

## Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP)

### Management Statement

Section	Contents
1	Definitions
2	Context
3	Overall accountability and leadership
4	Professional accountability and leadership
5	AMHP terms and conditions
6	Allocation of AMHP workforce responsibilities
7	Community AMHP duty definition
8	Community AMHP commitments
9	Locum AMHPs
10	AMHP Sabbatical
11	Ending AMHP approval

## 1 Definitions

**AMHP** Approved Mental Health Professional

**GCC** Gloucestershire County Council

**LSSA** Local Social Services Authority

**LA** Local Authority

**GHC** Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust

## 2 Context

In 2018, Gloucestershire AMHP service delivery moved from a 3 locality rota model to a single AMHP hub and spoke model. This change was needed for a number of reasons including and not limited to;

- a shortfall in numbers of practising AMHPs in the Local Authority to meet the increasing demand for Mental Health Act (MHA) work
- the projected turnover of AMHPs over the next 10 years
- Challenges in recruiting and training in both the daytime AMHP service and Gloucestershire's Emergency Duty Team (EDT) who fulfil the AMHP function outside of office hours, weekends and bank holidays.

Employed by GHC, a team of 5 fulltime band 7 AMHPs, based in a central hub cover an extended hours service from 0900-2300 Monday through to Friday with EDT covering AMHP responsibilities outside of these hours.

The AMHP Hub is supported by a number of community based AMHPs who undertake their AMHP duties alongside their substantive employment. The shift coordinator allocates referrals to community AMHP's on their duty day (see AMHP Service Operational Policy)

With support from their line/ team manager of their substantive post, community AMHPs contribute to a countywide rota for a minimum of 3 duty days per calendar month.

The AMHP qualification is not an essential requirement for any substantive contract of employment in GHC except for those employed as a fulltime AMHP in the hub.

Non hub based AMHPs receive an AMHP allowance in recognition of this additional role and skill base when undertaking the role of a community AMHP (see role descriptor for community AMHP).

*GHC will be providing a 24/7 AMHP service effective from July 2019*

### **3 Overall accountability and leadership**

The Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) is accountable on behalf of the Local Social Services Authority (LSSA) for the Statutory requirement to provide a 24/7 AMHP service. Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) has been commissioned Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (GHC) to deliver this function on their behalf.

Paragraph 14.35 of the Mental Health Act Code of Practice 2015 states that:

*Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that sufficient AMHPs are available to carry out their roles under the Act, including assessing patients to decide whether an application for detention should be made. To fulfil their statutory duty, local authorities should have arrangements in place in their area to provide a 24-hour service that can respond to patients' needs.*

The Director of Quality and Performance has the executive lead in GHC for the AMHP Service. The AMHP Lead (GHC), under the supervision of the Head of Profession for Social Care (GHC), is accountable for coordinating, planning and monitoring AMHP service arrangements. This accountability will include the provision of specific service issues and regular position statements reports.

GHC is accountable for coordinating, planning and maintaining AMHP service arrangements.

### **4 Professional accountability and leadership**

The AMHP Lead will be accountable for the professional standards and leadership of the AMHP service.

The AMHP Lead will ensure, among other tasks, professional consultation for all AMHP's approved by or authorised to act on behalf of GCC. This will include AMHP's employed by GHC, GCC, Locum and Agency AMHPs.

The AMHP Lead will ensure that all AMHPs have access to AMHP specific training and supervision.

All AMHPs must ensure that they are engaging in supervision according to GHC policy and that there is a record of these supervision sessions. This includes AMHP specific supervision with a hub AMHP on a minimum of 4 occasions per year.

## **5 AMHP Terms and Conditions**

AMHPs employed within GHC will have two employment contracts.

The substantive contract will be with GHC. The substantive post determines the banding pay scale of the employee and is unrelated to the AMHP role unless the employee is a hub AMHP. The AMHP employee will be band 6 or above or in an equivalent position in the local authority.

There will be a specific AMHP contract from GCC for those AMHPs approved to act on behalf of GCC when undertaking AMHP duties as defined in the MHA 1983/2007.

For those AMHPs in GCC EDT service the role of the AMHP remains an essential element of their substantive contract and therefore will have one contract of employment from GCC as their employer. *When GHC deliver the 24/7 AMHP service there will be no requirement for EDT staff to practice as an AMHP.*

The GCC AMHP specific contract indemnifies each AMHP by GCC liability insurance policy for any claims made against them that have resulted from their negligence whilst acting on behalf of that organisation.

All AMHPs employed either by GHC or GCC on a zero hours contract are also protected (see Staff Bank AMHPs paragraph 11)

By agreeing to the terms and conditions described in the GCC contract, AMHP's are agreeing to undertake their duties as outlined in either the Hub AMHP job description, or community AMHP role descriptor, to meet the needs of the service.

When undertaking AMHP duties, the AMHP must have on their persons their AMHP warrant card issued at point of approval to verify their identity and authority to practice as an AMHP when challenged.

## **6 AMHP Approval**

Following successful completion of AMHP training as a newly qualified AMHP, the AMHP Lead shall follow Gloucestershire's AMHP approval and re-approval policy (effective July 2019). This policy also provides guidance for those AMHP's re-approving with Gloucestershire, AMHP's joining from another Local Authority and those AMHP's returning to practice.

## **7 Allocation of AMHP workforce responsibilities**

All AMHPs approved to act on behalf of Gloucestershire LSSA are required to discharge their AMHP duties across the geographical area of Gloucestershire.

This includes considering requests for service users ordinarily resident in Gloucestershire including those placed out of area and for service users arriving from other Local Authorities within Gloucestershire (s13(2) MHA 1983/2007).

It should be emphasised that AMHP services are provided to the patients, not the hospitals themselves. Therefore LSSA's may not charge for the provision of AMHP services, even when requested by independent hospitals. (MHA 2007 New Roles' published in Oct 2008 by NIMHE (p.12).

It is essential all AMHP's have the ability to travel across Gloucestershire.

## **8 Community AMHP Duty Definition**

See role descriptor for community AMHP- all community based AMHPs must adhere to the community AMHP role descriptor. See Appendix 1.

Evidence of ongoing support from line manager to the commitment of Community AMHP role is required for each community AMHP. See Appendix 2 Information for Line Managers of Community AMHP's.

## **9 AMHP commitments and availability**

All AMHP's contributing to the Community AMHP rota shall attract an AMHP allowance currently set at £2545 per annum/ £212.08 per calendar month which is pensionable.

AMHP's are expected to be available on a minimum of 3 AMHP duty days per calendar month for full time staff and pro rata for part time. This is the basis for which community AMHP's shall receive the AMHP allowance.

AMHP allowance will be paid pro rata for part time posts. E.g. 30 hours substantive post attracts 4/5 of the allowance at £169.67, 22.5 hours at £127.25 per calendar month and so on.

The commitment of a minimum of 3 AMHP duty days remains regardless of annual leave but not in the event of unplanned sickness leave. If there is a planned sickness period the AMHP should discuss with the AMHP Lead in order to manage service delivery and whether additional cover needs to be sought.

AMHPs whose sickness leave lasts longer than a 3 month period shall have their AMHP allowance stopped. Upon returning to work the AMHP should make contact with the AMHP Lead to arrange a meeting to discuss a return to AMHP practice.

In exceptional circumstances, the AMHP may make up the required duty days over a consecutive 3 month period with written agreement from the AMHP Lead.

Non commitment to the rota for the minimum of 3 duty days per calendar month, or equivalent of over a consecutive 3 month period may result in AMHP allowance being stopped.

Due to the unplanned nature of AMHP work, there may be occasions when a community AMHP is not called on their duty day. If this occurs for more than one month then the community AMHP should make efforts to liaise with the hub to ensure they receive opportunity to practice to ensure equality and opportunity across the AMHP workforce.

Should an AMHP persistently decline to accept an MHA/ AMHP related referral from hub AMHP shift coordinator this will be discussed with them on an informal basis in AMHP supervision. Should the situation persist, this may result in more formal discussions with GHC HR department.

AMHPs will be released from their substantive post for these AMHP duty days and this will be supported by their team manager.

Any AMHP request on a duty day will be a priority for the AMHP.

AMHP duty days will be arranged through the hub administrator and GHC e-rostering system. (See GHC e-rostering Policy) A community AMHP rota will be arranged for 3 months cover and circulated to all AMHPs.

It is preferable community AMHP's base themselves in the AMHP hub on their duty days to be involved in the triage process and experience the benefits of this model of service delivery but this is not essential.

