



Children's Hospices Across Scotland

JOB DESCRIPTION – PLAY ASSISTANT

Job Details

Job Title – **Play Assistant**

Location – **Robin House/ Rachel House**

Responsible to – **Activities Co-ordinator**

Salary – **Clinical Band 4**

Job Family – **Family Support Team**

Job Purpose

Working within the culture, ethos and philosophy of CHAS the Play assistant will assist the activities facilitators in implementing programmes of play and activity experiences for children or young people with life-limiting conditions and their siblings, giving due consideration to their individual needs, abilities and preferences and the wishes of their families.

From the earliest age, playing helps children to learn, to relate to other people and to have fun. Play is vital to healthy growth and development and is a natural part of normal childhood which enables children to explore and make sense of the world they live in. This role will use play as a therapeutic tool for children and young people who come into the hospices or on occasion in their own home.

This can;

- Create an environment where stress and anxiety are reduced
- Aids the child in regaining confidence and self-esteem.
- Provides an outlet for feelings of anger and frustration.
- Helps the child understand their illness and their treatment.
- Aids in the assessment and diagnosis of conditions

Organisational Position

- This role reports directly to Activities Coordinator
- The post-holder will work as part of the activities team

Main Tasks

- Developmental play and play experiences
- Actively promote the emotional needs of children and young people
- Engage with Volunteer Services

Job Activities

Developmental Play and Play Experiences

- Provide developmental and engaging play for children using CHAS services
- Prepare age/ development-appropriate activities and offer experiences and opportunities in a variety of play to meet individual needs.
- Ensure that the play areas are well stocked and visibly attractive for children and invites attendance.
- Deliver a programme of age/ development-appropriate activities/play opportunities to both mobile and non-mobile children on a daily basis, ensuring that each child within the hospice is aware and has the opportunity to access play at a time that suits them. This should include play programmes and Multi-Disciplinary timetables.
- Establish an out-of-hours level of stock that can be safely utilised by children.
- Work alongside the Multi-Disciplinary Team in implementing the care plans for all children
- Provide a safe and welcoming child focussed environment for children engaged in play activities.
- Provide a sustainable level of safe and age/ development appropriate play materials / equipment for all children giving consideration to individual abilities.
- Participate (and on occasion, lead) in play events arranged for the enjoyment of the children (some of which may not be delivered within routine working hours).
- Participate in the on-going development of play services within CHAS and act as an ambassador for the service at all times.
- Ensure that the delivery of play conforms to Health and Safety and Infection Control requirements.
- Act as the lead within designated areas for ensuring any local, national or international festivities are recognised in conjunction with volunteer and events services.

Actively promote the emotional needs of a children and young people

- On a daily basis liaise with the Clinical Team.
- Participate in morning huddle that identifies those children who may require additional support in play during the day.
- Regularly engage with children and young people with regards to the planning and preparation of activities.
- Be alert to complex needs of some children and refer onwards as necessary.
- Participate in memory making which can include end of life hand and footprint activities.

- Undertake continuous professional development in the care of children with palliative care needs.
- Provide a support service to siblings / visiting children.
- Highlight and refer children to other members of the Family Support Team when required.

Learning and Development

- Support the activities facilitators in the induction, and orientation, on some aspects of play, for any new support staff, volunteers and students, ensuring that they are aware of the developmental, social and emotional needs of the children or young people, enabling them to maintain the required level of care, as set by the organisation
- As required, participates in research and audit projects at a local level in support of best practice
- Maintains Personal Development Plan (PDP), in accordance with the organisation's recommendations, identifying own training and development needs and ensuring the maximum contribution to the organisational goals
- Supports the multi-disciplinary nursing team, enabling them to develop their skills in relation to play activities, experiences and outings, ensuring that high levels of professional practice and care standards are maintained

Engagement with Voluntary Services

- Be responsible for and engage regularly with a local team of volunteers, being cognisant of their valuable contributions towards the full delivery of the service.
- Ensure volunteers receive appropriate guidance and support in the delivery of their role and are recognised as a full team-member within the activities team.
- Work alongside volunteers and actively support their work by providing advice and information to help them in their roles

Health and Safety

- Responsible for complying with the CHAS Health and Safety Management Policy and associated procedures and co-operate with CHAS in complying with its legal duties

Information Governance

- Responsible for complying with the CHAS Information Governance Framework and associated policies and co-operate with CHAS in complying with its legal duties

Dimensions

Line Management

- The post is line managed by the activities co-ordinator

Financial

- Frequently responsible for handling petty cash and collecting monetary donations
- In performing this role, frequently has contact with children or young people with life-limiting conditions, their families, the multidisciplinary nursing team, the wider CHAS team, volunteers, students, other healthcare professionals and external contacts

Knowledge, Skills, Experience

- Higher National Certificate in Child Care or Nursery Nurse Qualification or equivalent
- Experience of working with children
- Evidence of the ability to deliver various types of play and activities (including sensory play)
- Ability to work as a co-operative team member
- Exceptional communication skills
- Ability to follow policy instruction
- Ability to work within challenging environments and to handle stressful situations well.
- Microsoft Word – foundation level
- Internet Access – intermediate level

Decisions and Communications

Decisions

- Within the agreed management structure of CHAS, work is allocated by senior staff but generally works with a degree of autonomy within the clearly defined policies, protocols, procedures and codes of conduct.
- In consultation with children and their families, assesses, monitors and changes programmes of play plans.
- The post-holder will work as part of a multi-disciplinary team with the continual support of the activities team as required.
- The post-holder may be the sole Play Assistant within CHAS, and be responsible for the delivery of play within that area. As such the post-holder must:
 - Comply with CHAS policies and guidelines
 - Prioritise work-load
 - Be the nominated lead for naturalising play within that area.

Communications

- On a daily basis, communicates complex and sensitive information to children, their families, the multi-disciplinary nursing team and other healthcare professionals

- The post-holder will have daily interactions with the following:
 - Children and their families
 - Clinical staff caring for children
 - Other members of the Family Support Team
 - Volunteers delivering play

- On a less frequent basis, the post-holder will be expected to interact as follows:
 - Provide educational presentations relating to play services
 - Engage with external play / event organisers in the delivery of activities
 - Engage with senior managers relating to the delivery of play
 - Members of the media (under the direction of the Press Office)

Special Conditions

Equipment

- The post-holder will be required to operate the following systems:
 - CHAS Patient database system
 - Microsoft Office Word and Simple Spreadsheets
 - Internet and Child-Friendly web-sites
 - Internet ordering systems
 - Answer telephones
 - Toys and play equipment, following manufacturer's instructions
 - Email system
 - Observes a duty of care to all equipment used in the course of CHAS business.

Working Conditions

- Work in a variety of areas.
- Ability to work in variable temperatures
- May be required to drive/travel to different CHAS sites.

Physical Effort

- Move and handle patients for play purposes on a daily basis.
- Move and handle large and small pieces of equipment
- Clean and maintain large and small items of stock
- Set up play areas on a daily basis and clear away.

Mental Effort

- Ability to react to physical demands relating to the play needs of an ever changing clientele
- Frequent requirement for concentration where the work pattern maybe unpredictable with some competing demands for attention

Emotional Effort

- Need to act with diplomacy empathy and sensitivity at all times.
- Frequent exposure to distressing circumstances.
- May be exposed to potentially distressed/ aggressive families.
- Ability to work in distressing and emotional circumstances

- Work with patients and their families who have a wide range of illnesses and conditions, some of whom may be terminally ill or have severe disabilities.
- Provide support to families under stress
- Maybe exposed to traumatic circumstances, such as the death of a child, or children displaying emotional/ distressed behaviour as a result of the trauma they have experienced



Children's Hospices Across Scotland

PERSON SPECIFICATION – TBC – PLAY ASSISTANT

Education, Qualifications, and Training

Essential

- Higher National Certificate in Child Care or Nursery Nurse Qualification or equivalent
- Previous experience of working with children

Desirable

- Training in Makaton
- Training in the use of communication aids

Method of Assessment – Application Form

Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge

Essential

- Evidence of the ability to deliver play and activities
- Ability to follow toy manufacturers operating instructions
- Ability to work as a co-operative team member
- Exceptional communication skills
- Ability to follow policy instruction
- Ability to work within challenging environments and to handle stressful situations well.
- Microsoft Word – foundation level
- Internet Access – intermediate level

Desirable

- Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint – foundation level

Method of Assessment – Application Form and Interview

Experience

Essential

- An understanding of the provision of palliative care to children with life limiting conditions
- Experience of using therapeutic play with children and young people
- Relevant experience of working autonomously and as part of a multi-disciplinary team

Desirable

- Experience of working for a charity
- Experience of working with unwell children and young people or who have additional support needs
- Experience of working with bereaved children

Method of Assessment – Application Form and Interview

Personal Qualities

Essential

- Friendly, outgoing manner
- Positive and confident
- Personal drive, initiative and effectiveness
- Accountable for self, actions and decisions
- Commitment to ongoing learning and development
- A commitment to CHAS core value vision and purpose
- A commitment to working with/supporting volunteers

Desirable

- Child and family focused

Method of Assessment – Interview

Other Requirements

Essential

- Willingness to travel between CHAS sites

Desirable

- Access to a car and full driving licence

Method of Assessment – Application Form and Interview