

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. JOB IDENTIFICATION

Job Title:	Specialty Doctor In Palliative Medicine
Responsible to:	Consultant in Palliative Medicine
Department(s):	Medical Team
Last Updated:	May, 2025

2. JOB PURPOSE

The **Specialty Doctor in Palliative Medicine** will play a key role in delivering **high-quality, person-centred care** within **St Vincent's Hospice**. Working as part of a **multidisciplinary team**, the postholder will provide **medical support** to patients with **complex palliative care needs** in the **Inpatient Unit**, as well as supporting our **community and outpatient services**.

The role involves conducting **holistic assessments, managing symptoms**, and ensuring **compassionate end-of-life care**, in line with **best practices** and the **hospice's values**. The Specialty Doctor will work closely with the **Consultant in Palliative Medicine, Director of Care and Quality, Care and Quality teams**, and **allied health professionals** to ensure a **seamless, integrated approach** to patient and family support.

In addition to **clinical duties**, the postholder will contribute to **education, training, and quality improvement initiatives**, helping to develop **palliative care services** and supporting **professional development** within the hospice and **wider healthcare community**. They will also play an active role in **governance structures**, including participation in **patient safety sub-groups**, to support **continuous service improvement** and the **highest standards of care**.

3. DIMENSIONS OF THE ROLE

Key Responsibilities

Clinical Care & Patient Management

- Provide **expert palliative medical care** across the **Inpatient Unit, Outpatient Services, and Community settings**, ensuring high standards of **symptom management and holistic support**.
- Work collaboratively with the **Consultant, Specialist in Palliative Medicine, and other hospice doctors** to deliver high-quality medical care to patients at St Vincent's Hospice.
- Undertake **ward rounds in the 8-bedded inpatient unit (IPU)** as per the agreed work plan, ensuring comprehensive clinical review and management of patients.

- Conduct **holistic medical assessments** for new admissions, developing and implementing appropriate treatment and care plans.
- Engage in **future care planning**, symptom control, and complex decision-making in collaboration with patients, families, and the multidisciplinary team (MDT).
- Provide **specialist medical advice and support** to colleagues, including **nursing staff, allied health professionals, GPs, and hospital teams**, ensuring effective coordination of patient care.
- Participate in **MDT meetings**, including the **weekly SVH Inpatient Unit MDT Meeting, Community MDT Meeting, and/or RAH Hospital PCT MDT Meeting**, as per job plan availability.
- Consult with patients in the **Supportive Care Clinic (in person or virtually)** and conduct home visits when required to ensure accessible specialist care.
- Offer **telephone advice** to healthcare professionals, including GPs, hospital doctors, and district nurses, on palliative care management and symptom control.
- Communicate effectively with patients' **relatives and carers**, providing support and information regarding care plans and clinical decisions.
- Complete all necessary **clinical administration, documentation, and handovers**, ensuring seamless continuity of care across services.

Education & Professional Development

Management Responsibilities

- **To participate in annual appraisal and revalidation**, ensuring submission of relevant documentation (e.g. Form 4) to maintain an up-to-date staff file within the hospice.
- To comply with all **relevant hospice policies and procedures**, ensuring adherence to professional and organisational standards.
- To actively engage in the **clinical governance and audit programme**, contributing to quality improvement initiatives within the hospice.
- To take a lead role in **agreed areas of service development** on behalf of the medical team, such as education, research, or policy development.

Teaching Responsibilities

- To participate in the **teaching and supervision** of medical students, junior doctors, and other healthcare professionals undertaking placements at the hospice.
- To contribute to the development and delivery of the **hospice's internal education programme**, supporting the professional growth of all staff.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- To maintain **up-to-date knowledge and skills** in line with the expectations for a Specialty Doctor in Palliative Medicine, actively seeking opportunities for further development.
- To be registered with an appropriate **Royal College (e.g. Physicians or General Practitioners) or via SOAR**, ensuring an up-to-date record of CPD credits.
- To participate in **internal education and training events**, including mandatory and statutory training.

