

JOB DESCRIPTION

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| **JOB DETAILS** | |
| **Job Title** | Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Officer |
| **Reports to** | Deputy Complaint and Patient Support Manager |
| **Band** | Band 4 |
| **Department/Directorate** | Experience of Care Team/ Corporate Services |

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| **JOB PURPOSE** |
| As a key member of the Patient Experience Team, PALS support patients, carers and service users with any issues or concerns they may have which are related to the services provided by the Royal Devon. The post holder will be the first point of contact, offering advice, information, sign posting and resolution within 24-48 hours of receiving contact and will be responsible for ensuring that all enquiries are recorded on the DATIX system and dealt with or escalated appropriately. The PALS Officer will provide support to the Deputy Complaints and Patient Support Manager and will work closely with colleagues in the PALS and wider Patient Experience Team, ensuring a joined-up approach in improving the experience of patients and their loved ones at the Trust. |
| **KEY RESULT AREAS/PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| * To receive, investigate and satisfactorily resolve patient and service user enquiries received via PALS with the assistance of the PALS team and the Deputy Complaints and Patient Support Manager. * To provide an empathetic and responsive advice service to patients and service users. * To frequently communicate with patients and service users in person, on the telephone and via written communication. * To record and maintain PALS enquiries on the DATIX database system, escalating issues where necessary. * To work as part of a team, communicating with the Patient Experience team and ensuring a joined-up approach to improve the experience of patients and their families at the Trust. * To escalate enquiries to the Deputy Complaints and Patient Support Manager when appropriate. * To be aware of the difference between PALS and formal complaints and escalate cases to colleagues when appropriate. * To assist with collecting organisation-wide patient feedback. * To manage enquiries related to lost property and work closely with wards to resolve issues. * To log formal complaints on the DATIX system within 5 working days and allocate the appropriate care group/persons to investigate. * To send an introduction email/ letter to the complainant following the logging of a formal complaint and request appropriate consent. * To have oversight of the generic complaint’s inbox ensuring that any urgent queries are flagged to the care group complaints handlers. * On the occasions, when the Trust requires to set up a public helpline, the post holder will be expected to actively engage in this process. |
| **KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS** |
| Areas of Responsibility: Patient Experience  No. of Staff reporting to this role: Nil    The purpose of this post is to support patients, carers and service users with sign posting and advice, with issues and concerns relating to the Royal Devon Trust.  The post holder is required to deal effectively with staff of all levels throughout the Trust 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.  Of particular importance are working relationships with:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Internal to the Trust** | | **External to the Trust** | | * Care Group Triumvirates (Deputy Medical Director, Care Group Director, Director of Patient Care) * Deputy Director of Nursing, Patient Experience * Care Group Quality and Safety Lead * Associate Directors of Patient Care * Care Group Safety and Quality Improvement Manager * Care Group Assistant Safety and Quality Improvement Manager * Other Care Group Complaint Handlers * Matron for Complaints and Patient Support * Deputy Complaints and PALS manager * Patient Advice and Liaison Service team * Central Patient Experience and Patient Safety Teams * All relevant Royal Devon Staff * Trust Legal Department * Trust Safeguarding Team * Information Governance Team | * Devon Advocacy Consortium * Integrated Care Board * Primary Care Services * Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman * Care Quality Commission * Patients, families, carers and/or others affected by patient safety or experience events * Other NHS Trusts * Interpretation Services * Devon Carers | | |
| **ORGANISATIONAL CHART** |
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| **FREEDOM TO ACT** |
| * The post holder will manage the PALS processes autonomously, taking responsibility for planning, co-ordinating and managing PALS cases for the Trust. The post holder will be supported by the Senior PALS officer and Deputy Complaints Manager with decisions and escalations that are complex. |
| **COMMUNICATION/RELATIONSHIP SKILLS** |
| * Provide feedback on service issues to relevant managers. * Undertake patient satisfaction surveys where required. * Act as a facilitator providing advice, information and signposting for patients and relatives. * Provide advice and signposting to patients or relatives who may be distressed, escalating issues through line management where required. * Discuss issues which may be delicate and where there may be communication difficulties. * Have the ability to effectively communicate and empathise with aggressive, upset members of the public or staff members using tact and diplomacy. * Knowledge of the Trust’s Complaints Policy and procedures, Patient Communication Policy and Principles for Communicating with Patients and associated processes to enhance patient care and experience; proposing changes to practice and procedures, where relevant. * To work in accordance with equal opportunity policies and procedures. * Ability to work under pressure and manage sometimes difficult and highly sensitive situations; including very upset, bereaved and sometimes angry members of the public. * They will have the ability to communicate verbally and empathise with upset, distressed or angry staff or members of the public; whilst dealing with complex highly sensitive or contentious complaints which can be vexatious. |
| **ANALYTICAL/JUDGEMENTAL SKILLS** |
