**Agenda for Change Job Description Template**

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| **JOB IDENTIFICATION****Job Title:** Specialist Speech & Language Therapist **Responsible to:** East Dunbartonshire HSCP Service Manager/Band 7 SALT **Department:** NHS GG&C Learning Disabilities –Speech & Language Therapist**Directorate:** East Dunbartonshire Health & Social Care Partnership |
| **2. JOB PURPOSE** |
| 1. To provide a Specialist SLT service to adults with learning disabilities.
2. To be an autonomous practitioner, managing complex and specialist caseload independently in one or more specified ADLT area.
3. To work as an integral member of an inter-disciplinary team.
4. To supervise the work of SLT assistant and SLT students.
5. To participate in research and audit relevant to clinical work.
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| **3. ROLE OF DEPARTMENT** |
| Speech & language Therapist are specialist in communication disorders and are the only profession qualified to:* Comprehensive assess a person’s capability to communicate and understand verbal information
* Advise on and provide the best means by which someone with a communication disability might overcome or manage their disability

The ability to communicate is central to all that we do-to who we are, how we learn and how we relate to each other throughout everyday life. Thousands of people have difficulty accessing health, education, social, economic and other opportunities of day to day life due to communication difficulties. Speech & Language therapists work to assess, diagnose and develop interventions, including programmes of care, to maximise the communication potential of people under their care/referred to them. Such work will involve direct contact with people with communication difficulties as well as their carers and significant others in their lives. In the aim of enabling an individual to function to the best of their ability, an SLT may work* Direct with a person with communications difficulties
* And will also provide in breaking down communication barriers by influencing and supporting those in the person’s communication environment.
* And will work with communities e.g. training and education of businesses and service and other health promotion activities.

Speech & Language therapists (with appropriate post grad qualifications) are also specialists in swallowing, eating and drinking disorders (dysphagia). Assessment, diagnosis and intervention for dysphagia require the SLT to influence, support and educate carers who are supporting or feeding the person at mealtimes-increasing their understanding of the swallowing process, reason for swallowing difficulties specific to person and strategies to reduce the associated health risks (e.g. reduce the risk of chest infections and maintain levels of nutrition an hydration).The Speech 7 Language Therapy service is part of the NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and provided within the East Dunbartonshire HSCP family of services- the Joint Learning Disability Team is a specialist Health & Social Work team for Adults with Learning Disabilities. |
| **4. ORGANISATIONAL POSITION** |
| HSCP Service Manager HSCP Band 7 SALTProfessional Lead SALTThis Post Band 6 Operational Professional SLT Assistant SLT Student  |
| **5. SCOPE AND RANGE** |
| **Client group**Postholder work with individuals, their environment and their community. Client group for postholder therefore includes:* Adults with learning disabilities who have severe and enduring communication difficulties and /or dysphagia (swallowing problems)
* A consultative service to client’s communication partners e.g. family, paid carers, work colleagues
* A remit to deliver training to family and paid carers, other professionals working with people with learning disabilities.

Adults with Learning Disabilities (profound cognitive to mild cognitive impairment) frequently have co existing health, social or emotional difficulties which result in a complex presentation.* Mental Health difficulty/disorder
* Visual Impairment
* Hearing Impairment
* Challenging behaviour
* Autistic Spectrum Disorder
* Physical Disability
* Epilepsy
* English as a second language

**Supervisory Responsivity** The postholder will be required to support supervise and delegate tasks to Speech & Language Therapy Assistant, and to the JLDT Community Care Assistants as required. This may involve the provision of relevant training to ensure effective service delivery. The postholder will be responsible for:* Delegating SLT tasks to Assistants
* The supervision and monitoring of sessions/tasks that have been delegated
* The creation of detailed written plans to inform work of the Assistants

