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| **Job Specification; Sample Content****Health Care Assistant, Mental Health,** **including Approved Centres (6075)** |
| **The following template provides sample content for the above role.** **These job specifications were released by National HR on 19 September 2023 via HR Memo 047/2023. Please refer to that memo for further details.****Please refer to the latest National Job Specification Template on the HSE Job Specification Repository to create your full and final version and to ensure all sections continue to meet any new mandatory and/or required standards, when creating your version.** |
| **Reporting Relationship** | ***For Example:*** When working in the Nursing area, the post holder will report to the Clinical Nurse Manager 2 or designated officer. The post holder will be Accountable to the Assistant Director of Nursing and the Director of Nursing.The role of the HCA is to support the delivery of patient care under the supervision and direction of qualified nursing personnel (Shannon et al., 2001).Nursing has been defined as "The use of clinical judgement in the provision of care to enable people to improve, maintain, or recover health, to cope with health problems, and to achieve the best quality of life, whatever their disease or disability, until death” (Royal College of Nursing, 2003). The difference between the registered nurse and the health care assistant is in the knowledge that is the basis of the assessment of need and the determination of action to meet the need, plus the clinical judgement inherent in the processes of assessment, diagnosis, prescription and evaluation. |
| **Purpose of the Post**  | ***For Example:*** To assist with the delivery of patient care under the supervision and direction of Nursing or other Professional Staff.“Healthcare assistants provide assistance, support and direct personal care to patients and residents in a variety of healthcare settings such as hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, aged care facilities, as well as community and domestic settings. They generally work in support, or under delegation, direction and supervision, of health professionals. They support multi-disciplinary teams in the delivery of high-quality care.” - International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). |
| **Principal Duties and Responsibilities** | ***For Example:*** The Health Care Assistant (Mental Health) will:* Work in accordance with the principles and values of recovery as described in the National Framework for Recovery for Irish Mental Health Services 2018-2020.
* Ensure that care is carried out in an empathetic manner and that the dignity and spiritual needs of the patient are respected.
* Promote and recognise the patients’ social and cultural dimensions of care and the need for links with their local community.
* Promote a positive health concept with patients and colleagues and contribute to health promotion and disease prevention initiatives of the Health Service Executive

Duties appropriate to the Health Care Assistant, may vary depending on the care setting.The Health Care Assistant role involves:* The duties outlined hereunder
* Any other duties that may be necessary in the context of specific ward situations.

**Core Responsibilities***The Health Care Assistant will:** Carry out baseline clinical observations under delegation of the Nurse in charge; recording of blood pressure, taking of pulse, taking of temperature and urinalysis. Required training module must be completed.
* Assist under the direction of the Registered Nurse in the provision of quality service by promoting and adopting the Health Service Executive’s philosophy of care, working in line with national and locally devised policies and regulations.
* Demonstrate motivation and appreciate the importance of providing a quality service for patients and the public.
* Respect patients/resident, their families and colleagues as individuals showing dignity, courtesy and professionalism at all times.
* Act as an advocate for patients.
* Actively promote the participation of patients in their own care, and encourage as much independence as possible.
* Maintain the confidentiality of all information made available to him / her during the course of his / her work.
* Demonstrate good interpersonal skills and be able to work as part of a team.
* Promote a culture that values diversity and respect in the workplace.

**Quality and Safety***The Health Care Assistant will:** Support the implementation and evaluation of quality standards and improvement initiatives
* Work within own role, adhering to current legislation, policies, procedures protocols and guidelines
* Undertake assigned duties under the direction of a Registered Nurse in such a way as to ensure that care is of a high standard
* Report all complaints in accordance with service policy
* Ensure all actions support the enhancement of a person-centred service and a person-centred culture within the team
* Co-operate with quality reviews /service evaluations and assists with the implementation of any necessary corrective action.

