**Assistant Psychologist**

Salary: £19,000

Reports to: Clinical Psychologist or Forensic Psychologist

**Job Description**

**Purpose and summary of job:**

To support qualified psychologists in the delivery and evaluation of the clinical psychology service. To thereby help understand, prevent and ameliorate psychological distress and disorder and improve the mental health and well-being of students.

**Working Environment**

The post holder will work with children and young people with high and low functioning autism with or without learning disabilities, challenging behaviour and mental health problems. The post holder will work within a specialist education service for children and young people and will work alongside education and care staff as part of a MDT.

**Main Duties and Responsibilities**

1. Supports qualified psychologists in the delivery of clinical services:
2. Provide psychological assessment interventions as required. A particular emphasis will be on the assessment and management of challenging behaviour with students with autistic spectrum disorder and learning disability. Attends MDT student reviews, completes outcome measurements and care planning exercises for each student.
3. Governance, audit, research and clinical administrative activities, collecting, collating and analysing data, writing and presenting reports and assisting in project development. Uses IT equipment and software as required, including statistical and database spreadsheet
4. Plans and organises teaching/training programmes and undertakes/contributes to teaching and training activities as required. Contributes to group wide research projects.
5. Participates in personal appraisal and continuing professional development activities as agreed with psychology line manager, including general training required in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Cambian Group.
6. Draws on a knowledge base commensurate with a good honours degree in psychology and eligibility for graduate membership of the BPS. Maintains the professional standards of psychology as a profession and is aware of HPC regulatory processes.

**Clinical:**

*Under the clinical supervision of a qualified psychologist:*

1. Undertakes assessments of neuropsychological status and function, personality, beliefs, attitudes, behaviour, emotional function, other relevant psychological characteristics and dimensions and factors relevant to the development, maintenance and understanding of the client’s difficulties, using standardised psychometric instruments, protocol based assessment tools, self-report measures, rating scales, direct and indirect structured observations and structured and semi-structured interviews as required. Utilise assessment techniques directly with clients and collects information from family members and others involved in the client’s care as appropriate.
2. Scores, analyses, interprets and reports on psychological assessments undertaken with clients and others.
3. Assists in the formulation of the client’s difficulties and in the planning and delivery of care plans involving the psychological treatment and/or management of the client’s problems.
4. Delivers therapeutic interventions defined by protocol, for individual clients and for families, including, for example, planned programmes of CBT or other appropriate psychological interventions.
5. Assists in the planning, development, co-ordination and delivery of therapeutic care plans, including for example assessment and management of challenging behaviour, behavioural plans to manage challenging behaviour, group approaches to the management of anxiety, stress, or anger, psycho-educational group approaches to the understanding and self-management of symptoms, and other protocol based group interventions. Acts as co-therapist with qualified psychologist, other Assistant Practitioners or other designated clinician and as appropriate runs groups in accordance with agreed protocols.
6. When completing clinical duties, receives, obtains and communicates highly complex and sensitive clinical and personal information, sometimes in emotionally charged or otherwise challenging circumstances, when there may be constraints on the motivation, cooperation, understanding or acceptance of the service users involved or their families.
7. Collaborates with other members of the MDT, education and care staff in care reviews in the context of the Care Programme Approach and other relevant clinical systems.

**Teaching, training, supervisory, consultative/advisory**

*Under the clinical supervision of a qualified psychologist:*

1. Develops and provides programmes of staff training for members of the MDT, assisting in the planning and organisation of lectures and workshops..
2. Provides occasional presentations on relevant areas of work to other Assistant Practitioners within the Cambian Group and to other members of the psychology service.
3. Provides support and advice to other members of the MDT (e.g. nursing, OT, SLT staff) using psychologically informed assessment methodologies and treatment interventions as part of a client’s agreed care plan.
4. Policy, Service Development, Service/Resource Management, Recruitment and Professional Leadership

*Under the clinical supervision of a qualified psychologist:*

1. Designs, implements and evaluates of service development projects within the service as required.
2. Attends meetings in which service developments are planned and discussed, contributing information as appropriate and agreed with line manager and reporting back where necessary.
3. Co-ordinates work of undergraduates and non-graduate volunteers attached to the service.
4. Uses, transports and storage of material resources as allocated (test materials and equipment, books, stationery and IT equipment).

**Research and Service Evaluation**

*Under the clinical supervision of a qualified psychologist:*

1. R&D activity in support of innovative and evaluative research programmes relevant to the needs of the service.
2. Literature searches and reviews, particularly in respect of relevant clinical evidence, and provides summaries and reports that help clinical psychologists develop and deliver evidence-based practice in their individual work and in their work with other team members.
3. Designs and implements audit and research projects.
4. Collects research data using methods and procedures specified in relevant protocols.
5. Analyses data and produces/assists in the production of audit and research reports and summaries, using statistical procedures, statistical software (e.g. SPSS) and other information technology and software (including word processing, spreadsheet and databases) as appropriate.

