



**Independent Highly Specialist Speech & Language Therapist  
Talking Steps Ltd.**

**Stephanie Cross**

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

A full-time Band 5 paediatric post in Birmingham, seeing 5–6 children a day for speech, language, fluency and voice. I delivered therapy in clinics and schools, and ran language groups with an SLTA.

**What does your current role involve?**

I remotely assess children and adults for autism within an MDT, working with psychologists, OTs and specialist nurses. I'm self-employed, contracting with private and NHS-funded Right to Choose services.

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

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**What steps did you take to progress from Band 5 to Band 6, and how did you navigate the transition?**

I completed in-house CDC competencies with close supervision, built confidence, and showed enthusiasm, good communication and clear clinical boundaries, which supported my successful Band 6 application.

**How have you used CPD and/or networking opportunities to help you progress in your career?**

CPD, CENs and strong professional networks have opened doors through shared learning and word of mouth. These connections led to roles, broader clinical knowledge and becoming involved in pathway development and improvement

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

Build solid core clinical skills, seek experience with autistic people, observe MDTs and stay open, reflective and curious. Opportunities often grow from enthusiasm, CPD and genuine compassion for families.

