

1. JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Fertility Counsellor 049164

Responsible to: Clinical Manager

Department: E.F.R.E.C.

Directorate: Women and Children's Associated Services

Operating Division: Lothian University Hospital Division

No of Job Holders: 1

Last Update: 27th January 2021

2. JOB PURPOSE

- Manage and provide a specialist, confidential, professional, independent service to patients who are preparing for, undergoing, or have received fertility treatment or investigations within EFREC.
- To liaise with healthcare professionals in the multidisciplinary care of EFREC patients by providing support, counselling expertise and training where appropriate.

3. DIMENSIONS - Department and Directorate

The Edinburgh Fertility and Reproductive Endocrine Centre forms part of the Women's, children's and Associated Services Directorate. The Centre for Reproductive Health includes Maternity, Gynaecology, Neonatal Services and EFREC.

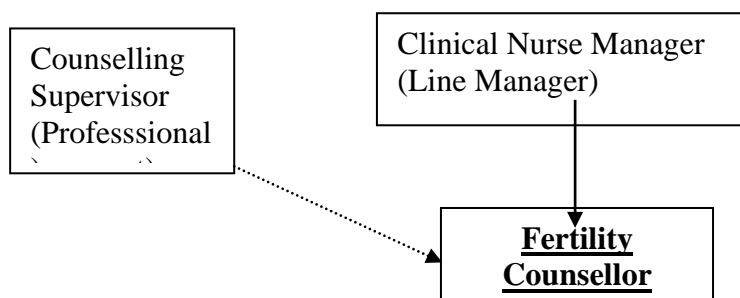
Referrals to the counselling service are made by clinicians, nurses or by patients themselves. Supportive, therapeutic and implications counselling are offered appropriately to individuals and/or couples. The referral of donors and recipients of donor gametes for implications counselling is mandatory as stated in the HFEA Code of Practice.

There are approximately 220 new referrals for counselling per annum.

The post holder has a dedicated session with new staff within the induction programme.

Informal teaching sessions for medical and nursing staff are provided when appropriate. These sessions are academically based and deal with theoretical models protecting patient confidentiality.

4. ORGANISATIONAL POSITION



5. ROLE OF DEPARTMENT

To provide a high quality, safe and supportive environment in order to care for patients within the speciality of fertility and reproductive problems/conditions meeting the identified physical and psychosocial needs. Ensuring the highest standard of patient care and management.

To offer fertility investigations and treatment as a tertiary referral service.

Provide fertility service, which is agreed by the management and is delivered within the agreed resource management.

NHS Lothian University Hospital Division offers diversity of first class patient services.

NHS Lothian University Hospital Division promotes the highest standards of patient care and management.

6. KEY RESULT AREAS

Professional:

- Undertake to work within the BACP and/or COSCA Code of Ethics and to follow the professional guidelines within the HFEA Code of Practice.
- Undertake membership of professional body (BACP, COSCA) and relevant educational and networking bodies (BICA, SIGC).
- Undertake the mandatory requirement of Counselling Supervision in accordance with the BACP, COSCA Code of Ethics.
- Undertake internal consultative case discussions with lead clinicians while adhering to BACP, COSCA requirements of confidentiality
- Undertake continued personal and professional development in accordance with BACP, COSCA requirements.

Counselling Practice:

- To provide supportive, therapeutic and implications counselling to patients referred by relevant health professionals or who are self referred.
- To be accountable for the assessing, planning, implementation and evaluation of care within the BACP, COSCA, HFEA framework.
- To promote a patient-focussed approach to care in collaboration with all relevant health professionals.
- To provide information which enables patients to make changes towards more robust emotional psychological health and to respond to their emotional and spiritual needs, assisting them in their understanding of their condition and choice of treatment.
- To ensure patient confidentiality and to practice a professional approach to the passing on of information which may cause harm to patient and/or others in line with BACP, COSCA, HFEA guidelines.
- To have a disciplined approach toward note keeping and record keeping.
- To participate in the promotion and maintenance of effective and appropriate communication attending multidisciplinary team meetings when required.
- To be available for consultation by other staff in the delivery of care.
- To refer patients on to other specialist services where appropriate.