- To attend **external educational events and conferences** as agreed with the Consultant in Palliative Medicine, ensuring continuous learning and adherence to best practices.

Service Development & Quality Improvement

- Engage in **clinical governance, audit, and research** to support ongoing improvement in palliative care delivery.
- Contribute to the **development of policies, protocols, and clinical guidelines**, ensuring safe and effective patient care aligned with national standards.
- Work collaboratively to **identify and implement service innovations** that enhance patient experience and operational efficiency.

Teamwork & Leadership

- Actively participate in the **multidisciplinary team**, fostering an environment of collaboration, respect, and shared decision-making.
- Demonstrate **leadership in clinical practice**, supporting staff development and service enhancement initiatives.
- Represent St Vincent's Hospice in external meetings and professional networks, contributing to the advancement of **palliative and end-of-life care**.

On-Call & Emergency Support

- To participate in the **first on-call rota** for the hospice, providing medical cover outside of routine working hours.
- To attend the hospice on **Saturday and Sunday mornings** when on call and conduct **ward round of inpatients**, with reviews on Sundays as required by nursing staff.
- To be available by **telephone during the on-call period**, offering **clinical advice** to hospice nursing staff and, where appropriate, providing guidance to external healthcare professionals on palliative care matters.
- To attend the hospice to **review acutely unwell patients** out of hours, following discussion with the nursing team.
- To assess and admit **urgent patient referrals** where clinically appropriate.
- To **liaise with the on-call consultant** for additional support or guidance as needed.

Volunteers

The hospice benefits from the support of a dedicated team of **volunteers** who contribute to various aspects of service delivery. If a volunteer is assigned to assist you in your role, you will retain full **responsibility** for ensuring that all tasks are completed with **accuracy, efficiency, and in accordance with required standards**.

You will also be expected to maintain **clear and effective communication** with the volunteer, providing appropriate guidance and support. Additionally, you must remain **mindful of your responsibility for their health, safety, and wellbeing**, ensuring they work within a **safe and supportive environment** in line with hospice policies.

This job description is not exhaustive. It merely acts as a guide and may be amended to meet the changing requirements of the charity at any time after discussion with the post holder(s).

Job Plan

6.5 programmed activities per week (24 hours Monday to Wednesday, plus 0.5 PAs for weekend on-call ward round commitment) with a 1 in 5 non-resident on-call (4% supplement).

Activities are categorised according to those recommended for NHS Job Planning for Consultants and other Career Grade staff:

PA – Programmed Activity (1 PA = 4 hours normal time; 3 hours premium)

DCC – Direct Clinical Care

SPA – Supporting Professional Activity

DCC will include activities that directly involve assessing/managing patients (e.g. ward rounds, clinics, home visits, meetings with patients/families), and also the clinical administration which directly supports those activities (e.g. documenting in an EPR, clinical letters, completion of eMCCDs etc.).

SPA includes core activities such as preparation for appraisal/revalidation and CPD, but also additional activities agreed such as education/teaching, audit, research etc.

The following is a summary of the weekly timetable – please note that this may vary from day to day and week to week depending on the clinical demands at the time.

Monday (am):

DCC - Handover & Triage Meetings: 0.125 PA

DCC - Ward Round: 0.875 PA

Monday (pm):

DCC – Variable Clinical (IPU, Outpatient or Community): 0.75 PA

DCC – Clinical Admin: 0.25 PA

Tuesday (am):

DCC – Handover & Triage Meetings: 0.125 PA

DCC – Ward Round: 0.875 PA

Tuesday (pm)

DCC – Inpatient Unit MDT: 0.25 PA

DCC – Variable Clinical (IPU, Outpatient/Community): 0.5 PA

DCC – Clinical Admin: 0.25 PA

Wednesday (am)

DCC – Handover & Triage Meetings: 0.125 PA

DCC – Variable Clinical (usually Outpatient/Community): 0.875

Wednesday (pm)

DCC – Variable Clinical: 0.25 PA

DCC – Clinical Admin: 0.25 PA

SPA – Variable (e.g. Core, Audit, Education etc.): 0.5 PA

4. ROLE OF ORGANISATION

Our Vision

St. Vincent's Hospice is a charitable organisation at the heart of the community, offering specialist care and services to all those affected by life-shortening illness; we are known as "the little hospice with the big heart".

