Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust

Job Description

Title: Highly Specialist Speech & Language Therapist (Head & Neck)

Band: 7

Staff Group: Therapies

Reports to: 8a Therapy Pathway Lead for Surgery, Oncology and Intensive Care

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Job Purpose:

This post demonstrates a range of direct clinical care (individual and non individual patient activities) and supporting professional activities. It includes additional NHS and trust responsibilities and has the potential to fulfil additional funded external duties in line with the AHP job planning directory.

The post holder will:

- Provide clinical and professional leadership which includes delivering an advanced specialist service to patients within the Head and Neck Service. This includes the provision of highly specialist assessment, differential diagnosis and therapeutic intervention for people with a wide range of communication and swallowing disorders arising from head & neck cancer and the treatment thereof.
- Work as a core member of the multi-disciplinary team to ensure inter-professional patient care for patients with head and neck cancer. This includes weekly attendance and SLT representation at the head and neck MDT clinic, co-ordinating and leading valve clinics, providing specialist input to the AHP/CNS pre-operative clinic and inputting into joint reviews with specialist colleagues (Tracheostomy CNS/Head & Neck CNS/Dietitian/Psychologist).
- Work with senior operational leads, clinical specialists and MDT members to develop services, including actively leading the collection and analysis of data and outcome measures.
- Provide a source of clinical expertise and support to therapy and MDT colleagues and lead on change within your defined clinical area supporting service improvement and redesign in line with the trust's strategic aims.
- Work closely with Speech & Language Therapy team, and senior leads to develop and transform therapy services and be responsible for implementing change at team level.
- Provide training and support to members of the MDT, alongside supporting the development of junior SLTs and students, providing managerial and clinical supervision as necessary.
- Be responsible for their own workload within the designated clinical areas on a day to day basis and show flexibility to cover service needs
- Provide clinical support to other areas of the SLT service when required.

Key Responsibilities

Professional Specific

- To provide highly specialist assessments, differential diagnosis, treatment and management of patients with swallowing and complex communication disorders for head and neck cancer patients at differing points of their journey, including pre and post-surgery and/or radiotherapy/oncological treatment.
- To independently manage and prioritise a highly complex and specialist caseload, whilst supporting development of junior colleagues and MDT staff.
- To provide specialist clinical/technical skills for instrumental assessment e.g. videofluoroscopy, FEES, in line with RCSLT guidelines including interpretation of swallow function and formulation of onward necessary therapeutic intervention.
- To provide highly specialist clinical assessment and management skills for the care of patients with tracheostomies, meeting RCSLT competencies and guidelines, including evidence that competency is maintained.
- To lead the delivery of both inpatient and outpatient care to patients who have undergone laryngectomy surgery, including assessment, treatment and management of surgical voice restoration, communication and dysphagia. This includes co-ordinating and leading monthly valve clinics and managing emergency valve replacements.
- To manage the provision, maintenance and safety of physical resources, such as voice protheses, electrolarynxes and therabites at all times, including liaison with budget holders and procurement.
- To advise and contribute to discussions within the multi-disciplinary team related to the extent to which cognition and communication will influence the ability for clients and carers to make specific decisions as well as approaches which may enable understanding and expression in decision making situations.
- To work closely with MDT colleagues in a range of settings, including support with specialist clinics, attendance at MDT, and local/regional Wessex meetings.
- To initiate MDT case discussions and management in relation to complex cases when the need for this has been identified through assessment and observation.

Professional Leadership

- To maintain registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and RCSLT.
- To contribute to local and national data collection and audit and to develop and monitor national standards/best practice, to support ongoing development of head & neck service.
- To be professionally and legally accountable for all aspects of your own work.
- To work autonomously and without direct supervision, holding this caseload at a highly specialist level and using advanced clinical reasoning.
- To support and deliver individual patient and team advanced specialist assessment, treatment and clinical advice in relation to the care of patients with complex needs including physical, cognitive, social and emotional problems within your defined clinical area.
- To support and deliver individual patient and team treatment programmes based on sound knowledge of evidence based practice and treatment options using highly specialised knowledge and skills and involving patients, carers and the MDT.
- Evaluate patient progress, reassess and alter treatment programmes of own caseload and team if required.
- To keep accurate, legible records of patient care in line with service guidelines.
- Provide a source of expertise and support to colleagues across the therapy services and work with other statutory and independent agencies.

- Represent your profession and the therapy service at multi-disciplinary meetings to ensure a co-ordinated and integrated approach to patient care including discharge planning.
- To actively participate in the trust appraisal process as appraisee and appraisor.
- To manage staff rosters.
- To provide clinical education, formal teaching and support to speech and language therapy students, junior SLT staff and members of MDT as required.
- To continue to develop own highly specialist clinical skills by attending relevant CENS and professional meetings as agreed with line manager.
- To provide operational management to the wider SLT team and contribute to the ongoing development of the Speech & Language Therapy service at PHUT, including representation at Trust meetings as required.

Clinical Leadership

- Responsible for the clinical leadership of a therapy team including participation in recruitment selection, supervision and appraisals of this group of staff as required.
- To triage new referrals and prioritise caseloads, allocate and delegate appropriately clinical and non-clinical tasks within own caseload and to other therapy team members or professionals using service triage and prioritisation systems.
- To provide clinical and professional leadership, ensuring the delivery of evidenced base practice and effective governance for staff working within your defined clinical area as well as driving future service development.
- Provide clinical leadership for initiatives which support and develop service quality.
- To work with the 8a Therapy Pathway Lead and Head of Therapies to ensure staff are clinically competent, services are clinically effective, safe and an excellent patient experience is delivered.
- If required to work within the community as a Lone Practioner to ensure that you and your team are following trust and therapy service policies for lone working.
- To manage, with support of Therapy Pathway Lead, staff performance issues that may arise within the team and if necessary, implement grievance and disciplinary procedures.
- To embed the principles of integrated working across therapies and the wider multi-disciplinary team as required.
- To advise the Therapy 8a Lead and Head of Therapies on professional and clinical issues relating to the provision and development of your defined clinical area including an awareness of the impact of national/regional/local strategy within your defined clinical area.
- To work closely with the Therapy 8a Leads and Head of Therapies to ensure services are delivered efficiently and within budgetary constraints.
- To maintain and provide accurate and timely statistical information as required in consultation with pathway lead and Head of Therapies.
- To work with the pathway team lead to analyse data to manage performance and inform senior leads of any concerns.
- To work with the pathway team lead to manage complaints in accordance to trust policy and with support from senior therapy staff.
- Propose, produce, interpret and implement policies, procedures, standards of service, clinical guidelines within your defined clinical area and wider therapy services.
- Undertake risk assessments in a variety of complex situations for self, patients, colleagues and relatives.
- To ensure the principles of the mental capacity act, best interests and deprivation of liberty are applied and documented in all situations with vulnerable patients and their carers.
- Responsible for maintaining stock of equipment or materials used within specific clinical areas e. g. valves, electrolarynxes, therabites, post-operative laryngectomy equipment
- Plan and organise non-clinical activities pertaining to your specialist area, meetings, training activities and

conferences.

- To set up procedures to evaluate service delivery by encouraging patients' feedback.
- To take delegated clinical responsibility from line manager as required.

Communication

- Provide and receive complex, sensitive or contentious information to patients, carers, and other staff.
- Use highly developed interpersonal verbal and non-verbal skills to overcome significant barriers to communication, acceptance or understanding.
- Communicate highly complex and sensitive case-related information to meet a range of levels of understanding from patients/carers/MDT colleagues. Involves demonstrating empathy and communicating sensitively and effectively with patients, carers, relatives or other professionals in situations that may be hostile, antagonistic or highly emotive.
- Establish robust communication networks with other professionals to optimise continuum of care, therapy intervention and discharge planning to ensure a consistent MDT approach to care.
- Responsible for recording personally generated information regarding patients e. g. written and electronic records, reports and activity data in accordance with professional and local standards including maintaining confidentiality.
- Create reports for the legal system and other external agencies as required e.g. Government Benefits departments, voluntary and private organisations and charities.
- Concentrate while undertaking work that is not always predictable. With competing demands for attention, prioritise workload and manage interruptions relating to patient care.
- Work with a number of patients who may be challenging and emotionally demanding, who have communication, psychological, cognitive or mental health issues as well as their physical disabilities, with frequent exposure to distressing and emotional circumstances, e. g. being exposed to severely injured patients and involvement with the terminally ill.
- To provide regular support to staff members who may have been exposed to emotional and stressful situations.
- To attend and actively participate in specialty, peer group and departmental staff meetings
- To ensure timely and effective communication to senior therapy staff on all professional matters

Education and training

- To participate in CPD activity including teaching on specific subjects and delivering core training programmes to team members, other professionals and students.
- Work alongside SLT Band 7 Practice Educator to identify training needs within clinical area and provide training as required as a member of SLT team
- Provide clinical practice placements for pre-registration students and apprentices and support other staff within your team to supervise students.
- To ensure that new members of staff, locums, students and visitors receive appropriate orientation and induction programmes.
- To keep updated with new developments within your specialist area and attend relevant training as appropriate

Research and development

- To lead on clinical audit and participate in research as appropriate to inform future service development.
- Demonstrate regular development activities and contribute to audits or other projects in order to support clinical judgments and decisions.