Managerial:

- To continually monitor the needs of the service.
- To be accountable for the quality of the counselling provided.
- To be aware of national and professional quality issues relevant to counselling e.g. BACP, COSCA Code of Ethics, HFEA Code of Practice.
- To uphold quality initiatives to improve patient care and enhance the interface between staff, patients and visitors.
- Assist in the assessment and monitoring of staffing requirements and discuss problems areas

with management team.

- Participate in maintenance of standards in line with ISO requirements by ensuring regular review of policies and protocols. The post holder is responsible for review of national guidance and review and development of counselling protocols within the department.

- Ensure accuracy and quality of printed non-clinical information available for patients.
- Undertake the provision of regular counselling service audits and patient satisfaction surveys to ensure the quality of the care provided.
- Participate in induction of new members of EFREC staff.
- Assist in ensuring employment of additional counsellors on an ad hoc basis when increased referral numbers would result in a patient waiting list.
- Provide supervision for any additional counsellors employed on an ad hoc basis to assist with workload.

Educational:

- To promote counselling practice in line with relevant research.
- To maintain and promote an awareness of evidence-based practice.
- To promote and contribute to research and development programmes within the department and the counselling network.

7a. EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY

Equipment and Machinery commonly used:

Telephone system and photocopier.

Equipment and Machinery occasionally used:

Mobile phone and computer

7b. SYSTEMS

- The postholder has the responsibility to ensure the safekeeping of all counselling records and to understand the implications of data collection in relation to local and national service planning.
- To be aware of, keep up to date with, and adhere to the following at all times:
- LUHT Policies and Procedures
- Sections 7 and 8 of the Health and Safety at Work Act
- Data Protection Act 1984
- The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990
- The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority Code of Conduct
- The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and COSCA (Counselling in Scotland) Code of Ethics
- ISO protocols
- Other relevant legislation and agreed practice/policy

8. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW OF WORK

Sole provider of the counselling service provision working independently within agreed managerial and counselling supervision guidelines.

Internally

- Work is generated internally from patients preparing for, undergoing, or who have received fertility investigations and/or treatment.
- Patients are referred by clinicians, nursing staff or by patients themselves.
- Service provision is reviewed informally at multidisciplinary team meetings and in discussion with lead clinician in line with agreed protocols and written counselling reports.
- Annual review of performance against agreed objectives and establishment of agreed objectives for the following year with Lead Nurse along with annual appraisal.

Externally

- Work is generated externally from GPs and other NHS Lothian University Hospital Trust services in referring patients who are experiencing the psychological impact of their fertility status following fertility investigations and/or treatment within EFREC.
- Participation in monthly supervision by external counselling supervisor in line with BACP, COSCA Code of Ethics and Practice.
- Maintenance of professional standards and accountability of counselling practice within BACP and COSCA Code of Ethics and Practice and disciplinary procedures.

9. DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS

- Maintain provision of counselling practice as an autonomous registered specialist counsellor aware of professional boundaries of competence to ensure beneficence and non-maleficence.
- Recipient of complex psychological facts/situations requiring initial assessment/action or assessment of suitability for counselling or referral to alternative treatment/support.
- Co-ordinate referrals for counselling to ensure requests are within agreed client inclusion criteria.
- Responsible for initial psychological assessment of clients' multiple and complex issues and situations requiring a range of decisions and options. Selection of appropriate therapeutic treatment decisions regarding referral to alternative counselling agencies/long term psychological management, to ensure specialist counselling meets the client's therapeutic needs.
- Responsible for ongoing assessment throughout the counselling process.
- Responsible for assessing and prioritising client need when referral for counselling appointments exceeds availability of service provision. Maintain and prioritise referrals to eliminate need for waiting list wherever possible.
- Maintain client confidentiality except in cases where the client is at risk of causing harm to either themselves or to others and refer on to specialist service where appropriate.
- Liaise with healthcare professionals to enable them to understand the emotional impact of their patients' fertility status.
- Share experience and knowledge with healthcare professionals to enhance their skilled insight and understand of their own needs in relation to caring for/supporting patients with fertility problems.