Care for all is at the heart of everything we do. We achieve this by:

- Being passionate about delivering high quality palliative care and support;
- Working with patients, families and those closest to them to ensure that care is right for everyone, every time;
- Having appropriately skilled teams who are able to work in home, hospice and other settings;
- Ensuring we have the necessary funds to maintain and develop services;
- Using our influence and expertise to shape the development of palliative care locally and nationally.

5. (a) EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY

- Computer/Laptop
- Telephone Systems including telephone conferencing
- Mobile Phone
- Multifunction Device (Printer/Photocopier/Scanner)
- Familiarity/experience of using the range of clinical equipment as appropriate

6. (b) SYSTEMS

- Ensure **compliance** with the **Data Protection Act, UK GDPR, Caldicott Principles**, and all relevant **local policies** regarding **confidentiality, data security, and access to clinical records**.
- Access and update **patient clinical records (both electronic and paper-based)** and utilise **NHS IT systems** (e.g. Trakcare, Clinical Portal, SCI Gateway) in accordance with **GMC, St Vincent's Hospice (SVH), and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde (NHSGGC) guidelines**.
- Effectively use and maintain **handover and triage documents, rota coordination systems, and audit/reporting tools**, ensuring accurate record-keeping and seamless clinical operations.

7. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW OF WORK

The post holder works within clearly defined occupational policies, protocols, procedures, and codes of conduct, **with** advice and support **available from the** Consultant in Palliative Medicine, Specialist in Palliative Medicine, **and** Director of Care and Quality **as needed. The workload is** demand-led, **and day-to-day** prioritisation **is largely** self-directed, **driven by** service needs **and** St. Vincent's Hospice strategic priorities.

The post holder is responsible for highlighting areas where learning and development **are required.** Performance **is formally reviewed, with** objective setting **conducted by the** Consultant in Palliative Medicine, **in accordance with** Hospice performance management arrangements. Regular reviews **of workload and performance also take place. The post holder undergoes an** annual appraisal **and** 5-yearly revalidation **through the** NHSGGC Medical Appraisal Systems **and** Responsible Offer. **Additionally, annual** SVH organisational appraisal/job planning **occurs with the** Consultant in Palliative Medicine.

8. DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS

The post holder will **prioritise tasks** daily, making **judgements** concerning their own working day and using **initiative** where appropriate. They are required to comply with **Hospice Policies and Procedures.**

The post holder has responsibility for ensuring that all their own activities in relation to **patient information** are carried out in line with relevant **legislation** and **policies**, including the **Information Governance Policy** and **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).**

The post holder takes **responsibility for own decisions**, supported by the **Consultant in Palliative Medicine** and **Specialist in Palliative Medicine** and when necessary, the **Director of Care and Quality**, regarding the **medical treatment** of patients referred to St. Vincent's Hospice. They act **independently**, planning and generating their own workload within their **competence**, being aware of their own **limitations** and appropriately asking for support from the Consultant/Specialist/Director of Care and Quality when required.

The post holder makes **complex clinical decisions** and uses **professional judgement** and **expertise** to determine the relevant course of action for the **coordination of seamless care.** They also act to support the decision-making of other **doctors** and **multidisciplinary team members** working within the hospice. The post holder adheres to **St Vincent's policies**, procedures, and guidelines, ensuring **compliance** within their area of responsibility.

