

# Medical Laboratory Assistant (MLA) Candidate Pack



## Our Trust

At The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital (SaTH), our vision is to provide excellent care for the communities we serve. Working together across our teams, we provide district general hospital services for around half a million people in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, and mid-Wales.

Our main service locations are The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and The Princess Royal Hospital, Telford, which together provide 99% of our activity. Alongside these, we also provide community and outreach services across the local area.

As one of Shropshire's biggest employers with around 7,000 staff, we offer a wide range of opportunities to build a rewarding career across both clinical and non-clinical roles. Our people are dedicated and passionate, working together to deliver the best patient care. No matter your role, you'll be joining a supportive team environment where you'll be able to make a real difference for our patients.

We are committed to supporting you at every stage of your career with us, whether you're starting something new or looking to take the next step into leadership. With strong partnerships and our newly awarded university hospital status, you'll have access to excellent education, mentoring and experience to help you thrive.

## Our Vision

"To provide excellent care for the communities we serve"

We believe that by adhering to our Vision and working with our Values in mind we can behave in a way which will ensure the right results for the people that matter most – our patients and their families.

## Our Values



# Poppy's Promise

Poppy's Promise is a compassionate care initiative introduced within this Trust to enhance communication, respect and empathy across every aspect of patient care.

The initiative was founded by Katie Russell, following the loss of her daughter Poppy, who tragically died at just twelve hours old due to failures in care and communication. Born from that experience, Poppy's Promise serves as a powerful reminder that while clinical skill saves lives, it is compassion, listening and respect that define the quality of care and human connection. By embedding this promise across our organisation, we ensure that no patient or family ever feels unseen, unheard, or uncared for.

Poppy's Promise is a five-stage framework that supports NHS staff to provide compassionate, consistent and patient-centred care. It aims to create a culture where empathy and communication are prioritised at every level - from education and recruitment to daily patient interactions.

At the heart of the initiative lies the C.A.R.E. framework, which outlines four guiding principles for staff to follow. The CARE principles form the foundation of Poppy's Promise. They describe the behaviours, attitudes and values that underpin every interaction — between staff and patients, staff and families, and colleagues with one another.

CARE is not an additional task. It is how care is delivered.

## C.A.R.E. Meaning and Practice

**Compassion** - Demonstrate genuine kindness, empathy and humanity in every interaction.

Compassion means recognising the emotional as well as the physical needs of patients, families and colleagues, and responding with care, patience and understanding. Small acts of compassion can have a lasting impact.

**Acknowledge** - Actively listen and be fully present.

Use eye contact, names and open body language, and acknowledge the individual's feelings, concerns and lived experience. Every person should feel seen, heard and taken seriously.

**Respect** - Treat everyone with dignity, honesty and fairness at all times.

Respect individual differences, personal circumstances and lived experience. Trust is built through respectful behaviour, consistency and integrity.

**Empower** - Enable people to be active participants in their care and work.

Communicate clearly, encourage questions and shared decision-making, and ensure patients, families and colleagues feel informed, confident and included.

Poppy's Promise is more than a framework - it represents a cultural shift towards human-centred care. By adopting these principles, we:

- Strengthen trust and communication between staff and patients
- Reduce avoidable harm through better understanding and listening
- Improve patient experience and staff wellbeing
- Foster a culture of openness, empathy and shared responsibility

Every member of staff has a role to play in bringing Poppy's Promise to life. Whether you are clinical, administrative or support staff, compassion and communication are part of everyone's role.

### **In daily practice, you can:**

- Take a moment before entering a patient's space - centre yourself, focus on the person, not the task
- Use clear, respectful and kind language
- Listen without interruption and acknowledge emotions expressed
- Be honest and transparent, even when conversations are difficult
- Reflect after interactions - consider how your approach made the patient or family feel

### **All staff within the Trust are expected to:**

- Uphold the values of Poppy's Promise in all patient and colleague interactions
- Attend any training, workshops or refreshers provided as part of the initiative
- Support colleagues in modelling compassionate behaviours
- Raise concerns constructively when communication or respect fall short
- Reflect these principles in both professional and personal conduct within the workplace

Together, we can make every interaction an opportunity to care, listen and make a difference.

