

## JOB DESCRIPTION

### 1. JOB IDENTIFICATION

Job Title: Mortuary Assistant

Reports to: Senior Anatomical Pathology Technologist

Department, Ward or Section: Mortuary/Pathology

Operational unit / Corporate Department: Clinical Support Division

Job Code: SSCLSSRAIGPATH56

No of Job Holders: 1

Date: 07/10/2021

### 2. JOB PURPOSE

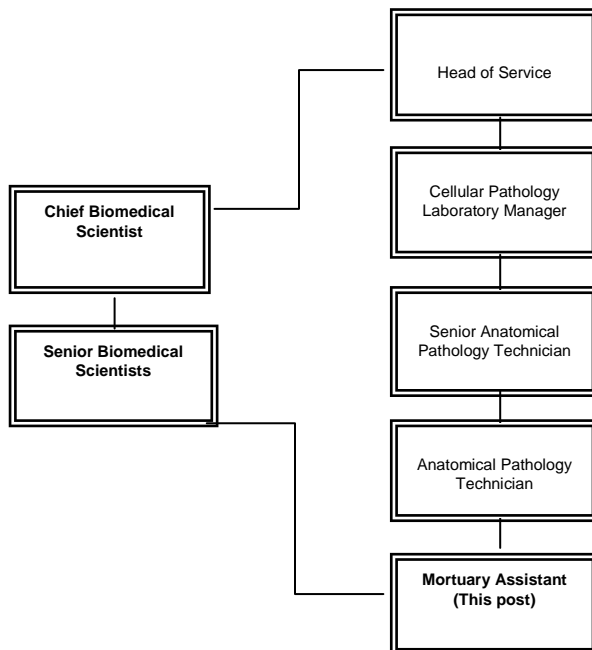
To assist the Anatomical Pathology Technicians in the running of a safe, secure, effective and comprehensive mortuary service for the needs of NHH, Procurator Fiscal and the wider community. The post holder will act as a Mortuary Assistant at Raigmore Hospital Mortuary. The post holder will also provide assistance to the histopathology section of the cellular pathology department (general housekeeping duties).

- Dealing with the receipt, removal and transfer of the deceased
- Assisting with enquiries from families, undertakers and Procurator fiscals office
- Prepare the deceased for identification and/or viewing
- Paperwork and release of the deceased to undertakers
- Maintenance of and accurate mortuary register
- Liaising with relatives of the deceased in a courteous and respectful manner, including conducting viewings.
- Provision of Pathology supplies to hospital user (for example formalin pots for histology biopsies).

### 3. DIMENSIONS

The post holder main functions will be in the Mortuary. The post holder will also perform general housekeeping duties in the histopathology section of the Cellular Pathology Department. Mortuary Assistants report directly to the Senior APT who in turn reports to the Cellular Pathology Manager.

### 4. ORGANISATIONAL POSITION



### 5. ROLE OF DEPARTMENT OR SECTION

The Cellular Pathology Department provides a range of effective, high quality diagnostic services, including Histopathology, Non-Gynae Cytology and Andrology and Post Mortems. To provide professional support and advice to clinicians, hospital departments, relatives and bereaved, Funeral Directors and hospitals, general medical and dental practitioners and outside agencies (e.g. Procurator Fiscal for medico-legal post mortems, Police, Local Authorities. Raigmore Hospital is the sole provider of autopsy services in the Highlands. The Cellular Pathology service is provided by various professional groups including medical staff, biomedical scientists, healthcare science associates and assistants, administrative & Clerical staff and Mortuary Staff.

## 6. MAIN TASKS, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Receive and release deceased brought into the mortuary from the wards or community, ensuring all identification protocols are followed and strictly adhered to.
- Ensuring all relevant documentation is completed correctly, and all mortuary records are kept up to date, including an accurate record being maintained regarding valuables and property accompanying the deceased to the mortuary.
- Ensuring any jewellery or property, removed from the deceased whilst in the mortuary before release to the funeral director, police, identified relative, is recorded in the 'Patient's Property, Clothing, Cash and Valuables' register.
- Record weights and measurements of the deceased
- Check that all statutory documentation e.g. consent forms, cremation forms, release forms have been completed correctly, and follow up any mistakes. Ensure all documents pertaining to foetal death are completed correctly.
- Prepare deceased for viewing/identification by relatives, police etc. Prepare and present bodies for Clinical Staff completing cremation forms.
- Provide assistance to Anatomical Pathology Technicians
- Reconstitution of the deceased following post mortem
- Ensure patient confidentiality and compliance with organisational Data Protection and security policies.
- Help distressed and emotional relatives and staff by providing support and advice in a compassionate way when receiving and giving highly sensitive information.
- Responsible for all domestic cleaning of the mortuary and body fridges.
- Monitor and report any equipment breakdown or malfunction via the appropriate escalation procedure.
- Maintaining up to date records (manual and/or computerised) of all activities relating to the movement of the deceased into and out of the mortuary, especially the mortuary register and all release documentation pertaining to the deceased.
- To attend the mortuary department in the event of a major incident/mass disaster being declared
- Supply formalin, biopsy tubs, and pre-filled biopsy pots (or other Pathology supplies) to theatres/ward areas, and monitor stock control of these items to ensure a ready supply is maintained

- Filing of tissue blocks, slides and forms
- Prepare and disseminate supplies of fixative to service users (theatres, GPs, other hospitals etc), along with specimen containers as required by the service users.
- Maintain stock levels, bringing to the attention of senior staff, any low stock levels or deficiencies.
- Receiving of laboratory supplies, and their correct storage, including the uplift of return and waste supplies.
- Participate in the Mortuary out of hours service
- Weekly transportation of foetal remains to the crematorium.