Working Conditions

- The job will involve frequent exposure to unpleasant working conditions on a regular daily basis involving exposure to bodily fluids e. g. sputum, vomit, urine, lice, fleas and unpleasant smells from wounds etc.,

- This job may involve attending theatre to support decision making regarding valve selection and placement with ENT H&N Consultants.
- There is frequent exposure to vulnerable patients who have high levels of anxiety caused by pain, cancer diagnoses, mental health, drug and alcohol dependency and patients dealing with distressing circumstances following extensive surgery, and palliative care.
- To employ appropriate strategies to manage aggressive behaviour within the workplace e.g. patients with drug/alcohol dependencies.
- To demonstrate high level of skill to deal with frequent distressing circumstances in own clinical caseload and in working with supervisees.
- There is a requirement to demonstrate skills in handling patients and considering the environment with patients with physical and cognitive disabilities.
- To work on a regular basis in areas of radiological exposure when attending video-fluoroscopy clinics
- To adhere to infection control and health and safety guidelines in relation to specialist procedures.
- Lone working as required e.g. In the community or on-call
- The job involves managing high caseloads, and sustained concentration to care for unstable patients or emergency situations.

Key working Relationships

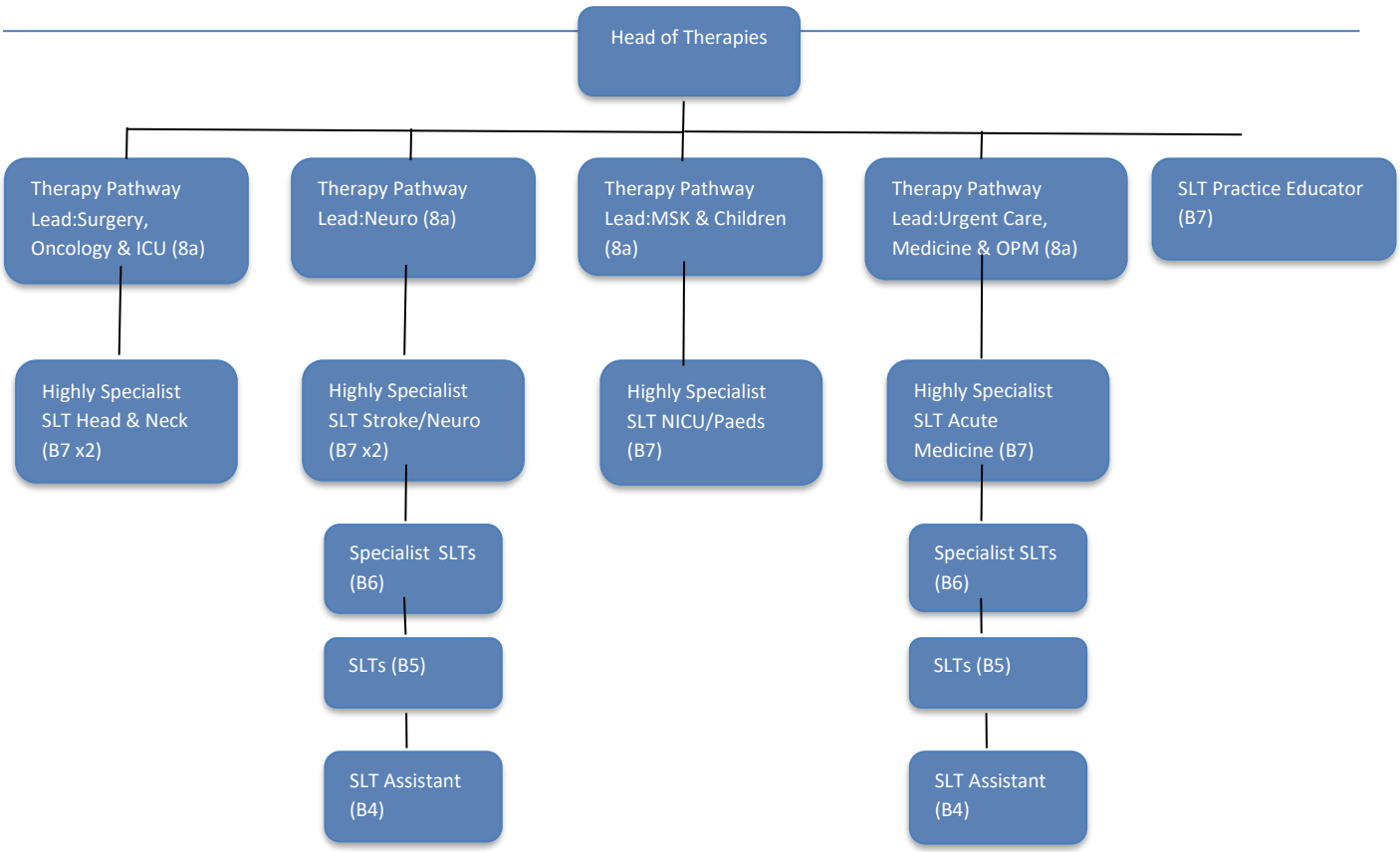
Head and Neck MDT (including ENT/OMFS/Oncology Consultants, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Dietitians, Psychologists, Nutrition Nurses, Altered Airway Nurse Specialist)

Community SLT team + IOW SLT H&N Practitioner

Radiology department

Valve suppliers

Organisational Chart



Other

This job description does not purport to cover all aspects of the job holder's duties but is intended to be indicative of the main areas of responsibility





Person Specification

Qualifications

Essential

- Recognised Speech & Language Therapy qualification to degree or masters level
- Registered with HCPC
- Registered with RCSLT
- Dysphagia competent to at least level C (RCLST competencies)
- Competent in Surgical Voice Restoration
- Completion of RCSLT tracheostomy competencies
- Proven evidence of completion of relevant specialist short courses and self-directed study in relevant clinical field

Desirable

- Completion of RCSLT Video-fluoroscopy/FEES competencies and/or completion of MBSImP.
- Advanced laryngectomy course
- Clinical supervisor training
- Completion of accredited course in surgical voice restoration

Experience

Essential

- Significant demonstratable experience working with adults with acquired disorders of communication and swallowing, including demonstratable experience of working with/leading a head and neck cancer caseload
- Demonstratable experience of working as a core member of the head and neck MDT
- Proven experience in the pre and post-operative management of patients with laryngectomies, including ability to lead on surgical voice restoration, stoma care, HME placement and equipment considerations.
- Training and demonstratable experience in tracheostomy management within head and neck
- Able to employ counselling skills and provide psychological/emotional support for patients, carers and relatives

- Experience in the area of voice, including use of specialist assessment and therapeutic techniques

Desirable

- Demonstratable experience of managing/supervising SLT students and junior staff
- Demonstratable experience of undertaking operational/managerial duties, including conducting annual appraisals
- Member of relevant CEN
- Experience of representing SLT at meetings outside of service e.g. steering groups/clinical governance meetings
- Experience in recruitment of SLT staff
- Experience of completing level 2 psychological skills
- Completion of Advanced Communication Skills course

Skills & Knowledge

Essential

- Proven knowledge of current oncological and surgical management approaches to head and neck cancer and the implications/outcomes of multi-modality treatment
- Commitment to and demonstration of evidence-based practice within head and neck cancer
- Sound proven knowledge of relevant RCSLT clinical guidelines and professional standards
- Proven knowledge of the legal and ethical aspects of capacity/consent
- Proven knowledge and use of outcome measurement and data collection
- Understanding of the principles of clinical governance and participation in audit/service development
- Excellent interpersonal skills including observation, listening and empathy
- Well-developed negotiation and problem solving skills
- Well-developed analytical and reflection skills
- Well-developed skills in data collection and interpretation
- Excellent verbal and written presentation skills
- Well-developed planning, organisational and prioritisation skills
- Able to recognise the limits of own knowledge and skills and seek support/guidance as necessary
- Able to work flexibly and manage pressure of work
- Able to work alone, autonomously and set own priorities
- Able to maintain intense concentration on and active engagement with all aspects of client management for prolonged periods
- Able to be flexible to the demands of the post, including unpredictable work patterns/caseloads, the need to multitask and make immediate complex decisions
- Ability to work as a team member with evidence to support this
- Positive attitude to work and ability to take personal ownership for learning and professional development
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent self-management and organisational skills
- Ability to work flexibly over 7-day period if required in the future to meet service needs

Desirable

- Specialist clinical/technical skills in undertaking and interpreting VFs in head & neck caseload
- Specialist clinical/technical skills in undertaking and interpreting FEES in head and neck caseload
- Knowledge of service improvement techniques e.g. change management

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: Rachel Cunningham

Date: 23.11.26

Signature: R. Cunningham