

PILGRIMS HOSPICES – JOB DESCRIPTION

Senior Ward Sister – Inpatient Unit (Band 7)

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

To provide visible, compassionate and expert clinical leadership to the inpatient unit team, ensuring the delivery of outstanding, person-centred specialist palliative and end-of-life care.

POSITION IN ORGANISATION

Reports to:

Head of Nursing

Line Management responsibility for:

Ward Sisters, Registered Nurses, Healthcare Assistants and ward-based volunteers

Location:

Predominantly ward-based, with cross-site working as required

ROLE OVERVIEW

The Senior Ward Sister is a pivotal clinical leader within Pilgrims Hospices, responsible for inspiring and empowering nursing teams to deliver exceptional palliative care. Working collaboratively with the multidisciplinary team, the post holder will ensure that patients and their families receive holistic, compassionate, and evidence-based care tailored to their individual needs.

The role combines expert clinical practice with operational and strategic leadership. The post holder will foster a positive, inclusive and forward-thinking culture—one that embraces innovation, continuous improvement, and learning—while contributing to the wider strategic direction of the organisation.

As a senior member of the care team, the Senior Ward Sister will champion excellence in patient experience, ensuring care is safe, effective, responsive, and consistently aligned with best practice and regulatory standards.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Clinical Leadership and Quality of Care

- Provide strong, visible clinical leadership, acting as an expert resource and role model within the inpatient unit.

- Ensure the delivery of high-quality, individualised, evidence-based care for patients and those important to them.
- Maintain oversight of clinical standards through regular review, audit, and evaluation of care delivery.
- Actively participate in ward rounds and multidisciplinary team meetings, contributing specialist expertise to complex clinical decision-making.
- Promote a culture of safety, proactively identifying and managing risks to patients, staff and visitors.
- Lead on learning from incidents, complaints and feedback to continuously improve service quality and patient experience.
- Ensure timely escalation of significant clinical or operational concerns to senior leadership.

2. Professional and Strategic Leadership

- Inspire, support and develop a high-performing nursing team through effective leadership, supervision, and appraisal.
- Promote open, transparent and compassionate communication across all levels of the organisation.
- Act as a positive agent of change, supporting service development and innovation in line with organisational priorities.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with internal teams and external partners to enhance collaborative working and service integration.
- Ensure all clinical practice aligns with professional standards, regulatory requirements (including CQC), and organisational policies.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of Pilgrims Hospices' strategic and operational objectives.
- Maintain high standards of clinical documentation and governance.

3. People Management and Workforce Development

- Ensure safe staffing levels and appropriate skill mix to meet patient needs.
- Lead on recruitment, induction, development and retention of nursing staff and volunteers.
- Foster a culture of continuous learning, supporting education, clinical supervision and reflective practice.
- Identify training needs and ensure compliance with statutory and mandatory requirements.
- Support and develop emerging leaders within the team, including Deputy Ward Sisters.
- Act as a mentor, coach and role model, promoting the values and behaviours of Pilgrims Hospices.

4. Operational and Resource Management

- Support the effective day-to-day management of the inpatient unit, including weekends as required.
- Ensure resources, including staffing and equipment, are used efficiently and safely within agreed budgets.
- Contribute to financial planning and budget management processes.
- Monitor and manage workforce utilisation, including bank and agency usage.

5. Audit, Research and Service Development

- Lead and participate in audit, research and quality improvement initiatives.
- Embed a culture of evidence-based practice and continuous improvement.

- Support the development, implementation and review of clinical policies and procedures.
- Ensure learning from audit and research is translated into practice improvements.

General Responsibilities

- Act in accordance with organisational values, professional codes, and all relevant legislation.
- Maintain the highest standards of integrity, confidentiality and accountability.
- Take responsibility for personal and professional development, including revalidation.
- Work flexibly to meet the evolving needs of the service.

This job description reflects the current requirements of the role and is not exhaustive. Duties may change in line with service needs, and the post holder will be expected to undertake responsibilities appropriate to the role.

PILGRIMS HOSPICES – PERSON SPECIFICATION

Inpatient Unit - Senior Ward Sister

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| <p>EXPERIENCE (Essential)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant experience in a senior nursing role, including team leadership • Experience at Band 6 or equivalent within palliative care or a comparable setting • Demonstrable experience in leading change and service improvement • Experience of multidisciplinary team working within a patient-centred model • Experience in teaching, mentorship and clinical supervision • Experience in audit and quality improvement |
| <p>SKILLS/ ABILITIES</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, compassionate and inclusive leadership skills • Excellent communication, influencing and interpersonal skills • Effective organisational and time management abilities • Ability to work under pressure and manage competing priorities • Competence in IT systems including Microsoft Office |
| <p>KNOWLEDGE</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up-to-date knowledge of palliative and end-of-life care practice • Understanding of clinical governance, supervision and reflective practice |
| <p>QUALIFICATION/ TRAINING</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Nurse (NMC) • Leadership training or equivalent experience • Degree or diploma in nursing • Management qualification or willingness to complete • Practice assessor and or supervisor qualification • Advanced communications course |

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| OTHER REQUIREMENTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to travel across sites (full UK driving licence and access to a vehicle) |
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This person specification sets out the essential, minimum qualities we are seeking for this post. Please ensure that your application demonstrates how you meet the criteria. You may include voluntary, unpaid and paid work.

Date Written: March 2026