



National Association of Health Play Specialists
Charity Number 1042599

The National Association of Health Play Specialists (NAHPS) is writing to all NHS Trusts and stake holders to inform them of the important changes to the education programme and the professional title in order to assist in your recruitment of registered practitioners.

- The changes you need to be aware of include:
- The change of professional title
- Changes to the education programme
- A change to the re-registration period

Rationale: Following extensive consultation it was agreed that the Foundation Degree (FdA) in Healthcare Play Specialism qualification would replace the previous Hospital Play Specialist training programme in order to offer individuals and trusts, a broad range of knowledge and skills required for today's NHS. The level 4 (120 credits) and 5 (120 credits) award has been mapped against NHS Employability Skills which are aligned to the NHS Career Framework, the Children's Workforce Functional Map and the QCA Key Skills.

The new graduates hold a qualification in Healthcare Play Specialism and therefore to avoid possible confusion of existing titles within Trusts the title of Health Play Specialist (HPS) has replaced Hospital Play Specialist. We believe this best reflects the wider range of health related roles achieved through play based interventions in healthcare settings not just in hospitals. The scope of practice encompasses health promotion activities for children with chronic illness, adolescent health, preparation and distraction for painful/invasive procedures, sibling and family work, children with life limiting conditions, loss and bereavement.

Although the training programme and professional title has changed, healthcare settings should still expect high standards of practice from all HPS regardless of whether they hold the previous or new qualification. However, we strongly advocate for the workforce to be qualified HPS. It is our concern that without registration and subsequent re-registration of professionals then the health and well being of staff, children and young people may be challenged. This situation may arise if:

- Trusts recruit unqualified play staff to carry out therapeutic play based interventions without the prerequisite training, knowledge and skills.
- The use of unqualified play staff may compromise the safeguarding of children and young people through a lack of awareness and specialist training.
- Trusts refer to unqualified staff as Play Specialists
- Hospital/Health Play Specialists have allowed their registration to lapse and are practicing without registration and a pin number. This means that the HPS has not demonstrated recent competency in the professional role.

The Hospital Play Staff Education Trust (HPSET) is responsible for the education and registration of all qualified HPS. Registered practitioners are expected to continue to develop their skills and knowledge in the workplace and are required to re-register every **two years**.

The approved overview of the Occupational Standards will be released in July 2013 to assist you in benchmarking best practice for the profession. Further information regarding training, re-registration and professional issues can be found on the following websites: www.hpset.org.uk and www.nahps.org.uk

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