

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023

Gerard Hayes  
Secretary  
Health Service Union

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Cc: [michael.kearns@hsu.asn.au](mailto:michael.kearns@hsu.asn.au)

Dear Mr Hayes

Re: Community and Allied Health, Speech Pathology Position, Ballina.

Dear Mr Hayes

I write in reference to the Speech Pathology Position, Ballina. This position is a full-time speech pathology position that has a generalist role. This position covers children (community) adults (community) and hospital in-patients. Hospital coverage is required on a daily basis. Ballina has an increasing population of young families and the demands for child and family health services is expected to increase.

Historically this position has been job shared. The generalist nature of this position requires clinicians to have an extended skill base and places pressure on the clinician in relation to daily prioritisation. This position has been historically job shared with the hours being split 24 hours (adult) and 20 hours (child) across five days. Over the past few years there has been extensive service realignment to ensure equity across the three clinical domains of children (community) adults (community) and hospital in-patients and that the hospital is covered on a daily basis. Part of this realignment work was the development of a partnership with the speech pathology service in the Rehabilitation Unit to support coverage to the ward on a daily basis. The majority of the clinical demand of this position is children (community) and there tends to be a pull by the clinicians towards this type of work.

Generalist positions place additional requirements on clinical staff to maintain interests, skills and competencies across a number of clinical areas, in this case adults and children. Across New South Wales the number of generalist positions have been reduced due to the challenges of these roles. The 20 hours of this position is currently filled by a long term staff member who has no plans to leave the role.

The staff member in the 24 hour position has recently resigned and to date we have advertised the position four times with no applicants. We have been working with the remaining staff member (20 hours) to look at strategies to recruit and retain staff to these positions. Given the inability to recruit to the current vacant hours and the ongoing issues associated with the generalist nature of the role, the position has been reviewed with a view of assessing the feasibility of splitting the position into two positions. One position focusing on child and family and the other position focusing on adults. Included in this review and in line with the current service demand is the need to have the child and family position work at the 24 hours per week and the adult position work at 20 hours per week.

The staff member currently in the 20 hour a week generalist position has been approached regarding her interest in taking up the 24 hour role and being focused on child and family. There was an in principle positive response from this staff member.

We are proposing to split the role into two separate positions – 1. Speech Pathology, Child and Family (24 hours per week) and 2. Speech Pathologist, Adult (20 hours per week). This requires two separate position descriptions. We will also need to recruit to both of these position (as they are new) and this will mean affecting the current staff member and conducting an internal recruitment and priority assessing the current staff member for this role. We have spoken at length to the current staff member Ms Shirley Robertson and explained the process, which she is in support of.

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Beasley  
General Manager  
Community and Allied Health  
NNSWLHD

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines, positioned to the right of the typed name.