**Health & Safety including Maintaining a Safe Environment :***The Health Care Assistant will:** In accordance with Health and Safety at Work policy, observe all rules relating to Health and Safety and Conduct at Work and to use any equipment provided in a safe and responsible manner.
* Understand and adhere to all relevant HSE policies, guidelines, and procedures, comply with health and safety, infection control and risk management procedures, comply with statutory obligations.
* Report any accidents, near misses, incident or potential incident to the person in charge which may compromise the health and safety of patients / clients / residents, staff or visitors and take appropriate action including completion of near miss / incident forms.
* Attend training courses as required. Only undertake any duty related to patient / client / resident care for which they are trained.
* Maintain a strict code of personal and general hygiene in the workplace as per work schedules and existing policies and procedures.
	+ Present to work wearing the agreed attire, footwear, and identification, having regard to the highest standard of attire and personal hygiene. This includes not having possession of personal mobile phones while delivering patient care.
* Conduct themselves in a manner that ensures safe patient / client care. Participates in maintaining a safe environment for patients, visitors and staff by ensuring vigilance in identifying potential hazards and by taking the necessary steps to remove such hazards.

These steps will include: * + Report broken or unsafe items that need repair and take them out of circulation as required
	+ Move, or assist in moving, equipment and/or furniture as necessary.
	+ Attending to the hygiene (disinfecting and cleaning) of equipment such as I.V. stands, infusion pumps, hoists, beds, patient chairs, commodes or other ward equipment.
	+ Be responsible for the appropriate storage and infection prevention of patient/resident equipment on the ward.
	+ Assist in keeping all ward areas clean and tidy.
	+ Assist in the disposal of clinical waste according to hospital policy.
	+ Washing and making up beds and bed side chairs and table top when necessary.
	+ Prepare ward and bed areas for the reception of new patients.
	+ Returning trays and equipment to proper storage areas.
	+ Attend to spillages when necessary as quickly as possible to prevent accidents.
	+ Cleaning Tasks relate only to the cleaning of equipment that is attached to the patient directly, to ensure that the environment is safely maintained and spillages should be made safe[[1]](#footnote-1)
	+ Be aware of fire risks, and minimise same where possible. Be aware of fire exits, keep free from obstructions, attend mandatory fire training and participate in fire drills. Maintain bed fire sheets on all beds as appropriate, and document monthly.
	+ Escort/transport patients within or outside the hospital when necessary.
	+ Provide support for patients who require enhanced care.
	+ Assist patients/residents with mobility and reduce the risk for patients/residents who are disorientated when moving around the ward.
	+ Assist visitors on the ward to prevent them falling or injuring themselves.
	+ Assist with the safekeeping of patient’s personal property (collaborate with nursing staff in dealing with money, valuables and medication) and document as per hospital policy.

**Education & Training** *The Health Care Assistant will:** Attend induction and mandatory in-service education.
* As directed, participate in the induction of new staff.
* Participate in team based development, education, training and learning.
* Participate in appraisal and the development of a personal development plan in conjunction with their line manager.

**Communication and Teamwork:**Effective communication is a core skill required by Health Care Assistants. These skills will be used to provide a caring service to the public in a courteous and effective manner.*The Health Care Assistant will:** Operate in accordance with the values of the HSE. These values include integrity and openness, respect and support, caring and loyalty to the organisation (Dignity at work Policy).
* Deal courteously with patients, their family, with visitors, other healthcare workers and with anyone whom they come in to contact in the course of their duties.
* Demonstrate a range of listening skills appropriate to the context of patient, visitor and ward situations. Be perceptive in interpreting non-verbal communication. Communicate effectively with patients taking into account their differing levels of ability to understand and their condition.
* Use a range of communication methods to exchange information with nursing staff. Direct all enquiries about a patient’s condition to a member of the nursing staff. This includes both telephone and verbal inquiries. Report to nursing staff any requests from patients or relatives and any complaints of pain and distress expressed by the patients. Complete records accurately.
* Report to nursing staff any changes in the patient’s physical and emotional condition or behaviour using ISBAR or similar communication framework/communication tool as per local policy. Required training in the communication framework/communication tool must be completed.
* Communicate effectively with all grades of staff and disciplines contributing to effective team working. Respect culture and diversity within the team. Strive to foster good working relationships within the team including handling conflict. Work effectively and co-operatively with colleagues in all disciplines. Develop and maintain good interpersonal relationships.
* Participate in and contribute to the team including handovers/meetings /care planning, as appropriate on service related issues. Contribute to the development of a multidisciplinary assessment and care plan, and assist in its implementation and evaluation in consultation with the Nurse/, patient and family as appropriate.
* Participate in maintaining a physical environment that communicates peace, comfort and caring to patients and their families.

