

Job Description

Title: Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) Neonatal Unit and Acute Paediatric: Band 7

Staff Group: Therapies

Reports to: Therapy 8a Lead

Job Summary

- Provide highly specialist clinical expertise in the assessment, differential diagnosis, treatment, and management dysphagia in neonates, infants, and children with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties.
 - To work as part of the Neonatal multi-disciplinary team to develop an embedded Neonatal Speech and Language Therapy service.
 - To support and advocate best practice models of neonatal care including UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative, Bliss Baby charter Family Integrated Care and Developmental Care and other quality markers of neonatal care as part of the wider multi-disciplinary team.
 - Assist conducting the proceedings for paediatric videofluoroscopy, in close collaboration with Consultant Radiologist attending the exam, and provide written reports and recommendations to community SLTs.
 - Provide peer SLT support to the Isle of Wight Neonatal Unit, St Mary's Hospital.
 - Supervise and support junior staff as appropriate.
 - Work collaboratively with MDT members, AHPs, operational leads, team leads, and clinical specialists to deliver a recently funded neonatal and paediatric inpatient service.
 - Ensure high-quality, family-centred care and a positive experience for babies, children, young people (BCYP) and their parents or carers.
 - Deliver high-quality, evidence-based training to staff, parents, and other professionals.
 - Report to the Band 8a Lead regarding performance, service delivery, operational issues, and contingency planning.
 - Support and implement service development, innovation, and transformation aligned with Trust strategic aims.
 - May require occasional Bank Holiday working.
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Key Responsibilities

1. Professional Responsibilities

- Be professionally and legally accountable for your own practice.

- Work autonomously, maintaining professional competence and adhering to HCPC/RCSLT standards.
 - Assess parent understanding and engagement, addressing any barriers to participation.
 - Hold a highly specialist caseload, applying advanced clinical reasoning and working collaboratively with the MDT.
 - Ensure all interventions are evidence-based to promote optimal health and wellbeing outcomes.
 - Evaluate progress and adjust treatment plans for your caseload and support adjustments across the wider team when required.
 - Maintain accurate, timely clinical records in accordance with Trust and professional guidance.
 - Provide expert advice to therapy colleagues and external agencies.
 - Represent SLT and therapies at MDT meetings to ensure coordinated care and safe discharge planning.
 - Participate in the appraisal process as both appraisee and appraiser.
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2. Operational Management & Clinical Leadership

- Provide day-to-day operational leadership, seeking support from 8a Leads where needed.
- To manage performance of individuals through the appraisal and supervision process and work closely with senior therapy leads to manage capability/performance issues in line with Trust policy when required.
- To report, investigate and manage incidents, sharing learning from incidents and risk with the team and wider organisation as appropriate.
- To investigate and manage complaints in accordance with Trust policy, share and implement learning across the team.
- Work with senior therapy leaders to ensure efficient use of resources, monitoring demand and capacity.
- Ensure effective induction of all staff and students in the service.
- Ensure compliance with statutory and mandatory training.
- Work with senior leads and neonatal delivery network to collect, analyse, and interpret performance data to support KPIs, workforce planning, and service development.
- Ensure delivery of evidence-based practice and robust clinical governance.
- Promote integrated working across therapies and the wider MDT.
- Advise senior leaders on professional issues, considering national and local strategic influences.
- Develop, interpret, and implement policies, procedures, and clinical guidelines relevant to your area.
- Ensure safe and competent use of equipment, reporting defects promptly.
- Conduct risk assessments in complex clinical situations.
- Manage stock levels for clinical materials and equipment.
- Plan and coordinate training, meetings, and service-related activities.

