Specialist Support Worker – Job Description

Reporting to: Team Manager

Salary: £30,127.50 per annum (£15.45 per hour), overtime paid at £16.59 per hour

Hours of work: **Day staff:** 37.5 hours per week on a rota, including some weekends
Waking night staff: 30 or 40 hours per week Nights 3 or 4 nights per week on a rota, including some weekends

Location: London W9 3HL

LDN London (Learning Disability Network London) is an award-winning charity with over 60 years' experience supporting people with learning disabilities in London. As a specialist support worker, you help people with learning disabilities who have additional complex support needs to live safe, fulfilling, and dignified lives in supported accommodation or their own home.

The following reflects the overall Job role and expectations of a Specialist Support Worker in general terms.

Specialist Support worker – main responsibilities

As a Specialist Support Worker, you will be part of a small, dedicated team supporting a woman with a learning disability, Prader-Willi syndrome and complex emotional and behavioural support needs to live safely, independently and enjoy a full and active life.

The role requires someone who is positive, outgoing and enthusiastic about supporting people to enjoy activities, social opportunities and new experiences. You will be expected to take an active role in planning and supporting enjoyable days, encouraging independence and building confidence.

You will also need to understand the importance of consistent routines, communication and agreed support strategies. There may be times when the person becomes anxious or distressed, and you will need to respond calmly, patiently and confidently.

You will receive specialist training in Prader-Willi syndrome and Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and will be expected to follow individual support plans, risk assessments and agreed approaches consistently.

The person receives continuous 1:1 support, with additional staffing at planned times. You must understand and maintain the agreed observation and safety arrangements, including safe handovers and escalation when additional assistance is required.

You will work closely with the Team Manager and other Specialist Support Workers to provide consistent, person-centred support, share learning and contribute to improvements in the person's quality of life.

Job duties

The Specialist Support Worker is responsible for providing safe, consistent and person-centred support that enables the person supported to live an active, enjoyable and fulfilling life in their own home and community.

The role requires a positive, engaging and proactive approach, alongside the ability to maintain consistent routines, follow specialist support plans and respond calmly and appropriately to individual needs.

1. Supporting an active, social and fulfilling life

- Take an enthusiastic and creative approach to planning and supporting activities, outings and social opportunities that reflect the person's interests and aspirations.
- Encourage an active lifestyle, participation in community events and opportunities to try new experiences.
- Support access to leisure facilities, social activities, holidays and other meaningful experiences.
- Encourage friendships, positive relationships and opportunities to spend time with people who are important to the person.
- Support safe community access, including public transport, planning activities and following agreed staffing and risk management arrangements.
- Recognise when encouragement and motivation are appropriate and when a calmer, more reassuring approach is needed.

2. Supporting choice, independence and decision-making

- Involve the person in decisions about their daily life, activities, routines and personal preferences.
- Provide accessible information and support understanding, allowing appropriate time to make choices and decisions.
- Encourage the development and maintenance of everyday living skills, promoting independence wherever possible.
- Support decision-making in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act, respecting the person's rights, wishes and preferences.
- Support money management and purchases in accordance with agreed financial support arrangements.
- Promote positive risk-taking while following individual support plans and risk assessments.

3. Supporting Prader-Willi syndrome and healthy eating

- Understand how Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS) affects the person's health, emotional wellbeing and daily support needs.
- Follow agreed food management plans, dietary arrangements and food security measures consistently.
- Support meal planning and preparation in accordance with nutritional needs, preferences and agreed routines.
- Communicate clearly and consistently about meals, snacks and food-related arrangements, avoiding unagreed changes or promises.
- Recognise signs of food-related anxiety and respond using agreed proactive strategies.
- Maintain required records of food and fluid intake and support a positive, respectful approach to healthy living.

4. Supporting emotional wellbeing and Positive Behaviour Support

- Understand and consistently implement the person's Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) plan.
- Build positive, trusting relationships through warm, respectful and consistent approaches.
- Recognise early signs of anxiety, frustration or distress and respond proactively to prevent escalation.
- Support predictable routines, prepare the person for changes and use agreed reassurance and de-escalation strategies.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and remain calm, patient and supportive during difficult situations.
- Recognise when additional assistance or management guidance is required and contribute to reviews of support strategies.

5. Supporting communication and relationships

- Communicate positively and respectfully, adapting communication to the person's understanding, preferences and emotional state.
- Use agreed communication tools, visual information and structured approaches where appropriate.
- Encourage the person to express their wishes, feelings and preferences and ensure these inform their support.
- Respect privacy, dignity, personal relationships and individual choices.
- Maintain positive and professional communication with family members and relevant professionals in accordance with agreed arrangements.

6. Supporting personal care, daily routines and healthy sleep

- Support personal hygiene, bathing, dressing and other daily living tasks in accordance with assessed needs and preferences.
- Encourage independence and participation in personal care while maintaining dignity, privacy and respect.

- Support consistent daily routines that promote physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Encourage healthy sleep patterns through predictable bedtime routines and a calm, comfortable environment.
- Provide reassurance and appropriate support when the person experiences difficulty settling, disrupted sleep or night-time anxiety.
- During waking-night shifts (as applicable), remain awake, alert and responsive, following agreed night-time support, monitoring and safety arrangements.
- Record relevant sleep patterns, night-time observations and changes in wellbeing.

7. Supporting health and wellbeing

- Promote physical and emotional wellbeing through healthy routines, appropriate activity and individualised support.
- Recognise changes in the person's health, behaviour or usual presentation and take appropriate action.
- Support attendance at health appointments and involvement in decisions about healthcare.
- Administer and record medication in accordance with individual medication plans and LDN London's procedures, following competency assessment.
- Follow individual health management plans, including epilepsy protocols where applicable.
- Seek medical advice or emergency assistance when required and communicate health concerns promptly.

8. Maintaining safety and agreed observation arrangements

- Maintain the person's assessed level of support and observation at all times, including during handovers, staff breaks and emergencies.
- Understand and follow individual 1:1 support arrangements, including any requirements for continuous visual observation.
- Provide additional 2:1 support where required by the person's support plan or risk assessment.
- Ensure responsibility for support is clearly transferred between staff and never leave the person without their assessed level of support.
- Complete agreed environmental safety checks, including window safety and other identified risks.
- Follow agreed procedures when the person requests privacy, refuses support or asks staff to leave, balancing their rights with assessed safety requirements.
- Respond appropriately to hazards, incidents and changes in risk, seeking additional assistance or management guidance when required.

9. Supporting the person to maintain their home

- Support the person to maintain a clean, comfortable, safe and welcoming home.
- Encourage participation in household tasks, including laundry, cleaning and changing bedding, according to individual abilities and preferences.

- Support the person to make choices about their home, belongings and personal environment.
- Maintain agreed food storage arrangements and other environmental safety measures.
- Identify and report maintenance concerns, hazards and repairs promptly.

10. Recording, teamwork and professional development

- Maintain accurate, timely and meaningful records using Nourish and other agreed systems.
- Record daily support, relevant observations, incidents and changes in needs, ensuring concerns are reported and escalated appropriately.
- Provide clear and effective handovers to ensure continuity and consistency of support.
- Follow agreed support plans, risk assessments, organisational policies and management instructions.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, contributing to a positive, supportive and consistent team culture.
- Participate in team meetings, support planning and reviews, sharing observations and contributing to improvements in practice.
- Recognise and report safeguarding concerns, challenge poor practice and maintain confidentiality and professional standards.
- Complete required health and safety checks and follow infection prevention and control procedures.
- Participate fully in induction, specialist training, supervision, appraisal and competency assessments.
- Apply learning and feedback to everyday practice, demonstrating competence before undertaking specialist responsibilities independently.
- Take responsibility for personal development, professional boundaries, resilience and wellbeing.
- Work flexibly within agreed shift arrangements, including early, late, weekend or waking-night shifts as applicable to the role.

