

Overview of the role

Health play specialists provide therapeutic play interventions to support children from birth to young adulthood in healthcare settings.

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Standard in development
L5: Health play specialist
Version 1.1

Title of occupation

Health play specialist

UOS reference number

ST0829

Core and options

No

Level of occupation

Level 5

Occupational maps data

Route: Health and science

Pathway: Health

Cluster: Health Practitioner

Typical duration of apprenticeship

24 months

Target date for approval

01/01/0001

Resubmission

No

Would your proposed apprenticeship standard replace an existing framework?

No

Does professional recognition exist for the occupation?

Yes

Regulated occupation**Is this a statutory regulated occupation?**

No

Occupational summary

This occupation is found in hospitals, outpatient clinics, community health centres hospices, NHS, and the private and voluntary sector.

The broad purpose of the occupation is health play specialists provide therapeutic play interventions to support children from birth to young adulthood in healthcare settings, throughout their healthcare journey. Play is at the centre of a child's life and is accepted as vital to healthy growth, development, and a natural part of childhood. Play strategies are used to support children and young people to understand their medical conditions and treatments and to adopt lifestyle changes that are required to manage long term conditions. Play is the tool used to gain informed consent from children and young people and to continue this work as the child and young person's condition improves, deteriorates, their cognition develops, to transition to adult services or end of life.

The health play specialist will assess, observe, play, evaluate and report the relationships in families, skills and behaviours of children and provide professional reports for the safeguarding process. They may be required to provide evidence in the family court. A non-judgement approach is required as children are admitted to hospitals at a time of family crisis which has resulted in an injury or significant neglect to the infant child or young person. An essential requirement of this role is professional annual re-registration with the Society of Health Play Specialists (SoHPS) demonstrating continuous professional development, practising within the scope of the Professional Standards.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with medical professionals such as consultants, doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, educational professionals, social workers, schools and families and carers to create supportive environments for children and young people during their healthcare journeys.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for providing therapeutic play techniques to prepare the child for medical, surgical and invasive interventions and procedures, seeking to promote informed consent. By using play as a therapeutic approach, it helps to reduce stress and fear associated with medical experiences, ultimately promoting better health outcomes and emotional resilience. Distraction and alternative focus activities provide autonomy through choice and control, augmenting the child’s coping strategies prior to and during procedures. Post procedural play supports children to make sense of health procedures and regimes. The health play specialist works collaboratively with other professionals at all times and especially when a life limiting diagnosis is made, through to end of life care.

Typical job titles

Activity co-ordinator Healthcare play specialists Learning disability health support specialist Nursery nurse (special care baby unit) Play leader Play specialist Registered community play specialist Registered hospital play specialist Therapeutic co-ordinator Youth support co-ordinator

Are there any statutory / regulatory or other typical entry requirements?

No

Occupation duties

Duty	KSBs
<p>Duty 1 Practise safely and effectively within the scope of practice and within the legal and ethical boundaries of the profession.</p>	<p>K1 K2 K3 K4 K5 K7 K8 K26 K27 S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S6 S8 S9 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5</p>
<p>Duty 2 Look after own health and wellbeing, seeking appropriate support where necessary.</p>	<p>K7 K9 S8 S10 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5</p>
<p>Duty 3 Practise as an autonomous professional, exercising professional judgement.</p>	<p>K1 K8 K11 K12 K13 K14 K15 K18 K19 K25 K32 K35 K36 K37 K38 K39 K42 S1 S9 S12 S13 S14 S15 S16 S19 S20 S26 S30 S32 S33 S34 S35 S36 S38 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5</p>
<p>Duty 4 Practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner recognising the impact of culture, equality and diversity.</p>	<p>K7 K12 K13 K14 K15 K18 K19 K25 K26 K27 K32 K35 K36 K37 K38 K39 S8 S13 S14 S15 S16 S19 S20 S26 S30 S32 S33 S34 S35 S36 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5</p>

Duty	KSBs
Duty 5 Communicate effectively, maintaining confidentiality and records appropriately.	K16 K17 K20 K22 K23 K24 K28 K29 K30 S17 S18 S21 S23 S24 S25 S27 S28 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 K16 K17 K20 K21 K22 K23 K24 K31 K40 S17 S18 S21 S22 S23 S24 S25 S29
Duty 6 Work with others.	B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 K6 K10 K21 K34 K35 K41
Duty 7 Reflect on, review and assure the quality of own practice.	S7 S11 S22 S32 S37 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5
Duty 8 Draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice and apply the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to the profession.	K10 K12 K13 K14 K15 K18 K21 K25 K31 K33 K36 K37 K38 S11 S13 S14 S15 S16 S19 S22 S26 S29 S31 S33 S34 S35 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 K5 K7 K8 K22 K23 K38
Duty 9 Establish and maintain a safe practice environment.	S4 S5 S6 S8 S9 S23 S24 S35 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5

KSBs

Knowledge

K1: Standards of personal and professional conduct, possible conflicts of care and interest and how to report breaches of Professional Standards.

K2: Limits of your practice.

K3: Lone working, personal and others' safety, employer's policies and the need to maintain the safety of service-users.

K4: Responsibilities to escalate and disclose information through the appropriate channels in regards to safeguarding and Prevent.

K5: Employers' guidelines on reporting incidents, risks and escalation process.

K6: Registration requirements, continuous reflection and improvement to practice.

K7: National legislation, local policies, workplace procedures, advice, and guidance including relating to culture, equality, diversity, and inclusion.

K8: Professional duty of care and steps to reduce the risk of harm to service-users, carers, and colleagues.

K9: The importance of maintaining own health and wellbeing.

K10: Importance of ongoing professional development and training, professional registration and incorporating changes to own role.

K11: The nature and severity of a problem in professional situations.

K12: Developmental needs of the service-user and how to use normalising interventions, preparation, distraction, and post procedural play techniques.

K13: Developmental needs of the service-user and how to use normalising interventions, preparation, distraction, and post procedural play techniques by initiating, continuing, modifying, and ceasing play based on the developmental needs of all service-users.

K14: Coping strategies in order to minimise service-user's distress and anxiety during clinical procedures.

K15: The importance of choice and control through service-user centred care that support positive outcomes.

K16: Partnership and team working approaches to ensure that clinical procedures are planned and managed.

K17: How sharing information, interactions and accurate records contributes to the management and the care provided for a service-user.

K18: Play interventions that enable a service-user to learn the sensory and factual information they need to prepare for any treatment or procedure or to make any necessary lifestyle changes.

K19: The importance of gaining consent before providing care and support to service-users to maintain their own health and well-being.

K20: How to make and receive referrals in line with organisational policy.

K21: The importance of participation in training, mentorship, coaching and supervision in order to support service users, health professionals, colleagues, students, and apprentices.

K22: How to provide support and guidance to ensure that safe practice can be monitored and maintained when working with junior staff.

K23: How to supervise and delegate to others ensuring the knowledge, skills and experience required to work safely and effectively.

K24: How the needs and preferences of service-user's care is impacted through play and health services in the multidisciplinary team and other professionals.

K25: Needs of different service-users and how to adapt practice or make reasonable adjustments to promote inclusive service provision.

K26: Socio-cultural diversity of the community and the specific local context of practice, and work-related policies and services that can impact on individual needs within a diverse society.

K27: The impact of economic inequality, poverty, and exclusion on and the ability to access services.

K28: Ways to use, record and store data and information related to service-users securely and in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements and local and national policies, including the safe use of technology.

K29: Different communication skills and strategies to maximise understanding for service-users and to facilitate assessment and engagement of those affected by protected characteristics.

K30: Communication support systems which can assist the service-user and how interpersonal skills can encourage active participation.

K31: The importance and impact of team and partnership working to service delivery in and across different sectors and the value of sharing skills knowledge and expertise.

K32: The value of enabling and engaging service-users in planning and evaluating therapeutic play techniques to support treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals.

K33: Potential new and emerging areas of practice in play.

K34: Evidence-based practice, audit procedures, systematic practice evaluation and continuous improvement.

K35: Information gathering to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions using recognised outcome measures.

K36: Theoretical concepts underpinning play, therapeutic play and the development of service-user.

K37: Development of care, developmental and therapeutic play plans for the service-user and review process.

K38: Normalising, developmental and therapeutic play activities within safe environments for service-users.

K39: Physical, psychological, social, cultural, and environmental needs, challenges and perspectives of service-users.

K40: Leadership theories and styles, and the impact these can have on service-users and the organisation.

K41: Take responsibility for continuous self-reflection, seeking and responding to support and feedback to develop professional knowledge and skills.

K42: Quality control, quality assurance and the role of audit and review in quality management and outcome measures.

Skills

S1: Maintain standards of personal and professional conduct, avoid possible conflicts of care and interest and report breaches of Professional Standards.

S2: Work within the remit of your professional boundaries, inform appropriate practitioners if the care or treatment is not within the scope of your professional boundaries or expertise.

S3: Refer and delegate to appropriate practitioners wherever you find yourself unable to maintain objectivity and professional boundaries.

S4: Comply with lone working policies considering your own personal and others' safety.

S5: Adhere to Safeguarding and Prevent policies following procedures to escalate and disclosure of information, through the appropriate channels.

S6: Adhere to employers' guidelines on reporting incidents, risks and escalation process.

S7: Reflection and improvement to practice to enable registration.

S8: Adhere to up to date national legislation, local policies, workplace procedures, advice, and guidance, supporting the rights of colleagues, service users and visitors, including relating to culture, equality, diversity, and inclusion.

S9: Exercise a professional duty of care ensuring no act or omission is detrimental to the condition or safety of service-users in your care or their families, carers and colleagues, to deal with concerns.

S10: Maintain own health and wellbeing, seeking advice and changing practise to reduce possible risks.

S11: Take personal responsibility for ongoing professional development and training opportunities and professional registration.

S12: Assess professional situations, determining the nature and severity of a problem acting within your professional scope of practice.

S13: Use normalising interventions, preparation, distraction, and post procedural play techniques by initiating, continuing, modifying, and ceasing play, based on the developmental needs of all service-users, to build on their abilities and enhance their experience.

S14: Apply play techniques selecting appropriate play resources to improve the service user's needs, experience and wellbeing.

S15: Apply coping strategies in order to minimise service-user's distress and anxiety during clinical procedures.

S16: Facilitate choice and control through service-user centred care, using play-based techniques that support positive outcomes.

S17: Work in partnership and with other professions as part of a team to ensure that clinical procedures are planned and managed.

S18: Share information, interactions and accurate records agreeing goals and priorities with other identified professionals to contribute to the management and the care provided for a service user.

S19: Guide a service-user to learn the sensory and factual information they need to prepare for any treatment or procedure or to make any necessary lifestyle changes through play interactions.

- S20:** Encourage and help service-users to maintain their own health and well-being, and support them so they can make informed decisions ensuring patient consent is gained.
- S21:** Make and receive referrals in line with organisation's referral policy.
- S22:** Participate in training, mentorship, coaching and supervision in order to support service users, health professionals, colleagues, students, and apprentices.
- S23:** Provide support and guidance to ensure that safe practice can be monitored and maintained when working with junior staff.
- S24:** Supervise and delegate to others ensuring the knowledge, skills and experience required to work safely and effectively.
- S25:** Raise awareness within the multidisciplinary team and other professionals of the needs and preferences of service-user's care through play and health services.
- S26:** Adapt practice or make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of different service-users to take account of new developments, changing contexts and promote inclusive service provision.
- S27:** Use, record and store data and information related to service-users securely and in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements and local and national policies, including the safe use of technology.
- S28:** Use and adapt communication skills and strategies to maximise understanding for service-users and to facilitate assessment and engagement of those affected by protected characteristics.
- S29:** Undertake work collaboratively with others as part of a professional team in and across different sectors sharing skills knowledge and expertise.
- S30:** Engage service-users in planning and evaluating therapeutic play techniques to support treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals.
- S31:** Engage in evidence-based practice and participate in audit procedures evaluating systematic practice, working towards continual improvement.
- S32:** Gather information to assess service-users, use information to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and revise plans as necessary.
- S33:** Apply the theoretical concepts underpinning play, therapeutic play and the development of service-user.
- S34:** Create and deliver a development of care, developmental and therapeutic play plans for the individual service-user including specific and timely reviews.
- S35:** Conduct normalising, developmental and therapeutic play activities, support procedures, treatments, therapy, or other actions within safe environments for service-users.
- S36:** Identify and assess physical, psychological, social, cultural, and environmental needs and challenges of service-users.
- S37:** Identify the importance of self reflection, using research, apply reasoning, problem-solving skills and feedback, to inform own practice and improve areas of personal performance.

S38: Participate in quality assurance programs.

Behaviours

B1: Show respect, compassion, and uphold the rights, dignity, values, and autonomy of all individuals whilst maintaining high standards of care.

B2: Recognise that you are personally responsible for own actions and decisions.

B3: Adopt an empathetic approach and demonstrates discretions.

B4: Promotes equity, diversity and inclusion within the team, the wider organisation and service users.

B5: Be adaptable, reliable and consistent, resilient and self-aware.

Qualifications

English and maths

Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the End-Point Assessment. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship's English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3. A British Sign Language (BSL) qualification is an alternative to the English qualification for those whose primary language is BSL.

Does the apprenticeship need to include any mandated qualifications in addition to the above-mentioned English and maths qualifications?

Yes

Other mandatory qualifications

Foundation Degree in Healthcare Play Specialism

Level: 5

Professional recognition

This standard aligns with the following professional recognition:

- Society of Health Play Specialists (SoHPS) for Registered HPS

Consultation

Progression routes

Supporting uploads

Mandatory qualification uploads

Mandated degree evidence uploads

Professional body confirmation uploads

Involved employers

Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital, Leicester NHS Trust, The Childrens Trust, Evelina Guys and St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust, Alderhey Hospital, University College

Hospitals London, Manchester Children's hospital, NHS Lothian, Imperial College NHS Trust London, The Portland Hospital, Leeds City College, Nescot College, Health Care Play Specialist Education Trust (HPSET)

Subject sector area

1.3 Health and social care