

Healthcare Support Worker Case Study

Healthcare Assistant and Assistant Practitioner questionnaire

Please tell us your name

Lauren Holland

Tell us about your role, where you work and how long you have been in post and

What qualifications and experience did you have prior to coming into the role?

Role: Assistant Research Practitioner – Great Ormond Street Children’s Hospital

Having worked in healthcare for the last sixteen years, I have had the opportunity to experience many areas of expertise. I began my career within the British Armed Forces, where I worked within a wide range of specialities. This includes, Adult nursing, Paediatrics, Mental Health, Burns, Trauma, Emergency Care and more general ward settings. Upon leaving the British Army I have also been employed in two different Accident and Emergency Departments and I spent time working at my local Children’s Hospice. This setting has enabled me to develop a more holistic approach to care and to be able to utilise my skills working outside of the hospital setting, whilst still acting as an advocate for the unwell child and providing support for their families.

I have been working in The NIHR Clinical Research Facility at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) for the last five years. During this time my role has developed into an Assistant Research Practitioner Role, allowing me to take more responsibility and autonomy in my work. This enabled more leadership in running studies and enhanced my knowledge and understanding of what is required from an Assistant Research Practitioner, working within good clinical practice (GCP) guidelines, protocol adherence, understanding what approvals need to be in place, screening, recruitment and the informed consent process, safety reporting and data entry input within tight time restraints. From here I have been able to go on to manage my own studies, with support and oversight from a registered nurse in Clinical Trial of an Investigational Medical Product (CTIMP) and non CTIMP from the set up phase, and has required me to be competent in communicating with a broad spectrum of Health Care Professionals to ensure safe and expert clinical outcomes for all patients and their families.

Describe a typical working day

At the start of our shift we all do the morning safety checks on the unit. We then have handover and highlight any potential risks and discuss the day ahead as a team. Dependent on which patients are coming in, we will then set up the clinical rooms accordingly. Our patient visits vary in length and can be anything from a few hours to a number of days. Some of the clinical investigations we carry out include ECGs, venepuncture, cannulation, dressing changes and observations to name a few.

When we don't have patients visits for our allocated studies we are communicating with pharmaceutical companies and other sponsors. We will spend time Inputting data, answering queries, following up on our patients care and also screening future eligible patients for the clinical trials. No two days are ever the same!

Describe how you make a difference

I am continuously striving to improve my skills and knowledge therefore providing better care and outcomes for the children, young people and their families.

I engage with patients, their families and my colleagues in an open minded, positive way. I understand the power of relationships, connection and engaging with the world openly. I'm not afraid to get "out there" — connecting with others, sharing my knowledge and talents. I relate well with others and build mutually supportive relationships. I know that positive, supportive and authentic relationships are the foundational building blocks to patient centred care.

- **Did you complete any training to prepare for your role?**

As part of my role I attended the National Institute for Health research (NIHR) Fundamentals of Research Nursing Course. This enabled me to have a good solid foundation to work from with regards to what is expected/required from healthcare professionals working in research and clinical trials. It also enabled me to meet with other professionals from different hospitals and share our experiences.

- **Are you currently undertaking any education/training programmes?**

I am currently undertaking the Edward Jenner leadership Programme, which is enabling me to have a good foundation for inspiring and developing my more junior colleagues, helping to develop them into competent, efficient healthcare professionals. I have also recently attended the Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB) Course to enhance my current skills and knowledge base. I now lead (with senior oversight) on a number of EB clinical trials more efficiently and am able to make my patients visits a more positive experience.

Thinking about your team

- **Describe the support you are given**

As a team we are all very supportive of each other both professionally and on a personal level. We work hard together providing the best outcomes for the patients and families in our care. We also support each other when day to day life proves to be challenging. We often socialise outside of the work place and the unit ensures all team members have access to psychological wellbeing networks and debriefs when required.

- **Do you mentor or support colleagues?**

In my team we all support each other. We come from a broad range of backgrounds and meet regularly to share our knowledge and experiences. We have monthly teaching sessions, where we take it turns to update or teach new skills across the unit. I also currently mentor more junior and new members of the team, enabling them to complete their care certificates, university certificates and their probationary periods successfully.

What are your aspirations for the future?

I intend to continue developing myself professionally and continue working within Research at a more advanced level. I hope to be able to empower the next generation of healthcare workers, sharing my knowledge, expertise, skills and good leadership.

Are you a member of the RCN?

yes

If yes: have you used any of our services?

yes

If yes: do you have any feedback?

The RCN have provided a solid support network for myself and my colleagues across our Trust and I look forward to working with them more in the future.

Thank-you for your participation