

Draft standards of proficiency for speech and language therapists

This document sets out the proposed changes to the standards of proficiency for speech and language therapists. Proposed deletions are indicated in the text by ~~strike through~~ whilst additions are shown in **bold** in the proposed amendments column. Text in *italics* sets out our reasoning for making certain amends.

Generic standards are indicated by shaded cells. These are standards which apply across all 15 professions. We have moved some standards around to ensure the generic standards are at the top of each section, and so are numbered consistently across all the professions. Feedback relating to these standards should be provided in **Part A: Generic standards** of the survey.

White cells are profession-specific standards. These are unique to each profession, although in many cases these are still consistent across multiple professions. Feedback relating to these standards should be provided in **Part B: Profession-specific standards** of the survey.

Where we have proposed to create a new standard, we have created a new row and assigned this a letter. This is to make it easier to refer back to when providing feedback. Please note the order of some of these standards may be subject to change. Once we have determined what changes we are going to make, we will update the numbering of the standards.

We have endeavoured to make the proposed changes as clear as possible. However, we are aware that this is still a complicated document. We have therefore created a 'clean' version of the standards, available on the consultation page. If you have any questions about the proposed changes, you can email consultation@hcpc-uk.org or call the Policy and Standards team on 020 7840 9815, and a member of the team will be able to talk through this document and the changes. **Please note, due to COVID-19, as the team is working from home, the above phone line is not manned. Instead, you will be prompted to leave a message.**

The current standards of proficiency for speech and language therapists are available to download and view for comparison at: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-proficiency/speech-and-language-therapists/>

No.	Standard	Proposed amendments
Registrant speech and language therapists must:		
1	be able to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice	
1.1	know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional	know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional or service
1.2	recognise the need to manage their own workload and resources effectively and be able to practise accordingly	recognise the need to manage their own workload and resources effectively and be able to practise accordingly safely and effectively
2	be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession	
2.1	understand the need to act in the best interests of service users at all times	understand the need to act in the best interests of service users promote and protect the service user's interests at all times
2.A		understand the importance of safeguarding and the need to engage in appropriate safeguarding processes where necessary
2.2	understand what is required of them by the Health and Care Professions Council	
2.3	understand the need to respect and uphold the rights, dignity, values, and autonomy of service users including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and wellbeing	
2.4	recognise that relationships with service users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility	
2.5	know about current legislation applicable to the work of their profession	understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent

		<i>Moved from 2.6</i>
2.6	understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent	be able to exercise a professional duty of care <i>Moved from 2.7</i>
2.7	be able to exercise a professional duty of care	understand know about current legislation applicable to the work of their profession <i>Moved from 2.5</i>
2.8	understand the ethical and legal implications of withholding and withdrawing feeding and nutrition	
3	be able to maintain fitness to practise	
3.1	understand the need to maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct	
3.2	understand the importance of maintaining their own health	understand the importance of maintaining their own mental and physical health and be able to take appropriate action if their health may affect their ability to practise safely and effectively
3.A		understand the role that coping strategies can play in maintaining fitness to practise and the importance of seeking help and support when necessary
3.3	understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning	understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning continuous professional development
4	be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement	
4.1	be able to assess a professional situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem	recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions <i>Moved from 4.4 to emphasise importance of this standard</i>

4.2	be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately	be able to assess a professional 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 use their skills, knowledge and experience, and the information available to them, to make informed decisions or initiate solutions where necessary <i>Moved from 4.1</i>
4.3	be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative	be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately <i>Moved from 4.2</i>
4.4	recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions	be able to make and receive appropriate referrals <i>Moved from 4.5</i>
4.5	be able to make and receive appropriate referrals	be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative <i>Moved from 4.3</i>
4.A		be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving <i>Moved from standard 14</i>
4.B		be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions <i>Moved from standard 14</i>
4.6	understand the importance of participation in training, supervision and mentoring	understand the importance of active participation in training, supervision and mentoring <i>Moved from 4.6</i>
5	be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice	
5.1	understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups and individuals	understand the need requirement need to adapt practice to respond appropriately to meet the needs of all different groups and individuals

5.A		be aware of the impact of their own values and beliefs on practice
5.B		be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by factors such as age, culture, disability , ethnicity, gender, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, sex, sexual orientation , socio-economic status and spiritual or religious beliefs <i>Moved from standard 8.6 as more relevant under this standard. Missing protected characteristics included, with the exception of marriage and civil partnership which considered could not impact on verbal and non-verbal communication</i>
5.2	recognise the possible contribution of social, psychological and medical factors to service users' communication difficulties and swallowing status	
6	be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner	be able to practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner
6.A		be aware of the characteristics and consequences of barriers to inclusion
7	understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality	
7.1	be aware of the limits of the concept of confidentiality	
7.2	understand the principles of information governance and be aware of the safe and effective use of health and social care information	understand the principles of information governance and be aware of the safe and effective use of health, and social care and other relevant information
7.3	be able to recognise and respond appropriately to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard service users or the wider public	

7.4	be aware that the concepts of confidentiality and informed consent extend to illustrative records such as photography, video and audio recordings	
8	be able to communicate effectively	
8.1	be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to service users, their relatives, carers, colleagues and others	be able to use demonstrate effective and appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills to communicate with in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to service users, their relatives, carers, colleagues and others <i>For consistency across the professions' standards</i>
8.2	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 ¹ This requirement is stricter for speech and language therapists than for all other HCPC registered professions, as communication in English is a core professional skill (see standard 14.20) ¹ <i>The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests competence in the English language. Applicants who have qualified outside of the UK, whose first language is not English and who are not nationals of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, must provide evidence that they have reached the necessary standard. Please visit our website for more information.</i>	
8.3	understand how communication skills affect assessment of, and engagement with, service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, capacity, learning ability and physical ability	understand how communication skills affect assessment of, and engagement with, service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, capacity, learning ability and physical ability

		<i>Captured by the new standards below</i>
8.4	be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others	be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others <i>Captured by the new standards below</i>
8.6	be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by factors such as age, culture, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and spiritual or religious beliefs	be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by factors such as age, culture, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and spiritual or religious beliefs <i>Moved to standard 5</i>
8.7	understand the need to provide service users or people acting on their behalf with the information necessary in accessible formats to enable them to make informed decisions	understand the need to provide service users or people acting on their behalf with the information necessary in accessible formats to enable them to make informed decisions <i>Captured by the new standards below</i>
8.8	understand the need to assist the communication needs of service users such as through the use of an appropriate interpreter, wherever possible	understand the need to assist the communication needs of service users such as through the use of an appropriate interpreter, wherever possible <i>Captured by the new standards below</i>
8.9	recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of service users	recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of service users <i>Captured by the new standards below</i>
8.A		be able to work with service users or their carers to facilitate the service user's preferred role in decision-making, and provide service users and carers with the information they may need where appropriate
8.B		be able to modify their means of communication to address the individual communication needs and preferences of service users and carers, and remove any barriers to communication where possible
8.C		be able to use information and communication technologies appropriate to their practice

		<i>Moved from standard 14</i>
9	be able to work appropriately with others	
9.1	be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with service users, their relatives and carers, other professionals, support staff and others	
9.2	understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an autonomous practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team	understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an autonomous independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team <i>For consistency across the professions</i>
9.3	understand the need to work in partnership with service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals	be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team <i>Moved from 9.4</i>
9.A		understand the qualities, behaviours and benefits of leadership and be able to apply them in the context of your practice
9.4	be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team	understand the need to work in partnership with service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals <i>Moved from 9.3</i>
9.5	understand the role of the speech and language therapist in taking the lead responsibility on speech and language communication and swallowing within a multi-professional forum	
9.6	recognise that the need to work with others includes health, social care and educational professionals	
9.7	recognise the importance of working in partnership with service users and their families	

10	be able to maintain records appropriately	
10.1	be able to keep accurate, comprehensive and comprehensible records in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines	
10.2	recognise the need to manage records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines	
11	be able to reflect on and review practice	
11.1	understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection	
11.2	recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review	
12	be able to assure the quality of their practice	
12.1	be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically and participate in audit procedures	be able to engage in evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically and participate in audit procedures
12.2	be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care	be able to gather and use feedback and information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of service users to their care
12.3	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 aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures <i>Captured by the new standard below</i>
12.4	be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement	be able to monitor and systematically evaluate the quality of practice, and maintain an effective audit trail to and work towards continual improvement
12.5	be aware of, and be able to participate in, quality assurance programmes, where appropriate	be aware of, and be able to participate in, quality assurance programmes, where appropriate <i>Captured by the new standard below</i>

12.A		be able to participate in audit procedures and quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
12.6	be able to evaluate intervention plans using recognised outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the service user	
12.7	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	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 <i>Captured by amendments above</i>
13	understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession	
13.1	understand the structure and function of the human body, together with knowledge of health, disease, impairment and dysfunction relevant to their profession	understand the structure and function of the human body, together with knowledge of health, disease, impairment disorder and dysfunction, relevant to their profession <i>For consistency across the professions' standards</i>
13.2	be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process	
13.3	recognise the role of other professions in education, health and social care	recognise the role(s) of other professions in education, health and social care and understand how they may relate to the role of speech and language therapist
13.4	understand the structure and function of education, health and social care services in the UK	
13.5	understand the concept of leadership and its application to practice	understand the concept of leadership and its application to practice <i>Addressed by a new standard on leadership under standard 9 (9.A)</i>
13.6	understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention	

13.7	understand educational theory and practice and the relationship between language and literacy in relation to speech and language therapy	
13.8	understand linguistics and phonetics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and all levels of typical processing	
13.9	understand biomedical and medical sciences as relevant to the development and maintenance of communication and swallowing	
13.10	understand psychology as relevant to lifespan development and change, normal and impaired communication, and psychological and social wellbeing	
13.11	understand sociology in relation to the practice of speech and language therapy, including its application to educational, health and workplace settings and within multi-cultural societies	
13.12	understand therapeutic contexts, models and processes, relevant to the practice of speech and language therapy	
13.13	understand developmental and acquired impairments of speech, language, communication and swallowing	
14	be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice	
14.1	be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments or changing contexts	be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments, technologies and or changing contexts
14.2	be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and effectively	be able to gather appropriate information <i>Moved from 14.4</i>
14.3	be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales	be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected <i>Moved from 14.9</i>
14.4	be able to gather appropriate information	be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques <i>Moved from 14.5</i>

14.5	be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques	be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment <i>Moved from 14.6</i>
14.6	be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment	be able to undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate <i>Moved from 14.8</i>
14.7	be able to administer, record, score and interpret a range of published and self-generated assessment tools to describe and analyse service users' abilities and needs using, where appropriate, phonetic transcription, linguistic analysis, instrumental analysis and psycholinguistic assessment	be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and effectively <i>Moved from 14.2</i>
14.8	be able to undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate	be aware of a range of research methodologies <i>Moved from 14.13</i>
14.9	be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected	recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice <i>Moved from 14.12</i>
14.10	be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving	be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving <i>Moved to standard 4</i>
14.11	be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions	be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions <i>Moved to standard 4</i>
14.12	recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice	be able to critically evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice <i>Moved from 14.14</i>
14.13	be aware of a range of research methodologies	be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales <i>Moved from 14.3</i>
14.14	be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice	be able to administer, record, score and interpret a range of published and self-generated assessment tools to describe

		and analyse service users' abilities and needs using, where appropriate, phonetic transcription, linguistic analysis, instrumental analysis and psycholinguistic assessment <i>Moved from 14.7</i>
14.15	be able to use information and communication technologies appropriate to their practice	be able to use information and communication technologies appropriate to their practice <i>Moved to standard 8</i>
14.16	be able to apply knowledge of communication impairment, linguistics, phonetics, psychology and biomedical sciences to the identification, assessment and differential diagnosis of a range of communication and swallowing impairments	
14.17	understand health education and how it relates to communication and swallowing	
14.18	be able to recognise the influence of situational contexts on communicative functioning and swallowing status	
14.19	be able to evaluate the effects of communication difficulties and swallowing status on the psychosocial wellbeing of service users, their families and carers	
14.20	as a core professional skill for speech and language therapists, 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	
14.21	be able to use knowledge of speech and language therapy to assess and work with people with the following impairments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – acquired speech and language impairments – developmental or acquired cognitive impairments – developmental speech and language impairments – fluency impairments 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – swallowing impairments – voice impairments 	
15	understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment	
15.1	understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care	
15.2	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	
15.3	be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner and in accordance with health and safety legislation	
15.4	be able to select appropriate personal protective equipment and use it correctly	
15.5	be able to establish safe environments for practice, which minimise risks to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control	be able to establish safe environments for practice, which minimise risks appropriately manages risk to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control