**Professional Development and Practice**

1. Observes professional codes of practice of the BPS/HPC, Cambian Group policies and procedures and terms and conditions of employment.
2. Undertakes actions necessary for CPD.

**General Group Conditions and Expectations**

**Confidentiality**

It is a condition of employment that staff do not disclose any information obtained in the course of their duties other than to those entitled to receive it. The post holder must ensure that the confidentiality of personal data remains secure and the terms of the Data Protection Act and relevant Group policies are met in respect of information held.

**This job description is indicative only and may be revised from time to time, and not less than annually, in consultation with the post holder and in the light of changing service demands, service priorities and other relevant circumstances and the post-holders personal appraisal. The post holder may also be required to provide cover in other areas following appropriate discussion.**

**Person Specification**

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|  | **ESSENTIAL** | **DESIRABLE** | **HOW TESTED** |
| **Training and qualifications** | An upper second class honours degree or higher in psychology.  Entitlement to graduate membership of the British Psychological Society. | Further post graduate training in relevant areas of professional psychology, mental health practice and/or research design and analysis. | Evidence of examination results |
| **Experience** | Experience of work with people with autistic spectrum disorder (high and low functioning), mental health problems or disabilities, or other relevant problems or disabilities (e.g. learning disabilities, organic impairment).  At least one year’s previous experience as an Assistant Psychologist, Assistant Practitioner, Research Psychologist in an applied clinical setting or qualified member of a relevant health care profession. | Paid work in a setting providing direct care.  Experience of working with children and young people with challenging behaviour and autism (high and low functioning).  Experience of working in a multidisciplinary team with a CAMHS setting. | Interview/  application form/ references |
| **Knowledge**  **and skills** | High level interpersonal and communication skills (written and verbal) including an ability to work and effectively communicate complex or sensitive information in highly emotive and emotionally charged settings involving conflict and significant personal distress.  When communicating with students, carers and colleagues, has ability to obtain and convey highly sensitive, complex or disputed information in a manner that addresses psychological resistance to/acceptance of potentially threatening information as well as barriers to understanding.  An awareness and understanding of the needs and difficulties of people with autism and disabilities and of contemporary issues in the field.  An ability to link and apply psychological theory, principles, understanding and knowledge to applied practice within a mental health context  An awareness and understanding of the differential needs of people from black and minority ethnic communities and from other minority groups and of the service issues arising within a multi-cultural urban area.  Ability to respond safely to physical aggression, drawing on training in de-escalation and breakaway where provided.  Awareness of boundary issues between professionals and between clients and psychologists.  Capacity to administer complex psychometric tests and to use psychological equipment in accordance with standardised timing, stimulus presentation and response monitoring requirements.  An understanding of statistical analysis commensurate with an honours degree in psychology. | Experience of collecting research data, including questionnaire design and interviewing.  Experience using microcomputers and associated software for purposes of data analysis and reporting, including databases and statistical programmes such as SPSS.  An ability to write articulate and comprehensible reports, letters and other correspondence.  Current driving licence and car/motorbike owner.  An interest in working with people with high and low functioning autism with or without learning disability and challenging behaviour | Interview/  application form/ references |
| **Personal** | An ability to interact effectively with staff from all disciplines.  An ability to interact and to build and sustain relationships with people with mental health problems and associated disabilities.  An ability to work independently, reliably, consistently and with initiative (seeking guidance when necessary) in circumstances where work is managed and objectives are agreed and reviewed at regular intervals.  Adaptable and able to work flexibly when required (e.g. in the light of changing service priorities).  Capacity for tolerating frustration, change and high levels of demand with an ability to work effectively under pressure.  Capacity to attend to and concentrate on clinical and research related information on a frequent basis (e.g. when undertaking client assessments or analysing statistical data) and to concentrate for prolonged periods of time on an at least occasional basis (e.g. when undertaking psychometric assessment).  Capacity to frequently sit in constrained positions for client assessment and therapy.  A commitment to the involvement of service users and carers on the development and delivery of mental health and other care services.  Willingness to travel between sites within the Group as required. | An interest in working with young people with high and low functioning autism with or without learning disability and challenging behaviour | Interview/  application form/  references |
| **Other** | An ability to accept and use supervision appropriately and effectively. | A desire to explore a career in professional psychology | Interview/  application form/ references |

Jobholder ……………..……………..……..…. Signed ……….......……….…….…..…. Date: ……………….

Manager …………..…………....…..………. Signed ……….….………….……………. Date: …..…….………