That is Poppy's Promise.

## Job Summary

*\*\*This summary has been generated using AI to provide a clear and accessible overview of the role. It is intended to support candidates who may find the full job description harder to read, such as those who are neurodiverse, have learning disabilities or lower literacy levels. Our goal is to make the application process more accessible and inclusive for everyone.\*\**

- This role supports the hospital's laboratory service by helping with everyday tasks that keep tests running smoothly.
- You will handle patient samples, prepare them for testing, and enter information into the computer system.
- You will help keep equipment and supplies organised, clean and ready to use.
- You will work with other staff, follow written and spoken instructions, and always follow safety rules.
- You may work at different laboratory sites and take part in evening, night and weekend shifts once trained.

## Job Description

<b>Job title:</b>	Medical Laboratory Assistant (MLA)
<b>Grade:</b>	2
<b>Site:</b>	The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital
<b>Accountable to:</b>	Head BMS through the Deputy Head BMS
<b>DBS required:</b>	No

## Job overview

To assist in supporting a diagnostic service, by performing a range of routine tasks that may either be defined verbally by staff supervising you, or by following written instructions, usually in the form of Standard Operating Procedures.

## Scope and Range

- You are assigned to a department within Pathology.
- You are required to work under direct or indirect supervision at all times.
- You are expected to liaise with other members of staff in Pathology, and similarly with other users of the service both within and outside the confines of the Trust.
- You may be required to work at any of the department's three laboratory sites.
- You will be expected to participate in out of hours working.

## Main duties and responsibilities of the post-holder:

An MLA is expected to perform a range of tasks of a similar nature and level of responsibility that contribute towards an integrated, diagnostic service. In particular you will:

- Follow tasks that are defined in writing, but may be communicated to you verbally by a member of staff supervising you.
- Receive, sort, label and distribute specimens.
- Entry of patient demographic details and specimen requests onto the laboratory computer system.
- Prepare specimens for testing and perform simple non-interpretive tests as part of the investigation of those specimens.
- Maintain, where appropriate, accurate records of the work assigned to you. • Load specimens and reagents onto automated analysers.
- Assist in maintaining stock levels of reagents and consumables in the area in which you are working.
- Assist in the receipt of deliveries and their subsequent distribution throughout the laboratory.
- Pack specimens for despatch to other laboratories (internal and external). • Deal with telephone enquiries to the laboratory, within the constraints of your grade and level of training.
- Perform a range of clerical and /or laboratory duties.
- File request forms and reports.
- Undertake training that is relevant to the post.
- Assist in the training of other unqualified members of staff, through practical demonstration, as required.
- Assist in the achievement and maintenance of standards required by United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), Clinical Pathology Accreditation (CPA) UK Ltd, Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and other accreditation schemes.
- Understand and follow at all times health and safety instructions made clear to you in the course of your duties.
- Attend Team Briefings, Staff Appraisals, Statutory Training and any other mandatory commitments defined by the Trust.
- Make an effective contribution to maintaining cleanliness and good housekeeping in the area in which you are working, including the disinfection of laboratory equipment and surfaces.

## **Additional responsibilities specific to the post-holder within the grade**

### **Out of hours shift commitment**

Following appropriate training and competency assessment; you will be expected to participate in the out of hours working rotas of the department, as part of an average 37.5 hour working week - including evenings, nights, weekends and Bank/Public holidays, as directed by the Head Biomedical Scientist or deputy.

When participating in the out of hours service you will normally participate in a single site rota but may be required to cover absences in other sites rotas.

Whilst working out of hours you will work under indirect supervision, with access to BMS staff, for advice when required. Work patterns may require you to work for long periods without being able to take a break. Rotation through the following sections:-

- Reception.
- Haematology/Biochemistry
- Coagulation
- Blood Transfusion.

### **Systems and equipment:**

- You may be required to use equipment in the course of your duties. You will be trained in its use, and be expected to understand and use it safely and competently (e.g. computer system, analyser, tissue processor, centrifuge, mechanical trolley). The use of equipment will generally extend to its daily maintenance, e.g. stocked with reagents and maintained in a clean and uncontaminated state.

### **Decisions, judgements and freedom to act:**

- You work within a level of supervision that has clear accountability. You are expected to refer any problems you encounter in your job to the person supervising you. You follow defined, written operating protocols, which may also be given to you verbally. You should recognise the clinical value of your work and the need for producing work of an accurate, high standard in a timely manner.

### **Communication and relationships:**

- You must observe confidentiality and disclosure of information at all times, in accordance with Trust policy.
- Whilst you liaise mainly with staff within the department, you may be required as part of your job, to respond to enquiries from other members of the Trust, and other organisations (e.g. GP 9 practices, patients, company representatives). You are required to exhibit a cordial and professional telephone manner when doing this.
- You are encouraged to feedback constructive criticism in the course of carrying out your duties, especially following the development and introduction of new ways of working.

### **Physical, Mental and Emotional demands of the post:**

- There is a frequent requirement for light physical effort.
- Accuracy of data input and analytical performance is vital at all times.
- Prolonged concentration is a frequent requirement, concentration always being necessary when handling and processing patient samples and data. Accuracy of data input and analytical performance is vital at all times.

- Unpredictable and rapidly changing work patterns are common, particularly when working out of core hours.
- Exposure to distressing or emotional circumstances as part of your duties is rare.

## Working conditions:

- There is frequent exposure to infectious material.
- There is frequent exposure to uncomfortable working temperatures in the summer months, particularly when operation automated equipment.
- There is occasional exposure to solvents and toxic chemicals.
- There is frequent exposure to a high level of background noise when working in the automated section of the department.

## Person Specification

	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<b>Qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good general education up to GCSE including Maths, English and Science (Grades 9-4) or equivalent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVQ Level 2 in Clinical Laboratory Support or equivalent</li> <li>• Proficiency with MS Office</li> </ul>
<b>Experience and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data entry experience</li> <li>• Basic theoretical knowledge to support sample processing/analytical processes</li> <li>• Understanding of the need for confidentiality and data protection</li> <li>• Understanding of health and safety</li> </ul>	
<b>Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate data entry and keyboard skills</li> <li>• Ability to pay close attention to detail</li> <li>• Effective communication skills</li> <li>• Good interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Good organisational skills</li> <li>• Ability to exercise initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to remain calm in difficult situations</li> <li>• Able to identify service developments and implement solutions</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to work as part of a team with indirect supervision</li><li>• Ability to prioritise work</li><li>• Ability to remain focused and carry out repetitive steps</li><li>• Ability to work under pressure</li><li>• Ability to use a computer, sometimes for longer periods (2-3 hours)</li></ul>	
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## General conditions

As they undertake their duties, all our people are required to uphold and demonstrate the Trust's core values of: Partnering, Ambitious, Caring and Trusted. Collaboration and partnership are also central to our approach in delivering our fundamental activities of patient care, teaching, and research.

## Health & Safety

As an employee of the Trust you have a responsibility to:

- take reasonable care of your own Health and Safety and that of any other person who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work;
- co-operate with the Trust in ensuring that statutory regulations, codes of practice, local policies and departmental health and safety rules are adhered to;
- not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

## Infection Prevention and Control

The prevention and management of acquired infection is a key priority for the Trust. Any breach of infection control policies is a serious matter which may result in disciplinary action. As an employee of the Trust you have a responsibility to:

- ensure that your work methods are compliant with the Trust's agreed policies and procedures and do not endanger other people or yourself;
- be aware of infection prevention and control policies, practices and guidelines appropriate for your duties and you must follow these at all times to maintain a safe environment for patients, visitors and staff;
- maintain an up to date knowledge of infection prevention and control, policies, practices and procedures through attendance at annual mandatory updates and ongoing continuing professional development;
- challenge poor infection prevention and control practices of others and to report any breaches, using appropriate Trust mechanisms (e.g. incident reporting policy).

## Information Governance

The Trust is committed to compliance with Information Governance standards to ensure that all information is handled legally, securely, efficiently and effectively. You

are required to comply with the Trust's Information Governance policies and standards. Failure to do so may result in action being taken in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

- **Confidentiality and Security** - Your attention is drawn to the confidential and sensitive nature of information collected within the NHS. Whilst you are employed by the Trust you will come into contact with confidential information and data relating to the work of the Trust, its patients or employees. You are bound by your conditions of service to respect the confidentiality of any information you may come into contact with which identifies patients, employees or other Trust personnel, or business information of the Trust. You also have a duty to ensure that all confidential information is held securely at all times, both on and off site.
- **Disclosure of Information** - The unauthorised use or disclosure of information relating to the Trust's activities or affairs, the treatment of patients or the personal details of an employee, will normally be considered a serious disciplinary offence which could result in dismissal. Upon leaving the Trust's employment and at any time thereafter you must not take advantage of or disclose confidential information that you learnt in the course of your employment. Unauthorised disclosure of any of this information may be deemed as a criminal offence. If you are found to have permitted the unauthorised disclosure of any such information, you and the Trust may face legal action.
- **Information Quality and Records Management** - You must ensure that all information handled by you is accurate and kept up-to-date and you must comply with the Trust's recording, monitoring, validation and improvement schemes and processes.

## **Professional Standards and Performance Review**

As an employee of the Trust you have a responsibility to:

- participate in statutory and mandatory training as appropriate for the post; and
- maintain consistently high personal and professional standards and act in accordance with the relevant professional code of conduct;
- take responsibility for the maintenance and improvement of personal and professional competence and to encourage that of colleagues and subordinates;
- participate in the Trust's appraisal processes including identifying performance standards for the post, personal objective setting and the creation of a personal development plan in line with the KSF outline for the post.

## Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

We all have a personal and a professional responsibility within the Trust to identify and report abuse. This may be known, suspected, witnessed or have raised concerns. Early recognition is vital to ensuring the patient is safeguarded; other people (children and vulnerable adults) may be at risk. The Trust's procedures must be implemented, working in partnership with the relevant authorities. The Sharing of Information no matter how small is of prime importance in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

- As an employee of the Trust you have a responsibility to ensure that:
  - you are familiar with and adhere to the Trusts Safeguarding Children procedures and guidelines.
  - you attend safeguarding awareness training and undertake any additional training in relation to safeguarding relevant to your role.

## NHS Sexual Safety Charter

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all employees work in an environment that is safe, inclusive, and free from sexual misconduct, harassment, and discrimination. As a signatory to the NHS Sexual Safety Charter, the Trust upholds a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and supports anyone affected by inappropriate behaviour. In accordance with the Workers Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, the Trust has a statutory duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of its employees. All staff, are required to treat others with dignity and respect at all times and to cooperate with Trust policies, procedures and training designed to maintain a culture of safety, professionalism, and mutual respect.

## Social Responsibility

The Trust is committed to behaving responsibly in the way we manage transport, procurement, our facilities, employment, skills and our engagement with the local community so that we can make a positive contribution to society. As an employee of the Trust you have a responsibility to take measures to support our contribution and to reduce the environmental impact of our activities relating to energy and water usage, transport and waste.

## Continuous Improvement

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust aims to empower colleagues at all levels have the confidence, capability, passion, and knowledge, to test changes and make improvements at SaTH and in the communities we serve.

To support this, we have developed the SaTH Improvement Method, a structured approach to change that provides practical tools and techniques to help you

understand what success looks like with clear aims, enables you to measure progress and plan meaningful improvements.

You won't be doing this alone. Whether you're new to improvement or already leading change, the Improvement Hub is here to guide you with expert advice, hands-on support, and a wide range of training opportunities to help you grow and thrive throughout your time at SaTH whilst making improvements in your area of work. Join us in shaping a culture of continuous improvement, where every colleague is supported to make a difference.

## Equal opportunities and diversity

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is an Equal Opportunities Employer, fully committed to fostering an inclusive workplace where all staff feel valued and able to thrive. We believe that a diverse workforce, reflective of our community, is essential for delivering the best patient care.

We will not discriminate against any job applicant or colleague based on any protected characteristic, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Selection for appointment, training, development, and promotion will be based purely on merit and the individual's ability to meet the role requirements.

As a post-holder, you have a personal responsibility to uphold the Trust's commitment to equality by treating all colleagues and patients with respect and dignity. You must actively support measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity and will not discriminate, harass, or bully others, or condone such behaviour.



