

NHS NATIONAL SERVICES SCOTLAND JOB DESCRIPTION

1. JOB DETAILS

Job Title:	Healthcare Scientist (Epidemiology or Health Protection)
Immediate Senior Officer:	Team Leader
SBU:	Public Health Intelligence (HPS)
Location:	Meridian Court, Glasgow
Reference:	NPPHIG283

2. JOB PURPOSE

To support consultants or senior scientific staff in the provision of specialised information, advice and support to stakeholders.

Assist in the development of a specialised epidemiological knowledge base to underpin one or more health protection programmes of work. This will include the analysis, interpretation and presentation of epidemiological and surveillance data and participation in relevant research activities.

3. DIMENSIONS

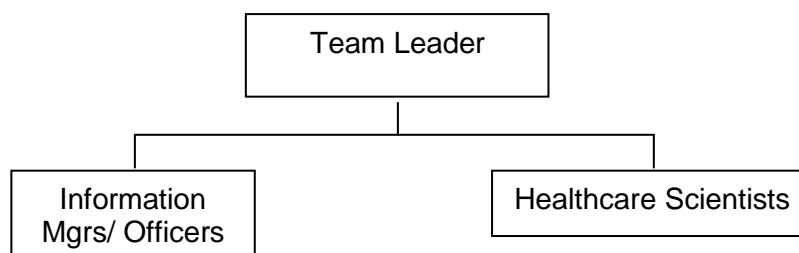
The post holder will report to a team leader.

There will be no financial responsibility but the post holder will need an awareness of budgetary constraints and will be expected to work within any budgets set by the line manager. There is no responsibility for staff though the post holder may be asked to train staff, supervise or mentor junior scientific staff and demonstrate specific tasks or work as required to others.

The post holder will contribute to HPS' Research Strategy activity by undertaking research & development activities under the direction of a senior member of staff e.g. preparation of questionnaires, data gathering, audits etc.

4. ORGANISATION CHART

Typical team



5. ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT

Health Protection Scotland - a division of NHS National Services Scotland - is a national, multidisciplinary organisation whose purpose is *'to protect Scotland's health'*. HPS does this by providing the best possible information and expert support to practitioners, policy-makers and others on infectious and environmental hazards.

HPS carries out surveillance, working with NHS professionals and local authorities in a variety of ways, gathers health intelligence and data, detects emerging trends and works to prevent infections and hazards, or reduce the effects of these if they do occur.

HPS monitors the extent and impact of infections and other risks to Scotland's health and helps prepare plans to manage incident or outbreaks, particularly those that may stretch the resources of the NHS in Scotland.

HPS' aim is to communicate effectively with health professionals and the general public to promote the steps needed to stop the spread of infections and other hazards.

6. KEY RESULT AREAS

1. Analyses, interprets and produces regular reports on surveillance data under direction of consultant or senior scientific staff. Identifies data quality issues and alerts senior staff to any anomalies.
2. Provides advice and information to a range of stakeholders on issues relating to surveillance programme(s) and health protection topics.
3. Identifies, critically appraises and summarises scientific and/or epidemiological literature to assist consultant and other senior staff in the provision of advice, development of guidelines and policies for dissemination to relevant stakeholders with the aim of providing best advice/up to date information and encouraging best practice.
4. Assists consultants and other senior professional staff in the preparation and dissemination of complex, sometimes sensitive, surveillance data, e.g. oral and written presentations of up-to-date, highly specialised scientific or clinical information to be presented at scientific meetings.
5. Provides scientific and/or epidemiological assistance to senior staff within HPS and to NHS boards in Scotland in the management of outbreaks and incidents
6. Contributes to the improvement of national surveillance systems under the guidance of a consultant or other senior scientific/clinical staff. This may include validation of surveillance data, validation of laboratory reporting systems and assisting with reviews of local surveillance systems within NHS boards.
7. Assists in the implementation of research and audit initiatives which will contribute to the body of knowledge of health protection by using and researching methodologies, gathering data etc. Assist in the writing up of findings and help prepare reports and articles for publication.
8. Ensures that services and outputs are delivered in accordance with policy, legislation or governance requirements including those covering confidentiality, Data Protection, ethics and Freedom of Information.

7. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW OF WORK and DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS

- The post holder will report to the line manager regularly to be assigned work and update manager and other team members on progress. Formal objectives will be set in line with organisational objectives and a review of work will be undertaken jointly between the post holder and the line manager twice per annum as part of the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (Performance & Development Review process).
- The post holder has autonomy to plan and organise their own and others activities on an ongoing basis using recognised project management methodologies and in line with organisational policies and procedures. They will be expected to use judgement around timescales and milestones, adjusting as appropriate. Where unusual situations or incidents occur they will bring these to the attention of a senior colleague, formulating ideas and suggestions to address any problems arising.
- In appraising and interpreting research, literature reviews or other information where available evidence may be contradictory, the post holder will need to consider the range of findings and make recommendations to consultants based on different outcomes or options.

8. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Internal

- The post holder will normally work within a designated team but may be required to carry out duties in other teams or other areas of the organisation if required. Through written and oral communication, as well as formal meetings, they will contribute to the Division's work in relation to protecting Scotland's health.
- The post holder will participate in meetings with other HPS scientific and clinical staff to promote continuing professional development.

External

- The post holder will liaise with other NHS organisations from time to time in support of the team's work (e.g. SGHD, NHS Boards, Public Health England, NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland, NHS Education Scotland and Local Authorities) and may be asked to communicate – under direction – specific information or advice in relation to surveillance, infection/exposure prevention and control etc.
- The nature of the work means that information or data may be sensitive, highly complex and at times contentious. Data may contain Patient Identifiable Information so adherence to all data governance requirements is paramount. When delivering information about health protection or public health risks an awareness of the need to carefully manage risk communication (especially in the public domain) is essential.
- Communication is mainly through written and oral communications and may include attendance at meetings, seminars or conferences at both local and national level. This may include the presentation of surveillance or research findings at conferences or scientific meetings under direction/approval of a clinical consultant.

9. MOST CHALLENGING PARTS OF THE JOB

- The ability to be flexible and react to a wide variety of demands and tight deadlines, particularly in relation to providing support during health protection incidents and outbreaks

10. SYSTEMS

The post holder will be expected to have advanced word processing and computer skills. These will be applied to the interrogation, extraction and manipulation of data (e.g. using Microsoft Access, Microsoft Excel). The post requires a working knowledge of packages for statistical analysis (e.g. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)) as well as software for the referencing and cataloguing of literature (e.g. Endnote). Using Microsoft PowerPoint, the post holder will develop presentations for local and national audiences.

11. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL EFFORT

Physical Effort

Frequent requirement to sit at workstation for long periods. May require to carry laptop, projectors, papers to meetings, presentations etc.

Mental Effort

Frequent requirement for intense concentration (e.g. report-writing, undertaking literature reviews or statistical analyses), as well as the ability to change activity on request. Expected to meet demands at short notice during outbreak and crisis situations.

Emotional Effort

Occasional involvement in potentially sensitive incidents/outbreak situations e.g. where there may be fatalities and/or significant media interest.

12. ENVIRONMENTAL/WORKING CONDITIONS & MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT

Open-plan office setting. Requirement to use Visual Display Unit equipment for long periods. Requirement to use printer, photocopier and fax machine.

13. KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB

Qualifications, Training & Experience

- Primary degree in a scientific or clinical subject
- Postgraduate qualification or equivalent experience in a health related discipline
- A qualification or demonstrable training/experience in public health, health protection or epidemiology

Knowledge & Skills

- Computer literacy, working knowledge of commonly used software (e.g. Access, Excel)
- Well developed analytical skills, including familiarity with statistical analysis tools (e.g. SPSS, STATA)
- Highly developed communication skills, both verbal and written
- Experience in implementing projects and working within project management frameworks
- Understanding of current scientific and/or epidemiological advances

Other Attributes

- Proven track record as a team player
- Enthusiastic approach with excellent planning and organisational skills
- Ability to foster and maintain good working relationships with administrative staff, scientific staff and health professionals at all levels
- Ability to present detailed data and complex scientific information to a variety of stakeholders
- Experience of training other staff groups
- Record of scientific publications
- Commitment to CPD within Public Health competency frameworks
- Flexible approach and commitment to apply skills across HPS in support of clinical/scientific priorities

14. JOB DESCRIPTION AGREEMENT

Job Holder's Signature:

Date:

Head of Department Signature:

Date:

HR Representative's Signature:

Date: