

## Tamsyn Cummins - Speech and Language Therapist

During school, I went through a number of different ideas for what I wanted to do, but ultimately, I knew I wanted to help people. After taking an online careers quiz in my school careers class, I got matched with Speech and Language Therapy. I hadn't heard much about the job before this, knowing only that it was something young children got if they couldn't make the right sounds. After some research and seeing how rewarding and varied the work as a speech and language therapist could be, I decided this was the career for me! I was lucky to discover this in the first year of my A



levels, so I was able to apply to all specific speech and language therapy undergraduate degrees through UCAS in my final school year and was lucky to be accepted and secure my place after receiving my A Level grades first time round. Though I started university straight from school, lots of people on my course had taken gap years and come from a totally different career – my peers were from all walks of life. During my course, the clinical placement experience was absolutely invaluable in deciding where I wanted to go next: In my third year, I was placed in a community adult learning disability team. I was inspired by how closely the different health and social care professionals worked together in this client group and loved the variety of role in terms of the different people you would see and what intervention you provided. Therefore, I knew I would love the opportunity to experience this sort of role in future.

After graduation and when I began my job search, I saw a Band 5 post for an SLT in the community learning disability health team in Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS foundation trust. What instantly stood out to me in this advert was that it specified the role would be ideal for a newly qualified therapist as lots of support would be available – this really put me at ease and was a big deciding factor in me applying for the job. I was lucky to be interviewed and offered this role and have now been working for a year. I have recently completed my newly qualified competencies, which could not have been done without the support of my extremely approachable and knowledgeable SLT manager, supervisor and colleagues, who ensured supervision was always available to me. I have also learnt loads from my other MDT colleagues, who were more than happy to go out of their way and offer me shadowing and discussion opportunities when I started my role. This gave me a great insight into how the team worked, which helped me feel really settled, despite the covid-19 pandemic (which is definitely a feat!). Overall, I am so grateful to now be qualified as a professional who can make differences to people's lives every day and have been lucky enough to begin my first role in such a supportive and caring team, and I would encourage everyone to consider a role in the NHS, specifically in Lancashire and South Cumbria.