

Role and Contribution of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists in the Neonatal Unit



POLICY DRIVERS

Neonatal Critical Care
Transformation Review

NHS England

Goals for Maternity
and Neonatal Services

NHS Long Term Plan

*Psychology Staffing on
the Neonatal Unit:
Recommendations for
Psychological Provision*

**Report for Operational
Delivery Network**

GOALS FOR NEONATAL CARE

1. Improvements across all aspects of care in neonatal units
2. Increase the provision of psychological therapists in units
3. Value of multi-disciplinary mental health workforce in neonatal care

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHOTHERAPIST INTEGRAL TO PSYCHOLOGICAL PROVISION

Patient Care

- attend to the baby's psychological and emotional development in busy and often stressful environment
- **attend to the way the baby reacts to separations and to the nature of the attachment to their parents**
- nurture the relationship between baby and parent, especially where there have been traumatic beginnings
- **supported by training in weekly mother/infant observation for two years**
- skill in appreciating the nuances of behaviour and feelings of the mother-infant dyad and the potential to bring together

Contribution to Team

- **being in touch with the emotional temperature of the unit and providing a sense of containment**
- physically and reliably present on the unit and offering debriefs and regular staff support sessions
- **staff members provided with a safe space to share difficult emotions such as shock, sadness and guilt**
- supported by experience during training of four times weekly individual psychoanalysis
- **capacity for internal reflection and judging how to respond in ways which are helpful**

NHS Training Pathway

- NHS-funded psychoanalytic training aligned to service priorities
- Post-graduate 'pre-clinical' course
- Four-year clinical doctorate training
- Registration with Association of Child Psychotherapists