The postholder is required to advise and support professional colleagues in planning interventions and interacting with individuals with simple and complex communication disorders.There is also a requirement to act as a placement educator for SLT undergraduates, providing the necessary experience for students, and participating in the examination schedule. |
| **6. MAIN TASKS, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| **Clinical Expertise**1. To provide highly skilled communication/swallowing assessments of clients, based upon the appropriate use, interpretation and integration of complex data from a variety of sources including standardised assessments, self- report measures, rating scales, direct and indirect structured observations and semi-structured interviews with clients, family members and others involved in the client’s care.
2. To formulate plans for the formal treatment of a client’s communication and or swallowing problems based upon an appropriate conceptual framework of the client’s problems and employing methods based upon evidence across the full range of care settings.
3. To be responsible for implementing a range of communication and or swallowing interventions for individuals, carers, families and groups within and across teams working individually and in synthesis, adjusting and refining professional formulations by drawing upon different explanatory models and maintaining a number of provisional hypotheses.
4. To make highly skilled evaluations and decisions about treatment options taking into account both theoretical and theraputic modules and highly complex factors concerning historical and developmental processes that have shaped the individual, family or group. This includes providing reports used in legal and procedural contexts e.g. Adults with Incapacity, Adult Support and Protection, Child Protection.
5. To provide detailed reports on specialist assessment and interventions regarding client’s communication and or dysphagia. Reports will include the skills & needs of clients and other people interacting with the client; take into account social, environmental & health factors: include details of the impact and implications on health and wellbeing and quality of life.
6. To exercise full responsibility and autonomy for the treatment and discharged of SLT clients, ensuring appropriate assessment, formulation and interventions communicating with the referral agent and others involved with the care on a regular basis.
7. To ensure that all members of the inter-disciplinary team, clients, families and other agencies have an understanding of the range of specialist skills available from the SLT postholder through the provision of advice and consultation and the dissemination of SLT knowledge, research and theory.

**Professional Supervision** 1. To supervise and direct SLT work delegated by the postholder to the SLT Assistants and Community Care Assistants. This includes devising work programmes for delegation and setting of standards by which to monitor performance.
2. To supervise SLT students on placement.
3. To provide peer supervision to one other SLT at a similar grade within the service, as appropriate.

**Teaching and consultancy to other professionals**1. To work within the multidisciplinary team to plan, deliver and evaluates interventions.
2. To provide specialist professional advice to multidisciplinary team regarding local policies and initiatives and make recommendations relating to policy development within SLT.
3. To devise and deliver training and teaching to team members, family, carers and staff from other agencies.

**Member of SLT department**1. To initiate, plan and execute small scale audit and participate in research within specialist area.
2. To develop personal networks across services through involvement in special interest groups and other forums as appropriate.
3. To engage in further training as dictated by service requirements.
4. To adhere to the code of ethics and professional conduct of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.
5. Comply with corporate and professional standards, policies and procedures.
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| **7a. EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY** |
| The postholder is responsible for assessing and recommending purchase of specific high tech communication machines (Alternative and Augmentative Communication) for individual clients.(£100-£10.000)Responsible for programming, updating, maintaining and training nominated clients, carers and family in the use of such AAC systems.Using computer programmes including graphics packages e.g. Boardmaker for producing accessible information and therapeutic materials. In assessment of eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties (dysphagia) postholder is responsible for using adapted cups and utensils, assessment materials e.g. mirror, pentorch, stethoscope and for deciding appropriate referral for videoflouroscopy.Use photographic equipment (including digital cameras) e.g. to prepare communication books (AAC)Use video camera recording equipment to provide interaction and language sample for analysis Use other presentation equipment in training carers and staff e.g. Power Point.The postholder will daily use a vehicle to drive to client’s homes, clinics, and meetings. |
| **7b. SYSTEMS** |
| **The postholder is required to:*** Be responsible for recording personally generated clinical observations in client case notes in accordance with professional and corporate standards and procedures.
* To provide monthly caseload statistics to line manager.
* Use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, email, Boardmaker picture communication software and other computer graphic systems.
* Access and update shared electronic specialist equipment and resource list.
* Prepare data for others to programme into a computer based communication aid.
* Collate information in response to data collection requests, e.g. waiting times, surveys, research and audit.
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| **8. DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS** |
| The postholder is expected to represent the SLT department as link SLT, as appropriate, to working parties, network meetings etc. The role of SLT may include:* To provide information on behalf of the department
* To relay information back to the department
* To provide comment on any suggested course of action.

The postholder works independently and is accountable for their own professional actions, managing their own caseload independently and takes responsibility for working with even the most complex presentations. This includes having responsibility for accepting /refusing clients, assessing clients, planning and implementing therapy/interventions, making onward referrals and discharging clients. The post holder, as a qualified speech and language therapist, is an autonomous and independent practitioner, responsible for their own work and interventions and for the interpretation of agreed guidelines and polices. Work is supervised clinically. The postholder is expected to:* Recognise potential breakdown and conflict when it occurs e.g. prevent placement breakdown due to communication dimensions of challenging behaviour.
* To develop clear care plans based on best practice
* Demonstrate the ability to reflect on practice with peers/clinical supervisor
* Identify and assess the learning needs appropriately of participants in communication training
* Demonstrate the ability to reflect on and evaluate all training and clinical interventions they provide
* Clinical supervision occurs via pre-arranged CPD sessions (approximately 6 per year) and is not confused with managerial supervision e.g. being closely watched over or regularly monitored.
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| **9. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS** |
| All clients are referred to SLT due to major difficulties in communication. Sometimes careers can also have communication difficulties. The results in problems with understanding, and /or in expressing themselves effectively. Clients may also present with severe cognitive or behavioural impairment, causing difficulties with communication. The role of SLT is to overcome these difficulties in their own communications with client AND to provide advice and training to all other professionals in how to overcome these barriers.The postholder conveys highly complex, sensitive information to a wide range of individuals and organisations requiring the postholder to:* Convey details of their assessment, diagnosis, treatment plan, prognosis and interventions to clients in a manner that is sensitive to their level of knowledge and understanding.
* Present highly sensitive clinical information to clients, for example those who are receiving end of life care.
* Receive unpleasant information and be exposed to stressful situations while in a community setting e.g. bereavement issues, rapid clinical deterioration, pain, emotional relatives, distressed clients, difficult social/relationships issues.
* Provide advice and respond to sensitive social situations e.g. where children are overburdened with caring responsibilities, neglect issues or substance/alcohol abuse.
* Engage in decision making that could be contentious, requiring a high degree of persuasiveness and negotiation skills e.g. agreeing clinical interventions with non-complaint clients, agree service boundaries with other services.
* Use highly developed interpersonal skills to persuade and motivate individuals and break down barriers e.g. agree clinical interventions with potentially resistant or hostile relatives/carers
* Maintain effective cross agency communication pathways to ensure a consistent approach to care e.g. formal/informal communications with GP’s, social work colleagues, the voluntary sector, housing, education, care agencies and multi-disciplinary team within the acute services.
* Ensure that clients from ethnic minorities have accessible information in relation to the team, and access to interpreting services when necessary.
* Receive verbal complaints directly from client/carers/other agencies and respond appropriately to these events.
* Receive and interpret complex verbal and/ or written information for clients and significant others, on behalf of other professionals and other agencies.
* Interpreting, translating and devising complex documents into an accessible format e.g. plain English, with graphics for people with limited comprehension or literacy skill. Providing this information on behalf of other professionals and agencies.

