

Genetic Counsellor

Job Description & Person Specification –

A summary of the role responsibilities and person specification



University Hospitals
Bristol and Weston
NHS Foundation Trust

Why Our Trust?

Terms and conditions

Post –Genetic Counsellor

Division – Specialised Services

Department – Clinical Genetics

Band – 7

Location – Clinical Genetics UHBW (and peripheral sites as required)

Contract length – 12 months fixed term

Annual leave – Up to 33 days dependant on NHS Service

Pension - The NHS Pension Scheme is a defined benefit scheme. Further details and outline of benefits can be found at: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pensions

Job Purpose

To provide a high quality genetic counselling service at a regional specialist level using national and local guidelines, helping individuals and families with genetic disorders 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 alternatives for dealing with the risk of recurrence.
- Help the patients choose the course of action which seems to them most appropriate
- To act as an educational resource to the wider health care system in relation to clinical genetics, genetic counselling and mainstreaming of genomic medicine.
- To work as an autonomous practitioner, providing genetic counselling for patients referred to discuss a broad range of hereditary conditions. The caseload will be mixed and may encompass cancer, cardiac, neurogenetic, renal, prenatal and general genetics cases and will include participation in on-duty genetic counselling rota to manage urgent referrals and enquiries. Patients may be seen in hospital clinics, on the ward, in GP surgeries, and rarely on home-visits. Genetic counselling via telephone or virtual appointments will also be offered as appropriate. Clinic delivery will include both central and peripheral clinics.

About us

Our mission is to improve the health of the people we serve by delivering exceptional care, teaching and research every day.

What you'll love about working here

UHBW has been rated by the CQC as 'Good' - our staff are proud to deliver excellent care. As a forward-thinking multi-award winning Trust, our world-leading research and innovations are having a positive local and global impact. Our hospitals are spread across Bristol and Weston-super-Mare, join us and you can enjoy the very best of both worlds; city living within a stone's throw of the countryside or beside the seaside, both with easy access to all that the South West has to offer.

A digital exemplar- Being appointed as a Global Digital Exemplar means we can realise this vision by implementing digital technologies that will help us to transform the way we work and how we relate to our colleagues, patients and partner organizations.

Sustainable healthcare - We have joined the international movement to declare a climate emergency, recognising the impact climate change is having on the world. Climate change is labelled as the greatest threat to health in the 21st century, with a range of conditions related to heat, cold, extreme weather and air pollution predicted to rise. To lead the way in healthcare the Trust has set ambitious goals to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Access to further opportunities with the Trust - Apprenticeships are a great way to learn and earn on the job. UH Bristol and Weston provides a range of apprenticeships to support a huge number of career opportunities in clinical and non-clinical support services with apprenticeships starting at level 2 through to level 7. As an organisation we encourage further development of all employees to progress upward within their chosen field.

Diversity & Inclusion

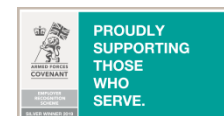
A core principle of the Trust is to ensure that patients and staff are treated with dignity and respect. Promoting equality, diversity and human rights and challenging any form of inequality, discrimination, harassment or abuse are central to the Trust's Values.

'Committed to inclusion in everything we do' is the ambition set out in the Trust's Workforce Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.

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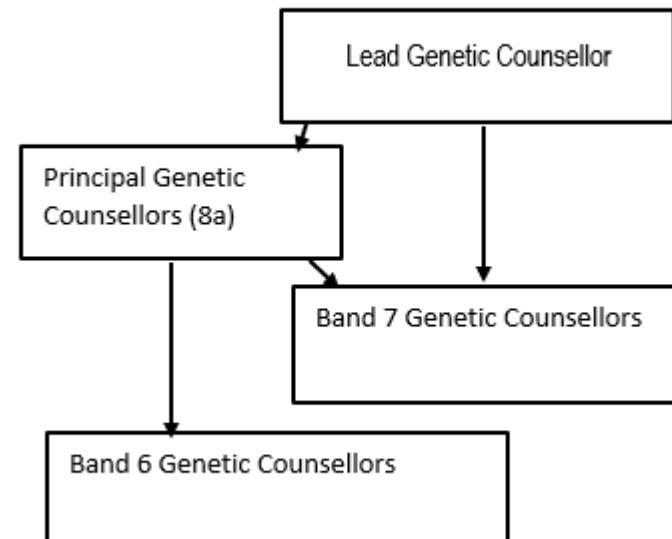
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Main Duties and Responsibilities

Communication with Patients and Families:

1. Elicit and accurately document patient's detailed family history.
2. Elicit patient's concerns and expectations.
3. Interpret medical, family and psychological history.
4. Confirm diagnostic information.
5. Communicate genetic information to patients and their relatives.
6. Receive and provide highly complex and possibly conflicting information.
7. Identify and respond to emerging issues for the patient or family.
8. Identify changes of risk within the family.
9. Take responsibility for communicating and applying new scientific information for the benefit of the family.
10. Interpret and communicate normal and abnormal genetic test results to patients and health care professionals.
11. Provide expert genetic counselling by managing an individual caseload autonomously.
12. Take a role in the provision of predictive genetic test consultations with patients.
13. Organise and partake in co-counselling with colleagues
14. Use non-directive and other counselling skills to counsel patients about various testing options and to facilitate decision-making.
15. Communicate with patients who are bereaved and provide support, e.g. around termination of pregnancy. Liaison with relevant colleagues in arranging a termination of pregnancy following an abnormal prenatal result.
16. Use 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 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
17. 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 couple an abnormal prenatal result, telling a patient that s/he has inherited a lethal untreatable condition such as Huntington's disease, or a condition that causes a high risk of developing various cancers.

Organisational Structure



Key Relationships

Lead Genetic Counsellor or Principal Genetic Counsellor (8a) will provide line management. Other leadership roles within the service include Lead Clinician, Performance & Operations Manager, Clinical Governance Lead(s) (Medical and Genetic Counsellor) and Admin Managers. Clinical Genetics is a multidisciplinary service and band 7 genetic counsellors work closely with Consultant Geneticists, Specialist Trainees, genetic counselling colleagues at all experience levels and a wide range of administration and support staff to deliver an effective clinical service. Liaison with multiple healthcare professionals and clinical scientists as required in caseload.

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18. Facilitate effective support to patients who have great difficulty accepting and/or understanding a clinical diagnosis or a genetic test result.
19. Provide advice on factors that reduce risk (e.g. prophylactic surgery, high dose folic acid) and on factors that influence risk (e.g. oral contraceptive pill, HRT)
20. Prepare letters to patients summarising clinic discussions and giving test results.

Communication with Colleagues:

21. Liaise regionally, nationally and internationally with laboratory directors and other staff to obtain, order and communicate about genetic and genomic tests and to discuss complex test results that are difficult to interpret.
22. Liaise regionally, nationally and internationally with other health care professionals including departments of histology, surgery, screening, fetal medicine, midwifery, psychiatry, cardiology, social work and others as needed to obtain and provide information and to facilitate mainstreaming of genomic medicine.
23. Liaise with colleagues in other genetic centres to obtain and provide information and to establish understanding and co-operation.
24. Prepare letters to referring clinicians.
25. Liaise and defer to medical colleagues and other health specialists about issues that have diagnostic or clinical complexity.
26. Discuss cases with colleagues at regular departmental clinical meetings where appropriate.
27. Discuss cases with ethical complexity with colleagues where appropriate.
28. Advise colleagues on issues around informed consent and support patient recruitment into approved research.
29. Act as patient advocate and educate other health professionals in situations where new testing or technology may be pertinent for patient care and/or service development.
30. Ensure effective liaison with administrative colleagues in the department, and health professionals outside the department, ensuring smooth transfer of information.

Patient/Client Care:

31. 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, and review with colleagues in clinical discussions.

32. Assess patients to determine where there is need for referral to specialist therapeutic counselling, psychiatric assessment or screening, and make appropriate referrals.
33. Act as duty genetic counsellor, on a rotational basis, for enquiries from patients and staff in Bristol and other sites within the region.
34. In collaboration with Consultant Geneticists, take responsibility for accepting referrals from GPs, hospital doctors, other health care professionals, and where appropriate, self-referrals from individual patients and families, and prioritising action accordingly.
35. In collaboration with Clinical Genetics team, take responsibility for patients and families within a defined clinical or geographical area within the Bristol region.
36. Phlebotomy and/or referral of patients to phlebotomy services
37. Occasionally assist the consultant in clinic with certain investigative procedures (e.g. skin biopsy).
38. Order genetic and biochemical tests as clinically appropriate according to departmental guidelines.
39. Refer patients for prenatal diagnostic procedures including CVS and amniocentesis.
40. Help identify individuals at increased risk of cancer and co-ordinate their genetics appointments, genetic testing, and screening follow-up. Draw pedigrees using departmental programmes and databases and perform related risk calculations.

