

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB DETAILS	
Job Title	Genetic Counsellor
Reports to	Principal / Lead Genetic Counsellor
Band	Band 7
Department/Directorate	South West Clinical Genetics, Clinical Specialist Services

JOB PURPOSE
To provide a high-quality genetic counselling service at specialist level within the South West Clinical Genetics (PCG) team. To act as a significant educational resource to trainees in genetics and genetic counselling, medical students, and to the wider health care system. To develop innovative ways of improving patient pathways. To actively participate in audit and service improvement to benefit patient care and improve outcomes.

KEY RESULT AREAS/PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
To help individuals and families to manage a genetic disorder. This is to be achieved by helping the patient and their families to: • Comprehend the medical facts, including the diagnosis, probable course of the disorder, and the available management. • Appreciate the way in which heredity contributes to the disorder, and the risk of recurrence in specified relatives • Understand the options for dealing with the risk of recurrence • Help patients choose the course of action which seems to them most appropriate • Make the best possible adjustment to the disorder in an affected family member and/or the risk of recurrence of that disorder.

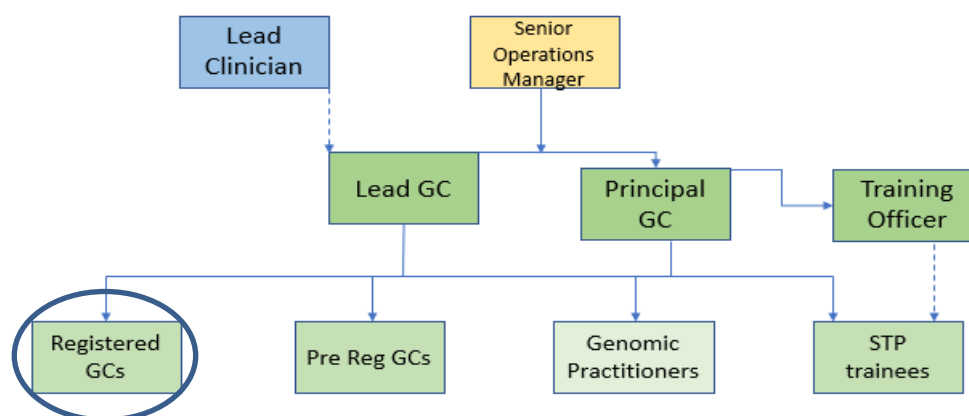
KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS
The post holder is required to deal effectively with staff of all levels throughout the Trust as and when they encounter on a day-to-day basis. In addition, the post holder will deal with the wider healthcare community, external organisations and the public. This will include verbal, written and electronic media. No. of Staff reporting to this role: 0 – no formal line management reports but will contribute to supervision of junior colleagues. Of particular importance are working relationships with:

Internal to the Trust	External to the Trust
• Lead and Principal Genetic Counsellors • Genetic Counsellor/Genetic Nurse Counsellor team • Genomic Practitioners • Senior Operations and Operations Manager • Lead Clinician • Admin Service/Line Manager • Consultant Clinical Geneticists • Specialist Registrars in Clinical Genetics	• Patients and their families/Public • Consultants, Clinical Nurse Specialists & Allied Health Professionals across other specialities and Trusts • GPs and GP surgery staff • Genomic Medicine Service Alliance colleagues • Genomic laboratory colleagues

- Admin/Clerical/Secretarial team
- Family History team
- Clinical Scientists and Laboratory team
- Clinical Nurse Specialists & Allied health Professionals
- Research Teams

- Patient support organisations and charities for rare disease patients.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



FREEDOM TO ACT

- Take responsibility for their own work managing and prioritising an individual caseload autonomously. The post holder will work within standard operating procedures, with support from their line manager as required.
- To be accountable for their own professional practice and work in accordance with the AGNC code of ethics, GCRB code of conduct/HPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics and/or NMCs Code of Professional Conduct (for registered nurses).
- Be an active member of the AHCS (formerly GCRB) register; maintain HCPC registration (if qualified through STP) or be an active member of the NMC's professional register (for registered nurses).

COMMUNICATION/RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

- Communicate genetic information to patients and their relatives.
- Receive and provide highly complex and possibly conflicting information, including review of genetic test reports with consultant and laboratory colleagues, for example in cases of variants of uncertain significance (VUS).
- Identify and respond to emerging issues for the patient or family. This may include managing conflict within families created by sensitive genetic information.
- Expertly communicate highly sensitive and potentially psychologically damaging information, which may cause high levels of distress e.g.
 - telling a patient a test has revealed unexpected non-paternity
 - giving a patient or couple an abnormal prenatal result
 - telling a patient they have inherited an untreatable condition such as Huntington's disease, or a condition that causes a high risk of developing various cancers.
- Communicate with patients who are bereaved and provide support e.g. around termination of pregnancy or loss of a family member to a genetic condition. Refer to primary care services or psychiatry to facilitate coping and grief resolution

- Take responsibility for communicating and applying new scientific information for the benefit of the family over an open-ended time frame.
- Present findings of research, audit and clinical practice to large groups of staff or members of the public, within the trust, regionally, nationally or internationally.
- Use advanced counselling skills to communicate sensitively in the presence of language, cultural and/or medical issues, or when dealing with cases where there is antagonism and/or a highly sensitive atmosphere, e.g.
 - in the presence of a complex ethical, cultural or psychiatric issue,
 - when there is need for an interpreter, or when patients have learning difficulties or psychiatric illness.
- Deal with patients who have difficulty accepting a clinical diagnosis or a genetic test result.

ANALYTICAL/JUDGEMENTAL SKILLS

- Elicit patient's concerns and expectations.
- Elicit and accurately document patient's detailed family history.
- Interpret medical, family and psychological history.
- Confirm diagnostic information.
- Identify changes of risk within the family.
- Calculate risks of patients and families being affected by various genetic disorders, the risks of recurrence and the carrier risks. This can involve making decisions where expert opinion differs or some information is unavailable. In order to do this, source and interpret complex scientific papers and genetic test results.
- Advise on factors that reduce risk (e.g. risk-reducing surgery, high dose folic acid) and on factors that influence risk (e.g. contraceptive pill, HRT) as per national best practice guidelines.
- Interpret and communicate normal and abnormal genetic test results to patients and health care professionals, including variants of uncertain significance.
- Assess patients to determine where there is need for referral to specialist therapeutic counselling, psychiatric assessment or screening, and make appropriate referrals.
- Make onward referrals to specialist services (e.g. for very high-risk breast cancer surveillance) as appropriate following a positive genetic test result.

PLANNING/ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

- Providing an efficient and supportive genetic counselling service by managing an individual caseload autonomously.
- See patients and their families in person in clinics, or through virtual (video) consultation as appropriate.
- Organise and participate in co-counselling with GC, SpR and consultant colleagues (e.g. as part of predictive testing).
- Discuss cases with ethical complexity with colleagues where appropriate.
- Liaise with medical colleagues about issues that have diagnostic or clinical complexity.
- Liaise regionally and nationally with laboratory scientists and other staff to order and communicate about genetic tests and to discuss complex test results that are difficult to interpret.
- Liaise regionally and nationally with other health care professionals including departments of histology, surgery, screening, midwifery, psychiatry, cardiology, social work and others as needed to obtain and provide information.
- Liaise with colleagues in other genetic centres to obtain and provide information and to establish understanding and cooperation.
- Maintain patient registers and ensure patients are added to appropriate national portals (e.g. Lynch Syndrome NDRS system).
- Arrange for blood/other samples taken outside the Trust to be transported to South West Genomic Laboratory (or elsewhere) as appropriate.
- Attend and contribute to departmental seminars/teaching sessions, and national meetings equitably within the team after discussion with supervisor and Lead Genetic Counsellor.
- Prepare and present scientific articles in clinical and departmental journal clubs.

PATIENT/CLIENT CARE

- The post holder will deliver clinical genetics care to adult and paediatric patients across the South West region, providing genetic counselling in person or through virtual/remote consultation. They will support development of patient pathways.
- Take a role in the provision of predictive genetic counselling.
- Act as patient advocate in appropriate situations.
- Use non-directive and other counselling skills to counsel patients about available options and facilitate decision making.
- Help to arrange relevant prenatal diagnostic tests for genetic patients who inform the department of a pregnancy, ensuring continuity of care through to outcome in conjunction with the named consultant.
- Prepare letters to patients summarising clinic discussion and giving test results in a timely manner.
- Based upon each family member's specific risk of developing/carrying a condition, develop a programme of care for the patient. This may involve referring to multiple specialities. Provide information on the care of other family members, to identify at-risk relatives and advise on how they could obtain genetic counselling or screening.
- Employ the methods, procedures and approach established within the department.
- Undertake an equitable and appropriate proportion of the total genetic counsellors' workload whilst maintaining the necessary quality of work.
- Maintain a full and accurate record of work undertaken (including pedigrees, clinic, telephone and (very rarely) home visit reports, correspondence and other notes) in both manual and computerised records and preserve their confidentiality.
- Ensure that best possible standards of work are maintained and that effective procedures exist to assess and review the quality of services offered regularly.
- Facilitate communication between medical, clerical and laboratory staff within the department to ensure the best possible service to families.
- Maintain effective communication with professionals (e.g. medical, nursing, social work) outside the department, both for the benefit of individual families as well as to promote general awareness of the genetic counselling service.
- Ensure that the views of patients, or those speaking on their behalf, are well received; and that complaints, both formal and informal, are received courteously and responded to promptly according to Trust guidelines.
- Undertake any other duties, within the context of this job description and appropriate to the grade of the post, necessary for the changing needs of an effective and efficient patient service.