The HCA has important obligations in relation to maintaining confidentiality. This applies to information accessed through interactions with patients and their relatives or through interactions with other staff. However, there is also an obligation to report to the nurse/, or other relevant authority any information that may indicate the potential of harm occurring to any person.**Breathing:**Report any signs of distress or change in patients breathing pattern to the Nurse immediately. The Health Care Assistant will assist the Nurse in positioning the patient to assist breathing.*The Health Care Assistant will:** Recognise signs of distressed breathing in patients and report these to the Nurse.
* Assist with positioning the patient to make breathing easier and more effective.
* Locate and bring oxygen-supplying equipment to the bedside as directed by the Nurse.
* Help patients conserve their oxygen supply and reduce their demands for oxygen by positioning personal items such as drinks, tissues and reading material within easy reach of the patient.
* Maintain the ward area in a well ventilated condition, and in the condition perceived by the patient as being most comfortable.
* Maintain a calming and relaxing atmosphere for the patient/resident.

**Eating and Drinking**The Health Care Assistant has a significant contribution to make in helping patients meet their needs for food and drink.In the context of patient care and under the direction of the Nurse/, *The Health Care Assistant will:** Where necessary assist the patient in choosing from the menu and completing the menu card
* Prepare the eating environment by removing any clutter prior to meals and making it as aesthetically pleasant as possible. (for example removing commodes, urinals and sputum containers)
* Assist patients at mealtimes and ensure patients individual needs are met e.g. toilet assistance before and after meals if required and to wash their hands as appropriate
* Assist with feeding or help to patients/residents to eat as directed by the Nurse/.
* Assist patients with cutting or arranging their food so it can be easily eaten.
* Observe the amount of food and liquids consumed by patients who need special monitoring in this area and document appropriately.
* Liaise with the patient and the Nurse/ to source alternative diet if offered meals are not eaten.
* Make patients comfortable after their meals (for example repositioning them or offering opportunities to clean their teeth or dentures)
* Encourage patients to drink plenty of fluids and making this possible by offering refreshing drink frequently.
* Ensure all information is given to the Nurse/ in a timely manner.
* In the absence of catering staff, assist with preparation and serving of meals, nutritional drinks and light snacks in limited circumstances i.e. out of hours or in emergency situations[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Elimination:**The Health Care Assistant will assist with patient/resident elimination needs as appropriate.*The Health Care Assistant will:** Supervise patients in the toilet and bathrooms when this is necessary and appropriate
* Assist patients on bedpans or commodes or assist the Nurse/ in doing this
* Attend to patients post elimination hygiene needs and promote good hand washing.
* Assist the patient/resident with incontinence wear as required.
* Measure and record volume of urine eliminated as directed by nursing staff.
* Record bowel function as directed by nursing staff
* Empty urinals recording volumes as directed
* Empty urine drainage bags and other drainage bags as required and measure volumes and record value as appropriate
* Dispose of used sputum containers
* Taking care of patients clothing which may become soiled
* The Health Care Assistant will strictly adhere to the universal precautions identified in the infection control policy so as to prevent spread of infection when dealing with human waste products.

**Personal Cleansing and Dressing:**The Health Care Assistant contributes to patient comfort and maintenance of personal dignity by assisting them, when necessary with personal and intimate care and dressing activities.These may include;* Bed bathing patients or assisting patients to shower where necessary.
* Helping with or performing oral care
* Shaving patients when necessary
* Caring for patients hair and nails as needed
* Helping patients to dress and groom.
* Carry out assigned and delegated responsibilities involving direct care and all activities of daily living under the supervision of the nurse/ manager i.e. to assist patients maintain standards of personal hygiene, dietary intake, physical, mental health and any other personal needs.

**Controlling Body Temperature:**The HealthCare Assistant will assist in maintaining patient comfort and body temperature within normal ranges in the following ways;* By offering extra blankets or removing them as requested by the patient or by the Nurse
* Taking and recording resident/client’s temperature, as directed by the nurse and report accordingly. Required training must be completed
* All changes in the patient’s temperature and subsequent interventions must be immediately reported to the Nurse/ to alert the possibility of deterioration in the patient’s medical condition

**Mobilising:**The Health Care Assistant will help patients to maintain or regain their independence by assisting them to mobilise in the following ways;* Assist patients with walking when it is appropriate
* Position patients comfortably and in a manner that enables mobility either in bed or on a chair
* Assist with repositioning the patient in bed and documenting same.
* Assist patients with aids that enhance opportunities for mobility in consultation with the nursing staff
* Participate in moving or handling patients as directed and according to hospital policy
* Report all falls, or other untoward events, experienced by patients to the nursing staff.

**End of Life Care:**Addressing issues relating to death and dying constitutes an important part of the Health Care Assistant role. This may include;* Establishing a quiet, comfortable and dignified environment for the dying person and family members to share
* Listening with respect and with empathy to relatives who may wish to chat
* Providing comforting and refreshing drinks or snacks to relatives who may be spending long periods both day and night with their dying family member.
* Providing comfort measures for the person as directed by the nursing staff. These may include frequent small sips of fluid, sponging off a warm forehead or adjusting pillows or bedclothes and assisting the team in the repositioning the patient.
* Assisting with the preparation of the body for its removal to the mortuary
* Organisation of the deceased person’s belongings for their return to the family.

**Collaboration in Other care /care area Activities**The efficiency and effectiveness with which a care provider can meet the needs of its clients depends on how well all the staff work together as a team. The Health Care Assistant is a key member of the care team, and may be requested to undertake some activities that are indirectly related to patient care.They may include:* Checking care /care area stocks and listing those that need reordering
* Restocking as required
* Maintaining orderly storage of supplies

**The above Job Specification is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all duties involved and consequently, the post holder may be required to perform other duties as appropriate to the post which may be assigned to them from time to time and to contribute to the development of the post while in office.** |
| **Sample****Post Specific Requirements** | This section may be used to include educational or experience requirements that are deemed necessary for a specific post in a specific location. Fluency in Irish where it is established that this is an essential requirement in delivering the service.If service requires any post specific requirements/additional qualifications e.g. sector specific QQI level 5 minor module, it has to be listed as desirable so as not to preclude applicants from shortlisting. |
| **Skills, competencies and/or knowledge** | ***For Example:*** ***Demonstrates the following*** **Professional Knowledge*** Demonstrates evidence of experience working in a Health or Caring Service
* Demonstrates awareness of person-centred approach.
* Demonstrates awareness of role of the Nurse.
* Demonstrates knowledge of Health & Safety regulations.
* Demonstrates knowledge of Health Services and role of Health Care Assistant.

**Planning & Organising*** + Demonstrates evidence of effective planning and organising skills.
	+ Demonstrates flexible approach to work.
	+ Demonstrates ability to work on own initiative.
	+ Demonstrates good organisational ability with practical competence.

**Teamwork*** + Demonstrates ability to work as a member of team and make positive contributions to that team.
	+ Demonstrates an understanding of one’s own role and the roles of others within the team.
	+ Demonstrates respect for other team members.
	+ Demonstrates a willingness to participate in change initiatives.
	+ Understands the need to be flexible and actively adapt within ones’ own role.

**Patient/Customer Focus*** + Demonstrates ability to work in a patient/customer focused environment.
	+ Demonstrates evidence of ability to empathise with and treat patients, babies, relatives and colleagues with dignity and respect.
	+ Demonstrates an understanding of the diversity and cultural and ethnic needs of the service users.

**Communication & Interpersonal Skills*** Demonstrates effective communication skills both written and verbal.
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1. This was agreed upon at the HCA Programme Oversight Group meeting (August 2023).

In the absence of dedicated cleaning staff, be prepared to assist as necessary in cleaning of the service area, as identified by local management. This should include, where required, cleaning of equipment, bed making and dealing with linen etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This was agreed at the HCA Programme Oversight Group meeting (Jan 2023), based on the following 3 considerations

Compassionate Care

As appropriate to care model & settings.

Assist/shared responsibility of all staff involved in patient care [↑](#footnote-ref-2)