

## Job Description

<b>Job Title</b>	Director of Corporate Support and Chief of Staff
<b>Reports to</b>	Chief Executive, NHS Lothian
<b>Accountable to</b>	Chief Executive, NHS Lothian
<b>Location</b>	Board Headquarters, Edinburgh
<b>Effective as at</b>	April 2026

### 2. Job Purpose

This is a pivotal role as the principal strategic adviser to the Chief Executive in fulfilling their role as Accountable Officer, acting on their behalf as an intermediary in both internal and external executive stakeholder management and strategic decision making, with responsibility for the leadership and oversight of several organisational corporate support functions. The post holder is a key member of the Board's Corporate Management Team (CMT), leads for their areas of accountability, and contributes on behalf of the Chief Executive to the formulation of local, sub-national and national strategy and policy as appropriate.

NHS Lothian's size and scale is reflected in the breadth of this role. Its key features are to:

- Provide key strategic support to the Chief Executive, including leading horizon scanning and working closely with executive directors in NHS Lothian; across the emerging sub-national functions and Scottish Government; and externally to ensure that aligned strategic insight informs executive decision making and leadership.
- Provide executive oversight of a range of business-critical corporate support functions, including corporate governance; communications, engagement and public affairs; and whistleblowing.
- Oversee and coordinate, on behalf of the Chief Executive, responses to activities such as external reviews, public inquiries and levels of escalation, and lead readiness and contingency planning at Board level for major strategic issues and Scottish Government interventions (e.g. Performance Framework escalation).
- Lead the private office to the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Medical and Nurse Directors, ensuring the development of governance and assurance structures to align NHS Lothian and Sub-national planning and delivery.

For Corporate Governance, this requires working in partnership with the Board Secretary, who is operationally responsible for the Board's governance and assurance system; for Communications and Public Affairs with the Director of Communications, Engagement and Public Affairs; and for Whistleblowing, with the Board's Non-Executive Whistleblowing Champion).

### 3. Dimensions

As the second largest Board in Scotland, serving nearly a fifth of the Scottish population, NHS Lothian provides a comprehensive range of community based and hospital-based services through its corporate and acute sectors/directorates and its four Health and

Social Care Partnerships. The Board also provides a wide range of specialist services for people from across Scotland.

Total Population – 0.9 million

Total Budget £2.8 billion

Total Staff - 28,000

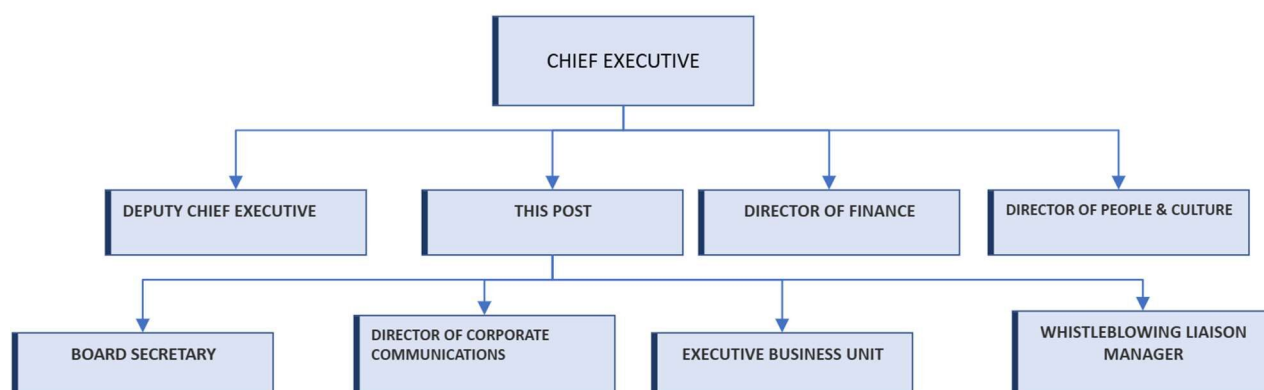
As well as acting on behalf of the Chief Executive where appropriate in working with executive level internal and external stakeholders, the individual provides expert strategic leadership for the Board's significant corporate business support functions, as well as executive oversight of Corporate Communications and Public Engagement, Corporate Governance and Whistleblowing.