The postholder is expected to develop and deliver formal presentation about the above complex issues to groups of carers and other professional (15-30 people).The postholder also communicates information about: * Appropriate management of communication/swallowing difficulties.
* The neurological basis of impairments.
* Appropriate service for clients.
* The role of the SLT in working with people with communication impairment.
* Developing role of SLT with multi-disciplinary team.
* Raising awareness and sharing information.
* The integration of theories of interventions into clinical practice.
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| **10. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS OF THE JOB** |
| **Physical Demands:**The postholder is routinely required to demonstrate very highly developed listening skills and observational skills in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of clients with complex speech and language disorders. The post requires physical skills used in the assessment of swallowing impairments.The post requires occasional moderate physical effort.Examples include:* Physical management of a client who is having an epileptic seizure
* Working with people with severe physical difficulties necessitates regular kneeling, crouching, crawling, (working on the floor) to get the best position for effective communication.
* Occasionally requires to push clients in wheelchairs.
* Carrying of equipment between buildings e.g. laptops, flipchart, power point projector, TV/training equipment (7-12kgs).
* Rearranging furniture, e.g. chairs and desks.
* The postholder is required to have keyboard skills and to use a computer for long periods of time.
* The postholder is required to have well- developed in using audio-visual equipment for long periods of time
* Standing for prolonged periods while presenting training (up to 2hrs).
* Long periods of travel across the GGHB area to training/client visits 1-2hrs a day.

**Mental Demands**The work of the postholder frequently requires intense, prolonged concentration. Assessment and treatment sessions of up to two hours in length require the postholder to make and respond to multiple observations simultaneously. For example, the postholder may conduct a theraputic session with a client who has a combination of several impaired intelligibility of speech, social or sexual disinhibition, anger management difficulties and poor concentration.In such session the postholder may need to monitor and modify his or her own behaviour and treatment plans and make subtle observations relating both to the therapeutic focus of the session with a client who has a combination of severely impaired intelligibility of speech, social or sexual disinhibition, anger management difficulties and poor concentration.In such a session the postholder may need both to monitor and modify his or her own behaviour and treatment plans and to make observations relating both to the theraputic focus of the session and to significant other behaviour’s, such as changes in eye contact and posture indicating increasing aggression. In group sessions several such demanding clients may need to managed simultaneously.High level of frequent, intense concentration is required for example during:* Training (2hour+ daily)
* Assessment (often 2 hour + daily) and review, particularly where client’s communication is severely limited.
* Complex assessment and diagnosis of often unresponsive clients.
* Concentration is required for complex report writing (up to 2hour daily).
* Memory skills for complex detail.
* Dealing with frequent interruptions during training, report writing and planning.
* Carry out complex assessment in distracting environments i.e. day-rooms/dining rooms.
* Dealing with lone working in community setting.

**Emotional Demands:**The postholder is frequently required to engage in and manage highly emotional interactions with clients.This includes:* Having to give potentially distressing diagnoses and prognoses relating to long term severe disability to clients and their significant others.
* Highly emotional interactions with clients include having to engage with and manage clients who are extremely distressed and/ or aggressive.
* Informing service users & carers that oral feeding is unsafe & surgery for tube feeding is required and supporting them in coming to terms with this.
* Working with people who have challenging behaviour, mental health disorders and emotional distress associated with enduring & severe communication difficulties.
* Regularly working with people who have degenerative conditions related to complex health problems, and people with Downs Syndrome who have early onset dementia. The post holder’s role includes helping the individual and their carers to cope with distress associated with the increasing communication and cognitive impairment, loss of independence and ailing health.
* Supporting family/paid carers and service users with empathy towards their difficulties, but also proactively to stabilise or maximise their potential.
* Individuals with learning disabilities are at risk of significant abuse including sexual abuse and postholder may be involved in overcoming communication difficulties in reporting abuse, in being supported with the consequences of abuse and being helped to understand the outcome e.g. legal proceedings, service changes.
* Individuals with learning disabilities have difficulty understanding significant life events e.g. closure of hospital or day service, becoming pregnant, death of family members. Postholder is responsible for assessing levels of understanding, providing support and advice at an appropriate level for the person, and for enabling other people to provide appropriate support.

NB one or more of the above situations will be encountered by the postholder on at least a weekly basis. **Environmental Demands/Working Conditions:**The postholder is occasionally (at least weekly) exposed to highly unpleasant working conditions such as experiencing and managing verbal aggression and implied threats, experiencing inappropriate personal/sexual comments from clients and being touched inappropriately by clients with poor impulse control or social understanding. The postholder is required to have awareness of personal safety and that of clients/carers within the clinical within the clinical setting and the community and to work within infection control and health & safety guidelines in order to deal appropriately with unpleasant conditions related to client contact e.g. body fluids, infectious conditions* Whilst risk assessments are undertaken, postholder is required to visit people on their own homes throughout East Dunbartonshire and wider geographic area as required, and inevitably may include contact with highly unpleasant conditions on occasion’s e.g. dirty homes, lice, scabies.
* Clients or carers may be verbally and physically aggressive.
* Dysphagia intervention is central to the role of the post and includes feeding individuals and contact with sputum and body fluids. People with dysphagia frequently drool, cough, experience sickness due to gastric problems and may have poor oral health.
* Visiting client’s in their own home-often unpleasant conditions, pets, unhygienic conditions.
* Exposure to clients who may have Hepatitis C, MRSA, etc.
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| **11. MOST CHALLENGING/DIFFICULT PARTS OF THE JOB** |
| The most challenging parts of the job include:* Assessing and managing people who may be verbally and physically aggressive.
* Conveying poor prognoses to clients and their significant others.
* Eliciting and listening to client accounts of very serious assaults.
* Eliciting and listening to client accounts of abuse experienced.
* Making initial assessment and management decisions relating to people who present a serious challenge to services.
* Eliciting and listening to clients and carers accounts of distressing life histories.
* Eliciting and listening to clients reports of their current psychological state.
* Formulating a meaningful treatment plan within very difficult social circumstances.
* Frequent exposure to emotionally demanding and complex social situations, necessitating the frequent need to make clinical judgements whilst working alone in the community setting.

The challenging nature of the above is compounded by the fact that the clients involved have complex communication difficulties which effect their ability to understand others, to express themselves and to engage in interactions. The postholder is required to adapt method of communication to suit the needs and abilities of all clients and carers. This includes guiding and supporting other team members, to conduct sessions with people with complex communication and psychological difficulties. |
| **12, KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB** |
| Requirements to undertake the role:**Essential/Desirable**1. Relevant first level degree or equivalent e.g. BSc, Bed, Ba, Post Graduate Degree **E**
2. Professional membership and registration with HPC and RCSLT **E**
3. Qualification to practise as SLT-obtained either as a clinical qualification alongside degree or via 2 year post graduate course **E**
4. Minimum 2 years post qualification with some experience in the specialism **E**
5. Post graduate experience/training in dysphagia **E**
6. Excellent auditory perception skills e.g. ability to transcribe speech phonetically **E**
7. Excellent interpersonal skills **E**
8. Good presentation skills involving the use of complex multi-medi materials as appropriate **E**
9. Prioritisation skills **E**
10. Ability to work effectively as a member of the inter-disciplinary team to support the planning and achievement of local service objectives **E**
11. Knowledge and experience of range of formal and informal assessment and theraputic tools and interventions relevant to client group **E**
12. Knowledge of all relevant national and local policies and procedures **E**
13. Knowledge of the legal and ethical framework relevant to speciality **E**
14. Commitment to corporate training e.g. moving and handling, disability awareness **E**
15. Commitment to ongoing professional development **E**
16. Some experience of providing teaching and training to undergraduates, Speech and Language Therapists, other professionals and agencies **D**
17. Experience in audit and research **D**
18. History of attendance at conferences, certificated short courses, training days relevant to specialism **D**
19. Experience of interdisciplinary and inter agency working **D**
20. Ability to maintain effective working relationships with relevant stakeholders **D**
21. Skills in mentoring/peer review **D**
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