However there is an expectation that if the AMHP is not based in the AMHP hub on their duty day that they liaise with the hub shift coordinator regarding their whereabouts for safe lone working practices (See AMHP Lone working Guidance).

## **10 AMHP Sabbatical**

AMHPs may at times during their employment chose to take a planned sabbatical from AMHP practice for up to 3 months. The AMHP allowance shall cease for this

sabbatical. AMHPs who wish to take a planned rest from AMHP work should discuss with the AMHP Lead to allow for workforce planning and service delivery.

## **11 Staff Bank AMHPs**

Staff Bank AMHP's will be employed on a zero hour's basis through GHC's staff bank. This is an agreement of employment and does not constitute an employment contract (see GHC's staff bank agreement).

Staff Bank AMHP's will be approved to act as an AMHP by GCC and afforded the same protections under GCC professional indemnity insurance and will be issued with a GCC AMHP statement of particulars.

There is no obligation on the staff bank AMHP to accept work offered by the AMHP service. However Staff Bank AMHPs must undertake 8 MHA assessments per 12 month period in order to meet the requirements for competency to practice. (See Approval and Re approval policy)

Staff Bank AMHPs will essentially function as a Hub AMHP and have a specific job description reflecting the same. Staff Bank AMHP's will be based at the AMHP Hub for the duration of their daytime shift or at Wotton Lawn Hospital if working night time and weekend. There will be no opportunity for on call arrangements.

The payment for Staff Bank AMHP will be band 7 in recognition of the role and managerial aspects of out of hours working.

Staff bank AMHP's will be eligible to attend and claim payment for 18 hours paid training per annum to meet the requirements of continued approval by GCC as described in the Mental Health Act (Approved Mental Health Professionals) (Approval) (England) Regulations 2008.

## **12 Ending AMHP approval**

GHC on behalf of GCC must end an AMHP's approval if:

- The AMHP notifies them in writing that they wish no longer to be approved as an AMHP
- The AMHP approval panel are no longer satisfied the AMHP has appropriate competence.
- If the AMHP is no longer a professional who meets at least one of the professional requirements such as described within The Mental Health (Approved Mental Health Professionals) (Approval) (England) Regulations 2008.
- The AMHP is in breach of the conditions of their approval.

- The AMHP is approved to act as an AMHP by another local authority in England.

Failure to submit evidence of a minimum of 18 hours AMHP related training per year may lead to suspension of AMHP approval.

Further guidance can be found in The Mental Health (Approved Mental Health Professionals) (England) Regulations 2008 and AMHP approval and re approval policy 2019.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Role Descriptor for Community AMHP**

The expectations for a Community AMHP is as follows;

To act as an AMHP on a rota system working as part of a countywide AMHP service

To request duty days in a timely manner to allow for effective planning of service delivery

To prioritise AMHP work on duty days

To undertake a range and variety of MHA work for service users across Gloucestershire

To support the hub as required at times of high service demand

To commit to a minimum of 3 duty days per calendar month

To attend a minimum of 2 out of the 4 countywide AMHP forums per year

To attend a minimum of 3 out of the 6 peer group supervision sessions per year

To attend a minimum of 4 1:1 AMHP specific supervisions

## Appendix 2

### Information for line managers of Community AMHPs

Line managers must sign in support of the following;

- To release the community AMHP from their substantive role for a minimum of 3 duty days per calendar month
- For this commitment to the AMHP service to be reflected in the community AMHP's caseload/ workload management
- For the community AMHP to prioritise AMHP requests on their duty days
- For the community AMHP to be released from their usual base of work to base themselves in the AMHP hub on duty days when requested or the community AMHP chooses to do so following discussion and agreement from you as line manager
- To release the community AMHP to attend the following AMHP related training to maintain their AMHP status;
  1. Attend a minimum of 2 out of the 4 annual countywide forums
  2. Attend a minimum of 3 out of the 6 peer group supervision sessions
  3. To attend a minimum of 4 1:1 AMHP supervision sessions with a hub AMHP
  4. To attend an annual review meeting to demonstrate ongoing competency
- To inform the AMHP Lead of any concerns regarding fitness to practice issues and the AMHP Lead will reciprocate
- As line manager you agree to provide a reference for the community AMHP for their approval or re-approval to act on behalf of GCC.

Line Manager Name.....

Line Manager Signature.....

Date.....