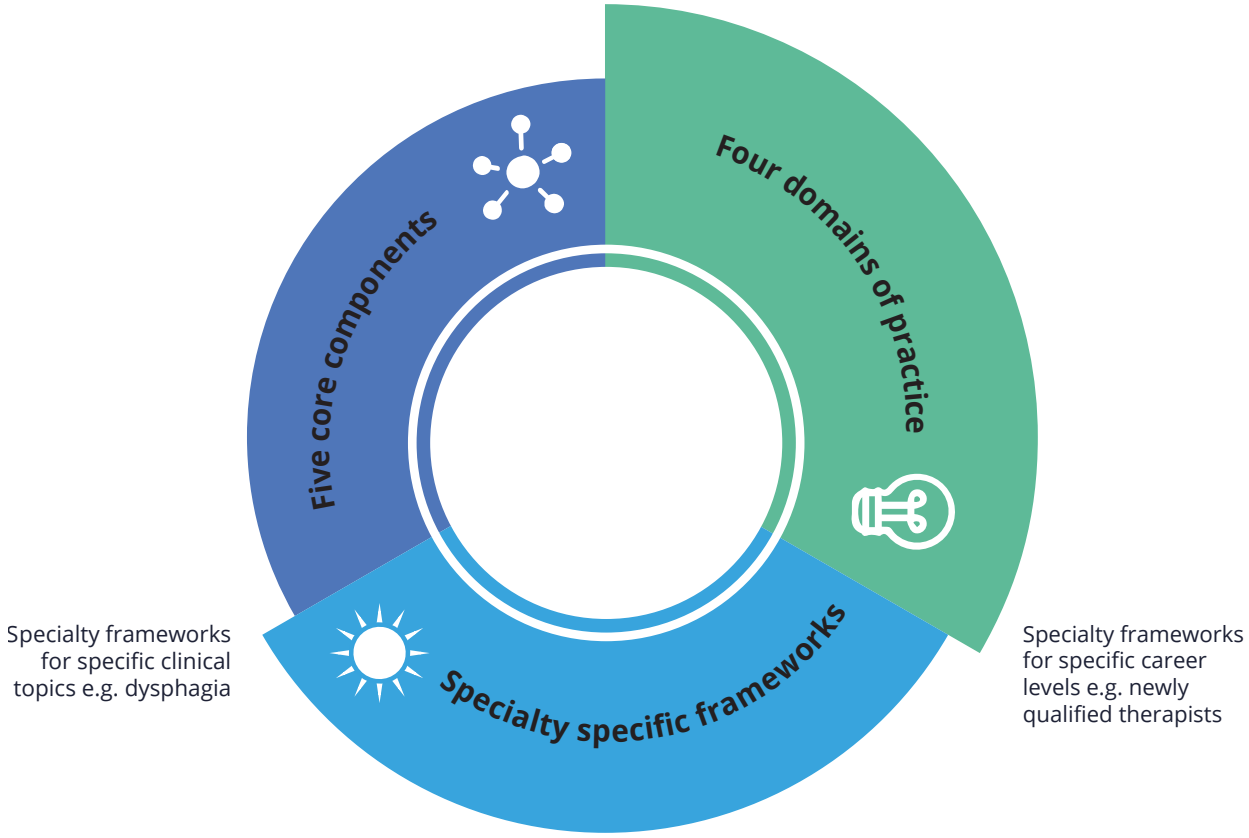
This section introduces:

- The relationship between this framework and specialty specific frameworks
- The relationship between this profession specific framework and other multidisciplinary frameworks

This is the only UK-wide framework designed by speech and language therapy practitioners for speech and language therapy practitioners across all sectors, and career levels. It contains underpinning elements for all practitioners including **five core components** (practitioner wellbeing, impact, inclusion and diversity, sustainability, co-production) and **four domains of practice** (professional practice, facilitation of learning, evidence, research and innovation, and leadership and management) to guide learning and professional development.

There are also several specialty specific frameworks within our profession, including those related to specific clinical topics or career levels, and these have been referenced during the development of this work. They can be used in addition to this framework to provide specialty specific detail to support learning and development. The relationship between them is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: The relationship between the RCSLT Professional Development Framework and specialty specific frameworks



This framework also aligns with multiprofessional, cross-sector resources. Appendix two lists the resources, including multi-professional ones (e.g. advanced practice), that have been mapped into this framework as part of creating the structure for this work. During the co-creation phase, RCSLT members shared additional frameworks they use within their national, regional, or local teams and these have also been referenced to ensure alignment.