9. MOST CHALLENGING/DIFFICULT PARTS OF THE JOB

- **Prioritising Competing Demands and Workload:** The role requires effective prioritisation of competing demands daily within a **challenging clinical environment**. This includes balancing patient care needs with administrative and operational tasks, which often require rapid decision-making.
- **Managing Multiple Operational and Strategic Demands:** The post holder must juggle a variety of **operational** and **strategic demands**, ensuring that both patient care and hospice objectives are met. This requires the ability to remain adaptable and organised while fulfilling the needs of the service and hospice leadership.
- **Emotional Intelligence and Communication:** The role demands a high level of **sensitivity, empathy**, and **excellent communication skills** to support patients, their families, and staff. This is especially important within this complex specialty, where patient conditions can change rapidly and where difficult conversations regarding end-of-life care are common.
- **Adaptability in Emergent Situations:** The ability to **prioritise and shift focus quickly** in response to **emergent situations** is critical, especially in a fast-paced environment where unexpected medical crises or operational demands can arise at any time.
- **Leadership and Team Dynamics:** As part of a multidisciplinary team, the post holder must **respond, actively participate**, and at times, **direct others**, ensuring a coordinated and cohesive approach to patient care. This can involve both clinical leadership and emotional support for the team in stressful circumstances.
- **Managing Stressful and Emotional Situations:** The post holder will frequently manage **stressful situations**, particularly when dealing with **distressed and/or vulnerable people** who may be **extremely ill or dying**. These situations require not only clinical expertise but also emotional resilience and a compassionate approach.
- **Addressing Personal and Professional Concerns of Staff and Volunteers:** There will be **frequent exposure** to the **personal and professional concerns** of staff and volunteers. Managing these concerns with **sensitivity** and **confidentiality** is essential to maintaining a healthy work environment and ensuring staff well-being.
- **Potential Exposure to Aggression:** The role may involve **potential exposure to verbal or physical aggression**, particularly in highly emotional or stressful situations, which requires a calm demeanour and the ability to defuse tensions while maintaining professionalism.
- **Physical Exposure to Body Fluids:** There may be **occasional exposure to body fluids**, which requires adherence to health and safety protocols and personal protective equipment, while managing patient care with dignity and respect.
- **Working in a 24-Hour Environment:** The hospice operates within a **24-hour environment**, meaning the post holder may need to provide **out-of-hours care** and be available for **on-call duties**. This can lead to unpredictable work schedules and the need for flexibility in always responding to patient and operational needs.
- **Maintaining Work-Life Balance:** Given the **emotionally and physically demanding nature** of the specialty, finding a **work-life balance** that allows for a sustainable long-term career in palliative care can be challenging. The post holder must be proactive in managing personal well-being to prevent burnout and maintain a fulfilling career in this sensitive field.

10. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The post holder communicates, negotiates, motivates, influences, and encourages close working relationships with a wide variety of individuals, including patients, their families, staff, stakeholders, and volunteers.

Key relationships include:

- **CEO**
- **Director of Care and Quality**
- **Consultant in Palliative Medicine**
- **Medical Team**
- **Care and Quality Teams**
- **Staff and volunteers across the whole organization**
- **External stakeholders**, including colleagues outside of St Vincent's Hospice
- **Scrutinising bodies** such as **Health Improvement Scotland**

The post holder will be responsible for **receiving and disseminating information** to patients and families, particularly when they are emotionally distressed, and ensuring clear, compassionate communication in these sensitive circumstances.

They will also **communicate with a wide range of professionals** to ensure the complexities of patient care are articulated effectively, working collaboratively to achieve the highest standard of **seamless care**.

Anticipating **barriers to communication**, the post holder will proactively apply advanced **inter-professional skills** to inform decision-making, resolve complex issues, **influence others**, and manage **continuous change**.

Additionally, the post holder will **participate in both formal and informal education programs**, demonstrating **excellent presentation skills** and contributing to the ongoing development of the team.

11. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS OF THE JOB

Physical Demands:

- The role may require long periods of **standing, walking**, and **sitting** in clinical settings, especially during patient rounds or while managing multiple tasks.
- Occasional exposure to **body fluids** necessitates the use of personal protective equipment and adherence to infection control protocols.
- There may be a need to work **out-of-hours**, including nights and weekends, requiring flexibility and the ability to manage workload in a 24-hour service environment.

Mental Demands:

- The role requires high levels of **concentration** and **decision-making**, often in complex, time-sensitive situations where clinical judgments must be made quickly and accurately.

- Managing **competing priorities** and **workload** in a high-pressure environment can be mentally challenging, especially when balancing patient care, administrative tasks, and leadership responsibilities.
- The post holder must remain **focused** and **resilient** when dealing with difficult cases and complex medical issues, often requiring deep clinical expertise and critical thinking.
- **Multitasking** is frequent, requiring quick transitions between different tasks, clinical decisions, and patient care.

Emotional Demands:

- The role involves regular **exposure to distressed, vulnerable, or dying patients**, requiring the post holder to offer both **emotional support** and **clinical care** with sensitivity and empathy.
- There may be emotional challenges in dealing with **patients' families**, especially when delivering difficult news or supporting those who are grieving.
- The post holder will frequently encounter **distressed staff and volunteers** who may need support in their professional and personal challenges, adding another layer of emotional responsibility.
- **Dealing with loss** and the suffering of patients can lead to **emotional strain**, requiring resilience and the ability to process difficult situations.

Environmental Demands:

- Working in a **clinical environment** can expose the post holder to **stressful and sometimes hazardous conditions**, such as **unpredictable** patient needs, exposure to infections, and the emotional strain of the work.
- The post holder must be able to adapt to a **dynamic** and sometimes **disruptive environment**, where situations can change rapidly, and priorities must shift quickly.
- **Teamwork** and **collaboration** are essential in this environment, and the post holder must be able to navigate complex relationships within a multidisciplinary team, balancing input from various professionals with the overall goals of patient care.
- The hospice operates in a **24-hour environment**, meaning the post holder must be flexible and prepared to adapt to shifts that may interfere with personal time or create physical fatigue.

12. KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB

- **MBChB, MBBS**, or an equivalent primary medical qualification that is recognised by the General Medical Council (GMC).
- Must be **fully registered** with the **General Medical Council (GMC)** with a **licence to practice**.
- Evidence of **satisfactory appraisal** and **revalidation** through the GMC's systems, ensuring ongoing professional competence and up-to-date medical practice.
- Proof of **right to work** in the UK, including any relevant immigration status or documentation.
- A minimum of **4 years' clinical experience** (full-time or aggregate) since primary qualification, with a broad foundation in medical practice and patient care.

- Experience in **Palliative Medicine**, with particular reference to **inpatient** and **community settings**, is highly desirable. This includes the management of patients with life-limiting conditions and end-of-life care.
- Comprehensive evidence of **continuing professional development** and a commitment to **lifelong learning**, demonstrating engagement with educational activities to keep skills and knowledge up to date.
- Ability to demonstrate **excellent leadership skills, influencing skills**, and the capacity to **generate own workload**, including the management of complex cases and leading multidisciplinary teams effectively.
- Proven ability to work **independently**, exercising sound clinical judgment, as well as within a **multi-professional team**, contributing to collaborative patient care and fostering strong working relationships with colleagues across different disciplines.

OTHER

Must hold a valid driving license and have access to a car and be able to undertake occasional travel within Renfrewshire and North Ayrshire.

13. JOB DESCRIPTION AGREEMENT

This job description is a general outline of the above post and it is not exhaustive. This job description is subject to periodic review with the post holder. Duties may change in line with the service changes and of the post holder's own personal development.

I agree that this is an accurate reflection of the duties involved in my current role in St. Vincent's hospice.

Job Holder's Signature

Date:

Head of Department Signature

Date: