

JOB DESCRIPTION



Job title: Palliative Care IPU Lead / Ward Senior Nurse

Department: In-Patient Unit (IPU)

Responsible to: Clinical Director

Grade: SMH Band 7

Job Purpose

To provide strong leadership and operational management of the Hospice Inpatient Unit (IPU), maintaining a strong clinical presence on the IPU while role modelling high-quality palliative care.

The successful candidate will support and develop the wider team through visible clinical leadership and close collaboration with the Deputy Ward Leads.

Working closely with the Clinical Leadership Team (CLT); and as a member of and with the Clinical Management Team (CMT) to ensure safe coordinated care across the organisation.

To provide direct line management to a team of deputies and support the management of the IPU and service development in line with SMH strategic objectives.

To ensure specialist clinical nursing care, expertise, knowledge, and skill to ensure optimal care, quality, governance and safety of patients and their families.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Key Responsibilities

- Maintain high standards of Professional Practice in line with NMC Code.
- To bring specialist nursing practice, knowledge, skills and experience in palliative and end of life care to IPU.
- To be responsible for day-to-day clinical leadership and operational management of the ward.
- Manage the ward skill mix and establishment on a day-to-day basis, ensuring safe, effective and fair rostering.
- Maintain a high profile across the IPU, undertaking clinical shifts as part of usual role responsibilities.
- To maintain own clinical knowledge and skills through clinical decision making and use of clinical judgement in relation to patient safety and clinical governance.
- To deliver high quality, safe and effective care to patients & their relatives, ensuring staffing levels and competencies are appropriate and meet the needs of the patients/carers and to an appropriate level of skill mix, escalating concerns to the Clinical Director as required.
- Responsible for good governance across the IPU.
- To work with the Clinical Director to implement the SMH Strategy, SMH Policy and Procedures, Staff Competencies and support nurse education and training.
- Line management of the IPU team with direct line management of the Deputy Ward Leads.
- Work closely with the Clinical Admin Team Lead to ensure robust support from the Clinical Coordinators to the IPU – with particular focus on utilising the Clinical Coordinator - IPU role.

JOB DESCRIPTION



- To lead and manage, in partnership with the Human Resource Department, issues of performance, capability or ill health, to undertake delegated part of investigation into disciplinary concerns and/or grievance procedures as appropriate for St. Michael's Hospice.
- Attend SMH IPU related clinical meetings i.e., Multidisciplinary Meeting (MDT), Morbidity and Mortality (M&M), Interprofessional Meeting (IPM), Admission Meeting, Ward Handover, this is not an exhaustive list, attendance at meetings will be delegated by the Clinical Director.
- Active member of Clinical Management Team (CMT), Clinical Governance Group (CGC), Medicine Management Group (MMG), Safeguarding Committee, and Information Governance Group. This is not an exhaustive list, attendance at meetings will be delegated by the Clinical Director.
- To work closely with the Clinical Leadership Team (CLT) to support the highest standards of care being delivered across St. Michael's Hospice services.
- To work with the Quality & Governance Lead to ensure robust governance and compliance of local and national safety and quality metrics. Such as audits, quality indicators, Care Quality Commission (CQC) standards or national Standards.
- To take a lead on and ensure Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures are adhered to and risk is minimised through good staff awareness, clinical and non-clinical. Working with the nominated lead for IPC.
- Good knowledge and understanding of the PSIRF.
- Working with the Quality & Governance Lead, lead incident management on the IPU guided by PSIRF, with regular effective After Action Reviews, supporting the IPU deputies with investigations and their ongoing development in this area.
- To take a lead on medicines management within the IPU responsible for stock control, administration and safe keeping of all medications held on the IPU, working in accordance with standards determined by the Care Quality Commission, NMC standards and legal regulation.
- To investigate and report on medicine administration errors or omissions, reporting controlled drug concerns and incidents to the Controlled Drug Accountable Officer (CDAO).
- Lead the first response to IPU feedback, concerns and complaints, working with the Clinical Director as appropriate.
- Be familiar with policies and guidelines particularly those relating to health and safety at work, governance, medicines management and risk management and to support the review and writing of these as delegated.
- To assist in the writing and update of policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Establish local networks, linking with other practitioners in independent and NHS providers of palliative and end of life care.
- Demonstrate effective communication between clinical and non-clinical teams.

Communication

- To be personally competent with advanced communication and able to advise others. To assess capacity, gain valid informed consent and can work within a legal framework with patients who lack capacity.
- To communicate complex and sensitive information in an understandable form to patients at the end of life, careers, and other staff.
- To demonstrate and use effective communication skills.
- To support staff who may be in distress or requiring support.
- To ensure that you regard the individual customs, values and spiritual beliefs of patients and staff.
- To empower and motivate those around you to constantly strive to improve care and experience for patients and staff.
- Engage with Fundraising, Marketing and Communications to support their work in promoting clinical services to achieve income generation and encourage all staff to do likewise.

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Leadership

- Behave as a leadership role model and continually aspire to the highest clinical care and practice standards.
- Develop a high performing team which is motivated and has clear focus and direction.
- To be clinically present and credible in specialist palliative care and demonstrate confidence in nursing practice and all it can deliver.
- To delegate tasks effectively.
- To provide challenge and questioning as appropriate.
- To address any issues of professional behaviour or attitudes, quality or safety in the moment and report to appropriate line manager.
- To monitor annual leave, sick leave and general wellbeing of the IPU nurses and health care assistants and other members of the team as needed, liaising with the HR Team and relevant team managers/leads as appropriate.
- To ensure that information and records held on paper or electronically are maintained to in line with SMH policies, standards, and professional regulations and relevant data protection legislation.
- To demonstrate patient advocacy through all aspects of care.
- To take an active part in patient case reviews.
- Provide senior cross-cover within the CMT and support other service areas during periods of need or absence.

Education and training

- To have a specialist knowledge across a range of work practices including Achieving Priorities of Care (APOC) and ReSPECT.
- To demonstrate current evidence-based practice and to share this knowledge to ensure delivery of high-quality care.
- To promote a positive research-based approach.
- To support the Nurse Consultant / Education Lead with the delivery of the internal and external education and training programmes, including supporting student placements.
- To ensure there is a culture of reflection and learning through all clinical teams. Support staff development, clinical supervision, audit, and research in clinical practice to ensure high quality services are provided and maintained.
- To take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate clinical / managerial supervision is in place and attended for yourself and team members.

Resource Management

- Awareness of the funding of independent/charity sector.
- IPU budget responsibility. Make effective use of the IPU budget that demonstrates responsiveness, flexibility, efficiency, and creativity.
- Ensure the skill mix and establishment of the unit is efficient.
- 1st line management and responsibility for the IPU budget.
- To use the clinical resources in a timely and effective manner
- To provide timely and accurate activity date and/or quality information, as required by the Clinical Director or wider senior leadership team (SLT)
- To ensure safe and effective use of equipment.
- Ensure safe staffing levels are maintained at all times.
- Lead the recruitment of staff on the IPU.
- Lead staff retention initiatives, fostering a positive workplace culture and implementing effective succession planning to ensure continuity.
- Ensure the Acuity and Dependency Tool is completed on a daily basis and the results collated to be presented at the Clinical Governance Committee.

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- Promote, influence, and develop innovative opportunities to use volunteers to support care and administrative roles throughout your areas of responsibility.

General Responsibilities

- Work to maintain the values, vision and aims of St. Michael's Hospice.
- Additional Duties – In discussion with the line manager undertake work, as and when required, in support of St. Michael's Hospice as an organisation.
- Public Relations – Represent St. Michael's Hospice in the community and public domain as appropriate.
- Undertake all statutory and mandatory training, as required.
- Be conversant with and adhere to St. Michael's Hospice Policies and Procedures.
- This is an outline job description and may be subject to change, according to the needs of the service, in consultation with the post holder.
- Take responsibility for own personal safety and of others whilst at work. You will take appropriate action or report any concerns to address any health and safety issues that you or members of your team may be aware of.
- This job description is an outline of the role and responsibilities. From time to time, due to the needs of the service, we may ask you to flexibly undertake other duties that are consistent with your role and banding, including project work, internal job rotation and absence cover.

Reviewed by:	Karen Drake, Clinical Director	Date:	January 2026
Signed by employee:		Date:	