2.2 Reflecting on the scope of practice, level of practice and career progression

This section presents two concepts, with reflective questions, to encourage you to think about what professional, career development and progression means to you and where you might want to go next. We invite you to potentially challenge your thinking and consider a different perspective on:

1) The relationship between expertise and specialisms
2) The nature of career development and career progression

2.2a The relationship between expertise and specialisms

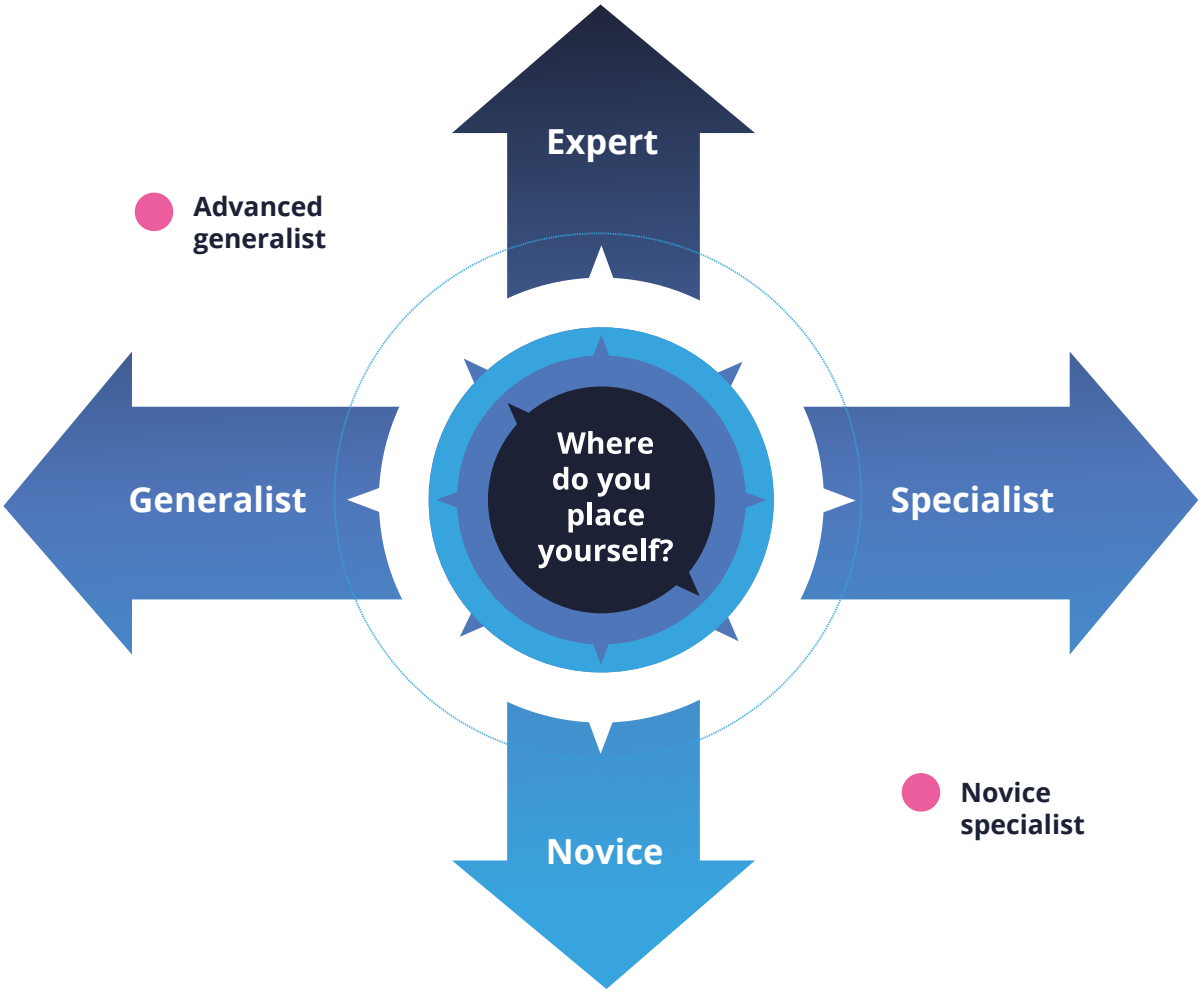
This section introduces:

- Ideas which may feel like a paradigm shift
- The idea that the concept of 'novice to expert' describes levels of practice
- The idea that the concept of 'specialist to generalist' describes a scope of practice

There is a common perception that moving into a specialism denotes seniority and the reality is that, if you work in the NHS, the system reinforces this too. However, Figure 6 offers a different perspective. It articulates the two intersecting concepts of level of practice and scope of practice. In this figure the **level of practice** is on the vertical axis as we move from novice through to expert (based on work originally proposed by Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980 and brought into health and care by Benner, 1982). This figure is used widely in other frameworks including those for advanced practice and broader career development (e.g. Health Education England, 2017; Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 2021; NHS Education Scotland, 2021).

The **scope of practice** intersects with the level of practice on the horizontal axis to show areas in which we work on the continuum between generalist and specialist. This means that the word specialist relates to a scope of practice and is not linked to seniority or level of practice. As the figure shows, it is possible to be a novice specialist i.e. if you have recently moved into a new area of practice. However, not everyone chooses to specialise and over time with experience, knowledge, and skills you can also recognise yourself and be recognised as an advanced generalist.

Figure 6: the relationship between level of practice and scope of practice



As we move through our careers, our level of practice may go up or down and we may choose to work across the continuum of generalist and specialist. For example, a move from clinical practice after many years of experience into academia, sees a person move from being an expert clinician to a novice academic and early career researcher.

Reflective questions on the relationship between expertise and specialisms

- Where do you place yourself on the novice to expert, generalist and specialist continuum?
- Can you identify where you have been in the past e.g. in different roles and career stages?
- In what ways, if any, has this section of the Professional Development Framework challenged or changed your thinking? Why is this important (i.e. the 'so what' factor) and what would you now like to do in response?

2.2b The nature of career development and career progression

This section introduces:

- Ideas which may feel like a paradigm shift
- Career development and career progression as two inter-related but different concepts
- The idea that career planning does not always involve promotion-focused moves
- The idea that the concept of a career ladder works for some people but not everyone
- The concept of growth-based career progression
- The idea of viewing your career as a river instead of a ladder
- The Kawa approach as a metaphor for thinking about growth-based career progression

Career development and career progression are two inter-related but different concepts. The HCPC requires all registered practitioners to engage in continuing professional (career) development to maintain safe and effective practice. In contrast, career progression involves making choices and planning moves for the next chapter in individual careers and this will look different for each of us.

Conversations about career progression often focus on promotion-based concepts. The idea of a career ladder is deeply entrenched in our thinking, and it is not unusual for career discussions to focus on what you need to do to get to the next pay band or scale. For some people this works, but it is not the only way of viewing progression. And for some, the concept of a career ladder is unhelpful.

The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2016) propose an alternative to the career ladder that focuses on growth and experience-based career progression rather than purely on promotion (locate the CIPD podcasts 'Career pathing: the new path forward' for further information). In the context of our profession this could mean vertical and / or lateral growth across the four domains of practice, for example:

- Identifying opportunities to advance our leadership and management, utilising our origin profession knowledge and skills to move into senior executive board roles
- Diversifying our work through a portfolio career approach or considering secondment opportunities within or beyond our existing employer
- Choosing to stay within an existing role and adding depth and breadth to our knowledge and skills within it
- Moving to a different sector for a new opportunity

The Kawa approach has started to gain popularity in conversations about career progression. Kawa is Japanese for 'river' and this occupational therapy model has been used in clinical practice since 2006. Some allied health professionals are already using it as individuals, within teams and organisations to support professional and service development.

The river metaphor allows us to explore the idea that career rivers take twists and turns, and we can make choices about the size, shape and direction of where our individual career river flows. It also allows us to acknowledge that our career, as an individual river, is part of a broader ecosystem.

A detailed discussion of the Kawa approach is beyond the scope of this framework, and you are invited to seek online resources on the Kawa model (from 2006 onwards) for more details. In brief, the Kawa approach encourages us to think about five elements to engage in a deeper level of growth-based career conversation.

River flow – is my career going too fast, or too slow, where has it come from, where would I like the river to flow to? Would I prefer my river to flow into a larger river or maybe a lake or rockpool so I can contain my career in one place? This allows us to think about careers in a more flexible and fluid way and in terms of the past, present and future.

Riverbanks – the environment that individual careers operate in or may want to move into. It allows us to think about what sort of physical, attitudinal and social environments meet our needs, including if we have a preference towards working in multiple environments to design a portfolio career.

Rocks – the blocks that inhibit the flow of our career rivers. This helps us to identify what is holding us back. What can we do to break these rocks? What can we do to go around these rocks, so the river continues to flow, and our careers continue to have fluidity and movement? Who do we need to influence to help remove the rocks?

Driftwood – there are helpful pieces of driftwood (hopefully like this framework) that can act as rafts to help our career rivers to flow. There can also be pieces that get stuck between the rocks and slow our career progression down. This helps us to identify learning resources and opportunities that we may want to consider.

