

National Association of Hospital Play Staff Guidelines for Professional Practice

Number 1 Professional Development

Introduction

“Children and their families place their trust in health care professionals. They need to be assured that the care and treatment they receive is delivered by appropriately trained staff, who are skilled to meet their needs. This includes ensuring that their own practice is up to date with current thinking and new techniques. Continuing professional development is a process of life long learning for all individuals and teams. It is more than just attendance at a course or study day, but about assisting staff to reflect upon incidents, complaints and develop their practice.”
Fay Valentine and Fiona Smith, ‘Clinical Governance in Acute Children’s Services’, Nursing Management, Volume 7, No. 3, June 2000.

Method

NAHPS recommends that all qualified Hospital Play Specialists keep a Professional Portfolio. This is a personal collection of information about your career. It should contain evidence about the way in which you have developed professionally and demonstrate the means by which you have acquired new knowledge and skills. In addition, it should contain details about the posts, which you have held and any particular achievements whilst in post, for example invitations to speak about the profession at professional conferences or articles published in professional journals.

The Hospital Play Staff Examination Trust (HPSET) produces a Professional Development Portfolio for Hospital Play Specialists. You may be required to use the format laid out by your NHS Trust.

Re-registration

NAHPS recommends that all qualified Hospital Play Specialists re-register with HPSET. Maintaining a portfolio recording all of the aspects outlined above will facilitate the easy extraction of the information needed for the profile for re-registration.

Guidelines on how to maintain a portfolio and produce a profile can be obtained from HPSET. These include detailed lists of courses and study opportunities available to Play Specialists.

HPSET

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Recognised areas of continuing professional development

Courses

You should attend all courses deemed mandatory by your NHS Trust. These usually include fire, manual handling, child protection and data protection training. Professional conferences, such as those run by NAHPS and HPSET provide networking opportunities as well as up to date information relevant to your work. You will also have opportunities to attend other study days both in and out of house.

It is important that you record and evaluate the content of all study opportunities that arise, focusing on how what you have learnt will influence your future practice. Where appropriate, feedback should also be given to other members of the team.

Suggested further training

- Edexcel Professional development Diploma in Hospital Play
- Counselling
- IT courses
- Degree courses relevant to the profession
- Play Therapy Courses, for example MA in Therapeutic Child Care
- Leadership development

Research

Grants can be obtained for research projects. Research projects carried out within your Trust will have to be sanctioned by the Trust's Ethics Committee. Such projects should be published in the relevant professional journals.

It is also important that you keep up to date by reading all literature and articles relevant to your field of work, and attending journal clubs.

Audit and Benchmarking

By researching best practice, standards should be set and audited through benchmarking.

Individual Performance Review (IPR)/ Personal Development Review (PDR)/ Appraisal/ KSF

Organisations use different titles for this process, but the underlying principles are the same. IPR provides an opportunity for you to spend time with your manager/supervisor to discuss your future goals and objectives. These objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely (S-M-A-R-T objectives). With the introduction of Agenda for Change in 2005, all appraisal objectives are now taken from the Knowledge and Skills Framework (K.S.F.). You should attend local training on the KSF and become familiar with your own Personal Development Plan. At appraisal, your performance over the previous period will also be reviewed and compared with the objectives for that period. In this way, you will receive feedback on your performance and direction for the future. You should also be able to give your manager/supervisor

feedback and have input in the future planning of the service. IPR is a two-way, ongoing process. Appraisals should take place on a yearly basis, and be reviewed every 3-6 months.

Clinical Supervision

“Clinical supervision brings practitioners and skilled supervisors together to reflect on practice. Supervision aims to identify solutions to problems, improve practice and increase understanding of professional issues.” UKCC 1996

In practice, this means that the practitioner meets with their chosen supervisor on a regular basis to discuss professional issues. The supervisor should help the practitioner to examine and reflect on his/her practice with a view to improving or modifying it to produce the best possible outcomes. Sessions should be used for caseload discussions, reflection and personal development.

Please refer to **NAHPS Guidelines for Professional Practice, Number 2: Clinical Supervision.**

Professional Organisations

Membership to your professional organisation, NAHPS provides opportunities to stay up to date with the latest research in the field of hospital play. Other organisations, such as Action for Sick Children also provide useful information.

Education

Opportunities to promote the work of the HPS should be taken. This can be achieved through good practice, and through providing training for the Multi-Disciplinary Team. Taking part in promotional events, such as Play in Hospital week will also boost the profile of your service.

It is important that your play service has a career structure.

Reviewed: November 2006

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