

## Cygnet

### JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Job Title:</b>	Assistant Psychologist
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Qualified psychologist and Hospital Manager
<b>Base:</b>	Cygnet
<b>Liaises with: -</b>	Qualified members of the Psychology Team, Hospital Manager, other members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team, Assistant and Trainee psychologists, Head of Care and ward-based staff, members of other disciplines and agencies responsible for a client's care, clients and their families and carers.

### **JOB PURPOSE**

Support and enhance the professional psychological care of clients within this service by assisting with the work of the psychology team and undertaking any tasks as required by the supervisor

### **JOB SUMMARY**

- Under the management, clinical supervision and direction of a qualified and suitably experienced psychologist, work within guidelines and procedures determined and monitored by the qualified psychologist, exercising initiative within agreed parameters and referring to the Qualified psychologist in relation to non-routine matters.
- Support qualified psychologists in the delivery of clinical services, providing psychological assessment and individual and group based psychological interventions under clinical supervision as required.
- Support qualified psychologists in governance, audit, research and clinical administrative activities, collecting, collating and analysing data, writing and presenting reports and assisting in project development under the guidance of the psychologist as required.
- Use IT equipment and software as required, including statistical, database, spreadsheet and presentational.

- Assist qualified psychologists in the planning and organisation of teaching/training programmes and undertake/contribute to teaching and training activities as required.
- Participate in personal appraisal and continuing professional development activities as agreed with Qualified psychologist, including general training required in accordance with the policies and procedures of Cygnet Healthcare.
- In completing duties, draw on a knowledge base commensurate with good honours degree in psychology and eligibility for graduate membership of the BPS

## **WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

This post covers our high dependency men's inpatient service for adults with a variety of presenting problems including psychosis, personality disorders, substance use and behavioural difficulties. The post holder will be working in an inpatient setting with patients detained under the Mental Health Act (1983; 2007) whose presentations may involve risk, overlapping conditions and multiple needs that are sometimes complicated by organic dysfunction. In the course of their work, the post holder will encounter a range of presenting problems, including hallucinatory and delusional experiences, self-harm, aggression, substance misuse, complex emotional difficulties (e.g. depression, anxiety), cognitive deficits (including impairments of intellectual, memory and executive function), severe interpersonal problems and social disabilities, often in association with childhood abuse. The client group with whom the post holder will work may present with high risks of harm to self and others at times. Motivation and engagement is often poor and the client's understanding or acceptance of their condition is often constrained by psychological, cognitive, linguistic or other factors. The post holder will also work with the patient's professional and natural support networks, including care staff, community teams and the client's families or friends

In completing their duties, the post holder is likely to encounter unpleasant working conditions (including verbal abuse) on a frequent basis and may have some exposure to physical aggression. The post holder is also likely to be exposed to highly distressing or highly emotional circumstances in the role (when, for example working with emotionally demanding or challenging clients or difficult family situations, when working with people who have been abused or are at risk of suicide or self-harm). Working across a range of multidisciplinary settings, the post holder may encounter and be required to address challenging team dynamics and conflicting professional perspectives.

## **KEY TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The post holder may be required to undertake any of the duties detailed below. The relative priority and time allocated to each of the duties will be determined by reference to service needs and may vary in the light of prevailing service priorities and requirements.