| * Identify common PALS themes and assist the Patient Experience Team with creating action plans for improvement. * The post holder will exercise their judgement to determine whether a PALS contact can be resolved informally through PALS or if it necessitates escalation to a formal complaints process. The post holder should exercise their judgement to identify any safeguarding issues, potential incident or issues and escalate to the Senior PALS officer and Deputy Complaints and Patient Support Manager. * The post holder, with the support of a Senior PALS officer, will regularly review incoming PALS contacts (queries, concerns, complaints, etc.). * They will analyse these contacts to determine the nature and complexity of each case. * The post holder will work closely with a Senior PALS officer, who will provide guidance and support in handling complex or ambiguous cases. |
| **PLANNING/ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS** |
| * Ensure that all PALS contacts are dealt with in a timely manner, and that the resolutions provided are appropriate and satisfactory for the individuals involved. * Excellent organisational, administrative skills and letter writing skills; with the ability to achieve objectives within agreed timescales. * Adhere to administrative duties within the process of managing complaints, ensuring that all issues are recorded appropriately and accurately in Datix, within appropriate timescales and managed in a timely manner. * The ability to manage multiple tasks at one time, including frequent interruptions, e.g. enquiries, complaints from patients/members of the public. * Manage own caseload and escalate to the Senior PALS officer when appropriate. |
| **PATIENT/CLIENT CARE** |
| * The post holder will have frequent daily contact with members of the public, inpatients, service users, external organisations and various different staff members across the Trust. |
| **POLICY/SERVICE DEVELOPMENT** |
| * Knowledge of and continuous contribution to the PALS Royal Devon Internal Professional Standards. * Knowledge of the Trust’s Complaints Policy and procedures, Patient Communication Policy and Principles for Communicating with Patients and associated processes to enhance patient care and experience; proposing changes to practice and procedures, where relevant. |
| **FINANCIAL/PHYSICAL RESOURCES** |
| * The post holder will be expected to log and acknowledge loss and compensation claims and allocate to the appropriate care groups. * The postholder will contribute to the efficient use of financial and physical resources within the service, ordering of stationery/supplies/invoicing as required; directed by their line manager and wider Care Group Governance structure. * Maintain stock levels of PALS and patient experience literature. |
| **HUMAN RESOURCES** |
| * The postholder will act responsibly in respect of colleague’s health, safety and welfare following safety at work practices, whilst working in compliance with local health and safety policy and guidance. * Recognises and respects equality and diversity, demonstrating an inclusive approach in all environments. * Understands the importance of role modelling and participates in providing education to Care Group staff in relation to the Trust’s complaints policy and associated procedures * Participate in supervision and annual appraisal of their work with line manager to support professional development. * Identifies opportunities for personal development and participates in the personal performance / development planning processes * Individual responsibility to complete mandatory training in line with electronic staff record. |
| **INFORMATION RESOURCES** |
| It is the responsibility of all staff to respect the confidentiality of patients and staff, as specified in the Caldicott Principles, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act. It is the duty of every employee to:   * Only access person identifiable information as required in the execution of their duties. * Disclose information appropriately, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. * To ensure good quality data by recording, promptly and accurately, clinical and non-clinical information within agreed timescales to the appropriate clinical or non-clinical information system * Maintain the confidentiality of their passwords / usernames and if in possession of a ‘Smartcard’ abiding by the terms and conditions of its use. |
| **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT** |
| * Support in the development of surveys or audits for service user satisfaction of the PALS service. |
| **PHYSICAL SKILLS** |
| * This is an administrative role, with a requirement for excellent keyboard skills and a frequent requirement to use a computer and IT packages; working in office conditions. |
| **PHYSICAL EFFORT** |
| * On occasions this role may require visiting inpatient wards and other service areas if necessary to solve a PALS query, such as to locate possible lost property. * Heavy manual handling (>10kg) on rare occasions when files or other equipment needs to be moved * This is primarily desk based and the role will be a combination of sitting for long periods at a desk, standing and walking |
| **MENTAL EFFORT** |
| * Ability to concentrate for long periods when dealing with complex information, analysing patient/ service user contacts, managing changing patient/client requirements. * Ability to work under pressure and able to multi-task, with frequent interruptions from patients, service users and staff, often requiring immediate attention. |
| **EMOTIONAL EFFORT** |
| * The postholder may be exposed to distressing situations whilst investigating complaints. |
| **WORKING CONDITIONS** |
| * The ability to use a VDU for long periods at a time. * Able to work across all service areas of the Trust. * Able to deal with verbal aggression from distressed or angry individuals. * Able to work in loud and busy environments. |
| **OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Take part in regular performance appraisal.  Undertake any training required in order to maintain competency including mandatory training, e.g. Manual Handling, Safeguarding, Fire Safety  Contribute to and work within a safe working environment.  You are expected to comply with Trust Infection Control Policies and conduct him/herself 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 (DES) if appropriate to role. |
| **DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CHECK** |
| 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

