Dr Avril Nicoll

Recent PhD graduate
NMAHP Research Unit

What does your current role involve?

I work on the PD COMM trial of LSVT and other NHS speech and language therapy for people with Parkinson's disease. I am looking forward to using therapy logs and notes to describe similarities and differences in these interventions.

What was your first role after graduating?

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

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

I've had three phases: doing clinical practice, publishing about clinical practice, and now researching clinical practice. You get the idea!

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

Luck more than design. I've been a community generalist (rural and city), Councillor for Student Affairs and Golden Jubilee Coordinator for RCSLT, publisher and editor of Speech & Language Therapy in Practice magazine, a user representative, a research assistant, a PhD student, and now an early career researcher.

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

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

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

A PhD can be disorientating and lonely, so get good people around you.

A clinical academic route might be more secure than a full-time PhD and contract research work.

It's never too soon to start writing.

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