### **Clinical:**

1. Under the clinical supervision of a qualified psychologist, undertake assessments of neuropsychological status and function, personality, beliefs, attitudes, behaviour, emotional function, other relevant psychological characteristics and dimensions and factors relevant to the development, maintenance and understanding of the client's difficulties, using standardised psychometric instruments, protocol based assessment tools, self-report measures, rating scales, direct and indirect structured observations and structured and semi-structured interviews as required. Utilise assessment techniques directly with clients and collect information from family members and others involved in the client's care as appropriate.
2. Assist qualified psychologists in the scoring, analysis, interpretation and reporting of psychological assessments undertaken with clients and others.
3. Under the clinical supervision of a qualified professional psychologist, assist in the formulation of the client's difficulties and in the planning and delivery of care plans involving the psychological treatment and/or management of the client's problems in community and in-patient/residential settings.
4. Under the clinical supervision of a qualified clinical psychologist, deliver therapeutic interventions developed or guided by the qualified psychologist or otherwise defined by protocol, for individual clients and for families, including, for example, planned programmes or other appropriate psychological interventions.
5. Under the clinical supervision of a qualified psychologist, assist in the planning, development, co-ordination and delivery of therapeutic groups. Act as co-therapist with qualified psychologist, other Assistant psychologist or other designated clinician and as appropriate run group in accordance with agreed protocol.
6. To complete risk assessments utilizing the available information to advise on current risk level and potential management strategies under the supervision of a qualified psychologist.
7. When completing clinical duties, receive, obtain and communicate complex and sensitive clinical and personal information, sometimes in circumstances where there may be constraints on the motivation,

cooperation, understanding or acceptance of the clients involved or their families.

8. Assist in the promotion a psychologically informed approach to the understanding and management of the problems and needs of all clients within the service area covered.
9. Under the clinical supervision and guidance of a qualified psychologist, collaborate with other members of the MDT in case and care reviews in the context of the Care Programme Approach and other relevant clinical systems applying in inpatient settings.
10. Attend and contribute to appropriate multi-disciplinary meetings, providing a psychological perspective or psychological information in conjunction with or on behalf of the qualified psychologist who supervises their practice.

### **Teaching, training, and supervision**

1. Support qualified psychologists in the development and provision of programmes of staff training for members of the MDT, assisting in the planning and organisation of lectures and workshops, in the preparation of teaching content, teaching materials (including handouts) and teaching aids (including computer assisted), in the direct delivery of teaching sessions (providing presentations as required) and in the evaluation of teaching initiatives.
2. Provide occasional presentations on relevant areas of work to other Assistant psychologists within the hospital and to other members of the psychology service.
3. Under the clinical supervision of a qualified professional psychologist, provide support and advice to other members of the MDT (e.g. nursing staff) using psychologically informed assessment methodologies and treatment interventions as part of a client's agreed care plan.

### **IT responsibilities**

1. To use computer software/packages to write reports, record data and send and receive emails.
2. To be able to use research databases and advanced tools for analysis at both quantitative and qualitative levels.

### **Research and service evaluation**

1. To utilise theory, evidence-based literature and research to support evidence based practice in individual work and work with other team members.
2. To undertake appropriate research and provide research advice to other staff undertaking research.
3. To undertake project management, including complex audit and service evaluation, with colleagues within the service to help develop service provision.

### **Professional Development and Practice**

1. Observe professional codes of practice of the BPS, Cygnet Healthcare policies and procedures and terms and conditions of employment.
2. Responsible for working within limits appropriate to qualifications, competence and experience.
3. In common with all applied psychologists, receive regular clinical supervision in accordance with professional practice guidelines.
4. Participate in personal development/appraisal reviews as required with psychology line manager.
5. Undertake such programmes of internal and external CPD, personal development and training as may be agreed with the post-holder's professional manager at the beginning of the appointment and at subsequent appraisal reviews, ensuring thereby that the post-holder maintains the highest professional standards of practice when fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.
6. Gain wider experience of professional psychological practice, and develop skills and competencies that assist in the performance of current duties, through attendance at training events, reading relevant research and practice literature, visits to other service settings, etc.
7. Maintain the highest standards of clinical record keeping and report writing in accordance with professional codes of practice and Cygnet Healthcare policies and procedures.

### **Other**

1. Prepare test materials, clinical materials, informational leaflets and visual aids as required in support of the work of qualified psychologists.
2. Undertake specific administrative duties as required.

3. Perform other duties of a similar kind appropriate to the grade, which may be required from time to time by the Qualified psychologist and/or Hospital Manager.