How do you deliver this support?

To ensure support is high quality, effective, and delivered in a safe and stimulating environment you should put our values into practice, including by:

- involving people as much a possible when planning and doing activities, providing information to help people make choices and informed decisions
- helping people in meetings and social settings to ensure they are included, consulted, and listened to
- respecting people's dignity and property
- breaking down tasks into simple steps within a learning programme

Person specification – Specialist Support Worker

Knowledge	• Understanding of Prader-Willi syndrome and its impact on daily life, health, emotional wellbeing and support needs. • Knowledge of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), including proactive strategies, recognising triggers and responding to anxiety or distress. • Understanding of person-centred support, choice, independence, dignity and positive risk-taking. • Knowledge of safeguarding, risk management and the importance of consistent support and observation arrangements.
Skills	• Build positive, trusting relationships while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. • Communicate clearly and sensitively, adapting approaches to individual needs and situations. • Bring energy, enthusiasm and creativity to supporting activities, social opportunities and community involvement. • Encourage independence, participation and meaningful everyday experiences. • Remain calm, patient and resilient when responding to challenging situations. • Recognise changes in mood, behaviour or wellbeing and respond appropriately. • Work collaboratively with colleagues and contribute to a positive, consistent team approach. • Maintain accurate records and communicate concerns effectively.
Competencies	• Consistently implement individual support plans, PBS strategies and agreed routines and boundaries. • Maintain assessed observation requirements, including safe handovers, breaks and emergency arrangements. • Apply sound judgement when managing risks, responding to incidents and escalating concerns. • Demonstrate safe and effective practice in supporting health, wellbeing and daily living needs. • Apply specialist training confidently and consistently in everyday support. • Take responsibility for professional development, using supervision, feedback and reflective practice to improve performance.

Our standards for our specialist support workers

How you should demonstrate our expected standards for support workers

I am committed to our values

- I respect the people I support
- I take pride in my work
- I advocate for the people I support
- I ensure people I support:
  - **stay healthy**
  - **are safe**
  - **live well**
- I enable people I support to:
  - be **Included** as a valued part of the community
  - make **Choices** and **Decisions** about their lives
  - be treated with **Dignity** and **Respect** as valued individuals
  - **Achieve** their dreams and aspirations

I am responsible

- I am honest, reliable and organised
- I follow all relevant support plans, guidelines, policies, and procedures
- I understand risk, danger, and safeguarding and speak up to raise concerns
- I consider the health and safety of myself and others, reporting incidents, accidents, hazards, and near misses
- I can work on my own and take decisions when necessary
- I am resilient, ask for help when necessary, and can deal with unexpected events
- I take on responsibility through shift leading and key working
- I have good maths skills, can manage petty cash and support people to manage their finances
- I take responsibility for my own development, learning on and off the job
- I reflect on and own my actions, learning from events and feedback
- I communicate with people I support in a way they understand
- I use appropriate language about people I support
- I speak and write English clearly and accurately
- I am polite and engaging with colleagues and work collaboratively as part of a team
- I resolve disputes calmly and constructively away from people I support
- I listen to people and consider what they say
- I share knowledge and information appropriately and respect confidentiality
- I complete records accurately and write reports of incidents etc.
- I have good IT skills and can use tablets, apps, and computers to enhance and record support and to do training
- I create and maintain good relationships with the families of those I support and external partners

I do my job well

- I take pride in my workplace
- I am kind, supportive, and patient
- I understand the individual needs, likes, and aspirations of the people I support
- I am proactive and creative in my approach to engaging and supporting people
- I support people to dress, eat, use the bathroom etc. in line with their needs
- I enable people to move around their home and community and can push a wheelchair, use a hoist etc.
- I start work on time and only leave when my shift has finished and people I support are safe
- When providing support I only use a phone or tablet for work-related activities
- I am flexible, try new things, and take on new duties
- I can work on a rota basis as appropriate to my role and the people I support