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| **Job Title** | PALS Officer |

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| **Requirements** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| **QUALIFICATION/ SPECIAL TRAINING**  Minimum of 5 GCSEs A\*-C / 9-4 or equivalent including English  Additional relevant administration knowledge acquired through further experience  A Levels / NVQ 3 in Customer Services or Business Administration / Level 3 Diploma or equivalent knowledge and experience  Microsoft Office qualification  Formal course on managing difficult conversations | E  E  E | D  D |
| **KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS**  Knowledge of health and wellbeing issues and services acquired through experience.  Knowledge of PALS  Knowledge of data protection  Knowledge of administrative procedures and bespoke IT systems  Knowledge of NHS complaints process  Knowledge of Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  Ability to deal with distressing or emotional circumstances  Ability to identify and support vulnerable groups.  Ability to cope with occasional unpleasant conditions such as verbal aggression and distress.  Ability to identify situations where a more senior member of the team should be involved.  Excellent IT skills including Microsoft Office  Plan and organise workload.  Good at prioritising  Excellent verbal and written communication skills  Excellent interpersonal skills | E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E | D |
| **EXPERIENCE**  Able to identify themes and trends in issues being highlighted through PALS  Experience of Radar or other risk management systems  Previous experience of PALS or Complaint environment  Previous experience of working with people with a diverse range of needs  Previous experience of training and assisting junior or new staff  Excellent organisational skills  Experience of dealing with patients or customers in a face to face environment  Experience of dealing with highly distressed or emotional patients or customers  Experience of defusing problematic situations  Experience in using databases and reporting systems.  Understanding of simple statistics  Good understanding of current issues facing the NHS | E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E | D |
| **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES**  Compassionate  Calm and diplomatic  Sensitive in emotional situations  Reliable  Conscientious  Effective team worker  Attention to detail  Problem-solver  Confident working with senior staff and clinicians | E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E  E |  |
| **OTHER REQUIREMENTS**  The post holder must demonstrate a positive commitment to uphold diversity and equality policies approved by the Trust.  Ability to travel to other locations on occasions as required. | E  E |  |

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|  | | **FREQUENCY**  **(Rare/ Occasional/ Moderate/ Frequent)** | | | |
| **WORKING CONDITIONS/HAZARDS** | | **R** | **O** | **M** | **F** |
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| **Hazards/ Risks requiring Immunisation Screening** | |  |  |  |  |
| Laboratory specimens | N |  |  |  |  |
| Contact with patients | Y |  |  |  |  |
| Exposure Prone Procedures | N |  |  |  |  |
| Blood/body fluids | N |  |  |  |  |
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| **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 |  |  |  |  |
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| **Risks requiring Other Health Surveillance** | |  |  |  |  |
| Radiation (>6mSv) | N |  |  |  |  |
| Laser (Class 3R, 3B, 4) | N |  |  |  |  |
| Dusty environment (>4mg/m3) | N |  |  |  |  |
| Noise (over 80dBA) | Y | R |  |  |  |
| Hand held vibration tools (=>2.5 m/s2) | N |  |  |  |  |
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| **Other General Hazards/ Risks** | |  |  |  |  |
| VDU use ( > 1 hour daily) | Y |  |  |  | F |
| Heavy manual handling (>10kg) | Y | R |  |  |  |
| Driving | Y |  | O |  |  |
| Food handling | N |  |  |  |  |
| Night working | N |  |  |  |  |
| Electrical work | N |  |  |  |  |
| Physical Effort | N |  |  |  |  |
| Mental Effort | Y |  |  |  | F |
| Emotional Effort | Y |  |  |  | F |
| Working in isolation | N |  |  |  |  |
| Challenging behaviour | Y |  |  | M |  |