- Develop methods for evaluating service delivery, including patient/carer feedback.
 - Undertake delegated responsibilities from senior managers as needed.
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3. Communication

- Provide and receive complex, sensitive, and sometimes contentious information with parents, carers, and professionals.
 - Use highly developed communication skills to overcome barriers to understanding.
 - Manage challenging or emotive conversations with families in distressing circumstances.
 - Establish robust communication channels to support continuity of care, MDT planning, and discharge processes.
 - Maintain confidential written and electronic records to expected professional standards.
 - Prioritise competing demands in unpredictable clinical environments.
 - Support staff exposed to distressing or emotionally demanding situations.
 - Actively participate in departmental, specialty, and peer group meetings.
 - Ensure effective communication with senior therapy leads on all professional issues.
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4. Education & Training

- Participate in CPD and contribute to the delivery of training for staff, parents, and external professionals.
 - Provide specialist training in consultation with the Band 8a and SLT Training Lead.
 - Support and supervise student SLTs, apprentices, and colleagues engaged in student supervision.
 - Ensure new staff, locums, and students receive appropriate induction.
 - Maintain and update specialist knowledge through ongoing learning and relevant training.
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5. Research & Development

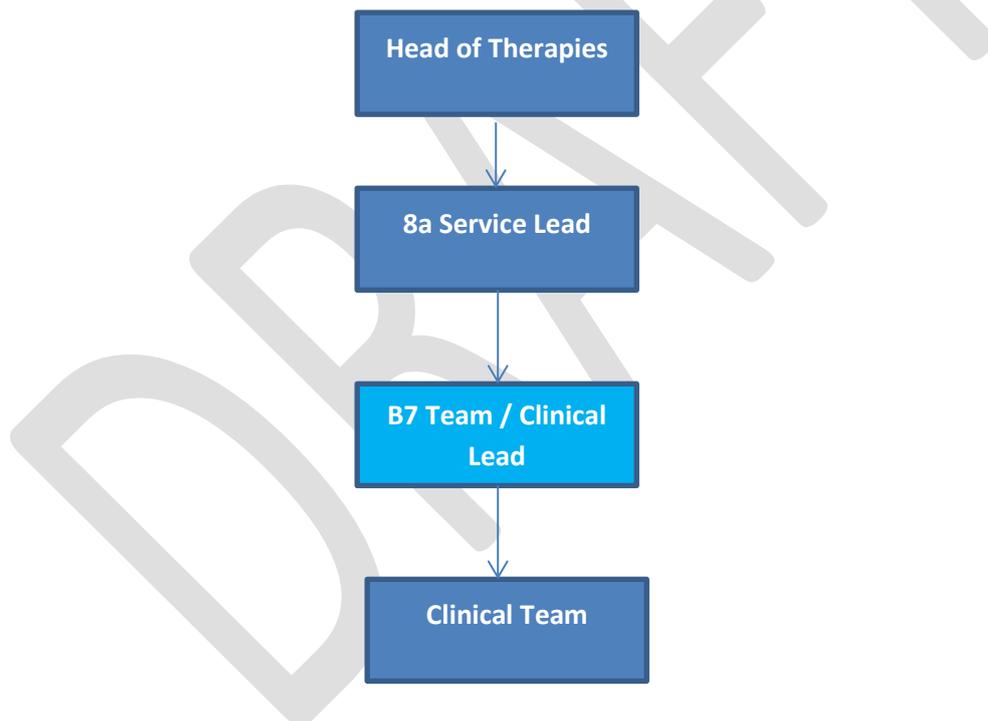
- Lead clinical audit for your area and participate in research initiatives to inform and improve service delivery.
 - Demonstrate ongoing professional development and contribute to service improvement projects.
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6. Working Conditions

- Frequent moderate physical effort and in restricted spaces when assessing and treating babies with complex conditions.

- Regular therapeutic handling of vulnerable infants in accordance with manual handling and therapeutic handling guidelines.
- Regular exposure to bodily fluids and unpleasant smells.
- Frequent exposure to highly distressed, anxious, or occasionally aggressive parents/carers.
- Emotional demands from supporting families with complex decision-making, including end-of-life care where dysphagia is a factor.
- Exposure to families with social vulnerabilities including mental health, substance use, housing instability.
- Infrequent work within designated areas where ionising radiation is used, with all activity undertaken in accordance with robust safety procedures and supported by appropriate radiation-protection measures and equipment.
- Managing high caseloads with unpredictable work patterns and the need for sustained concentration in emergency situations.

Organisational Chart



Person Specification

Person Specification

Qualifications

Essential

- Degree in Speech and Language Therapy (or equivalent).
- RCSLT membership.

- HCPC registration.
- RCSLT Neonatal Dysphagia Competencies at Enhanced/Specialist Level.
- Paediatric Dysphagia Competencies (RCSLT Level C or EDS – Proficient)
- Evidence of CPD in neonatal care, infant feeding, paediatric dysphagia and complex communication needs.
- HEE Neonatal modules (AHP Introduction to Neonatal Care; SLT modules).

Desirable

- Specialist courses such as FINE, NBO, IBCLC/Lactation, Recognised Infant Feeding Training.
- Membership of relevant CENs (e.g., PDCEN, Neonatal CEN).
- RCSLT Paediatric EDS and Neonatal SLT competencies at advanced/expert/Specialist level
- Evidence of FICare training and co-production
- Resilience/wellbeing training.

Skills and Knowledge

Essential

- Highly developed specialist knowledge grounded in evidence-based theory.
- Understanding of neonatal and paediatric guidelines e.g., safeguarding, RCSLT guidance, UNICEF BFI, FIC.
- Specialist assessment skills in feeding and dysphagia in premature infants, neonates, and children.
- Excellent interpersonal, observational, and empathic communication skills.
- Ability to reflect on and identify own training needs.
- Strong written and verbal presentation skills.
- Clear, concise communication skills.
- Strong leadership and influencing abilities.
- Understanding of ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities.
- Understanding of MDT roles within neonatal care.
- Ability to build effective relationships with MDT colleagues.
- Knowledge of health and safety and risk assessment.
- Thorough understanding of clinical governance.
- Self-motivated, assertive, diplomatic, and tactful.
- Ability to work autonomously, prioritise, and manage pressure.

- Ability to delegate tasks and negotiate effectively.
- Ability to critically appraise own performance and reflect on ethical issues.
- Supervisory and appraisal skills.
- Ability to manage and interpret complex clinical information.
- Ability to work in emotionally challenging environments.
- Strong IT and digital record-keeping skills.
- Ability to develop and deliver training.
- Commitment to inclusive, client-centred practice.
- Ability to maintain accurate, legible clinical notes.

Desirable

- Competence in SLT management of ventilator-dependent neonates (D)
- Expertise in management of the tracheostomised infant/child

Experience

Essential

Significant experience in:

- Assessing, treating, and managing pre-term infants, neonates, and BCYPs with feeding, dysphagia and complex communication needs.
- Working with complex feeding and swallowing needs (and communication needs where applicable).
- Experience in infant/paediatric VFSS
- MDT working.
- Collaborative work with parents, carers, and families.
- Supervising staff/students and providing training to professionals and parents.
- Leading audit, service transformation, change initiatives and involvement in research.
- Demonstrating sustained CPD.

Desirable

- Experience in neonatal or acute paediatric inpatient settings.
- Evidence of working towards and/or completion of infant/Paediatric VFSS Competencies.
- Experience of leading and conducting research in the specialist area
- FEES competent practitioner

Other Requirements

- Adherence to RCSLT and HCPC codes of ethics, conduct, and professional standards.

Working Together For Patients with Compassion as One Team Always Improving

Strategic approach (clarity on objectives, clear on expectations)

Relationship building (communicate effectively, be open and willing to help, courtesy, nurtures partnerships)

Personal credibility (visibility, approachable, back bone, courage, resilience, confidence, role model, challenge bad behaviour, manage poor performance, act with honesty and integrity)

Passion to succeed (patient centred, positive attitude, take action, take pride, take responsibility, aspire for excellence)

Harness performance through teams (champion positive change, develop staff, create a culture without fear of retribution, actively listen and value contribution, feedback and empower staff , respect diversity)

Job holders are required to act in such a way that at all times the health and well being of children and vulnerable adults is safeguarded. Familiarisation with and adherence to the Safeguarding Policies of the Trust is an essential requirement for all employees. In addition all staff are expected to complete essential/mandatory training in this area.

Print Name:

Date:

Signature: