Job Description

Job Title: Lead for Practice Education and Research

Responsible to: Associate Director of Care

Accountable to: Director of Care and Deputy Chief Executive

Job Purpose:

To provide strategic, professional and operational leadership as the Lead for Practice Education and Research, using highly developed specialist knowledge and skills to lead the design, delivery, quality assurance and evaluation of a hospice-wide practice education, clinical skills, simulation and research portfolio that meets the needs of children and young people, families, staff, services and multi-disciplinary teams across Acorns Children's Hospice.

The postholder will contribute to the strategic development of Acorns practice education and research offer, working collaboratively with the Directors of Care, operational leaders and external partners to ensure a high-quality, evidence-based and future-focused education service. They will design, develop and maintain robust education programmes, policies, lesson plans, competency frameworks and training resources to ensure standardisation of care education across multiple sites, improving compliance, and supporting safe, effective and compassionate care.

The Lead for Practice Education and Research will provide visible leadership to the Practice Education Team, including line management, professional supervision, performance oversight and development of Practice Educators and other staff as appropriate. The post holder will influence practice through teaching, coaching, quality improvement, audit and research activity, ensuring that education provision is responsive to organisational priorities, regulatory requirements and emerging evidence within paediatric palliative and end of life care.

The post holder will work with a high degree of autonomy, exercising professional judgement across complex clinical, educational and service development issues, and will be accountable for prioritising their own workload and that of the team to deliver agreed objectives.

The team operates across all Acorns sites, and the team will be expected to travel to different locations, where their role requires them to do so.

Main Duties:

Key Objectives

- The post holder will provide senior leadership for the practice education and research function, working with minimal supervision to plan, coordinate and deliver a broad portfolio of complex activities that support the strategic and operational priorities of the care service.
- The post holder will be responsible for leading the planning, organisation, implementation and evaluation of education, clinical skills, simulation, competency and research activity for new and existing staff employed by the hospice, ensuring delivery against mandatory, statutory and role-specific requirements.

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- The post holder will manage competing priorities across clinical education, workforce development, governance, audit and service improvement, using analysis and judgement to make decisions, escalate risk where appropriate and ensure effective use of staffing, time and resources.

Budgetary and Resource Management

- Work with Care Leadership Team to manage the Clinical Education Budget in line with hospice policy
- Identify funding required to meet the needs of the service Training Needs Analysis and staff development needs
- Cost courses to allow promotion and invitations to go to external organisations.
- Liaise with Care Leadership Team to ensure that equipment and available resources meet the requirements of the hospice curriculum.
- Ensure good use of resources minimising waste.

Management, Supervisory, Teaching and Training Responsibilities

- Provide line management, professional leadership, supervision and development for the Practice Education Team and other staff within the remit of the role.
- Lead the strategic direction, annual work programme and operational delivery of practice education, clinical skills, simulation and research activity across the organisation.
- To work with the Acorns Academy and other leads within the organisation to identify organisational learning needs through training needs analysis, incident themes, audit findings, service developments and regulatory requirements, translating these into prioritised education plans.
- Design, commission, deliver and evaluate evidence-based education programmes and competency frameworks for staff providing care to children and young people with complex and palliative care needs.
- Collaborate with Acorns Academy and departments across the hospice to develop, support and deliver high-quality educational and research initiatives aligned to organisational priorities.
- Lead on quality assurance of education delivery, competency assessment and practice development standards, ensuring consistency across all hospice sites.
- Provide expert professional advice to leaders, clinicians and educators on practice education, workforce capability, professional standards and evidence-based practice.
- Ensure any unsafe practice identified through education, supervision or competency review is acted upon immediately and escalated in line with hospice governance processes.
- Oversee the maintenance, accuracy and reporting of training records, compliance data and education performance metrics, producing reports and action plans for senior leaders and governance groups.
- Lead and contribute to policy development, service redesign, workforce transformation and change programmes relevant to education, clinical practice and research.
- Represent the hospice internally and externally in relation to practice education and research, developing productive relationships with higher education institutions, NHS partners, networks and external stakeholders.
- Promote a culture of lifelong learning, reflective practice, innovation and continuous improvement, acting as an expert role model and visible leader.
- Ensure that infection control guidelines and policies are strictly adhered to.
- Be aware of and work within the lone working policies of the organisation.

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- Maintain the Health & Safety Regulations of Acorns Children's Hospice Trust including Fire Regulations within the Acorns buildings.