Spaces – previously unseen opportunities to progress our careers. For example, a portfolio career option, a secondment opportunity, hourly-paid roles within higher education, leadership opportunities. What are these spaces? What is available to help us grow and lead a fulfilled career?

Reflective questions on the nature of career development and career progression

- What images, thoughts and feelings do you have when you think about a career ladder?
- How do you feel about using the Kawa approach when reflecting on your own career progression?
- Read the following quote which is a personal reflection from a journalist: what do you think of it and why? What would you like to do after reading this quote? (And that may include disagreeing with it or working with it)

“A career ladder creates no value except for the person climbing it, while a career river feeds an entire ecosystem… If you embrace your career as a river instead of a ladder, you’re better able to confront the obstacles. I’d rather live in a professional world of rivers, where we all can go with the flow together.”

(Thoreson, 2021)

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3. Summary

The RCSLT Professional Development Framework comprises two sections:

Section one presents the:

- Five core components
- Four domains of practice (with sub-themes and detailed topics)
- Professional development levels for self-evaluation

Section two shows how the framework aligns to others and presents concepts to encourage reflection on our individual professional development and career progression.

The framework is designed to be used flexibly, in a way that is manageable for you and based on the level of detail you wish to focus on. It can be revisited at different stages of your career and particularly in moments of career transition and progression.

Further resources are planned to support the implementation of the framework in practice and will be available via the RCSLT website.

Please share your experiences via social media using **#RCSLTProfDev**. We value hearing about how you use the framework in practice and in particular the impact it has on your learning, development and career progression.

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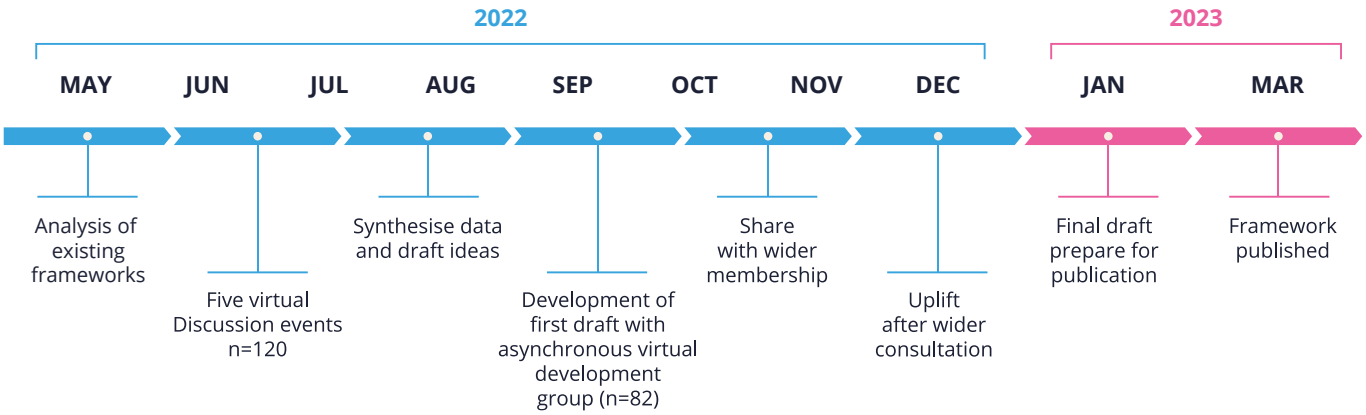
5. Appendices

Appendix one: details of the co-creation process



Appendix two: documents used to inform the content mapping

A sample of frameworks and strategy documents across the UK and beyond informed the mapping process including from other professional bodies, multi-professional frameworks and those within the profession. The original list was compiled by the RCSLT project team. In addition, participants at the discussion events shared the local, regional, and national frameworks they used to inform their practice.

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Appendix three: supporting links on the RCSLT website

RCSLT Leadership resources (please note you will need to be logged in to view these) https://www.rcslt.org/learning/leadership-resources/

RCSLT Reflective Writing learning (please note you will need to be logged in to view this), including templates and explanations for several reflective writing models https://www.rcsltcpd.org.uk/courses/reflective-writing/

RCSLT CPD Diary (please note you will need to be logged in to access your diary) https://community.rcslt.org/s/cpd-diary and user guide https://rise.articulate.com/share/MZCb0O5B-IrChE3rCLHx-Wx8olERDq_P#/

RCSLT Diversity, inclusion and anti-racism hub (please note you will need to be logged in to view this) https://www.rcslt.org/learning/diversity-inclusion-and-anti-racism/

RCSLT Working with bilingual children elearning (please note you will need to be logged in to view this) https://www.rcsltcpd.org.uk/courses/working-with-bilingual-children/

RCSLT YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/@RCSLTOfficial and direct link to webinar playlist https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9WZl-0CJ2TIPyp_US8AWDlEPZZb2_8Rv

RCSLT Podcasts https://soundcloud.com/rcslt

6. Glossary

Word or phrase	Definitions
Carer	A carer is a person of any age who provides unpaid care and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who is disabled, has an illness or long-term condition, or who needs extra help as they grow older. https://www.carersuk.org/about-us/why-were-here/
Complexity	Complexity is characterised by unpredictability and interconnectivity, the need for flexibility and adaptation and is underpinned by relationships. A complex situation is not a higher order level of a complicated one but a very different situation. A workplace example is working with many people and organisations crossing organisational and professional boundaries on issues that keep changing. At home an example is raising a child. (https://www.england.nhs.uk/spread-and-adoption/seven-interconnected-principles/complexity/)
Continuing professional development	The way in which an individual continues to learn and develop throughout their career, including during their pre-registration programme. CPD is essential and evolves skills, knowledge, professional identity and professional conduct so that individuals stay up to date and practise safely and effectively. (Adapted from Interprofessional CPD and Lifelong Learning UK Working Group 2022)
Core components	These are five core components at the centre of the RCSLT Professional Development Framework: practitioner wellbeing; impact; inclusion and diversity; sustainability; co-production.
Critical reflexivity	Reflexivity requires people to monitor and manage practice as it is happening. Critical reflexivity also requires that we recognise assumptions, values and structures that underpin our practice and examine: (1) how these are enacted through daily practice; and (2) the effects these have, in particular the unintended consequences (Bright et al 2021).

Word or phrase	Definitions
Cultural humility	A lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redress power imbalance and to develop non paternalistic partnerships (Tervalon and Murray-Garcia 1998). Cultural humility requires us to acknowledge we are constantly learning, we recognise without shame that everyone has knowledge gaps, we expect differences between and within cultures, we work to identify biases to promote positive change and we recognise power dynamics and their effects (Agner 2020).
Culturally responsive	Ability to understand and consider the different cultural backgrounds of the people you offer services to, including across all protected characteristics (adapted from Cambridge Dictionary, 2023)
Detailed topics	Each domain of practice has a number of sub-themes which contain detailed topics to support you to identify specific aspects for your learning and development and rate your current level of knowledge and skills.
Domains of practice	There are four domains of practice in the RCSLT Professional Development Framework: professional practice; facilitation of learning; evidence, research and innovation; leadership and management.
Environment	The circumstances, objects or conditions that make up a person's surroundings, in which they live and that they experience. This might include physical, social, economic, societal, cultural, attitudinal or virtual environments.
Evidence, research and innovation	One of the four domains of practice relating to evidence-based practice; quality improvement and outcomes; research engagement; entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship.
Facilitation of learning	One of the four domains of practice relating to supervision and coaching; teaching and mentoring; creating learning resources, environments, and opportunities; self-awareness and development; lifelong learning and informal learning (including academic learning).

Word or phrase	Definitions
Intrapreneur	A person who works within a company or organisation (rather than running their own company as an entrepreneur) who promotes innovation and takes responsibility for turning an idea into a new service, product, or business.
Leadership and management	One of the four domains of practice relating to effective teamwork; promote the profession; lead change; self-management; compassionate and inclusive leadership at all levels.
Not applicable now (N/A now)	'N/A now' sits alongside the Professional development levels to recognise the multitude of reasons why it may not be possible or applicable to focus on a specific topic. For example, at a particular stage in your career, in a specific role or because it is not an area you wish to shine a light on at this at the moment. It can also be used to identify topics you may wish to revisit at a different point in your career.
Professional development levels	There are five learning stages namely, foundation, proficient, enhanced, advanced, expert. Practitioners are encouraged to identify the progress they are making with their learning using the professional development levels (also see not applicable now).
Professional practice	One of the four domains of practice relating to communication; eating, drinking and swallowing; safe, effective, high-quality practice; ethical and values-based practice; and autonomy and accountability.
Portfolio career	Working in several roles or jobs, within or across organisations at the same time, rather than one job. Often undertaken to provide variety in work life.
Social capital	The networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular group, enabling that group to function effectively.

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) is the professional body for speech and language therapists in the UK. As well as providing leadership and setting professional standards, the RCSLT facilitates and promotes research into the field of speech and language therapy, promotes better education and training of speech and language therapists, and provides its members and the public with information about speech and language therapy.

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