## **7. EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY USED**

- Use of refrigerated and frozen body storage facilities
- Electronic body lifting apparatus
- Cleaning equipment
- Office equipment including PC, fax, scanner &c.
- Use of refrigerated and frozen body storage facilities

## **8. SYSTEMS**

- Use of Cirdan Ultra Laboratory Information Management System
- Use of ipassport quality management system
- Use of electronic databases for recording deceased's details and movement
- Use of Word, Excel, Outlook and internet explorer.

## **9. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW OF WORK**

The post holder is directly answerable to the Senior Anatomical Pathology Technologist for mortuary related work, and the Chief Biomedical Scientist in Cellular Pathology for Laboratory related work, and responsible to the Cellular Pathology Laboratory Manager.

Meetings and reviews take place formally and informally with the Senior Anatomical Pathology Technologist and consultant medical staff. Supervision/Support for the post holder is always available from one of the consultant pathologists, the Senior Anatomical Pathology Technologist, the Laboratory Manager or her deputy when required.

Work is mainly requested by Consultant Pathologists.

The annual autopsy work in the mortuary is mainly generated from two sources (hospital and

the community) is approximately:

1. Hospitals and NHS services 20
2. Procurators Fiscal 300

The mortuary body store handles approximately 1000 bodies per annum. These may be attributed to either the NHS, police or the funeral trade storage depending on the circumstances surrounding the death.

The post mortem may generate further work in the form of samples to other labs for analysis and organs for medical research.

The department also deals with the sensitive disposal of approximately 800 foetal remains cases.

## **10. DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS**

- The post holder must make decisions on the appropriate handling procedure when dealing with the deceased, taking into account any Infection Control factors.
- The post holder uses judgement to determine the degree of contact with the deceased that is suitable for relatives' viewings.
- The post holder will work alone, without direct supervision, for large parts of the working day. Supervision is provided remotely.
- The post holder must interpret all available documentation and ensure all in order prior to receiving and releasing bodies.
- The post holder follows the Department's Standard Operating Procedures and adheres to Divisional policies.
- Required to use own initiative daily to gauge the nature of any situation that may arise and act accordingly for the benefit of each family.

## **11. MOST CHALLENGING/DIFFICULT PARTS OF THE JOB**

- Daily dealing with noxious decomposing mutilated or infested cadavers.
- Frequently working with deceased that pose a danger of infection
- Multitasking
- Coping with constant pressure within a demand led service
- Working between and/or across sites
- Working alone
- Highly emotional working environment due to dealing with deceased children.
- Time management and prioritisation of tasks to ensure a quick efficient service is provided, thus enabling funerals to take place with the minimum of delay and stress to families.
- Daily dealing with distressed relatives whilst maintaining a detached and professional manner.

- Exposure to dead children and babies

## 12. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

- The post holder will communicate daily with clinical users regarding organisation of paperwork and/or regarding required procedures for transfer of deceased to the mortuary facility.
- The post holder will communicate on a daily basis with funeral directors regarding arrangements for release of the deceased.
- The post holder will communicate on a regular basis with relatives of the deceased, requiring the post holder to display empathy, sympathy and sensitivity.
- The post holder will communicate on a daily basis with other departmental colleagues and other NHSH including portering staff, medical staff, nursing staff, administration staff.
- The post holder will communicate with Police, Procurator Fiscal and other external agencies as required.

## 13. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS OF THE JOB

### Physical Skills/Effort

- To be able to use all equipment in the mortuary as required including all body handling and movement equipment.
- To be physically able to move deceased as per instruction and training in accordance with the Boards Manual Handling and Lifting Policy.

### Mental Demands

- Prolonged concentration when completing necessary paperwork
- Ability to cope under pressure to ensure paperwork is completed within tight timescales

### Emotional Demands

Dealing with highly distressed grieving relatives whilst accommodating viewings, including sensitively dealing with relatives of badly disfigured deceased which are unsuitable for viewing.

Ability to deal with badly disfigured and/or decomposed bodies

### Working Conditions

- Daily exposure to dead adult and paediatric bodies who may be in varying stages of decomposition
- Exposure to unpleasant and offensive smells

## 14. KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB

### Essential

- Educated to HNC/ SVQ level 3 or a minimum of 3 Highers at grade C or above (or equivalent qualification)
- Good literacy and numeracy skills
- Experience of working with the public
- Knowledge of Health & Safety policies and procedures
- Knowledge of confidentiality and Data Protection policies
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including good verbal communication skills due to the requirement to liaise with bereaved relatives in a respectful and courteous manner
- Good time management and organisational skills
- Good physical skills due to the requirement for manual handling
- Driving licence

### Desirable

- Experience of working with the deceased
- Good computer skills

## 15. JOB DESCRIPTION AGREEMENT

I agree that the above Job Description is an accurate reflection of my duties and responsibilities at the date of signing.

Job Holder's Signature:

Manager's Signature:

Date:

Date: