

**Job Description****1. JOB DETAILS**

Job Title: Speech & Language Therapy Assistant

Grade: Band 4

Responsible to: Team Leader

Reports to: Head of Speech & Language Therapy Service

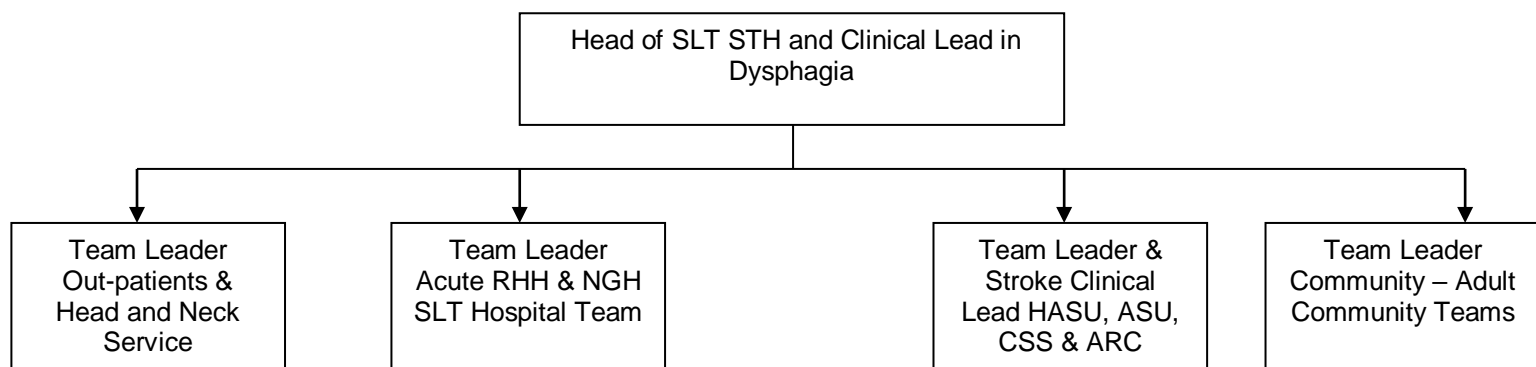
Location: Main base and location of work could be Northern General Hospital or Royal Hallamshire Hospital.

**2. JOB PURPOSE**

To provide high quality speech and language therapy (SLT) support to adult patients with swallowing and/or communication difficulties under the guidance of the speech and language therapist. Working in acute ward settings.

**3. ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT**

To provide a Speech & Language Therapy Service to adults with communication and swallowing disorders.

**4. DEPARTMENTAL/DIRECTORATE ORGANISATIONAL CHART****5. MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## Clinical

The post holder will work within a specified scope of competence. This will include and equate with Levels 3 and 4 on the Eating, Drinking, Swallowing Competency Framework (EDSCF) of the RCSLT. (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists).

Once competence is achieved (through in house training and assessment) the post holder will:

- Provide high quality swallowing support to designated patients with swallowing difficulties (dysphagia) in acute wards.
- Work autonomously with own caseload (screened for appropriacy by a Level 6 registered dysphagia practitioner). This caseload will be composed of patients presenting with classic/basic dysphagia impairments.
- Implement protocol guided review process – carry out Level 3 direct reviews of existing recommendations that are not expected to change. May modify diet (downgrades) or suggest other strategies such as pacing, bolus size, posture etc.
- Carry out Level 3 telephone reviews (following a protocol) of pts who have already had assessment and recommendations from a qualified SLT assessment.
- Carry out protocol guided EDSCF Level 3 dysphagia initial assessments and reviews to identify and implement an interim eating and drinking plan (not including IDDSI modifications to fluids)
- Carry out protocol guided EDSCF Level 4 dysphagia initial assessments and reviews and put in place an appropriate management plan. Implementation of protocol guided actions (including IDDSI fluid modifications).
- To review and adjust care plans for designated review assessments for swallowing and/or communication, working within agreed competency and ensuring issues of concern are raised with care staff and the SLT.
- Act as telehealth partner
- Liaise and makes onward referrals to other teams and disciplines.
- Train patients, relatives and care staff in implementation of dysphagia management plan.
- Train care staff to Level 2 EDSCF competency.
- Deliver high quality communication therapy in one to one and group sessions.
- Enable patients to effectively use low- and high-tech communication aids through preparing and programming the aids and supporting the patient and their family/carers in their use.
- Deliver patient group talks or training such as dysphagia awareness following an agreed lesson plan and undertaking annual peer review to assess competency.
- Ensure that outcomes are collected as per departmental guidelines.

The post holder will:

- Show initiative, working autonomously and prioritising their day to day and overall workload whilst working closely with and receiving regular supervision from HCPC registered speech and language therapists.
- Ensure that resources are used effectively, planning workload to meet the priorities of patient care by the most efficient use of time, equipment and manpower and other resources.
- Work independently from a specific plan of care seeking advice and modification when required.

