

Job description

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| Position | Neonatal/Paediatric Speech and Language Therapist |
| Grade | Band 7 |
| Location | Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust |
| Hours | 15 hours per week |
| Responsible to | Matron for NICU |
| Accountable to | Head of Therapies |

Our Organisation

The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust (PAHT) provides a full range of general acute, outpatient and diagnostic services at The Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow, the Herts and Essex Hospital in Bishop's Stortford, and St Margaret's Hospital in Epping.

We employ 3,500 staff and serve a local population of around 350,000 people living in west Essex and east Hertfordshire, centred on the M11 corridor and the towns of Harlow, Bishop's Stortford and Epping. Our extended catchment area incorporates a population of up to 500,000 and includes the areas of Hoddesdon, Cheshunt and Broxbourne in Hertfordshire.

Our Values

The Princess Alexandra Promise to our patients as identified by our 3 values which will contribute to improving our patient experiences:

Patient at heart – Always holding the patient and their wellbeing at the centre of our thoughts and efforts

Everyday excellence – Sharing and celebrating our successes, being honest when we get it wrong, giving us the ability to learn from both

Creative collaboration – Knowing strength comes from diversity, we combine our experiences, skills and talents, working together to find new and better ways to care

The Trust believes in investing in all our staff and rewarding high standards of care whilst building for excellence and in return we expect our staff to uphold the Trust values to the highest level.



Job summary

The post holder will be responsible for delivering of specialist speech and language therapy support within the model of Family Integrated Care to infants and families on the neonatal unit and the paediatric ward at The Princess Alexandra Hospital.

The role involves the assessment, differential diagnosis and management of early communication and feeding challenges associated with prematurity and health conditions of babies admitted to the neonatal unit and children within Dolphin Ward.

The post holder will work as an integral member of the neonatal/paediatric multidisciplinary team, working closely alongside Neonatal Consultants and Nursing Teams, Infant Feeding Team, AHP and Psychology Team (local and ODN), and families to provide evidence-based care.

Key working relationships

Internally

- Paediatric Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy team
- Neonatal staff including support staff, nurses, doctors and consultants etc
- Other Allied Health Professionals, departments and services within trust

Externally

- Paediatric/neonatal staff from local acute and community services
- Social Services, GPs, other community and voluntary agencies,
- Higher Education Institutions
- Professional body and Neonatal Operational Delivery Network (ODN) team

MAIN DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

CLINICAL DUTIES

- To identify neonates with feeding difficulties, swallow dysfunction, and dysphagia and develop suitable management plans to reduce their risk of stress, aspiration and feeding aversion.
- Provide autonomous specialist assessment, treatment and advice to patients on the neonatal unit who present with feeding/swallowing difficulties.
- Utilise a range of informal and formal approaches to assess the neonates' early communication and feeding skills; and to support the MDT in identifying these needs in order to inform optimum care planning and intervention.
- Maintain an in-depth, comprehensive knowledge of neonatal clinical needs and presentations resulting from a range of acquired conditions.
- To communicate effectively and clearly with clinical colleagues regarding assessments and interventions both in spoken and written reports, as well as in day-to day liaison.



- Deliver therapy programmes based on current evidence and clinical knowledge to meet the needs of the infant and family's profile.
- To participate in, practice and support Developmental Care practices and a Family Integrated Care approach as highlighted as good practice for neonates.
- To be aware of the boundaries of own practice, and to manage the associated clinical risk effectively at all times
- Work closely with members of the MDT to holistically identify the range of needs of the infant and family and how best to support these.
- To communicate effectively, empathically and clearly with families and carers regarding issues which will sometimes be complicated or emotionally charged
- To work with the MDT to ensure timely community referrals, discharge planning meetings, liaison with other medical specialities and healthcare professionals.
- To be able to identify need for further specialist swallowing assessment (i.e. instrumental assessment) and liaise with appropriate teams to arrange this.
- To identify own training needs and maintain up to date skills.
- To continue to meet clinical competency requirements according to RCSLT and HCPC standards.
- To attend meetings and seminars/case conferences as appropriate, and liaise with and advise other disciplines, as appropriate, to achieve comprehensive, effective and confidential patient management through to discharge.
- To behave in a professional manner at all times.
- To appropriately seek and use supervision to review complex case material, develop skills, plan continuing professional development, set learning targets and address any issues which may be relevant to the fulfilment of your role.
- To actively engage with neonatal clinical network via network meetings and externally via relevant Clinical Excellent Networks (CEN's).

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- To communicate and liaise effectively with other professionals, patients, families/ carers and other agencies to ensure and integrated pattern of service delivery.
- Use effective interpersonal skills when engaging with families/ carers and other professionals.
- Work effectively with families requiring a language interpreter, ensuring services are accessible for all service users regardless of their language or communication status. Adapt verbal and non-verbal techniques as the situation demands.

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

- To demonstrate a sound understanding of Clinical Governance and apply to work situation.
- To be aware of health and Safety and risk management aspects of clinical work. To implement any policies, which may be required to improve the safety



of the work area, including the prompt recording and reporting of accidents or equipment defects to senior or designated staff.

- To comply with the organisational and departmental policies and procedures and be involved in the reviewing and updating as appropriate.
- To regularly participate in working parties developing policy changes within the community that will impact on service users.
- To be responsible for equipment used in carrying out SLT duties and to adhere to departmental policy, including competence to use equipment and ensuring the safe use of equipment by others through teaching, training and supervision of practise.
- To be actively involved in the collection of appropriate data and statistics for the use of the department.
- Work with the Neonatal AHP team to evaluate and identify the current needs of the service with the Unit Leads create job plan with priorities for service provision within funded time.
- To work with the head of service in developing the strategic and operational management of the neonatal SLT service.
- To co-ordinate and produce service and staffing reports as requested by a manager.
- Design and undertake evidence-based audit and research projects to further own and team's clinical practice and improve service delivery within the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Identify and implement changes as agreed with the Head of Therapies.
- Undertake a team leader role alongside the Community Paediatric Team Leader in planning, co-ordinating and evaluating the neonatal SLT service to these children with diverse and complex disorders.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- To be responsible for maintaining own competency to practice through Continuing Professional Development activities, the local Trust staff appraisal scheme and agreed personal development plan.
- To actively maintain and develop the specialist skills required of a highly specialist SLT (neonates) by participating in reflective practice, attending in-service training, relevant national courses, clinical specialist groups, clinical supervision and peer review.
- To fulfil all specified mandatory training requirements
- To be professionally and legally responsible and accountable for all aspects of work including the management of patients following national, local and occupational policies.
- To accept clinical responsibility for a designated caseload of patients and to organise this effectively and efficiently with regard to clinical priorities. To balance this with other patient relayed and professional demands within the available working hours.
- To be clinically responsible for a designated area of work, as agreed. To manage this area of the service with regard to organisation and clinical supervision of staff to ensure an efficient and effective service.



- To co-ordinate and deliver training to junior SLT colleagues and other members of the MDT regarding SLT management of children with complex needs including knowledge and practical skills.
- To take part in service/departmental policy implementation and development.
- To ensure a high standard of documentation including clinical notes, reports and goals and outcome measures are maintained in a timely manner.
- To manage own time effectively within the demands of the service. To demonstrate good organisational skills in terms of time and caseload management.
- Input data into database including outcome measures and audit/ service related projects
- To monitor and evaluate clinical effectiveness and evidence-based practice using appropriate outcome measures
- To demonstrate knowledge of, and adhere to Professional Body, National and Local Clinical Guidelines.
- Ensure mandatory training is up to date annually.

TRAINING, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

- To maintain clinical professional development (CPD) by keeping informed of any new trends, which includes attending internal or external courses and incorporating them as necessary into the workplace (reflective evidence-based practise).
- To be an active member of the in-service training programme by delivering presentations and training sessions at staff meetings and tutorials. To provide supervision for more junior staff.
- To be responsible for the teaching and supervision of SLT students.
- To provide specialist advice, teaching and training to other members of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) (including hospital and community-based consultants, specialist nursing teams and paediatric therapy services) regarding the SLT management of neonatal patients with neurological, orthopaedic and respiratory conditions.
- To undertake the measurement and evaluation of work and current practise through audit and outcome measures, either individually or with a manager.
- To participate in the staff personal development and appraisal scheme as both appraiser and appraisee.
- To regularly evaluate the service in line with the objectives of the network and local teams.
- To lead on SLT specific developmental care training to staff and parents within the neonatal unit.
- To support training needs of staff on the neonatal unit related to infant feeding, swallowing and communication on the neonatal unit.

SYSTEMS & EQUIPMENT

- The post requires use of a range of software packages and IT equipment for the production of professionally written reports / presentations
- Contribute to the development of performance and governance strategies.



- Routinely handle and present highly complex data and information related to patient flow.

DEMANDS OF THE JOB

This post may involve frequent exposure to unpleasant working conditions and physical contact with unpleasant substances e.g. body fluids, sputum, unpleasant smells and occasional exposure to verbal and physical aggression.

Physical Effort

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| Specialised therapeutic handling of patients | Frequently every day |
| Moving equipment | Frequently every day |
| Repetitive movements | Frequent short periods each day |
| Prolonged standing | 80% of day |
| Working in awkward positions e.g. crouching, kneeling | Frequently every day. |

Mental Effort

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| Sustained Concentration | All of every working day |
| Interruptions to concentration e.g. called to urgent situations | Frequently each day |
| Communicating complex clinical issues with healthcare professionals, patients, relatives and carers | Frequently daily |
| Dealing with unrealistic treatment expectations and demands from patients / relatives/ carers | Frequently Daily |

Emotional Effort

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| Need to share distressing news with support | Regularly |
| Need to accept that they are unable to help every patient | Frequently daily |
| Dealing with death, bereavement, disability, deteriorating & life-threatening conditions, terminal illness and psychological issues | Regularly |
| Carrying out distressing treatment techniques or treatments that cause discomfort | Daily |

Working Conditions/Environment

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| Sputum and bodily fluids | Frequently Daily, |
| Alarms on machines e.g. medical equipment | Frequently Daily |
| Patients with infections e.g. MRSA, TB, HIV | Frequently Daily |
| Highly emotional patients | Regularly Daily |



This job description may be subject to change according to the varying needs of the service. Such changes will be made after discussion between the post holder and the manager. All duties must be carried out under supervision or within Trust policy and procedure.

Person specification

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| Position | Neonatal/Paediatric Speech and Language Therapist |
| Grade | Band 7 |

Evidence for suitability in the role will be measured via a mixture of application form, testing and interview. Essential: E Desirable: D

| Trust values | |
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| Patient at heart – Always holding the patient and their wellbeing at the centre of our thoughts and efforts | E |
| Everyday excellence – Sharing and celebrating our successes, being honest when we get it wrong, giving us the ability to learn from both | E |
| Creative collaboration – Knowing strength comes from diversity, we combine our experiences, skills and talents, working together to find new and better ways to care | E |

| Education and qualifications | |
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| Recognised Speech and Language Therapy Degree or equivalent | E |
| RCSLT Registration | E |
| HCPC Registration | E |
| Post qualification training in paediatric dysphagia | E |
| Experience working at Paediatric Dysphagia Competency Level C | E |
| Relevant specialist training courses e.g. FINE, NBO, IBCLC, SOFFI | D |
| Completion of HEE Modules (Introduction to Neonatal Care and Speech Language Therapy modules) | D |
| Membership of relevant clinical excellence networks (CENs) e.g., PDCEN, Neonatal CEN | D |
| Experience working at Paediatric Dysphagia Competency Level D | D |
| Experience working at Neonatal Dysphagia Competency Level C | D |

| Experience | |
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| Significant experience in paediatric SLT post qualification | E |
| Experience working in a neonatal or acute setting | D |
| Experience working with neonates and infants and/or children with complex needs | E |
| Experience of independently managing feeding and swallowing difficulties associated with a neonatal or paediatric caseload | E |
| Experience of working as part of a multi-disciplinary team | E |



| Skills and knowledge | |
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| Knowledge of processes and policies relating to work in a neonatal setting e.g. safeguarding, developmental/educational needs, RCSLT guidelines etc. | E |
| Knowledge of assessment tools relevant to neonates in order to assess, diagnose, plan and treat neonates and infants with swallowing difficulties | E |
| Excellent interpersonal skills – including observation, listening and empathy skills | E |
| Ability to recognise own training and supervision needs and use these to further enhance clinical skills | E |
| Ability to interpret and apply evidence-based practice in clinical work | E |
| Understanding of the roles of other professionals working on the neonatal unit | E |
| Knowledge of standards of record keeping | E |
| Competence in computer skills, word processing, data management and analysis | E |
| Able to develop and deliver internal and external training | E |

| Personal qualities | |
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| Adherence to RCSLT and HCPC guidelines, codes of ethics and professional conduct | E |
| Excellent organisational skills | E |
| Excellent presentation skills, both written and verbal | E |
| Empathetic | E |
| Reliable | E |
| Innovative | E |
| Problem solving approach | E |
| Motivated, enthusiastic and driven | E |