Planning & Organisation:

41. Utilise in-house patient databases, standard letters and protocols to ensure effective liaison with clinicians and patients.
42. Maintain good filing practice in accordance with the departmental systems for retrieval, tracking, scanning, storage, and disposal of records.
43. Use patient databases and files to identify when patients suitable for recruitment into a variety of local, national and potentially international research projects.
44. Manage workload based on clinical prioritisation and referral date.
45. Support the activities of the genetic counsellor team and assume responsibility for various related tasks according to personal interest and the needs of the team.
46. Arrange for blood and tumour samples taken outside the Trust to be transported as appropriate.
47. Locate laboratories performing specialised genetic testing both in the UK and internationally. Obtain testing guidelines and make arrangements for specimen collection and transportation to the appropriate laboratory.

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Adhering to departmental guidance with regards to cost and location of testing laboratory and in line with the National Genomic Test Directory.

48. 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, identify at-risk relatives and advise on how they could obtain genetic counselling or screening.
49. Co-ordinate Genetic Counsellor clinics with assistance from administration team.

General Patient Care:

50. See patients and their families in clinics within UHBW or peripheral clinics elsewhere in the region, GP surgeries or in their own homes as appropriate. This will include face to face, virtual and phone appointments.
51. 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.
52. Maintain a good working environment in which patients receive a high standard of care.
53. Ensure that standards of care are maintained and that effective procedures exist to assess and review the quality of services offered regularly.
54. Maintain the safety and well-being of patients and staff in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy, and ensure that all accidents/incidents are reported and documented.
55. Work within Genetic Counsellor competency frameworks and recognise when to refer to appropriate healthcare specialists.
56. To carry out any other reasonable duties as may be required, which are commensurate with the grade and nature of the post, to meet the needs of the service. This will include cover of appropriate duties during the absence of colleagues.
57. Work in accordance with Trust values and the service ethos to provide and deliver a patient-centred service.

Information Resources:

58. Always ensure that all clinical documents are up-to-date, accurate, legible and appropriately filed in line with Trust Information Governance policies.
59. Utilise the services of the departmental administrative assistants and word processing to accurately send standard and non-standard letters and other communications as appropriate. This will include using dictation equipment.

60. Accurately record data on patient information systems and use in-house databases

61. Occasional requirement to create databases or spreadsheets using computerised systems.

Staff training:

62. Contribute to the training for Trainee Genetic Counsellors, STP's on the Genomic Counselling and Genomics programmes, student Genetic Counsellors, Genomic Associates and Specialist Registrars where appropriate.

Self-Development:

63. Keep up to date with departmental, Trust and national training requirements, particularly regarding information governance.
64. Take personal responsibility for continuing professional self-development and keep up-to-date with changes in the practice of genetic counselling. It is expected this will include regular attendance at local, regional, national, and occasionally international events.
65. Attend regular counselling supervision sessions to discuss difficult cases and enhance counselling skills.

Policy and Service Development:

66. Propose changes to working practices within the genetic clinics and the Regional Molecular and Cytogenetic Laboratories where appropriate.
67. Within area(s) of speciality design protocols and policies and information leaflets with guidance from colleagues, Clinical Genetic associations and Department of Health policies, in conjunction with team members.
68. Support the activities of the genetic counsellor team and assume responsibility for various related tasks according to the needs of the team and personal interest.

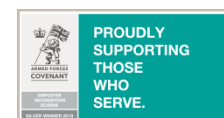
Research and Development:

69. Design and implement annual audit of clinical genetics to maintain clinical governance and audit profile of department.
70. Access and interpret literature reviews relating to clinical practice.
71. Participate in original research where appropriate to extend knowledge and understanding of genetic conditions and their impact on families.
72. Facilitate participation in appropriate National research trials in conjunction with Genetic team members and colleagues in multidisciplinary teams throughout the Bristol region.

