



## Curriculum Vitae

### **Gemma O'Rourke – Associate Speech & Language Therapist**

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#### **Personal Profile**

I am an enthusiastic, hard working and dedicated clinician who is passionate about holistic, patient centred care and working with the wider MDT to support patients with an acquired brain injury or progressive neurological conditions. This is demonstrated by my commitment to providing high quality intervention; which may involve rehabilitation or preparing and supporting patients and their carers for future changes in communication and/or swallowing following a progressive neurological diagnosis.

I have a particular strength in establishing rapport with patients, carers and my colleagues, which has been paramount when working within a team, but also to develop a strong trusting clinical relationship when patients can be at an extremely vulnerable stage in their lives.

I have developed a wealth of clinical experience over the years which has strengthened my special interest in working with clients who have complex communication and/or swallowing needs as a result of a neurological condition.

#### **Employment History**

- **March 2021** - **Speech Therapy North East Ltd**  
**Present** Independent Speech and Language Therapist (Associate)

Providing independent communication and/or swallowing assessment to clients with acquired brain injury. This role requires flexible working, effective time management and allows me to continually develop my specialist interest in rehabilitation of swallowing and/or communication following acquired brain injury.

- **December 2020** - **County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust**  
**Present** Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist – Site Lead

Management of a complex caseload, encompassing a wide range of neurological and neurodegenerative conditions on acute medical/stroke wards/ITU and within the

community. This requires assessment, management and rehabilitation of communication and/or swallowing difficulties in a variety of different clinical areas i.e. acute stroke, respiratory, head and neck oncology inpatients, orthopaedics, care of the elderly and neurology.

I also act as a clinical supervisor for student Speech and Language Therapists to help develop their clinical/theoretical skills and competencies during their undergraduate/masters training.

**Site lead responsibilities include;**

- Direct responsibility for a small team of Speech and Language Therapists and an assistant SLT
- Organising and maintaining adequate ward cover and processing annual leave requests
- Providing clinical and peer supervision to colleagues
- Organising ward training to promote and highlight swallowing and communication difficulties (including ward-based swallow screening & dysphagia nurse training)

- **January 2014 – December 2020** – **County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust**  
Speech and Language Therapist (Band 5)  
Specialist Speech and Language Therapist (Band 6)

Varied caseload initially full-time community communication progressing to stroke rehabilitation which involved assessing and managing swallowing and/or communication difficulties after stroke. Many of these patients presented with co-morbidities i.e. (respiratory conditions such as COPD) and rehabilitation involved close working within the MDT, carrying out joint sessions, home visits and functional tasks i.e. supermarket visits. I also ran weekly communication groups to help patients integrate their communication goals within a functional setting with the safety of scaffolded support to enable successful communication. These roles contributed significantly to my development and progression as a therapist and significantly increased my experience with a wide range of AAC, instrumental swallow assessment using VF and integration of Facial Oral Tract Therapy (FOTT) into the rehabilitation process.

**Qualifications**

- **September 2009 - June 2014**  
**Newcastle University**  
Bsc (Hons) Speech and Language Sciences – 1<sup>st</sup> Class Honours
- **September 2007 – June 2009**  
**University of Ulster, Jordanstown**  
Associate Bachelor's Degree Language and Linguistics
- **September 1999 – June 2006**  
**Hunterhouse College, Belfast**  
10 GCSE's Grades A-C  
A-Levels Biology, English Literature,

## Business Studies & Theatre Studies

### **Continued Professional Development**

- Fundamentals of Tracheostomy Management - Northwick Park Hospital -2019
- RCSLT level 3 videofluoroscopy competencies – 2016/2017
- Manchester Post Basic Dysphagia Course – 2015
- NESTA - Counselling Skills for Speech and Language Therapists – 2015

### **Memberships**

- Registration with Health and Care Professions Council September 2013- present
- Registered with Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists September 2013-present
- Northern VF/FEES Clinical Excellence Network