Business Support & Corporate Governance (budget, staffing and services overseen by this post):

- Business Support & Corporate Governance direct budget £3.5m
- Business Support & Corporate Governance Staff (40)
- Subnational Project Management Office staff (10)
- Departments include:
  - Chair's Private Office which includes 22 Non-Executive Board Members
  - Chief Executive's Private Office providing advice and guidance to ten Corporate Directors, four HSCP Chief Officers and a number of senior managers
  - Legal claims relating to contractual challenge - management of a large number of claims per annum and £156m risk adjusted liability
  - Communications and Public Affairs – management of 1,000-1,200 enquires per annum usually from MSP/MPs, local authority councillors and members of the public
  - Corporate Business Support Office with a range of staff across several job families and grades including administrative and senior managers.
  - Whistleblowing Manager dealing with 5-10 new Stage 2 concerns per annum and associated referrals to the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO), and the Speak Up service dealing with approx. 120 contacts per year through NHS Lothian staff acting as 3 x Ambassadors and 19 x Advocates

The post holder will provide advice, guidance and support to the Board, the Chief Executive, executive directors, other senior managers and employees on all those issues that require a strategic corporate perspective or the seeking of legal counsel.

#### 4. Organisational Chart



## 5. Role of Department

The Director of Corporate Support and Chief of Staff's department comprises several differing though complementary areas, in respect of which the post holder is required to:

### Corporate Governance

- Through the administrative line management of the Board Secretary (whose professional accountability remains to the Chair for all Board governance matters), ensure the provision of and be accountable for the development and implementation of an effective Board Assurance Framework and Corporate Governance System that supports the Board in effectively discharging its accountabilities and responsibilities and aligning the performance and governance of NHS Lothian to sub-national planning and delivery arrangements.
- Ensure the provision of expert professional and strategic advice to the Board Chair, Chief Executive, other board members, senior management and officers throughout the organisation on all matters pertinent to good corporate governance and internal control.
- Work directly with the Chief Executive and Board Secretary on all aspects of managing the business of the NHS Board and the organisation providing strategic advice as required and acting on behalf of the Chief Executive in both internal and external stakeholder engagement and decision making as directed.

### Corporate Support Portfolios

- *Corporate Business Support:* Establish an effective and resilient joint Business Management and Executive Assistant service for the Chief Executive and Chair, Deputy Chief Executive, Medical and Nurse Directors that supports horizon scanning and the effective management of issues requiring a coordinated approach, such as regulatory reviews or Scottish Government escalations.
- *Corporate Communications and Public Affairs:* Ensure the provision of effective internal communication strategies and external media and public affairs handling, which exploit technology and social media to enhance the organisations reputation and branding (externally) and ensure that staff at all levels are appropriately informed on key organisational initiatives, strategies, and performance
- *Freedom of Information.* Provide strategic oversight of the Board's FOI/EIR compliance arrangements and executive-level sign-off for responses, being assured that appropriate organisational processes are in place and that performance, themes and risks are reported to the Board.
- *Legal:* Responsibility and accountability for the provision of appropriate support services for contractual legal advice and directing the co-ordination and management of all contractual legal claims received by NHS Lothian, liaising continually with the Central Legal Office and being the first point of contact for any issues requiring CLO review
- *Whistleblowing:* Responsible for the overall operation of the Whistleblowing process and implementation of the National Standards offering advice and support to the Board's Non-Executive Whistleblowing Champion and standing committees of the Board on performance and handling of each case.
- *Speak Up Service:* Provide a credible, confidential and psychologically safe means by which staff can raise concerns, signposting to other services and processes as appropriate and supporting staff with these and providing feedback on formal

concern handling that supports continuous improvement of the whistleblowing and HR issues management services.

#### Direct support to Chief Executive and Chair

- Provide executive oversight for the organisation's response to critical corporate issues including, but not limited to; statutory public inquiries, government performance escalation, major emergency responses etc. and, on behalf of the Board and Corporate Management Team, be responsible for working directly with the government, legal advisers etc.
- Establish, develop and line manage a robust and professional Programme Management Team to enable effective integration of NHS Lothian systems and processes with the evolving sub-national planning structures.
- Lead the interface between external stakeholders and the organisation e.g. directors in other boards, the Scottish Government, senior legal counsel, acting as the single point of contact on behalf of the organisation, and communicating regularly, often in respect of politically sensitive or contentious issues.
- Ensure the provision of written reports and presentations on behalf of the Chief Executive and Chair for both internal (Board and Corporate Management Team) and external (Scottish Government, NHS Scotland Executive, Board Chairs Group, Subnational East Planning and Delivery Committee) audiences.

## **6. Key Result Areas**

### Corporate Governance

- On behalf of the Chief Executive, lead the executive contribution to the design and on-going development of the Board Assurance Framework, working with the Board Secretary who holds responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the Board's governance system. Ensure that this Framework balances the needs of Board-specific and Sub-national planning and delivery.
- Support the delivery of excellence within corporate governance by developing strategic policy and guidance, motivating fellow executives and senior managers to uphold best practice. Provide strategic leadership and support to enable the Board Secretary and Corporate Governance Team to develop and maintain the Board's Corporate Governance Operating System including for example the Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation as well as the remits and memberships of the Board's Standing and Advisory Committees.
- Provide expert advice and information to support the Chief Executive and executive management on all strategic and policy matters so that they may effectively carry out their responsibilities, working in partnership with the Board Secretary on matters relating to corporate governance, risk management and internal control.
- Where appropriate, contribute constructive strategic challenge within executive discussions to support transparent decision-making, ensuring consistency with any independent governance advice provided by the Board Secretary to the Board and its committees.
- Be the principal contact for external stakeholders including MPs/MSPs, senior officials within the Scottish Government ensuring effective relationships are created for supportive and constructive dialogue.

### Corporate Support Portfolios

- *Corporate Business Support:* Lead development and oversee management of a professional, efficient and effective private office to the Chief Executive and Chair, Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Medical and Nurse Directors that is resilient to staffing changes and supports effective horizon scanning and planning of sub-national, Board and Corporate Management Team business.

- *Communications and Public Affairs:* Through executive oversight of the Corporate Communication and Public Affairs function ensure the efficient handling of all elected representatives' communications, Parliamentary Questions, Ministerial Briefing and enquiries, ensuring responses are consistent with public statements and current policy of the Board, and that the service provides a high quality, timely and person-centred response enhancing the organisation's reputation
- Work with the Director of Communications, Engagement and Public Affairs and other Directors to develop an engagement function that helps services across NHS Lothian and the HSCPs to meet the requirements placed on health boards to plan changes to services with the public, drawing on best practice examples to embed an approach that moves beyond consultation to active participation in and co-creation of improved health outcomes.
- Ensure effective management of the Ombudsman's process, to Stage 3 complaints, building relations with the SPSO communications and reports and ensuring in conjunction with executive colleagues that organisational learning is taking place as the result of complaints, concerns and Ombudsman's reports/decision letters, reviewing trends, sharing learning, redefining policy in conjunction with e.g. the Clinical Governance Unit or clinical services.
- *Legal Affairs:* Working closely with the Executive Medical Director (Clinical litigation) the post holder will have corporate responsibility as the organisation's lead for coordinating and leading in respect of contractual claims and liaison with legal advisers, ensuring the continued development and provision of an effective, efficient e service which assists the Central Legal Office in the investigation of contractual issues that relate to the organisation.
- Be accountable for the design and development of the corporate policy framework that supports the demonstration of legal and regulatory compliance, ensuring that there are systems in place for the design, management and update of all corporate policies, including the archive, communication and validation of Board policies.
- Lead the preparation of the Board's response to any relevant formal consultations (e.g. draft legislation, draft Bills, draft guidance, draft plans or strategies of SGHD or other bodies), so that the Board provides an informed, debated and high-quality response to all such requests.
- *Whistleblowing:* Overall responsibility for managing the whistleblowing system to ensure performance targets are met and the NHS Lothian production of a range of accurate data reporting to ISD, SPSO, NHS Board and standing committees of the NHS Board, and management teams on key performance indicators. This will include ensuring the capabilities of the recording system meet the requirements of the INWO and NHS Lothian executives acting as investigation commissioners, from both an operational and reporting perspective.
- Develop, implement and monitor whistleblowing educational / training packages which will meet the needs of the different professions/ teams across the organisation, encouraging local ownership and a culture of proactive whistleblowing handling – focusing on the INWO Whistleblowing Standards.
- Maintain mechanisms with the contractor teams for enhanced reporting systems, with the Independent Contractors and Family Health Services to build organisational systems for learning from experiences, improving the whistleblowing process across the whole of the organisation.
- *Speak Up Service:* Ensure that the service is effectively resourced so that it is able to provide a psychologically safe route to raising concerns for NHS Lothian staff, that themes from contacts with the service are triangulated with other information and intelligence in support of early identification of services where significant problems exist, and meeting with those using the service and Whistleblowing procedures where this will support organisational learning and action.

### Direct support to Chief Executive and Chair

- Lead and manage the organisation's response to critical corporate issues in a way that ensures the reputation of the organisation is maintained and that contributions are seen as highly competent, trusted, and in line with the public interest.
- Ensure the establishment, development and line management of a robust and professional Programme Management Team for Corporate Support enables effective integration of NHS Lothian systems and processes with the evolving sub-national planning structures, building sufficient and coordinated programme and project management skill and capacity.
- Lead the interface between external stakeholders and the organisation e.g. directors in other Boards, the Scottish Government, senior legal counsel, acting as the single point of contact on behalf of the organisation, building effective relationships and communicating regularly, often in respect of politically sensitive or contentious issues which is critical to ensuring the best outcome for the organisation,
- Ensure the timely and accurate development of high-quality written reports and presentations by corporate business support staff and directors on behalf of the Chief Executive and Chair for both internal (Board and Corporate Management Team) and external (Scottish Government, NHS Scotland Executive, Board Chairs Group, Subnational East Planning and Delivery Committee) audiences.

### **7. Assignment and Review Work**

The post reports directly and is accountable to the Chief Executive for the various functions related to their individual offices and is responsible for providing leadership and co-ordination across the organisation's corporate support functions. This will include acting on behalf of the Chief Executive in agreed areas of internal and external stakeholder engagement and management, taking decisions on their behalf in line with pre-determined parameters.

To fulfil this critical and complex role the post holder reports to the Chief Executive and provides support to the Board Chair. As previously described, the post holder is accountable for leading and driving progress in identified areas e.g. delivery of a new Assurance Framework across the Board, leading the response to major aspects of Board business such as Subnational Planning Structures and Reform, working autonomously. They have substantial freedom to act and are expected to operate with the absolute minimum of management, supervision and direction, exercising professional maturity and substantial discretion and judgement in progressing the workload associated with the post.

The post holder has autonomy to contribute to the development of Board-level governance strategy from an executive perspective, and to determine how corporate support resources are deployed to deliver agreed business objectives. The post holder ensures that appropriate executive governance arrangements are in place to support business planning, stakeholder engagement, performance and risk management, working in partnership with relevant colleagues.

Review of performance is undertaken through the agreement of performance objectives and individual performance appraisal by the Chief Executive. As part of this process the Chief Executive will seek the Board Chair's views on areas affecting the NHS Board. Formal appraisal is annual but informal reviews will take place between the post holder and the Chief Executive on an ongoing basis. The Chief Executive will give authority, where necessary, for the post holder to act on their behalf and / or out with the scope of their delegated authority.

## **8. Communication and Working Relationships**

The ability of the post holder to build and maintain key relationships and communicate effectively with the most senior of individuals as well as frontline staff and external parties will be crucial to the success of this role. Communication will need to be appropriate and flexible to meet the requirements of the recipient(s), including written reports, presentations, formal and informal briefings, leading group discussions, and 1:1 meetings.

Many aspects of communications will be in respect of highly politically, sensitive and often contentious issues where there is significant resistance and reputational risk, and the post holder is required to use the highest level of communication skills to overcome challenge and build both internal and external relationships to ensure a good outcome for the organisation and the people it serves and the staff it employs.

The information being communicated can range from analysis of complex legal/regulatory matters that affect the whole organisation to advice on internal control or good governance as it should be applied to one topic in one area. All information and advice must be conveyed in a clear and concise manner for all audiences. The work of the post holder may be communicated to inform and influence key decisions impacting on the whole organisation, to serve the Board's governance processes, or to educate and develop Board members and staff. The post holder will engage with the following individuals and groups:

### Internal:

- Chief Executive
- Board Chair
- Board Secretary
- The Board and its Standing Committees
- Non-Executive Board Members, particularly the committee chairs and Whistleblowing Champion.
- Executive Board Members other Directors and senior managers.
- Health and Social Care Partnership Chief Officers
- Senior Clinicians
- Professional Advisory Committee chairs and members
- Internal Auditors and External Auditors (Audit Scotland)
- Any other employees for the purposes of giving advice.

### External:

- Scottish Government – Health Directorates and Scottish Parliamentary officials
- Scottish Health Service Central Legal Office
- Health Improvement Scotland
- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman / Independent National Whistleblowing Officer
- Citizens Advice, Scotland
- Mediation Network
- Standards Commission for Scotland
- NHS Scotland Counter Fraud Services
- Regulators of the Board's functions and services
- Professional organisations.
- External audit
- Audit Scotland
- Local Authority managers and staff
- All NHS Boards in the Sub national East – 7 territorial and 8 national.
- Other NHS Boards

## **9. Most Challenging Part of the Job**

This is a critical strategic role within the organisation and requires an individual of a high calibre with significant senior management experience within the NHS to manage multiple complex relationships.

The post holder has to be able to demonstrate sound judgment on how to reconcile the often-competing demands of political sensitivity, accuracy, conflicting interpretations and extremely tight timescales for responses.

The post holder is required to manage the competing agendas of senior colleagues.

This role includes working across organisational boundaries at the highest level with other NHS boards, four integration joint boards (IJBs), local authorities and the Scottish Government, often dealing with contentious issues.

As a core member of the Corporate Management Team, the postholder provides appropriate and responsive advice to a wide range of directors and senior staff which entails utilising influencing skills to maximum benefit.

The post holder has also to be able to recognise and address matters which may present a risk, including reputational risk, to the NHS Board.

The job requires a significant level of negotiation and influencing in order to drive forward the implementation of short to long term plans and policies particularly where there are significant barriers. Where change programmes involve staff groups and changes to process or working practice, this introduces the post holder to occasional and direct exposure to highly distressing or emotional circumstances, especially when imparting unwelcome news to patients, their families and staff and dealing with related disciplinary or grievance matters,

The post holder will be required to discuss performance targets and achievements with managers, and this will include presenting information when targets have not been met. This may result in difficult and demanding dialogue that requires sensitivity, tact and diplomacy, whilst ensuring facts are carefully and transparently presented.

The post holder has to ensure the Board is able to govern its functions in a complex and political environment, whilst attempting to meet the needs of a large, diverse and highly engaged body of internal and external stakeholders. The Board itself is subject to Scottish Government oversight and direction, and an extensive body of law and regulation relating to its functions and services.

The Board has delegated a large proportion of its health functions to four integration joint boards (IJBs).

The Board is also engaged in functions which are managed nationally, sub-nationally and regionally, which necessitates effective working relationships with other NHS bodies. The post holder has to understand this environment, and use their communication skills to involve, engage and consult with the relevant stakeholders to deliver sustainable solutions.

## **10. Qualifications and / or Experience Specified for the Post by the Employing Authority**

### **Qualifications:**

- Educated to Master's degree level or can clearly demonstrate experience (with evidence of success) operating at a strategic level, equitable to someone qualified at a Masters level in an associated field.
- Relevant professional qualification in NHS management
- Evidence of ongoing professional development is essential

### **Knowledge and Experience:**

- Extensive experience of operating effectively at a senior level within a large complex organisation, that evidences the qualities sought from Director level roles in the NHS Scotland Leadership Success Profile
- In-depth specialist knowledge over multiple aspects of Health Board business and operating systems including corporate governance, Scottish Government NHS policy and procedures, legislation and regulations pertinent to the public sector (i.e. FOI, Whistleblowing, Legal Claims, Public Enquiries), performance management, financial management, people management.
- Demonstrable experience in providing professional advice to Board members and senior managers in a public sector organisation on matters of a highly sensitive/highly political nature
- Experience and ability to develop, implement and evaluate Board Policy and Strategy.
- Evidence of the application of expertise in good corporate governance, internal control and risk management, through initiating, leading, facilitating and evaluating the development of systems and practices in an organisation.
- Evidence of team leadership and management skills with the ability to influence and negotiate with all levels of management and staff, external organisations, and other stakeholders.
- Evidence of being able to produce complex written reports to a professional standard expected by Boards and their committees.
- Evidence of excellent communication skills including oral and presentational communication, combined with good listening skills.
- Evidence of attention to detail and accuracy in ways of working
- Evidence of applying tact, diplomacy and persuasion skills to address highly contentious and challenging situations.