

Job Description

Job Details:	
Job Title:	Family Support Assistant Practitioner
Grade:	Band 4
Department:	Family Support Team (FST)
Directorate:	Care Services
Reporting to:	Therapeutic Practitioner

Job Summary / Main Purpose:

To provide compassionate, person-centred emotional and psychosocial support to patients, relatives, carers and bereaved individuals accessing hospice services.

The post holder will act as the first point of contact for referrals coming into the Family Support Team, undertaking triage and information-gathering conversations to identify emotional, practical and psychosocial needs, supporting the prioritisation and allocation of referrals under the guidance and supervision of qualified professionals, and ensuring timely access to appropriate support pathways.

The role will hold a small caseload of individuals requiring low-level, time-limited pre-bereavement and post-bereavement support, delivering structured emotional, practical and psychoeducational interventions, and signposting to other services where appropriate, under supervision.

The post holder will facilitate and support bereavement groups, wellbeing activities and family support initiatives, work alongside Family Support Team volunteers, undertake community and hospice visits as required, and contribute to the delivery of high-quality family support services.

Scope of Practice

The post holder is not responsible for undertaking specialist therapeutic assessments or delivering specialist counselling or psychotherapy interventions.

Working under the supervision of qualified professionals, the post holder will recognise when presenting needs exceed the scope of the role and seek guidance, escalating cases where complexity, risk or therapeutic need requires specialist assessment or intervention. The post holder will ensure timely referral to the appropriate practitioner or service.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities

Referral Management, Assessment and Triage

- Act as the first point of contact for referrals into the Family Support Team, responding to enquiries from patients, relatives, carers, professionals and external agencies in a timely and professional manner.
- Undertake telephone, virtual and face-to-face triage conversations to identify emotional, practical, psychosocial and support needs.
- Gather and record information to inform and support holistic needs assessments, prioritisation and allocation decisions.
- Assess presenting needs and identify individuals requiring immediate support, escalation or referral to specialist services, seeking guidance from qualified professionals where required.
- Support the prioritisation and allocation of referrals according to identified need, risk and service criteria under the guidance of qualified professionals, ensuring equitable and timely access to support.
- Signpost and refer individuals to appropriate internal and external services where their needs can be better met by an alternative provider.
- Maintain accurate and contemporaneous records of assessments, referrals, interventions and outcomes using hospice systems.
- Escalate complex presentations, higher-risk cases and situations requiring specialist therapeutic intervention to the Therapeutic Practitioner or Psychosocial Lead in accordance with service procedures.

Emotional and Psychosocial Support

- Provide person-centred emotional support to patients, carers, family members and bereaved individuals experiencing distress associated with life-limiting illness, caregiving responsibilities, grief, loss and bereavement.
- Use supportive listening, encouragement and practical interventions to help individuals understand and cope with the challenges they are experiencing.
- Support individuals to identify strengths, coping strategies, support networks and resources that promote wellbeing and resilience.
- Assist individuals in accessing information, advice and services that may improve their emotional, social and practical wellbeing.
- Recognise when a person's needs exceed the scope of the role and seek advice, supervision or onward referral as appropriate.
- Work within agreed professional boundaries, recognising personal limitations and responsibilities.
- Hold a defined caseload of individuals requiring lower-level emotional and bereavement support interventions, managing ongoing contact and support plans under the supervision of the line manager.
- Participate in regular caseload reviews and clinical supervision to ensure interventions remain appropriate, effective and within the scope of the role.

Family Support and Care Coordination

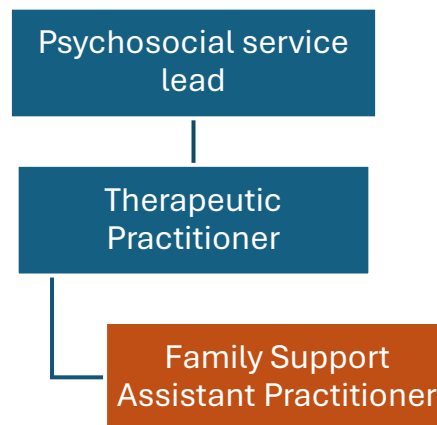
- Undertake visits within hospice, community and home settings as required to identify needs and provide support.
- Develop supportive relationships with patients, families and carers that promote trust, dignity and person-centred care.
- Support individuals and families to navigate hospice services and access appropriate resources throughout their care journey.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues across the multidisciplinary team to contribute to coordinated and holistic support plans.
- Participate in multidisciplinary discussions and contribute information relevant to patient and family wellbeing.
- Liaise with statutory, voluntary and community organisations to facilitate access to additional support where appropriate.
- Work alongside Family Support Team volunteers, providing support, information and guidance relating to activities within the service, escalating any concerns to the appropriate supervisor.

Safeguarding, Risk Management and Professional Practice

- Recognise safeguarding concerns involving adults and children and escalate appropriately in line with hospice procedures.
- Identify indicators of emotional distress, vulnerability or risk and seek advice or support where required.
- Recognise when an individual's needs fall outside the scope of the role and refer or escalate to appropriate professionals.
- Participate in regular supervision, reflective practice and continuing professional development activities to support safe and effective practice.

Service Development, Education and Team Contribution

- Facilitate and support bereavement groups, wellbeing activities, psychoeducational sessions and other family support initiatives, working within agreed programmes and plans developed by senior team members.
- Contribute to the development and ongoing improvement of Family Support Team services through feedback, reflection and participation in service evaluation activities.
- Assist with awareness raising activities relating to emotional wellbeing, loss, grief, bereavement and family support.
- Support the induction, ongoing involvement and development of volunteers, students and new team members, acting as a positive role model and point of contact where appropriate.
- Maintain positive and collaborative working relationships across the organisation and act as an ambassador for Dorothy House values.

Structure Chart**Contacts**

- *External and internal staff*
- *Patients*
- *Clients*
- *Organisations*

Special Note

This job description does not form a part of the contract of employment but indicates how that contract should be performed. The job description will be subject to amendment in the light of experience and in consultation with the post holder.

No Smoking Policy

Dorothy House operates a No Smoking Policy for all staff, volunteers and visitors in relation to promoting health. It applies to the Hospice premises and grounds at Winsley, all Dorothy House shops and when staff are on duty in patients homes.

Confidentiality

All of the work relating to patients, carers, donors, staff and volunteers and any other information gained are of a confidential nature and must not be communicated to other persons except in the course of duty.

Health and Safety at Work Act

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act are complied with safe working practices are adhered to and that hazards are observed and reported to the appropriate office.

Safeguarding

Dorothy House is committed to promoting the wellbeing of all adults and children who use our services, ensuring that they live a life that is free from harm, abuse and neglect. We work in an open and transparent way and encourage staff, volunteers, patients and families to raise any safeguarding concerns. All staff should ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities and attend the mandatory training as

required.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Relevant qualification or equivalent experience in health, social care, counselling, mental health or a related field.	X	
Experience providing person-centred support to patients, families, carers or vulnerable individuals.	X	
Experience undertaking assessments, triage, referrals or identifying support needs.	X	
Ability to identify, manage and escalate safeguarding, wellbeing or risk concerns appropriately.	X	
Ability to work independently, maintain accurate records and collaborate effectively with multidisciplinary teams.	X	
Experience within hospice, palliative care, bereavement, family support or mental health services.		X
Training or experience in counselling skills, bereavement support, group facilitation or trauma-informed practice.		X