POLICY/SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

- Follow departmental and trust policies in own role, but may be required to comment on policies, procedures or possible developments to working practices within Genetics Service in collaboration with colleagues.

FINANCIAL/PHYSICAL RESOURCES

- Observe personal duty of care in relation to equipment and resources used in course of work.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Support shadowing, training and assessment for mainstream nurse colleagues, medical students, MSc Genomic Counselling placement students and trainee colleagues. However, the postholder will not be the named mentor/supervisor of junior colleagues.
- Participate in the teaching of genetics to medical personnel, including students, other health care professionals and members of the public.
- Support education of colleagues as part of mainstream initiatives, including consent, communication and genetics training.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

- Accurately record data on patient information systems including trust electronic patient record, in-house databases and national patient registers.

- Ensure all clinical documents and resources are up to date and accurate.
- Use voice recognition software and word processing to send standard and non-standard (individualised) letters and other communications as appropriate.
- Use video conferencing software (such as Microsoft Teams) as directed by the Trust, to contribute to the management of patient care.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Participate in reflective practice in all areas of patient care and have an understanding of current research with the speciality.
- Attend and actively participate in regular clinical supervision sessions to discuss difficult cases with group and facilitator.
- Recruit to approved research studies; keep GCP training up-to-date.
- Collate clinical and educational development opportunities towards the portfolio of evidence required for Genetic Counsellor registration.
- Develop and utilise patient information resources.
- Design and implement audit of clinical genetics to maintain clinical governance and audit profile of department.

PHYSICAL SKILLS

- Word processing via desk top computer and laptop.
- Current driving licence or ability to travel independently to peripheral clinics.
- If phlebotomy trained, undertake venepuncture in clinical settings to obtain suitable blood samples for genetic testing.

PHYSICAL EFFORT

- Combination of sitting (with extensive VDU use), standing and walking between office and clinic.
- Limited manual handling (transport and review of hospital notes from other trusts when undertaking a clinic at a peripheral site).

MENTAL EFFORT

- Frequent (daily) periods of intense concentration, in clinic with patients. This applies to both virtual (video and telephone) and in-person work.
- Frequent (daily) periods of intense concentration, when assessing reports, risk assessments and interpreting information.
- Frequent (daily) periods of intense concentration when completing and checking letters and other written correspondence.
- Frequent (weekly) periods of intense concentration when contributing to multidisciplinary meetings (MDT).

EMOTIONAL EFFORT

- Frequent exposure to potentially highly distressing and emotional circumstances, including delivering genetic results confirming a terminal prognosis, unexpected or uncertain findings that may affect treatment and management of patients. This may include termination of pregnancy.

WORKING CONDITIONS

- Frequent (daily) VDU use.
- Frequent (weekly) handling of blood or bodily fluids if collecting samples (blood or saliva) from patients in clinic.
- Clinical contact with patients and members of the public may result in exposure to challenging behaviour, including violence or aggression (rare).
- Option to partly work from home as part of flexible working policy may mean working in relative isolation (occasional).
- Transport of laptop and hospital notes when attending peripheral clinics (at most weekly).

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Take part in regular performance appraisal.

Undertake any training required in order to maintain competency including mandatory training, e.g. Manual Handling.

Contribute to and work within a safe working environment.

You are expected to comply with Trust Infection Control Policies and conduct yourself at all times in such a manner as to minimise the risk of healthcare associated infection.

As an employee of the Trust, it is a contractual duty that you abide by any relevant code of professional conduct and/or practice applicable to you. A breach of this requirement may result in action being taken against you (in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary policy) up to and including dismissal.