10. MOST CHALLENGING/DIFFICULT PARTS OF THE JOB

- Receive complex, sensitive and contentious information in a highly emotive atmosphere.
- Sole provider of the counselling service with no internal peer support. Experience of long periods of time between debriefing. Only in exceptional circumstances would contact be made with counselling supervisor outwith agreed monthly sessions.
- Raising awareness of the nature of professional counselling and its role in supporting patients with challenged fertility.
- Nature of referrals reflects patient need which cannot be planned and can result in periods of increased demand requiring flexibility, time management and liaison with additional counsellor to ensure avoidance of long waiting list.
- Only available to counsellor within specified periods of each day resulting in time management issues for patients and counsellor.
- Emotional and psychological both conscious and unconscious for patients who have experienced trauma and loss within a clinical setting.

11. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Show evidence of excellent communication and networking skills to develop and continue constructive relationships with:

Internally:

- Co-ordinate referrals for counselling from clinicians, nurses and patients prior to, during or following fertility investigations and/or treatment.
- Produce written information that guides patients and healthcare professionals to use and understand the benefit of the counselling service.
- Source and understand current literature that will help educate and support patients with fertility problems and make this available to patients.
- Liaise informally and develop good working relationships with all members of the multidisciplinary team in the interests of their own emotional and psychological needs and as an adjunct to their support of patients.
- Attend weekly multidisciplinary team meetings.
- Foster relationships within the hospital staff to enhance delivery and quality of patient support e.g. psychosexual service, bereavement counsellor.

Externally:

- Liaise with external generic and specialist counselling agencies.
- Liaise with GPs, Health Visitors, Social Workers etc. where appropriate regarding specific patient needs.
- Liaise with voluntary sector in exploration and formation of patient support group.
- Liaise with specialist fertility counsellors through education workshops, networking meetings, fact finding hospital visits and email.

Audit:

- Produce annual and half-yearly statistics and counselling service report for use by clinicians, nursing staff and for submission to HFEA.
- Provide data on non-identifiable information and statistics for specialist counselling organisations e.g. BICA, SICG

12. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS OF THE JOB

Physical

- Long periods of sitting with every session lasting 60 minutes and 5 sessions per day.
- There is a high level of “stillness” within the counselling session requiring a minimum of physical movement on the part of the counsellor.

Mental

- Concentration required for long periods of time is vital to the role and involves active listening.
- Need to retain complex information throughout the session to recall for record keeping after the session.
- There is often a need to negotiate with patients.

Emotional

- Receive highly complex and sensitive information in a highly emotive atmosphere.
- Detailed, deep, proactive mental attention on initial patient assessment and ongoing counselling sessions.
- Unpredictability and complexity of workload.
- Patients display challenging behaviour in terms of anger/hostility
- Patients present with extreme distress in terms of increased sense of sadness, frustration, hopelessness etc. etc.
- Patients who feel inability to re-engage with life and are personally, socially and occupationally challenged by the impact of their fertility status may become highly dependent on the counsellor
- Patients present with suicidal ideation or intent
- Emotional intensity of counselling sessions can result in a personal reduction in weekly working hours

Environmental

- Constraints within the clinical environment in scheduling of appointments

13. KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB

- Post-graduate Diploma in Counselling or MSc or equivalent
- Counsellor accreditation with recognised UK Bodies either BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) or COSCA (Counselling in Scotland *previously Confederation of Scottish Counselling Agencies*)
- Further specialist knowledge/training across a range of procedures underpinned by psychological theory
- Membership with BICA (British Infertility Counselling Association)
- Currently in supervision
- Experience of counselling in organisations, counselling at work or in a GP surgery
- Experience of a brief or solution focused short-term therapy model
- Good oral and written communication
- Ability to maintain composure and objectivity in stressful situations.
- An understanding of the importance of managing own stress and demonstration of well developed personal support systems.
- Good time management skills.
- Experience of working independently within the team

14. JOB DESCRIPTION AGREEMENT

A separate job description will need to be signed off by each jobholder to whom the job description applies.

Job Holder's Signature:

Head of Department Signature:

Date:

Date: