



NQP and Beyond

RCSLT Professional Transitions Guide

In effect from June 2026

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Foreword

In April 2024 RCSLT began a large programme of work funded by NHS England to promote the ongoing education reform priorities for speech and language therapy in the UK. The RCSLT Professional transitions guide: NQP and beyond is one of the key outcomes of the programme.

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) remains committed to championing the profession and ensuring all members have access to the tools, knowledge, and networks they need to succeed. Whether you are an NQP setting out on your career path or an experienced SLT embracing a new opportunity, we hope this guide provides clarity, confidence, and direction for your next steps.

Transitions are a key part of every professional journey. Navigating career progression requires structured support, guidance, and the confidence to embrace change. This guide has been carefully designed to guide and support SLTs at key transition points, ensuring they feel equipped, empowered, and ready to thrive in their roles.

For those beginning their careers, the revised NQP goals process offers a structured pathway to build professional confidence, competence, and autonomy. This framework provides a clear, supportive route for new practitioners to achieve certification and continue growing within the profession. We have ensured it aligns to the HCPC principles of preceptorship, national programmes where they exist and RCSLT's Professional development framework.

Beyond the NQP stage, professional transitions occur in many forms—moving to a new clinical specialism, taking on leadership responsibilities, returning to practice, or shifting into research and education. This document acts as a guide to assist at those times of change.

Dr Stephanie Tempest led this work through a series of co-production activities with members. We extend our gratitude to Stephanie and all those who contributed to the development of this guide, including practitioners, supervisors, educators, and professional leaders. In particular those who engaged in the online co-production events; members of the virtual development group; those who responded to the consultation; and Barbara Paulger and Rachel Brown and the Surrey County Council SLT team for testing this at two CPD days. Your insights and expertise have been invaluable in shaping a resource that will benefit SLTs now and in the future. Additional thanks go to Vicky Harris, Sally Cochrane and Will Christopher who were the RCSLT Team who worked on this project with such dedication and grace.

We wish you every success in your professional journey.



Dr Krystina Stanway
RCSLT Director of Professional Development and Innovation

Glossary

Term	Definition and source
Foundation level	The first of five professional development levels within the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (RCSLT, 2026). Speech and language therapists at this level use their knowledge and skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply and critically analyse • make decisions within protocols and processes • manage rapidly changing events within specific situations.
Foundation support	Foundation support: A matrix of opportunities for professional and personal development for allied health professionals that supports upskilling across the four pillars of practice, while simultaneously developing a diverse workforce fit for the future (NHS England).
NQP (newly-qualified practitioner) goals process	The RCSLT NQP goals process is a membership offer that aims to support a smooth transition for members in their first roles as registered practitioners, to build confidence as a safe, effective and skilled speech and language therapists (RCSLT, 2026).
Preceptorship	A period of structured support provided to Health and Care Professions Council registrants at key moments of career transitions . This includes joining the workforce for the first time, returning to work after a long period away (including being re-admitted to the register), working in the UK for the first time, taking up a new role or moving to a new organisation, to give them confidence to act as an autonomous practitioner.
Preceptor	An individual providing one-to-one support to someone undertaking preceptorship. Within the context of the NQP goals process, this person is known by the established title of 'supervisor'. They may or may not be the line manager, depending on local service needs.
Preceptee	An individual accessing a period of preceptorship. In the context of the NQP goals process, this person is known by the established term 'NQP'.

Term	Definition and source
RCSLT Professional Development Framework	A structure to support individuals, managers and organisations to identify existing knowledge and skills within the profession and areas for future learning and development, which was created by members (RCSLT, 2026).

Background



Aims of this section:

- To provide a short explanation of why this guide is important.
- To make links to regulatory guidance and the existing RCSLT support on offer.

Providing and accessing structured support for speech and language therapists (SLTs) at any point of career transition helps to deliver safe, compassionate and high-quality care (Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) 2025). This resource provides guidance on what structured support looks like for newly-qualified practitioners (NQPs) – through the established and revised NQP goals process – alongside ways to provide support for other key moments of career transitions.

Structured support is also known as preceptorship and it is important to reinforce that it includes, but is not limited to, starting as an NQP. The HCPC, as our regulator, defines preceptorship as:

“A period of structured support provided to HCPC registrants at key moments of career transitions. This includes joining the workforce for the first time, returning to work after a long period away (including being re-admitted to the register), working in the UK for the first time, taking up a new role, or moving to a new organisation, to give them confidence to act as an autonomous practitioner” (HCPC, 2023).

In addition to this guide, the RCSLT provides more advice and information on a dedicated preceptorship webpage and the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (2026), which supports a broad range of transitions. Members can also access the professional enquiries service.

Introduction to this guide



Aims of this section:

- To show and explain why there are two sections – one for NQPs and one for all other forms of career transitions.
- To reinforce you only need to look at the section relevant to you and not read the whole document.
- To outline selected RCSLT resources to support different career levels.

There are two main sections in this guide and it is likely you will only need to use one. They have been kept together in one document to reinforce the importance of transitional support at every career level. Both sections are written in the first person to connect directly with you, as the person leading and growing through your transitional career point.