- Deliver specialist rehabilitation programmes and reviews independently of a clinician to individuals or groups according to agreed plans.
- Undertake day to day assessment of patients' mental health, communicative and physical levels of function and capacity to undertake activities and implement/modify treatment appropriately.
- Participate in setting and documenting patients' goals, following departmental protocols for this process, including with patients who have communication impairments.
- Show the ability to recognise when patients have reached desired goals or have problems requiring re-assessment by a clinician and refer back to clinician or discharge as appropriate.
- Undertake assessments to defined protocols with informed patient consent.
- Develop resources to support communication and cognition for patients, using digital camera, IT and relevant supporting software, maintaining and updating technical skills in order to do this.
- Develop resources to support impairment based and functional SLT rehabilitation programmes, maintaining and updating technical skills in order to do this.
- Use computer assisted therapy programmes under the supervision of qualified therapists, showing ability to vary levels appropriate to patients' ability and need.
- Use low- and high-tech communication aids with patients and carers under the supervision of the Speech and Language Therapist.
- Develop accessible information following agreed guidelines.
- Assist patients to eat and drink and prepare consistencies of diet/fluid in the Videofluoroscopy Clinic, X-ray department.
- Initiate referrals to other agencies working across professional boundaries to facilitate integrated services for patients.
- Have dexterity, co-ordination and sensory skills for manual treatment of patients where accuracy is important.
- Maintain sensitivity to the emotional needs of the patient.
- Communicate effectively and work collaboratively with health, social care and voluntary community and faith sector colleagues to assist in the delivery of a co-ordinated multi agency service within the complexities of a community environment.
- Provide and receive routine information requiring tact, sensitivity and confidentiality. This will usually include overcoming barriers to communication such as aphasia, cognitive impairments, mental health problems, deafness, to maximise rehabilitation potential.
- Have very good verbal and non-verbal communication skills of motivation and reassurance to encourage patients to undertake their treatment programmes.
- Maintain job related competencies through life-long learning and attendance on relevant courses and incorporate evidence-based practice as instructed by a clinician.
- Participate as an appraisee in the staff appraisal scheme and produce a Personal Development Plan.
- Be an active member of the in-service training programme by the attendance and co-delivery of training sessions.
- Demonstrate an understanding of clinical governance, and equal opportunities policies, risk management and apply to work situations.
- Participate in research trials and audit on occasion.

- Provide spontaneous and planned advice, teaching and instruction to relatives and carers related to the treatment plan for individual patients.
- Provide care and therapeutic interventions in working conditions which may frequently be hazardous e.g. exposure to body fluids, aggressive persons, visits to high risk areas and associated travel risks.
- Be patient, calm and remain focussed at all times. Be flexible to the demands of the environment, including unpredictable work patterns, deadlines and frequent interruptions.
- Work with patients, carers, relatives who may have distressing or challenging social / clinical circumstances/behaviours.

## **Organisational**

- To be responsible for the management and prioritisation of own workload.
- To participate in peer support with other Speech and Language therapy assistants.
- To promote the understanding of the role of the SLTA to students and other health and social care staff.
- Contribute to discussions on service and policy development and provide comments on proposals.
- To monitor, store, clean and order stock and maintain equipment for use by the Speech and Language Therapy team.
- To be responsible for equipment used in carrying out duties and to adhere to departmental policy ensuring competence in use.
- To organise and plan appropriate venues for the provision of group activities if required, taking into account patients' physical and cognitive capabilities.
- To maintain accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date clinical and non-clinical documentation, in line with legal and departmental requirements.
- To be actively involved in the collection of appropriate data and statistics for the use of the department.
- To be aware of Health and Safety aspects of your work in the community setting and implement any policies, which may be required to improve the safety of your work area, including your prompt recording and reporting of accidents and incidents to senior staff and ensuring that equipment use is safe.
- To comply with the organisational and departmental policies and procedures and to be involved in the reviewing and updating as appropriate.
- The postholder is expected to familiarise themselves with the Mental Capacity Act, be aware of its requirements and apply them appropriately.
- The postholder is expected to familiarise themselves with the procedures surrounding safeguarding adults and children and apply them appropriately.
- To undertake any other duties that might be considered appropriate by the Operational Manager after negotiation and adequate training.

**6. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES (including estimated size of budget)**

None

**7. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES (including numbers and grades of staff)**

None

**8. ASSET MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES (i.e. stock, equipment, buildings)**

None

**9. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS (please identify the main personnel with whom the post holder will be required to communicate with and advise internally and externally)**

a) Communicate with:

Speech & Language Therapists, Speech & Language Therapy Assistants, members of the MDT, Speech & Language Therapy management, patients & carers

b) Provide advice to:

Patients & carers, members of the MDT

---

**We are committed to our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and encourage equal opportunities, diversity and flexibility within our workforce**