

Anne – returning speech and language therapist



Anne Robinson is on the HEE Leadership Programme as part of her journey to return to practice as a speech and language therapist. Based in Shropshire, it's been 4 years since Anne's registration lapsed.

In that time Anne has been working within the special needs field in education and specialises in hearing impairments, working with deaf children and their families. Anne shares her experience on the leadership programme with us.

Why undertake the Leadership Programme

"When I returned to the UK in 2010 there weren't really a lot of speech and language therapy jobs out there and having done some teaching previously, I ended up going back into teaching in special needs. Throughout this time, I always kind of thought, I really would love to go back to speech and language therapy.

"That was really what lit my fire and made me feel passionate. I signed up for the Return to Practice Programme at the end of 2020, at this point in time I was getting quite lost with the process of returning to practice and questioned how do I work my way through this?

"I needed a clinical programme and some supervised practice and because of the pandemic, largely my requests for a supervised practice were proving difficult to get.

"This Leadership Programme offered me an alternative route through the supervised practice element of returning to practice that I knew I needed to have as part of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPCs) requirement and I thought – hey, I might also learn something about leadership along the way too"

Anne's leadership objectives

"In starting this Leadership Programme, my overall objective was to get some supervised practice. As I began to see what was available to me and what the programme involved, I set some more specific targets.

"They were to understand the current landscape of the NHS and what that might involve as a returning speech and language therapist; how things are changing in the NHS and why, what are the benefits of those changes and what's the rationale behind those changes that are coming into the NHS.

"I wanted to understand what leadership is and gain a better idea as to how I could be a better leader and support others to be better leaders in the workplace.

"Finally, I wanted to increase my confidence as I had been out of Practice for such a long time."

Projects Anne has been involved in

“One of the main projects that myself and another returnee, have been involved in is collecting information and resources from other AHP returnees and people who've recently returned to the register around courses that they've accessed to support them to upskill and retrain in their respective professions, and putting them into one place on SharePoint for returnees to access.

“Another project we've been looking at is the creation of a webinar focussed on returnees' experiences and myth busting, to provide support for other returnees and to ensure they know they are not alone in their journey and to give them some helpful tips - a community of returnees in a way!”

Anne's advice and experience

“One of the main challenges for me was the amount of time that I was able to give to this programme, it's important to have the headspace available and time to get into the nitty gritty of the programme. If you're doing another job alongside this - that is very demanding – like mine, then it's quite tricky to juggle the two, especially if you've got family to look after at home as well.

“Another challenge for me has been that I am not a social media person, and a lot of the work that we've done involved working and liaising through social media.

“On the plus side I've learned about the power of social media and social networking. To see the power of it, has meant I see the benefit of it. I see how important it is for learning about the good work that our people are doing and sharing that as well as sharing your own work and what you're doing and helping you and your team to grow through the sharing of information – that's been helpful!

“Coaching on the programme has been amazing and I've observed good leadership in action, I have seen really great examples of how to run meetings and how to make the best use of time – I've seen amazing examples of time management in meetings, moving things forward and getting things actioned!

“The big learning point for me is in understanding what leadership really is, understanding that everyone at every level of the organisation has something to offer when it comes to leadership.

“The sense of belonging I have felt has been amazing, I have felt genuinely welcomed within the HEE family and people have offered their time and expertise to us. It has really felt like they wanted to support us going forward into our careers.

“I've learned to understand my own strengths and weaknesses a lot better. I did the self values exercise and understanding what my values are, has been a really useful exercise for me because I think that's going to influence what I then take forward and go into following this programme in terms of my future career in the NHS.

“The programme has allowed me to understand and pass on the knowledge of all the openings that are available within the NHS for AHPs returning, that's been a big eye opener for me. I had no idea that a speech and language therapist, or indeed any other AHP, could become so many different things within the NHS.

“The programme with HEE has facilitated the coming together of other people going through the same trials and tribulations and provided the opportunity for everyone to discuss what’s going on for them together.”