

Speech and language therapists

The PLG has considered the following information with specific reference to speech and language therapists:

- (i) Registration assessors' questionnaires (comments made about generic standards, page 9)
- (ii) Visitors' questionnaires (page 7)
- (iii) Professional bodies' questionnaires (response from Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists; no changes suggested to the standards)
- (iv) Education providers' questionnaires (page 7)

This document incorporates the suggestions, made in relation to the dietitian standards (where possible) and makes recommendations to the PLG for changes, where appropriate.

The profession-specific standards are shown in italics. Where the PLG is required to make a decision in relation to a standard, this is shown in the grey shaded areas.

The generic standards incorporate the suggestions made elsewhere.

Expectations of a health professional

1a: Professional autonomy and accountability

Registrant speech and language therapists must:

1a.1

be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession

- understand what is required of them by the Health Professions Council
- understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity and autonomy of every patient, client and user including their role in the **preventative** diagnostic and therapeutic process

- *be aware of current education, health and **social care** legislation in the UK applicable to the work of speech and language therapists*

Suggestion:

The above suggestion was made by an education provider to reflect the importance of being aware of social care legislation as well as that relating to education and health (education providers' paper, page 7).

Decision:

Although only suggested by one respondent, the suggested change would seem to be reasonable. The PLG is invited to agree the amendment to the standards.

1a.2 be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner

1a.3 be able to maintain confidentiality and obtain informed consent

1a.4 be able to exercise a professional duty of care

1a.5: **be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**

- be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem
- be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative
- **know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional**
- **recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions**

1a.6 recognise the need for effective self-management of workload **and resources** and be able to practise accordingly

1a.7 understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise

- understand the importance of caring for themselves, including maintaining their health

1a.8 understand the need for career-long self-directed learning

1b: Professional relationships

Registrant speech and language therapists must:

1b.1 know the professional and personal scope of their practice and be able to make referrals

- be able to apply appropriate referral practices within health, social services and educational settings

1b.2 be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, patients, clients and users, and their relatives and carers

- understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team

- understand the need to engage patients, clients, users and carers in planning and evaluating care, **or in the provision of investigative services**

- recognise that the need to work with others includes health, social and educational professionals

- recognise the importance of working in partnership with clients and their families

- understand health education and how it relates to communication and swallowing

- be aware of the structure and function of the education, social and healthcare services in the UK, and current developments

1b.3 be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team

1b.4 be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, patients, clients, users, their relatives and carers

- be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 8 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 7.5

This requirement is stricter for speech and language therapists than for all other professions, as communication in English is a core professional skill: see 2b.4

- understand how communication skills affect the assessment of patients, clients and users, and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, physical and learning disability

- be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with patients, clients, users and others

- be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
- understand the need to provide patients, clients and users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
- understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist patients whose first language is not English, wherever possible [not included in the dietitian standards]
- recognise that relationships with patients, clients and users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility

1b.5 understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the patient, client or user

- recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of patients, clients and users

The skills required for the application of practice

2a: Identification and assessment of health and social care needs

Registrant speech and language therapists must:

2a.1 be able to gather appropriate information

2a.2 be able to use appropriate assessment techniques

- be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment

- be able to administer, record, score and interpret a range of published and self-generated assessment tools to describe and analyse clients' abilities and needs using, where appropriate, phonetic transcription, linguistic analyses, instrumental analyses and psycholinguistic assessment

2a.3 be able to undertake or arrange clinical **or scientific** investigations as appropriate

2a.4 be able to analyse and evaluate the information collected

2b: Formulation and delivery of plans and strategies for meeting health and social care needs

Registrant speech and language therapists must:

2b.1 be able to use research, **clinical** reasoning and problem solving skills (and, in the case of clinical scientists, conduct fundamental research)

- recognise the value of research to the systematic evaluation of practice
- be able to conduct evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit procedures
- be aware of methods commonly used in health and social care research
- be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
- be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice

2b.2 be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements

- be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments
- be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their profession

- be able to apply knowledge of communication disorder, linguistics, phonetics, psychology and biomedical sciences to the identification, assessment and differential diagnosis of a range of communication and swallowing disorders

2b.3 be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales

- understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different client groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors

- be able to recognise the influence of situational contexts on communicative functioning and swallowing status

- recognise the possible contribution of social, psychological and medical factors to clients' communication difficulties and swallowing status

- be able to evaluate the effects of communication difficulties and swallowing status on the psychosocial well-being of clients and their families and carers

2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely, skilfully and **effectively**

- understand the need to maintain the safety of both patients, clients and users, and those involved in their care

- ensure patients, clients and users are positioned (and if necessary immobilised) for safe and effective interventions
- know the indications and contra-indications of using specific paramedic techniques, including their modifications

- be able, as a core professional skill for speech and language therapists, to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 8 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 7.5

2b.5 be able to maintain records appropriately

- be able to keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other [] information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
- understand the need to use only accepted terminology (which includes abbreviations) in making [] records

2c: Critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the registrant's actions

Registrant speech and language therapists must:

2c.1 be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly

- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of patients, clients and users to their care
- be able to evaluate management plans against treatment milestones using recognised health outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the patient, client or user
- recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes
- be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify, **inform** or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately
- understand that outcomes may not always conform to expectations but may still meet the needs of patients, clients or users

2c.2 be able to audit, reflect on and review practice

- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance
- be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures

- be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement
- participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate
- understand the value of reflection on clinical practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection
- recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review

Knowledge, understanding and skills

3a:

Registrant speech and language therapists must:

3a.1 know the key concepts of the biological, physical, social, psychological and clinical sciences which are relevant to their profession-specific practice

- understand the structure and function of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with a knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction
- be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process
- recognise the role of other professions in health and social care
- understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention

- *understand linguistics, including phonetics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and all levels of normal processing*
- *understand biomedical and medical sciences as relevant to the development and maintenance of communication and swallowing*
- *understand psychology, as relevant to normal and impaired communication, psychological and social well-being*
- *understand, in relation to the practice of speech and language therapy, sociology, including its application to educational, health and workplace settings and within multi-cultural societies*
- *understand educational philosophy and practice and the relationship between language and literacy*
- *understand therapeutic contexts, models and processes, relevant to the practice of speech and language therapy*
- *understand developmental and acquired disorders of speech, language, communication and swallowing*

3a.2 know how professional principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different approaches to practice, and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of an individual, groups **or communities**

- *be able to use knowledge of speech and language therapy to assess and manage people with the following disorders:*

- *developmental speech and language disorders*
- *acquired speech and language disorders*
- *voice disorders*
- *fluency disorders*
- *swallowing disorders*
- *developmental or acquired cognitive disorders*

3a.3 understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment

- be aware of applicable health and safety legislation, and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these
- be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner in accordance with health and safety legislation
- be able to select appropriate personal protective equipment and use it correctly
- be able to establish safe environments for clinical practice, which minimise risks to patients, clients and users, those treating them, and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control

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