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Personal Profile - (E) = Essential (D) = Desirable

Knowledge and Experience

- Professional genetic and genomic counselling experience -E
- A knowledge of genetics obtained through graduate/post-graduate training.-E
- Experience of communicating sensitive information to patients-E
- Experience of working in the NHS and knowledge of the way the NHS works and is developing.-E
- Must work within AGNC code of ethics.-E
- Computer literacy, knowledge of MS word, Excel, Powerpoint and electronic patient databases.-E
- Ability to use patient administration database- Trakgene- D
- Understanding of clinical and research governance-E
- Evidence of Continuing Professional Development-E
- Evidence of participation in research and Audit projects-D
- Experience of working in a Regional Clinical Genetics Department-E
- Experience of educating healthcare professionals- D

Skills and Abilities

- Ability to work autonomously and manage independent clinical caseload - E
- Ability to work within a multi-disciplinary team- E
- Excellent organisational and time management skills - E
- Must be mobile for travel- E
- Phlebotomy - D

Aptitudes

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills - E
 - Emotional resilience to cope with the emotional issues encountered regularly as part of the genetic counselling process - E
 - Leadership skills - D
- Can demonstrate a understanding and evidence of the UHBW Trust Values as follows:
- Supportive– E
 - Respectful– E
 - Innovative– E
 - Collaborative– E

Qualifications and Training

- MSc Genetic Counselling or STP Clinical Scientist (Genomic Counsellor) training or Professional qualification (e.g RGN or RCM) with valid eligibility to register GCRB certificate -E
- Genetic Counsellor Registration Board Registration or Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) Clinical Scientist (Genomic Counselling) registration– E

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Transforming Care

Delivering sustainable healthcare services to our patients, which are effective, efficient and driven by excellence, is at the heart of our organisation. Transforming Care is the Trust's overarching programme of transformational change. It enables staff to use a structured approach to continuously improve and innovates their services, strengthen our capability, and deliver our Trust's mission to improve the health of the people we serve by delivering exceptional care, teaching and research, every day.

Our Quality Improvement Academy is open to all staff and leaders across the Trust, and provides training to lead or take part in improvement and transformation activities in their departments and across the Trust. We will support staff to develop the skills and tools to improve services to deliver the best care to our patients and public.

Information Governance

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 PAS, the health record or the appropriate clinical or non-clinical information system
- Always trace patient notes on the Patient Administration System

Maintain the confidentiality of their passwords / usernames and if in possession of a 'Smartcard' abiding by the terms and conditions of its use.

Workplace health and wellbeing

The Trust Workplace Health and Wellbeing Framework applies to all employees, students and volunteers who are encouraged to take responsibility for their individual health and wellbeing and to promote the wellbeing of colleagues. Line managers must recognise the importance of health and wellbeing and take it into account when planning tasks and designing jobs.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults, and as such expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Quality and Clinical Governance

Quality in the NHS has three core dimensions: Patient Safety, Patient Experience and Clinical Effectiveness. Clinical Governance is about the systems, processes and behaviours to ensure that high quality services are provided to patients. Every member of staff has a role to play in striving for excellence: it is important that everyone is aware of and follows policies and procedures that govern their work; and if something goes wrong, everyone has an obligation to report it so lessons can be learned from mistakes, incidents and complaints. If any member of staff has concerns on any clinical governance matters, they should raise them with their line manager, professional adviser, or a more senior member of management. Reference should be made to the Trust's guidance on Raising Concerns about provision of patient care.

Health and Safety

Under the provisions contained in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, it is the duty of every employee to:

- Take reasonable care of themselves and for others at work
- To co-operate with the Trust as far as is necessary to enable them to carry out their legal duty
- Not to intentionally or recklessly interfere with anything provided including personal protective equipment for Health and Safety or welfare at work.

Everyone has a responsibility for contributing to the reduction of infections.

Senior Management is responsible for the implementation throughout the Trust of suitable arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees at work and the health and safety of other persons who may be affected by their activities. Where health and safety matters cannot be resolved at Senior Management level the appropriate Executive Director must be notified.

Line Managers are responsible for the health and safety management of all activities, areas and staff under their control. This includes responsibility for ensuring risk assessments are completed and implementation of suitable and sufficient control measures put in place. Health and safety issues are dealt with at the lowest level of management practicable. Where health and safety matters cannot be resolved at a particular management level the appropriate Senior Manager must be notified.