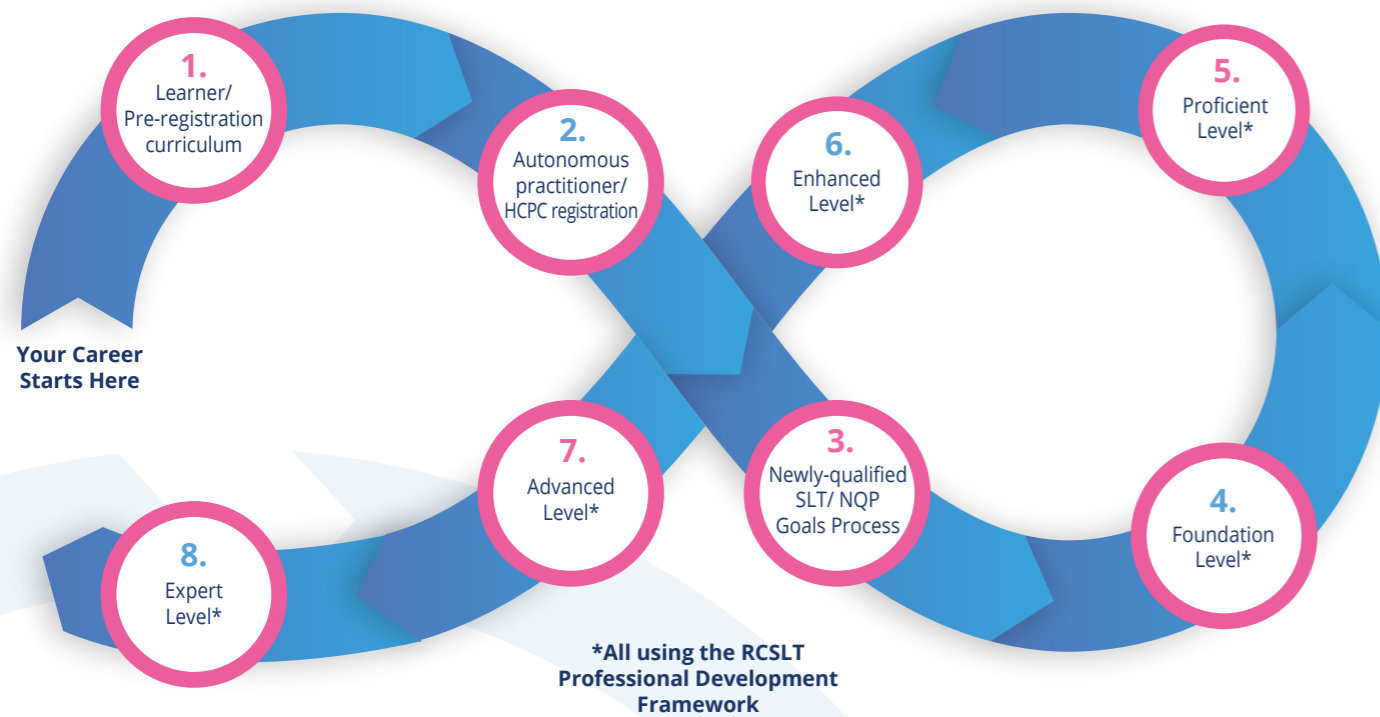
Section One outlines the revised structured **NQP goals process**, which builds on the pre-registration curriculum and aligns with the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (2026) and the HCPC Standards of Proficiency (2023). The NQP goals process is designed to be owned and led by the newly-qualified SLT, supported by the employer and the RCSLT.

Section Two focuses on ways to offer **support for other key transitions** including through the use of the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (2026). It provides suggestions rather than a structured process, appreciating formal processes are already in place for some transitions, for example formal return to practice. In addition, support across different career transitions will vary significantly.

The overarching aim of this guide is to provide support to enable smooth and successful transitions, so SLTs feel confident and ready to work as they transition from one phase to the next. Since there is no universal definition for ‘work readiness’ (Peersia et al, 2024), the guide draws on available evidence to outline important skills and behaviours that help people transition into different workplaces and to navigate real world practice. It is designed to work alongside local, regional and national programmes you might be part of - for example ones provided by your employer, or by NHS England (such as the Quality Mark) or by NHS Scotland in the form of the Flying Start programme.

The information in this guide does not seek to duplicate the existing information, such as from the HCPC or RCSLT, and you will need to be familiar with the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (2026) alongside using this resource, as part of a suite of resources that support careers (see figure 1).

Figure 1: RCSLT resources that support different career levels



Section one

The RCSLT newly-qualified practitioners (NQPs) goals process

1.1 Welcome into the profession



Aims of this section

- To welcome you into the profession.
- To reassure and normalise feelings around transition.
- To outline where the NQP goals process fits in the broader career pathway.

Firstly, congratulations on qualifying as an SLT. We are delighted you have chosen to join the profession to become part of a highly-skilled and valuable workforce that enables better lives for people with communication and swallowing needs.

At the RCSLT, we want to support you throughout your professional journey by providing a wide range of benefits including leadership and guidance, facilitating research and promoting education and training. As a member you are part of a large speech and language therapy community and you are very welcome.

Even if you have not been an RCSLT student member, we have been working behind the scenes to support you, for example by working with universities to develop and maintain contemporary curriculum standards. We want to continue to support you, including by providing resources to help you grow at every career level.

We know the transition into practice is an exciting time. However, like any transition, it can present challenges. To support you as an NQP, we have developed the NQP goals process comprising 10 goals and additional learning activities that you choose, with support from your supervisor, that are specifically linked to your individual role. On successful completion, you can apply to become a certified member of the RCSLT. However, it is more than just a membership category.

The RCSLT NQP goals process has been carefully designed by SLTs including NQPs, academics,

managers and supervisors. It aims to support a smooth transition into your role as a registered practitioner and to build your confidence as a safe, effective and skilled practitioner. It is designed as a profession-specific process to complement multi-professional programmes, for example Flying Start in Scotland. Please expect some local variation across boards/trusts in your NQP journey. For example, in some services your line manager and NQP supervisor may be the same or a different person depending on staffing levels and the needs of the service.

We wish you every success as you start this new and exciting phase of your career, recognised for the first time as an autonomous, qualified SLT with many career opportunities ahead.

1.2 What is the NQP goals process?



Aims of this section:

- To outline the overall NQP goals process.
- To introduce the 10 core NQP goals.
- To provide details about the additional learning activities.
- To link the NQP goals process to the RCSLT Professional Development Framework.

Figure 2 shows the elements within the NQP goals process. There are 10 core NQP goals (also referred to as goals) that everyone must focus on. You will also need to pick additional activities that match your own learning requirements and the needs of your workplace. Throughout the process, you will need to collect evidence from different sources to show that you are consistently achieving the goals. Your supervisor will support and guide you. Once both of you are confident that you have met the goals, and you have started to engage in other learning activities, you can apply for full RCSLT membership and officially take the next step in your career.

Figure 2: The NQP goals process



The 10 core NQP goals

Appendix one outlines the 10 core NQP goals, which are aligned to the HCPC Standards of Proficiency and other multi-professional resources from across the UK. All NQPs must focus on these goals and gather evidence over time to demonstrate they are met. Appendix one provides guidance on the evidence. In short, the goals cover:

1. Reasoning and decision-making
2. Communication with service users, families, carers and colleagues
3. Autonomy and accountability
4. Promoting the profession
5. Work readiness knowledge and skills
6. Specialist knowledge and skills
7. Managing and recording complexity
8. Continuous learning and development of yourself and others
9. Working in partnership with service users to improve service delivery
10. Contributing to changes at work

Additional learning activities

Alongside working on the goals, you are required to select additional learning and development activities relevant to your area of practice. These can be completed over a longer period, as part of continuing to develop as a professional beyond the NQP timeframe. Choose activities that you want to work on first and discuss them with your supervisor to make sure they also fit the needs of your workplace.

The additional activities could include:

- Picking four to six additional topics across the four pillars of practice in the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (2026) (see figure 3 for an overview of the framework and figure 4 for an example of the detailed topics within teaching and mentoring).
- Working through a relevant competency framework related to your area of practice.
- Engaging in other forms of transitional support, eg completing a multi-professional preceptorship programme like one provided under NHS England's Quality Mark scheme, or through NHS Education Scotland's Flying Start programme..
- Supporting the work of RCSLT. For example you could join a guidance development working group, become a research champion, get involved in a clinical excellence network, present to current students at the annual student day, or join a working group to develop e-learning.

When applying for full RCSLT membership, you will be required to provide a short summary of the ongoing CPD activities you have chosen, but you do not need to provide evidence of working towards or completing them.

Figure 3: The four pillars in the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (2026)

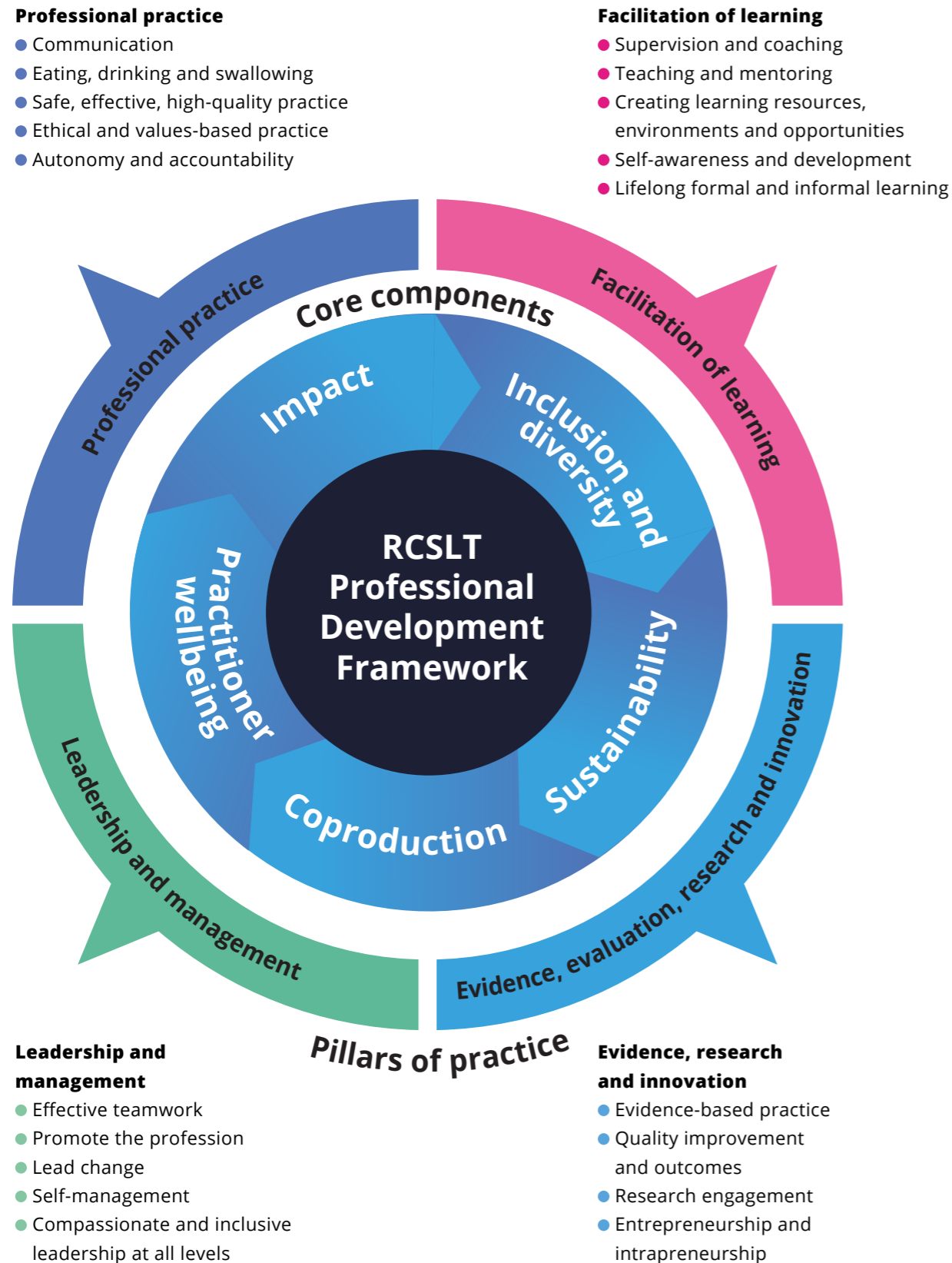


Figure 4: Some of the detailed topics in the teaching and mentoring subtheme from the facilitation of learning pillars (RCSLT Professional Development Framework, 2026)

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						

1.3 What level of achievement is required to complete my NQP goals process?



Aims of this section

- To clarify the level expected by the end of the NQP goals process as a minimum, linked to the RCSLT Professional Development Framework.
- To encourage dialogue between you and your supervisor.

To complete the NQP goals process you are expected to demonstrate competence and confidence, as an autonomous practitioner, in all the areas outlined in the goals. Overall, it is about being able to consistently perform your job safely, efficiently and in line with the professional standards expected for newly-qualified SLTs, to benefit the people you serve.

There are five development levels in the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (see table 1) and at a minimum, by the end of the NQP goals process, you should be consistently performing at foundation level for all the goals. The levels are shown in a table to make them easier to

understand but, in practice, there will be some overlap as we continue to grow in our careers. It is possible you might reach a higher development level, as you may have previous knowledge, skills and experience, for example from a previous career or other work/home roles.

Table 1: RCSLT professional development levels taken from the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (RCSLT, 2026)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply and critically analyse ● Make decisions within protocols and processes ● Manage rapidly changing events within specific situations
Proficient	I am knowledgeable and skilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critically evaluate and create ● Manage extensive risk in unpredictable environments ● Make decisions which involve high level of complexity
Expert	I have expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critically evaluate and create ● Manage extensive risk across a system ● Make decisions which involve high level of complexity

As with all forms of evaluation, there is some subjectivity. It is important to maintain and record your ongoing dialogue with your supervisor as you work through the goals, so you are both clear on the expectations and develop a shared understanding of what a successful outcome looks like. The RCSLT offers additional support through the professional enquiries service if you have additional questions. Please call 020 7378 3012.

1.4 How long will the NQP goals process take?



Aims of this section

- To clarify the minimum and maximum anticipated time frames for the NQP goals.
- To reinforce the NQP goals process starts from the point you and your supervisor decide it is appropriate to do so.
- To reinforce the purpose of investing in the process.

From start to finish, the NQP goals process typically takes a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 24 months to complete. There may be some variation in this timeframe depending on your individual needs and the context of your work.

However, if you find that you reach 2 years from starting your NQP post and you have not completed your competencies please do get in touch with the RCSLT for support. We appreciate that becoming a fully practising clinician can be challenging and it may help to have a conversation.

1.5 Responsibilities as a newly-qualified SLT and as a supervisor



Aims of this section

- To clarify activities within the role of NQP and supervisor.
- To reinforce that the process is led by the NQP with support from the supervisor.
- To encourage a conversation to clarify effective supervision.
- To reinforce the purpose of investing in the process.

Within the NQP goals process there are some activities that need to be completed by you as the NQP, some by your supervisor and some that require both of you to work together (see table 2). As the NQP, you will lead the process as part of developing as an autonomous practitioner.

Table 2: The activities and responsibilities within the NQP goals process

Role/Activity	NQP	Supervisor
Review the 10 core NQP goals (and contextualise them if needed)	✓	✓
Identify additional learning activities to meet your needs	✓	
Make sure the additional learning activities also meet the needs of the workplace	✓	✓
Gather good quality evidence for each goal to demonstrate consistent performance over time	✓	
Regularly review and agree progress and milestones	✓	✓
Sign-off evidence on completion of the NQP goals process		✓
Submit evidence of sign-off with full RCSLT membership application	✓	

Best practice

At the start of the process, you are encouraged to lead a conversation with your supervisor to discuss what effective supervision looks like for you. There are useful resources from HCPC to support you, including guidance for supervisees and supervisors and details of the key characteristics of effective supervision to aim for, as outlined below (HCPC 2021) based on research by Newcastle University, commissioned for HCPC:

1. Supervision is based on mutual trust and respect.
2. Supervisees are offered a choice of supervisor to secure a good match on a personal level, an expertise match and to meet cultural needs.
3. Both supervisors and supervisees have a shared understanding of the purpose of the supervisory sessions.
4. Supervision focuses on sharing and enhancing knowledge and skills to support professional development and improve service delivery.
5. Supervision is regular and based on the needs of the individual, and ad hoc supervision is provided in cases of need.
6. Supervisory models are based on the needs of the individual, such as one-to-one, group, internal/external or distance.
7. The employer creates protected time, supervisor training and private space to facilitate the supervisory session.
8. Training and feedback is provided for supervisors.
9. Supervision is delivered using a flexible timetable, to ensure all staff have access to sessions, regardless of working patterns.
10. Different types of supervision, including practice, professional and managerial supervision, is delivered by different supervisors, or by those who are trained to manage the overlapping responsibility as both line manager and supervisor.

1.6 Gathering evidence and who can support you



Aims of this section:

- To clarify the amount of evidence needed.
- To provide suggestions for potential sources of evidence.
- To clarify the role of the supervisor and other team members.
- To acknowledge that 'enough' is a subjective concept and will need to be discussed between NQP and supervisor (with RCSLT support if required).
- To link the NQP goals process to future HCPC audit and other transitional support programmes.

As the NQP, it is your job to gather a minimum of three pieces of good quality evidence per goal, which can come from different sources (see appendix 1 for examples linked to individual goals). Remember, strong foundations mean you need to show consistent performance over time, not just that you did something well once.

You are encouraged to:

1. View the 10 core goals as separate but naturally relating to each other, so one piece of larger evidence may address more than one goal. You will need to highlight where this is the case (templates are provided to support you with this – see section 1.7).
2. Consider how you can use the same evidence (where it aligns) if you are participating in another support programme, such as a trust preceptorship programme. The NQP goals process is designed to be supportive and meaningful, not just a tick-box exercise. Integrating your efforts can help ensure that the process feels purposeful and enhances your professional growth.
3. Establish the habit of gathering evidence at the start of your career, as this will be helpful if you are called to submit your portfolio as part of the HCPC audit process.
4. Gather the evidence regularly and review it with your supervisor through the NQP goals process timeframe. This will give you time to gather supplementary evidence from different supervisors or from those who are trained to manage the overlapping responsibility as both line manager and supervisor.

Here is a list of potential sources where evidence for meeting NQP goals can come from (the sources may need to be anonymised to remove personal information where necessary). The HCPC also provide lists of evidence examples which you may want to consider. Ideally, you need to use a range of different sources to gather your evidence to strengthen your submission:

- Clinical supervision notes – documentation from regular meetings with your supervisor, reflecting on your progress and feedback.
- Case studies or reflections – written reflections on specific cases, demonstrating your application of skills and learning.
- Patient/client feedback – testimonials or evaluations from patients or clients regarding your therapy sessions.
- Peer feedback – input from speech and language therapy colleagues or multidisciplinary team members observing your work or working jointly with you.
- Professional development courses – certificates or learning outcomes from workshops, training or seminars attended, alongside short reflections on how you have applied the learning into practice.
- Direct observation – supervisor or peer observations of your clinical practice, with notes on competencies demonstrated.
- Clinical reports and documentation – examples of your written reports, care plans or session notes showing your approach and effectiveness.
- Self-reflections – personal reflections on your own development and experiences throughout the process, including understanding your own values, professionalism, emotional intelligence etc.
- Contributions to articles in journals, magazines and bulletins.
- Evidence of accessing journal articles and critically applying the findings to practice.
- Multidisciplinary team meetings – meeting minutes, notes or reflections from participating in team meetings, showing your contribution and collaboration.
- Audit and quality improvement projects – participation in or contributions to clinical audits, research or quality improvement initiatives.
- Client outcomes – objective measures of client progress or success, such as standardised assessments or goal achievement.
- Professional journaling or logs – a detailed journal or log tracking your day-to-day experiences, challenges and learning.
- Other evidence, even if not collected specifically for the NQP goals process.



Who can support you?

Multidisciplinary team members can provide evidence showing they have observed your performance related to a specific goal. Please remember that it is not their responsibility to officially sign off that you have met the required level – that is the job of your designated speech and language therapy supervisor.

Talk with your supervisor regularly to determine what counts as 'enough' evidence as you progress. Be ready for open and honest conversations, since what is considered enough can be subjective. **If you need extra help, please contact us at RCSLT.**

1.7 Other resources



Aim of this section:

- To signpost to useful resources.

The RCSLT website contains useful templates to support you through the NQP goals process, including:

- **CPD diary** - to record your progress through and evidence for the goals. Just log in to your 'My account' area on the RCSLT website and select 'CPD diary'
- **NQP hub** - Visit www.rcslt.org/members/your-career/newly-qualified-practitioners
- **Preceptorship guidance** - Visit www.rcslt.org/learning/preceptorships
- **Supervision guidance** - for advice if you are a supervisor or supervisee. Visit www.rcslt.org/members/delivering-quality-services/supervision/
- **Supervision e-learning** - Visit our CPD site: www.rcsltcpd.org.uk
- **Reflective writing e-learning** - Visit our CPD site: www.rcsltcpd.org.uk

Appendix 1

The 10 NQP core goals

Aims of this section

- To provide the details of the NQP goals.
- To provide guidance on how to meet the NQP goals.

Where appropriate, the NQP goals have been mapped to the following sources:

- HCPC Standards of Proficiency
- HCPC Principles of Preceptorship
- RCSLT Professional Development Framework
- Flying Start (NHS Education Scotland)
- NHSE AHP preceptorship standards

NQP goal	Guidance
<p>1. Reasoning and decision making</p> <p>Use your professional judgement, critical thinking and reasoning to make decisions that ensure safe, effective, high-quality, evidence-based practice, seeking support from colleagues as required.</p>	<p>Evidence where you: Consistently work as an autonomous practitioner by utilising your skills to deliver safe, effective, high-quality practice.</p> <p>Evidence through a collection of some but not all of the following: This could be through a collection of evidence over time, highlighting reasoning and decision making. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A short reflective piece focusing on your analysis of assessment information and how you used this to identify the next steps for holistic therapy ● A series of brief, anonymised case discussions highlighting the reasoning and decisions you made captured in your supervision notes ● Redacted care plans which contain justification of decision making ● Anonymised discharge or end of care reports with evidence of reasoning and decision making

NQP goal	Guidance
<p>2. Communication with service users, families, carers and colleagues</p> <p>a) When discussing assessment results, interventions or progress with service users, their families or carers, communicate in a way that matches their understanding, culture and preferred communication style. Consider any impairments, limitations or restrictions.</p> <p>b) Show respect and sensitivity to the cultural backgrounds and needs of everyone you work with, including service users, families, carers and colleagues from diverse, marginalised, or disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>	<p>With service users, families, carers and colleagues demonstrate ways to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work in partnership to enhance dynamic person-centred practice, eg evidence of joint goal setting or holistic therapy plans ● Recognise power dynamics and their effects within relationships with colleagues and service users ● Actively listen ● Utilise non-verbal communication skills ● Show empathy and respect ● Share information in different mediums to account for language, cultural preferences and literacy and/or cognitive levels ● Work alongside an interpreter for speakers of languages other than English ● Understand the unique context of the service user within a variety of contexts including their family and broader community ● Understand yourself and address the impact of your unique context, including from privilege, biases, intersectionality, health and learning needs and other factors ● Utilise public health messages ● Negotiate and mediate ● Influence others ● Engage in difficult and uncomfortable conversations when needed ● Engage in non-judgemental, values-based approaches ● Use preferred terminology, eg neurodivergent-affirming language <p>Evidence through a collection of some but not all of the following:</p> <p>This could be through a collection of evidence over time or a reflection from one or two interactions which allow you to demonstrate the skills listed above. For example, reflections from case discussions, feedback from colleagues, family members and service users.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A short reflective piece focusing on ways you communicate effectively with a range of people ● A series of brief, anonymised case discussions highlighting the communication skills you utilise, captured in your supervision notes ● Joint redacted care plans which contain evidence of ways you communicate progress to other people ● Anonymised discharge or end of care reports with evidence of the aligning the communication style to the report recipients

NQP goal	Guidance
<p>3. Autonomy and accountability</p> <p>Work within the professional boundaries of your role and setting. Take responsibility for your decisions, wellbeing, actions and any mistakes, and seek help appropriately. Know how to raise concerns about the practice of others appropriately and/or any systemic challenges in the workplace.</p>	<p>Refer to resources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regulatory frameworks ● Legal and ethical frameworks ● National, regional and local guidance ● Professional body guidance <p>Examples linked to this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safeguarding decisions ● Confidentiality ● Consistent and timely report writing and documentation ● Seeking advice and making referrals to other professionals ● Critical application of evidence in practice ● Managing and maintaining boundaries ● Knowing the importance of and supporting the wellbeing of yourself and others to maintain safe and effective practice <p>Evidence through a collection of some but not all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A short reflective piece linked to the above examples, including onward referrals to other professionals ● A series of brief, anonymised case discussions captured in your supervision notes or from appraisal feedback ● Redacted care plans, end of care reports etc, which contain anonymised information linked to the above examples
<p>4. Promoting the profession</p> <p>Promote the profession, its impact and its reputation to support its growth and sustainability across career levels and sectors</p>	<p>Demonstrate ways to:</p> <p>Work with your team and beyond to promote the profession including the impact it makes to the people it serves.</p> <p>Evidence through a collection of some but not all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussions in supervision, in the context of your role, where you have promoted the SLT role to other people ● Career talks/activities with local schools or colleges ● Multidisciplinary/joint goal-setting or working, highlighting the SLT impact within the process ● Referrals on to other professionals to demonstrate knowledge of professional boundaries to promote the SLT role ● Volunteer work with RCSLT linked to promoting the profession ● Letters/campaign materials linked to RCSLT policy campaigns, for example writing to local politicians and other decision-makers

NQP goal	Guidance
<p>5. Work readiness knowledge and skills</p> <p>Proactively identify your own learning needs and know who to seek advice from to gain support and develop work readiness skills.</p>	<p>Demonstrate skills, behaviours, ways of thinking and personal characteristics linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teamwork, eg understand and value the contributions of different roles including SLT support workers and other professions ● Problem-solving ● Adaptability ● Digital literacy ● Time management ● Interpersonal skills ● Self-management ● Resilience ● Strategic awareness <p>Evidence through a collection of some but not all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Case-based discussions in supervision about the contributions of other professionals that you work with, in the context of your role ● Work shadowing ● Multidisciplinary/joint goal-setting or working ● Referrals on to other professionals ● Use of digital skills throughout the therapeutic process ● Discussions in supervision linked to the skills listed above
<p>6. Specialist knowledge and skills</p> <p>Proactively identify your own learning needs and know who to seek advice from to gain support and develop specialist skills as required for your role and/or in line with your personal interests, eg eating, drinking and swallowing (EDS), speech disorders, deafness.</p> <p>NB: if EDS is a core part of your NQP role, you will need to review and complete the detailed EDS competencies as part of working in your role and as part of the additional learning activities within the NQP goals process.</p>	<p>Evidence where you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identified specialist service user needs and sought advice recognising the limits of your practice <p>Evidence through a collection of some but not all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A collection of evidence examples over time ● A reflection from one or two interactions, which allow you to demonstrate how you identified the needs of the service user, recognised and sought advice and the outcome of how this supported specialist skills development ● An evaluation of the specialist skills you have developed

NQP goal	Guidance
<p>7. Managing and recording complexity</p> <p>Understand and manage competing demands and complex situations in your job, including managing your workload, and administrative tasks effectively, seeking help appropriately.</p>	<p>Evidence where you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Managed and prioritised your caseload, eg safe delegation to an assistant or joint working with a colleague ● Demonstrated ways you have managed and documented managing complexity within your record keeping ● Managed administrative tasks effectively ● Maintained accurate and contemporaneous records <p>Evidence through a collection of some but not all of the following::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Short reflective piece linked to anonymised examples captured in your supervision notes ● Documented discussion with your supervisor
<p>8. Continuous learning and development of yourself and others</p> <p>Participate in activities to show your commitment to ongoing professional development, including seeking help to manage your own wellbeing, learning and growth.</p>	<p>Demonstrate ways to:</p> <p>Know the responsibilities of others to support you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the support available to you as an NQP ● Recognise that we are all constantly learning ● Seek timely support from others ● Critically reflect on your practice, recognising without shame that everyone has knowledge gaps ● Look after your own and others' wellbeing ● Actively engage in supervision ● Support work-based learning for self and colleagues, eg with assistants ● Support practice-based learning for pre-registration students ● Apply new knowledge and skills, including the critical application of evidence, in your daily practice <p>Evidence through a collection of some but not all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Short reflective piece linked to anonymised examples captured in your supervision notes ● Reflections on delivering a teaching session ● Practice-based learning documentation etc

NQP goal	Guidance
<p>9. Working in partnership with service users to improve service delivery</p> <p>Actively engage service users in developing services and the evidence base within your local service and area.</p>	<p>Demonstrate ways to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gather service user feedback on your sessions ● Support service user participation in evaluating their progress ● Review aspects of your service (eg a care pathway) with people who use them ● Role model the use of evidence-based, person-centred practice ● Contribute to service delivery in partnership to enhance equity, diversity and belonging <p>Evidence through a collection of some but not all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supervision notes ● Supporting service user involvement in research being undertaken in your own service, department or organisation ● Summary of redacted service user feedback ● Use of evidence-based outcome measures ● Use of RCSLT health inequalities self-audit tool ● Knowledge of research opportunities for service users within your local area
<p>10. Contributing to changes at work</p> <p>Contribute to workforce development innovations. Actively engage in developing the evidence base. Understand the political, social, economic and institutional factors that impact making changes at work.</p>	<p>Demonstrate ways to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access, use and blend evidence from multiple sources, including service user preferences, scientific evidence and clinical experience ● Access local research-related resources and opportunities ● Use audit data, eg from a caseload audit ● Contribute to project-based work ● Contribute to quality improvement projects <p>Evidence through a collection of some but not all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team project reports ● Evidence-based session plans ● Presentations linked to sharing the need or outcomes for service changes ● Active participation in team meetings etc ● Critical appraisal in staff meetings

Section two

Support for broader career transitions

2.1 Who else could benefit from transitional support?



Aims of this section

- To articulate why transitional support might be needed for people at different career stage.

Sometimes in our careers we may simply feel stuck, at a crossroads, ready for a change, or in need of ideas for professional development or support to prepare for appraisals. All of these examples are forms of career transition and the Professional Development Framework can help guide you through them. The RCSLT also offers additional support through the professional enquiries service for members with specific questions.

As outlined in the guide introduction, the HCPC defines preceptorship as structured support at any point of transition (HCPC, 2023). Therefore, if you are at a stage in your career where you are facing changes or feel like you need a change, beyond being newly qualified, this part of the guide is for you.

There are several key career transition points, including but not limited to:

1. Finishing the NQP process and moving beyond the foundation level of practice and maybe taking on a more specialised role.
2. Officially returning to practice (to re-register with HCPC).
3. Returning to work informally after a long break (like maternity leave or carers leave).
4. Starting to work in the UK after moving from another country.
5. Changing sectors, such as moving from clinical work to education or moving across from working with children to adults.
6. Moving up in your career, for example preparing for promotions or more advanced roles.
7. Preparing for an aligned role that utilises the skills from your origin profession and requires you to be a registered professional, for example as a digital health lead or trust AHP lead.
8. Getting ready for retirement.

2.2 How to engage in structured support for broader transitions



Aim of this section:

- To provide guidance and ideas for structured support for broader transitions, including formal mechanisms and RCSLT resources.

There are several ways to engage in structured support for broader transitions and all of them are best delivered within the context of supervision.

Formal return to practice

If you are seeking to re-register with the HCPC, to return to practice, there is a formal process that you are required to follow. You may also wish to consider the information in this rest of section, because it offers profession-specific support alongside the regulatory requirements.

Reviewing the 10 core NQP goals

The 10 core NQP goals are mainly for newly-qualified SLTs. However, the work environment has changed since many of us started, requiring new work readiness skills, such as digital literacy. If you are returning to work after some time away, reviewing the goals in this guide could help you focus on areas that support your career transition. It may also help to recognise and confirm the knowledge and skills you still have.

Using the RCSLT Professional Development Framework to support broader transitions

The RCSLT Professional Development Framework (2026) has been designed to support broader work transitions and it is available both in digital download and interactive forms (see Section 2.3). Figure 4 provides an overview of the framework and, when you familiarise yourself with the full version, you will see detailed topics under the four domains of practice (see figure 5 for an example) to support you to identify your ongoing learning and development.

Figure 4: The four pillars in the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (2026)

