

Health Play Specialist Apprenticeship

This occupation is found in Hospital, Community, Hospices, NHS, private and voluntary sectors. The broad purpose of Health Play Specialists (HPS) is to provide therapeutic play interventions for sick infants, children and young people, service users, carers and families of all ages, throughout their healthcare journey. Play strategies are used to support children and young people in the understanding of their medical conditions and treatments, and to adopt life style changes that are required to manage long term conditions.

The purpose of play and recreational provision within a healthcare environment is to facilitate access to normalising play in an appropriate and safe environment where developmental norms and goals can be achieved and maintained. Without the provision of skilled play interventions, opportunities for normal growth and development can be limited, leading to restriction or regression in development.

The HPS is a key member of the multi-professional team supporting diagnosis and treatment plans, assessing, developing and implementing complex communication plans with children and families. Communication can be verbal, written, non-verbal or technology assisted and often delivered through play and recreational techniques.

The HPS will assess, observe, play, evaluate and report the relationships in families, skills and behaviours of children and provide professional reports for the safeguarding process. They may be required to provide evidence in the family court.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for providing therapeutic play techniques to prepare the child for medical, surgical and invasive interventions and procedures, seeking to promote informed consent. Distraction and alternative focus activities provide autonomy through choice and control, augmenting the child's coping strategies prior to and during procedures. Post procedural play supports children to make sense of health procedures and regimes. The HPS works collaboratively with other professionals at all times and especially when a life limiting diagnosis is made; through to end of life care.

Annual re-registration with the professional body, the Health Care Play Specialist Education Trust (HPSET), is essential in this role as it demonstrates continuous professional development, and that you are practising within the scope of the Professional Code of Conduct and Professional Occupational Standards. In daily work, Health Play Specialists interact with: Consultants, Doctors, Nurses, Theatre Nurses and Operating Department Technicians, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Medical Professionals, Educational Professionals, Safeguarding Teams, Social Workers, Children Centres, Speech and Language Therapist, Dietician, Charities, Schools, Chaplaincy, Service users, Carers and families, and other AHP.

Examples of common work activities include can be found [here](#).

The typical duration for this apprenticeship is 24 months, but will depend on the previous experience of the apprentice.

Entry requirements: Level 3 Childcare or health related qualification.

This apprenticeship is completed whilst studying the [Foundation Degree in Healthcare Play Specialism](#).

Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the End-Point Assessment (EPA). For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship's English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3. A British Sign Language (BSL) qualification is an alternative to the English qualification for those whose primary language is BSL.

Click [here](#) to find out more information about the course, entry requirements, assessment methods, student handbooks, programme specifications, and staff profiles.

In addition to the course assessments, apprentices will complete an EPA which includes the following components:

1. Knowledge Test
2. Observation
3. Professional discussion underpinned by portfolio

Performance in the EPA will determine the overall apprenticeship standard grade of pass, fail, or distinction.

The apprenticeship is designed to prepare successful apprentices to meet the requirements for registration as a Health Play Specialist with HPSET.

For more information about the Health Play Specialist apprenticeship, please contact engage@ucl Leeds.ac.uk or call 0113 235 4510.