**Job Description – Family Support Worker**

**Hours of work**: To be discussed at interview (additional hours may be available including waking nights for holiday and sickness cover). Please see availability matrix document for details of hours.

**Rate of pay**: £10/hour

**Introduction**

“Hello, my name is Cooper and I am nearly six. I have mitochondrial problems, this is a rare genetic muscle condition. My condition causes profound muscle weakness and also affects the muscles that help me to breathe and swallow. Therefore, I have a tracheostomy and I am gastrostomy fed through my tummy.

I live with my mum, dad and big sister. We also have a dog. I love to be around other children, to splash in a warm pool, paint with my hands and to be read stories. When I am feeling adventurous I like to ice skate (in my buggy), be bounced on a trampoline, feel reptiles and see the pigs at the farm. I need someone to help me do these things.

Due to my condition I need a lot of support from my **Family Support Worker** both during the day and during the night. There are a number of responsibilities that the person supporting will undertake, and this job description covers them. My care plans go into more detail about my needs and full training will be given. This role is also about supporting me within my family, so sometimes it will involve a task not directly connected to me. For example, “taking my big sister out or picking her up so that mum and dad can spend time with me.”

**Main Duties**

The main duties of the job are outlined below. However, because my needs vary on a day to day basis, it is extremely important that your approach to work is flexible. You will be expected to carry out any other reasonable jobs too, relating to me or my family.

**Personal Assistance**

* **Communicating -** I am not able to speak yet, so I communicate through smiles and laughter mainly. If I am sad or do not like something I will cry real tears until you fix it for me. Sometimes I have no expression, but this is sometimes just because I am so tired. As the person supporting me you need to monitor me very closely as I can’t always let you know if I need something. I also get very tired very quickly, you need to monitor this and make sure that I don’t overdo it. You need to ensure that I rest when I need to.
* **To be there at all times** – I need to have someone with me 24/7. This means that you can’t ever leave me alone. My airway could block and I would suffocate. I need your full attention at all times. You should not make or receive personal telephone calls at any time unless it’s absolutely urgent.
* **Tracheostomy care** – monitoring and management of my tracheostomy, including all aspects of hygiene and other management including suctioning when required and taking prompt action in the event of any emergency.
* **Gastrostomy Care -** I have an “unsafe swallow”. I am fed by my gastrostomy. My carers should know how to safely feed me and should do so at the right times. You also need to watch out for the signs that I need a burp or air taking off my tummy! (I can’t burp either). You also need to keep the gastrostomy site clean and monitor it for any problems – it’s all on my Care Plan.
* **Assistance with all transfer**s – I can’t move by myself, my support workers will have to help me with all of the transitions that I will need throughout the day. You must always follow the moving and handling procedures that you will be trained in.
* **Medications -** I have a range of medicines throughout the day and night. You need to be sure that I take them as prescribed by my doctors.
* **Skin –** My skin is very sensitive and can mark very easily with certain pressure points. My seating and standing equipment can also mark my skin. You will need to monitor my skin and let mum and dad know about any changes.
* **Equipment –** I have equipment that I need to use to help me through the day. You will be shown how to assist me with this so I am safe. I am finding it hard to get seating that works for me and doesn’t damage my skin. Please make sure that you know what is appropriate for me to use on a day by day basis.
* **Monitoring my health** - my health can deteriorate rapidly. All of my carers need to have a clear awareness of what to do if this happens and be able to react appropriately in an emergency.
* **SATs monitor -** I need to be attached to my SATs monitor on a night, and if I am not very well. When its on it needs reading frequently.
* **Personal care –** I’m getting bigger but I need you to look after me 100%. I cannot do anything myself and never will. I need to be washed and dressed and have my nappy changed when needed.
* **Hygiene regime –** you must make sure that I am clean and dry at all times. Particular attention must be paid to mouth, eyes, skin and stomas. You will need to clean my teeth in the morning. I also really love a bath!
* **Documenting my care** - It is important that all care provided to me is written down for other carers or my parents to read. It allows people to pick up where you left off.
* **Care Plan** – All of this is written in my care plan. Its like my instruction book.

**Social Assistance**

* I am a very happy boy when I am well and like any five year old I like to be busy and entertained. I love being talked to and sung to. My favourite thing to do is watch my iPad and have stories read to me. I like to be picked up or to be moved to different parts of the house so I can see different things. I also like messy play and exploring new textures and sensations, I often do this in my room at home. I also like playing with a variety of toys and am learning to make choices for myself with my communication cards.
* I like to be out and about. I have a swing in the garden and I like being taken out for a walk to look at things. My eyes can’t cope with bright sunlight so I have to shut them. Please be aware of this, it’s no fun being out and about if I can’t see what’s going on.
* I love to go to the swimming pool o, a hydro pool. When you put my trunks on I know that I am going for a dip and get excited!

**General tasks**

* **Working Independently** - Mum and dad are always on hand if there is an emergency and would always rather that you ask for help if you are unsure. However please respect that this is my mum and dads time to get on with the other things they need to do.
* **Light Domestic Duties** - Whilst caring for me there may also be the occasional general task such as ironing, putting my washing away, getting my clothes out, preparing my feeds and maintaining the working order and cleanliness of my equipment and room. Because of my busy days it is important to be prepared.
* If my parents need to spend time with me, you might be asked to take my older sister (she’s 3 years older than me) out or pick her up and bring her home. She’s no trouble by the way 😊
* Collect my prescriptions if needed.

**Person Specification – Family Support Worker**

To be our son’s Family Support Worker you should:

* Be able to stay awake through the night if you are applying to work for night shifts
* Have a positive attitude towards disabled people
* Be enthusiastic about your work
* Be reliable
* Be motivated, want to read Cooper a book, to ensure his muscles are stretched out and soothed in a warm bath daily
* Be on time and take pride in punctuality
* Be able to plan your shifts up to at least two months in advance
* Be able to accept responsibility
* Have and use your own initiative and common sense
* Be clean, tidy and have excellent hygiene
* Be prepared to be trained
* Be willing to work under my direction and instruction
* Be willing to work in a family setting around other children, and including them
* Be confident
* Be comfortable asking questions if you are not sure
* Be willing to try out new activities with our son
* Be patient
* Be good at recording what you do by writing it down
* Know how to follow a confidentiality policy
* Not smoke whilst you are at work or wear strong perfume
* Not have impractically long or false fingernails
* Not use your mobile phone recreationally whilst he is awake
* Be comfortable around the family dog

An enhanced DBS check will be carried out for each applicant. References will be sought if you are offered a position.

You do not need any formal qualifications to do this job. Just a willingness to help Cooper experience life like a typical 5 year old.

It is far more important that we find the right person with good values for the role regardless of prior experience or training. What is of paramount importance is that you have the abilities and personality traits listed in the person specification.