**To be noted:**

- **This is not an exhaustive list of duties and responsibilities, and the post holder may be required to undertake other duties which fall within the grade of the job, in discussion with the manager.**
- **This job description will be reviewed regularly in the light of changing service requirements and any such changes will be discussed with the post holder.**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Employee) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)  
**Signature of Employee**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Employer) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)  
**Signature of Employer**  
**(For and on behalf of Cygnet Health Care).**

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Job title: Assistant Psychologist**

	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>How tested</b>
<b>Training and qualifications</b>	An upper second class honours degree or higher in psychology	Further post graduate training in relevant areas of professional psychology, mental health practice and/or research design and analysis	Evidence of examination results
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Experience of work with people with mental health problems or disabilities, or other relevant problems or disabilities (e.g. learning disabilities, organic impairment).</p> <p>Experience of working as under the supervision of a Practitioner psychologist</p> <p>Experience in working individually with clients.</p> <p>Experience in co-facilitating groups with clients.</p>	<p>Direct experience of working as an Assistant psychologist for at least 6 months</p> <p>Experience of working with people who have experienced mental health difficulties including psychosis and/or personality disorder.</p> <p>Capacity for and experience of administering complex psychometric tests and to use psychological equipment in accordance with standardised timing, stimulus presentation and response monitoring requirements</p> <p>Experience of working in a multidisciplinary team.</p>	Interview/ application form/ references
<b>Knowledge and skills</b>	<p>High level of interpersonal and communication skills (written and verbal) including an ability to work and effectively communicate complex or sensitive information in highly emotive and emotionally charged settings involving conflict and significant personal distress.</p> <p>An understanding of risk assessment and its application in mental health settings. An ability to write articulate and comprehensible reports, letters and other correspondence.</p> <p>When communicating with patients, carers and colleagues, the ability to obtain and convey highly sensitive, complex or disputed information in a manner that addresses psychological resistance to/acceptance of potentially threatening information as well as barriers to</p>	<p>Knowledge of CBT and other relevant therapeutic skills and how these apply in practice within a mental health setting.</p> <p>An ability to write articulate and comprehensible reports, letters and other correspondence.</p> <p>Experience of completing HCR-20 risk assessments.</p> <p>Current driving licence and car/motorbike owner.</p>	Interview/ application form/ references

	<p>understanding.</p> <p>An ability to link and apply psychological theory, principles, understanding and knowledge to applied practice within a mental health context.</p> <p>An awareness and understanding of the differential needs of people from minority ethnic communities and from other minority groups and of the service issues arising within a multi-cultural urban area.</p> <p>Ability to respond safely to physical aggression, drawing on training in de-escalation and breakaway where provided.</p> <p>Awareness of boundary issues between professionals and between clients and psychologists.</p> <p>An understanding of statistical analysis commensurate with an honours degree in psychology.</p>		
<p><b>Personal</b></p>	<p>An ability to interact effectively with staff from all disciplines.</p> <p>An ability to interact and to build and sustain relationships with people with mental health problems, personality disorder and associated disabilities.</p> <p>Under the day-to-day direction of a qualified psychologist, has ability to work independently, reliably, consistently and with initiative (seeking guidance when appropriate and necessary).</p> <p>Adaptable and able to work flexibly when required.</p> <p>Capacity for tolerating frustration, change and high levels of demand with an ability to work effectively under pressure.</p> <p>Capacity to attend to and concentrate on clinical and research related information on a frequent basis (e.g. when undertaking client assessments or analysing statistical data).</p> <p>Capacity to frequently sit in constrained positions for client assessment and therapy.</p>		<p>Interview/ application form/ references</p>



	<p>A commitment to the involvement of clients and carers on the development and delivery of mental health and other care services.</p> <p>Commitment to the reduction of restrictive practice use within services.</p>		
<b>Other</b>	<p>An ability to accept and use supervision appropriately and effectively.</p> <p>An ability to reflect on own strengths, limitations and needs.</p>		<p>Interview/ Application form/ references</p>