

Developing a Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist Job Plan

Introduction

Specialist nursing practice is inherently complex and multifaceted, making it challenging to define, quantify, and fully capture its impact.

As the NHS faces increasing pressures on its resources, it is more important than ever to clearly demonstrate the essential contributions that cancer specialist nurses make to patient care and service improvement.

Effectively articulating the role is crucial, and a well-structured job plan can support CNS's in doing so.

Wessex Cancer Alliance has developed a guide to help define and communicate the role at an enhanced and advanced level of practice, aligning with the ACCEND framework.

Purpose of the CNS Job Planning Guide

This guide supports Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs) to:

- Define and communicate their role – highlighting their impact on cancer care.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities within the team.
- Translate ACCEND core capabilities and levels of practice into everyday clinical practice – promoting awareness and application of ACCEND.
- Promote safe, high quality care – while supporting a healthy work-life balance.
- Support workforce planning by articulating the value and contribution of CNSs.

What is a job plan?

A job plan is a structured, weekly schedule outlining how a CNS's time is typically spent – excluding emergency or unplanned activities. Activity is described across the four pillars of professional practice:

- **Clinical Care**
- **Leadership and management**
- **Education**
- **Research**

A job plan should be created collaboratively with the line manager and the team reflecting each member's key roles and responsibilities as outlined in their job description and operational policy.

Key Highlights

- Helps CNSs clearly articulate their contribution to cancer care, service improvement and clinical leadership..
- Offers templates which can be adapted according to tumour site.
- Aligns CNS activities with ACCEND capabilities at enhanced and advanced levels providing clarity and consistency.
- Supports professional reflection, development and career progression.

Governance and Review

Job plans should:

- Align with organisational goals, priorities, job descriptions and operational policies.
- Must be approved by line managers and supported by cancer management teams.
- Reviewed annually or when there are significant changes in the role or service.



Feedback on the guide

"The benefit of the CNS Job Plan guide has been fantastic. It has enabled the Lead CNSs to focus on their own job plans which hadn't been reviewed for a long period of time and to ensure that they truly reflected the complexity of their strategic and clinical lead roles. The use of the ACCEND capabilities provides reinforcement that to fulfil the role the four pillars of practice all have to be included in the job plan. This is vital when negotiating with executive teams and finance managers to support the value of the CNS role.

Completing the job plans has triggered conversations with CNS line managers and resulted in a much clearer mutual understanding of the complexity and value of the roles."

Lead Cancer Nurse, Acute Hospital Trust

**Scan here to download our
CNS Job Planning Guide**