You must also take responsibility for your workplace health and wellbeing:

- When required, gain support from Occupational Health, Human Resources or other sources.
- Familiarise yourself with the health and wellbeing support available from policies and/or Occupational Health.
- Follow the Trust's health and wellbeing vision of healthy body, healthy mind, healthy you.
- Undertake a Display Screen Equipment assessment (DSE) if appropriate to role.

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CHECKS

This post has been identified as involving access to vulnerable adults and/or children and in line with Trust policy successful applicants will be required to undertake a Disclosure & Barring Service Disclosure Check.

GENERAL

This is a description of the job as it is now. We periodically examine employees' job descriptions and update them to ensure that they reflect the job as it is then being performed, or to incorporate any changes being proposed. This procedure is conducted by the manager in consultation with the jobholder. You will, therefore, be expected to participate fully in such discussions. We aim to reach agreement on reasonable changes, but if agreement is not possible, we reserve the right to insist on changes to your job description after consultation with you.

Everyone within the Trust has a responsibility for, and is committed to, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults, children and young people and for ensuring that they are protected from harm, ensuring that the Trusts Child Protection and Safeguarding Adult policies and procedures are promoted and adhered to by all members of staff.

At the Royal Devon, we are committed to reducing our carbon emissions and minimising the impact of healthcare on the environment, as outlined in our Green Plan available on our website. We actively promote sustainable practices and encourage colleagues to explore and implement greener ways of working within their roles.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title	Genetic Counsellor
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Requirements	Essential	Desirable
QUALIFICATION/ SPECIAL TRAINING		
GCRB** registration as a Genetic Counsellor (must be maintained) OR	✓	
Successful completion of STP Programme in Genomic Counselling OR	✓	
Genetic Counsellor registration with a Board that has reciprocal arrangements with GCRB (see GCRB website for details)	✓	
KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS		
Ability to work within a multidisciplinary environment	✓	
Ability to work as a member of a team	✓	
Ability to manage own workload	✓	
Ability to work within supervision	✓	
Extensive verbal and written communication skills	✓	
Counselling skills	✓	
Good knowledge of genetics	✓	
Good report and writing skills	✓	
EXPERIENCE		
Teaching experience		✓
Knowledge of clinical governance	✓	
Experience of research governance		✓
Experience of literature searching and critical analysis	✓	
Experience of clinical audit	✓	
Experience of working in a Regional Genetics Unit	✓	
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES		
Excellent attention to detail and standards of care and thorough record keeping.	✓	
Highly motivated, flexible and enthusiastic	✓	
Excellent ability to work within and contribute to the development and maintenance of a highly skilled and motivated team	✓	
Ability to self-motivate and work autonomously	✓	
Awareness and respect for the needs and values of patients and professional colleagues	✓	
Commitment to further professional training	✓	
OTHER REQUIREMENTS		
Phlebotomy		✓
Knowledge and previous experience of using PC software, particularly word processing and databases.	✓	
The post holder must demonstrate a positive commitment to uphold diversity and equality policies approved by the Trust.	✓	
Ability to travel to other locations as required.	✓	

WORKING CONDITIONS/HAZARDS		FREQUENCY (Rare/ Occasional/ Moderate/ Frequent)			
		R	O	M	F
Hazards/ Risks requiring Immunisation Screening					
Laboratory specimens	Y		x		
Contact with patients	Y				x
Exposure Prone Procedures	Y		x		
Blood/body fluids	Y		x		
Hazard/Risks requiring Respiratory Health Surveillance					
Solvents (e.g. toluene, xylene, white spirit, acetone, formaldehyde and ethyl acetate)	N				
Respiratory sensitisers (e.g. isocyanates)	N				
Chlorine based cleaning solutions (e.g. Chlorclean, Actichlor, Tristel)	N				
Animals	N				
Cytotoxic drugs	N				
Risks requiring Other Health Surveillance					
Radiation (>6mSv)	N				
Laser (Class 3R, 3B, 4)	N				
Dusty environment (>4mg/m3)	N				
Noise (over 80dBA)	N				
Hand held vibration tools (=>2.5 m/s2)	N				
Other General Hazards/ Risks					
VDU use (> 1 hour daily)	Y				x
Heavy manual handling (>10kg)	Y	x			
Driving	Y			x	
Food handling	N				
Night working	N				
Electrical work	N				
Physical Effort	Y			x	
Mental Effort	Y				x
Emotional Effort	Y				x
Working in isolation	Y		x		
Challenging behaviour	Y	x			