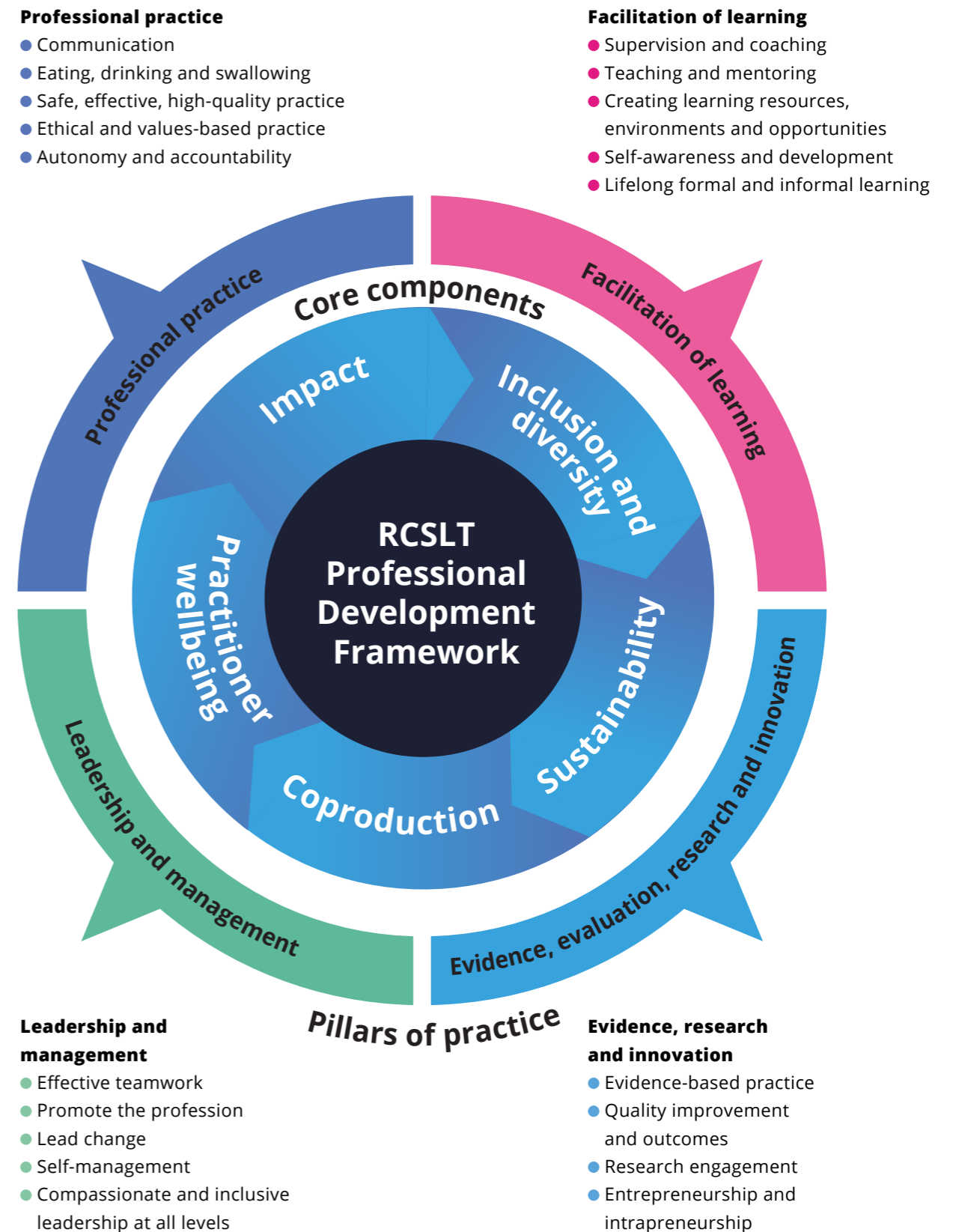
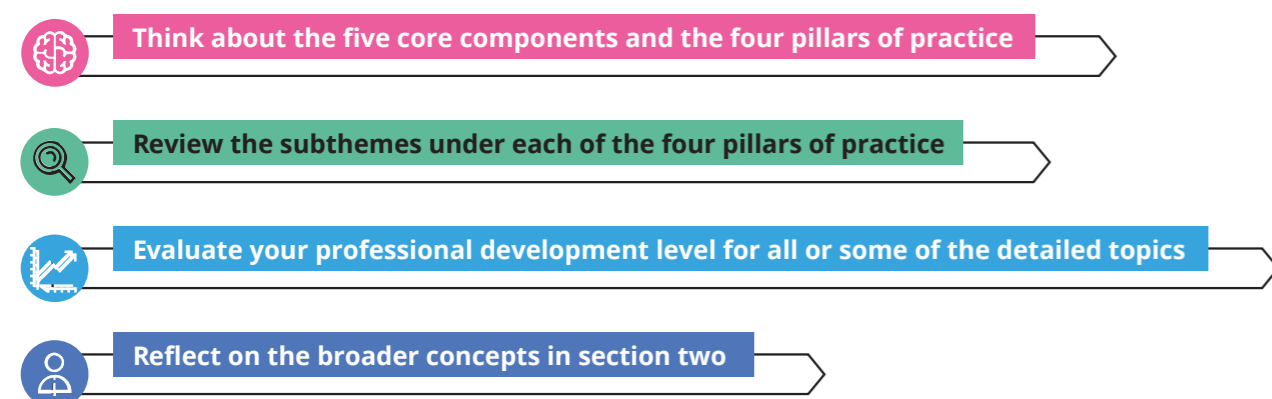


Figure 5: The detailed topics in the teaching and mentoring subtheme from the facilitation of learning pillar (RCSLT, 2026)

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						

Figure 6 is taken directly from the framework to provide other examples of how to use it for structured support. A strength of using the framework is in the conversations that it helps to structure. It can be of benefit to do this work with a trusted colleague or friend.

Figure 6: ways to use the Professional Development Framework for structured support



In practice, you could:

1. Review your knowledge and skills and the reflective questions linked to the five core components (see figure 7 for an example of the section on impact). Use the information from this review to identify new learning and development opportunities.

Figure 7: The core component 'impact' with reflective questions (RCSLT, 2026)

"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



Reflective questions:

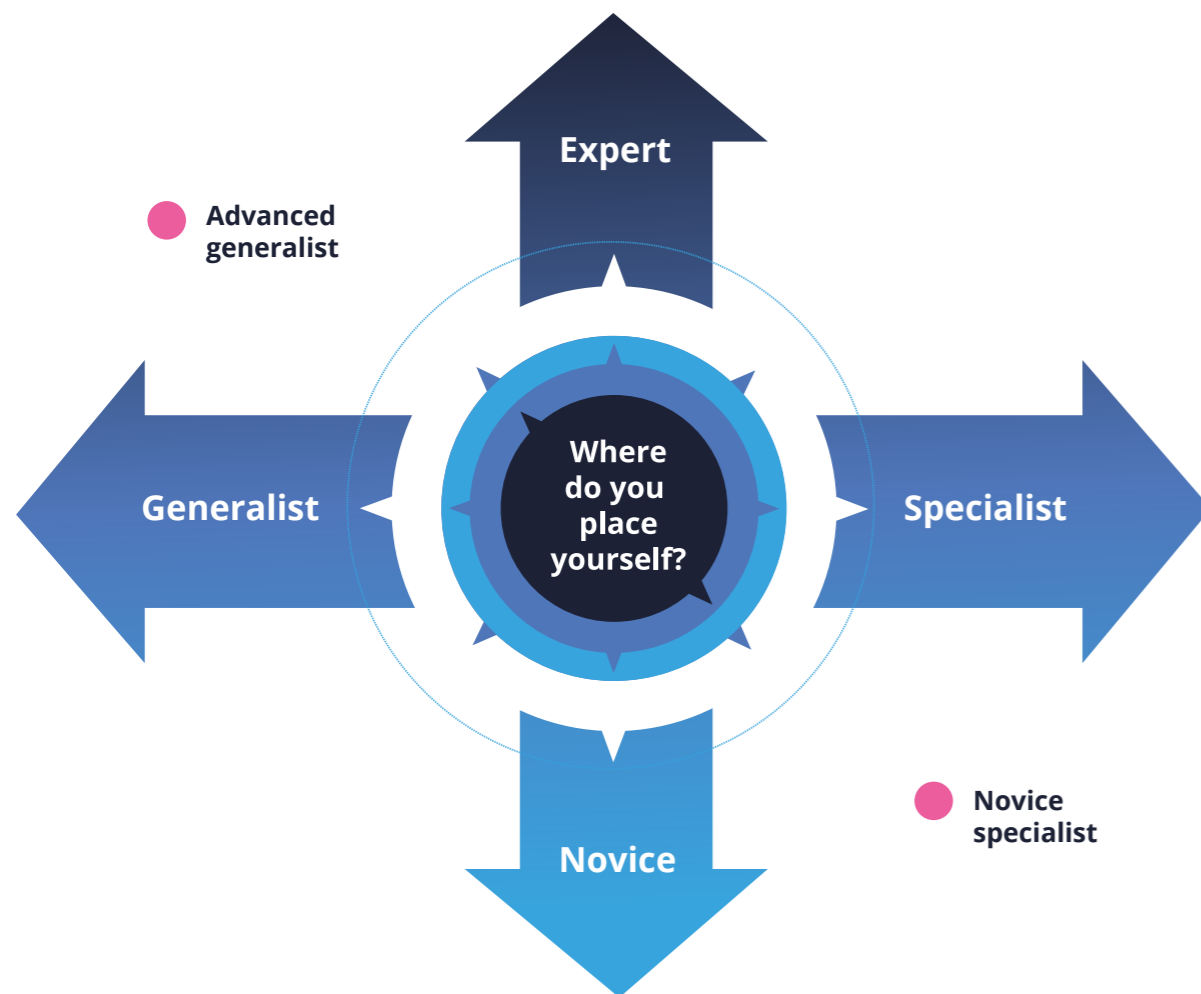
Think about the definition of impact in relation to your own current knowledge and experience across the different groups of people you work with.

- 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?

2. Map yourself into one or more of the four pillars of practice and their subthemes. For example, you may want to focus on developing your knowledge and skills in the facilitation of learning pillar in preparation for working with a student or to move your career into academia (see figure 5).

3. Cross-reference a job description to your existing level of knowledge and skills to identify the steps you need to do in preparation for a future move, including a promotion or into an enhanced or advanced role.
4. Review the themes and subthemes across the four pillars of practice to identify the legacy knowledge and skills you would like to give back to the profession as you transition into retirement.
5. Use the concepts in section two of the Professional Development Framework. For example, consider where you place your level and scope of practice (see figure 8) and where you would like to go next.

Figure 8: Levels of practice (novice to expert) verses scope of practice (generalist to specialist) taken from the RCSLT Professional Development Framework (2026)



Setting specific competency frameworks

If you are transitioning into a new area of practice, you may also want or be required to work through specific competency frameworks for the area and consider using them as part of your transitional support to enhance safe and effective practice.

2.3 Other resources



Aims of this section

- To provide a list of additional resources to support career transitions including into specific areas such as research and education.

Below is a selection of key resources and opportunities that can support different transitions, but it is not exhaustive and you may be able to access local or regional opportunities within your workplace. You are also encouraged to reach out to workplace learning and development teams and preceptorship teams if you have them within your organisation. In addition, the templates listed in section one may also be of use for all forms of transitional support.

Opportunities to support learning and development are regularly shared via the fortnightly RCSLT e-news bulletin.

Association of Speech and Language Therapists in Independent Practice:
<https://asltip.com/>

Council of Deans for Health (2023) AHP Educator Career Framework:
<https://www.councilofdeans.org.uk/ahp-framework/>

HCPC Principles for preceptorship:
<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/information/principles-for-preceptorship/>

HCPC Differences between preceptorship and other forms of support:
<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/information/principles-for-preceptorship/differences-between-preceptorship-and-other-forms-of-support/>

HCPC Preceptorship for registrants working outside the NHS, including as sole practitioners:
<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/information/principles-for-preceptorship/preceptorship-for-registrants-working-outside-the-nhs-including-as-sole-practitioners/>

HCPC (2024) Supervision
<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/meeting-our-standards/supervision-leadership-and-culture/supervision/>

NHS Education for Scotland (2024) The AHP Practice Education Framework:
<https://newsletters.nes.digital/the-ahp-practice-education-development-framework/the-ahp-practice-education-development-framework/>

NHS Education for Scotland (2024) Empowering Scotland's Newly-qualified Practitioners
<https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/nes-current/empowering-scotland-s-newly-qualified-practitioners/>

NHS Education for Scotland: Flying Start
<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/735/flying-start-nhs>

NHS Education for Scotland: NMAHP Professional Development Framework

<https://www.nmahpdevelopmentframework.nes.scot.nhs.uk/>

NHS England (2023) National Allied Health Professionals Preceptorship and Foundation Support Programme

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/education-employment/national-allied-health-professionals-preceptorship-foundation-support-programme>

NHS England Centre for Advancing Practice

<https://advanced-practice.hee.nhs.uk/>

NHS England: Consultant resources (including the Multi-professional consultant-level practice capability and impact framework)

<https://advanced-practice.hee.nhs.uk/resources/consultant-resources/>

NHS England (2023) Multi-professional Practice-based Research Capabilities Framework

<https://advanced-practice.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/research/multi-professional-practice-based-research-capabilities-framework/>

NHS Wales/Health Education and Improvement Wales (2023) Professional Framework for Enhanced, Advanced and Consultant Clinical Practice:

<https://heiw.nhs.wales/workforce/workforce-development/professional-framework-for-enhanced-advanced-and-consultant-clinical-practice/>

Peersia, K., Rappa, N. A., & Perry, L. B. (2024). Work readiness: definitions and conceptualisations. Higher Education Research & Development, 43(8), 1830–1845.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2024.2366322>

RCSLT clinical advisers

<https://www.rcslt.org/members/speech-and-language-therapy/what-is-a-clinical-adviser/>

RCSLT Preceptorship pages:

<https://www.rcslt.org/learning/preceptorships/>

RCSLT Professional Development Framework interactive resource

<https://rise.articulate.com/share/kRe5QP50xikBSbR3RcgbGhteDavqcOdn#/>

RCSLT Supervision guidance:

<https://www.rcslt.org/members/delivering-quality-services/supervision/>



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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