Research and Development

- Lead the delivery of the hospice's research and evidence-based practice agenda, ensuring that research activity is aligned to organisational priorities, clinical strategy, quality improvement goals and the needs of children, young people and families.
- Work in partnership with the Directors of Care to develop and implement a clear research strategy and infrastructure that supports the hospice's ambition to strengthen its academic profile and collaborative research offer.
- Provide professional leadership for research, audit, service evaluation and quality improvement activity across the hospice, ensuring appropriate governance, ethical consideration, oversight and dissemination of learning.
- Identify, prioritise and coordinate research opportunities relevant to paediatric palliative care, practice education, workforce development and service innovation, using internal data, national guidance and emerging evidence to inform decision-making.
- Develop and maintain productive partnerships with universities, NHS organisations, hospices, clinical academic networks and other external stakeholders to support collaborative projects, student opportunities, benchmarking and shared learning.
- Support staff to develop research knowledge and capability by promoting critical appraisal, reflective practice, audit, quality improvement methodology, publication writing, poster presentation and conference dissemination.
- Lead the translation of research findings, national policy, best practice guidance and evaluation outcomes into education programmes, competency frameworks, clinical standards, policies and service improvements.
- Oversee the collection, analysis and presentation of research, audit and education impact data, producing high-quality reports, papers, presentations and assurance updates for senior leaders, governance groups and external forums.
- Contribute to the identification of potential funding, grant or collaborative development opportunities that support research, innovation and workforce development, working with relevant colleagues to progress these where appropriate.
- Act as a visible advocate for research, innovation and evidence-based practice, fostering a culture in which staff are encouraged and enabled to question practice, generate learning and improve outcomes.

Other Duties:

- To act as an ambassador for Acorns raising awareness of its charitable aims and objectives and enhancing its reputation through exemplary behaviour, conduct and team working.
- To contribute to Acorns fundraising aims by raising awareness with your stakeholder groups about how vital fundraising is to the charity's mission and sharing opportunities for fundraising support
- To put the needs and interests of Acorns children and young people and their families first in all aspects of their work.
- To ensure compliance with Acorns policies for diversity, employment, equal opportunities, health and safety, information governance and safeguarding.
- To actively participate in an annual performance and development review process and any training and development identified to further enhance your role with Acorns.
- Promote a coaching culture within Acorns and provide coaching expertise as a resource across the organisation.
- Be innovative, commit to continuous learning, researching new ideas, monitoring new technology advancements, sharing good practice across the team and colleagues

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- To carry out any other reasonable duty as requested by your line manager.

Medicine Management

There will be a responsibility for ensuring the safe and accurate administration of medications to patients, following prescribed treatment plans and relevant protocols. This includes verifying medication orders, preparing and administering medications according to established guidelines, and monitoring patient responses. There will also be responsibility for maintaining accurate records of medication administration, managing medication storage, and ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards related to medication handling and patient safety. Additionally, there will be responsibility for the education of patients and their families about proper medication use, potential side effects, and adherence to prescribed regimens.

Infection Prevention and Control

All Employees and Volunteers of Acorns will be expected to follow all infection prevention and control policies and procedures to ensure a safe and healthy environment. This includes maintaining best hygiene practices, using personal protective equipment (PPE) as required, and adhering to safety protocols to minimise the risk of infection. It everybody's responsibility to promote a clean and safe environment for staff, children, young people and their families.

Health and Safety

All Employees and Volunteers of Acorns are required to comply with all health and safety policies and procedures in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This includes taking reasonable care of their own health and safety, as well as that of others who may be affected by their actions. The role involves using personal protective equipment (PPE) when necessary, following established safety protocols, reporting hazards or unsafe conditions, and participating in health and safety training. All Employees and Volunteers of Acorns must actively contribute to maintaining a safe and healthy environment and cooperate with the employer to ensure compliance with relevant health and safety legislation.

Environmental sustainability

All Employees and Volunteers of Acorns are required to support in minimising environmental impact wherever possible, including recycling, switching off lights, computers, monitors and equipment when not in use. Helping to reduce paper waste by minimising printing/copying and reducing water usage, reporting faults and heating/cooling concerns promptly and minimising travel. Where the role includes the ordering and use of supplies or equipment the post holder will consider the environmental impact of purchases.

Safeguarding

Acorns is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is the responsibility of all staff to always safeguard and protect children and adults at risk, staff must report any concerns as per safeguarding policies and procedures which are available on Acorns internal systems. Every staff member must undertake regular mandatory safeguarding training at a level relevant to their role.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

All Employees and Volunteers of Acorns are required to comply with all relevant data protection laws, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection

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Regulation (GDPR). This includes ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and security of personal and sensitive information. All Employees and Volunteers of Acorns must handle all data in accordance with organisational policies and procedures, ensuring it is only used for its intended purpose and is not disclosed to unauthorised individuals. The role may involve safeguarding personal data, reporting any data breaches, and always maintaining strict confidentiality to protect both individuals' privacy and the organisation's legal obligations.

Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity

All Employees and Volunteers of Acorns are required to promote and uphold the principles of equality, inclusivity, and diversity in all aspects of their work. This includes ensuring that all individuals are treated with respect and fairness, regardless of their race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other characteristic protected by law. All Employees and Volunteers of Acorns must comply with relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, and contribute to creating an inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives. The role involves actively challenging discrimination and bias and supporting the organisation's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all.

CQC Regulatory Body

Acorns is regulated by Care Quality Commission (CQC). All Employees and Volunteers of Acorns support with and influence compliance with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulations and support the organisation in maintaining high standards of care and service delivery. This includes an awareness and knowledge of the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs). All Employees and Volunteers of Acorns will work closely with senior management to ensure that the service meets the CQC's five key domains: Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive, and Well-led, while promoting continuous improvement and high-quality care for all children, young people and families.

Acorns adheres to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. As an employee you will be a Duty Bearer for Children's Rights and support all children to be Rights Holders.

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Person Specification – Lead for Practice Education and Research

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications	> Registered healthcare professional with current professional registration. > Degree in a relevant healthcare subject or equivalent professional qualification and experience. > Evidence of specialist study and continuing professional development equivalent to Masters level knowledge, or willingness to work towards. > Relevant qualification or demonstrable experience in teaching, assessing or practice education.	> Masters degree in a relevant subject or working towards. > Teaching, leadership, coaching or management qualification. > Paediatric palliative care, clinical assessment or non-medical prescribing qualification.
Experience	> Registered healthcare professional with significant post-registration experience, including substantial experience in practice education, clinical skills or workforce development. > Evidence of senior leadership and management experience, including line management, supervision, appraisal and staff development. > Experience of leading service improvement, education programme development, quality assurance or change management across teams or services. > Evidence of continuing professional development and learning at degree level with development towards Masters level or equivalent experience.	> Experience of paediatric palliative care, children with complex needs, hospice care or community children's services. > Experience of research, audit, service evaluation or quality improvement leadership. > Experience of partnership working with universities, NHS organisations or regional education networks. > Postgraduate teaching, leadership or coaching qualification.
Skills & Abilities	> Able to provide visible, credible and compassionate leadership and to influence practice across professional and organisational boundaries. > Highly developed communication, facilitation and presentation skills, including the ability to communicate complex, sensitive or contentious information effectively. > Ability to analyse complex information, make sound judgements, prioritise competing demands and lead change within a dynamic environment. > Demonstrable knowledge of clinical governance, quality assurance, risk management, safeguarding and professional standards relevant to the role. > Ability to design, deliver and evaluate formal and informal education in clinical and academic settings, including competency assessment. > Ability to write high-quality reports, business cases, policies and presentations and to use digital systems to monitor performance and compliance. > High level of personal organisation, resilience, integrity and self-motivation, with the ability to work autonomously and collaboratively. > Ability to fulfil the travel requirements of the post and work flexibly in line with service need.	> Ability to critically appraise research and apply evidence to practice and education. > Experience of budget/resource management and business planning. > Knowledge of human factors, simulation methodology and quality improvement approaches. > Confidence in building external partnerships and representing the organisation in professional forums.
Other	> Ability and willingness to undergo further appropriate training. > Ability to work under pressure/ tolerate stress within themselves and others. > Ability to travel independently around the Acorns geographical region. > Commitment to equal opportunities.	> To be able to support individuals who express strong emotions

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Behaviours	> Compassionate and child-centered > Emotionally resilient and reflective > Highly motivated and committed to excellence > Collaborative, supportive, and open to innovation > Able to work flexibly to meet service needs	

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Terms And Conditions of Employment

Position:	Lead for Practice Education and Research
Reporting To:	Associate Director of Care
Accountable To:	Director of Care and Deputy CEO
Location:	Nearest Acorns Hospice (Walsall, Birmingham or Worcester), with travel to all sites
Hours:	37.5 hours per week Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm but with some flexibility to do some evenings and weekends if service needs require it.
Salary Range:	Pay Level G £54,060 to £67,740 per annum
Notice:	12 weeks
Holidays:	27 days plus statutory bank holidays
Pension:	Contribution to Group Personal Pension Plan or NHS Pension Scheme.
Life Assurance:	NHS Pension Scheme Life Assurance cover or Acorns Group Life Assurance Scheme

All terms and conditions will be detailed in writing together with Employee/Health & Safety handbook, which must be read and observed.

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