

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. JOB IDENTIFICATION

Job Title:	Health Protection Nurse
Responsible to:	Advanced Health Protection Nurse
Department:	Health Protection
Directorate:	Public Health & Health Policy
Operating Division:	Lothian NHS Board
Job Reference:	195905
No of Job Holders:	5
Last Update:	August 2024

2. JOB PURPOSE

To undertake the role of Health Protection Nurse, managing a caseload of public health incidents and cases through assessing, advising and implementing effective communicable disease control and community case and outbreak management interventions.

Work in partnership with other organisations, patients and their families to manage public health incidents and develop prevention methods.

Provide advice and training on communicable disease case and outbreak management to healthcare professionals, other agencies, carers, patients and their relatives.

3. DIMENSIONS

The post holder will manage public health cases and incidents on HPzone, providing advice to other professionals and members of the public on communicable disease prevention and control and community outbreak management.

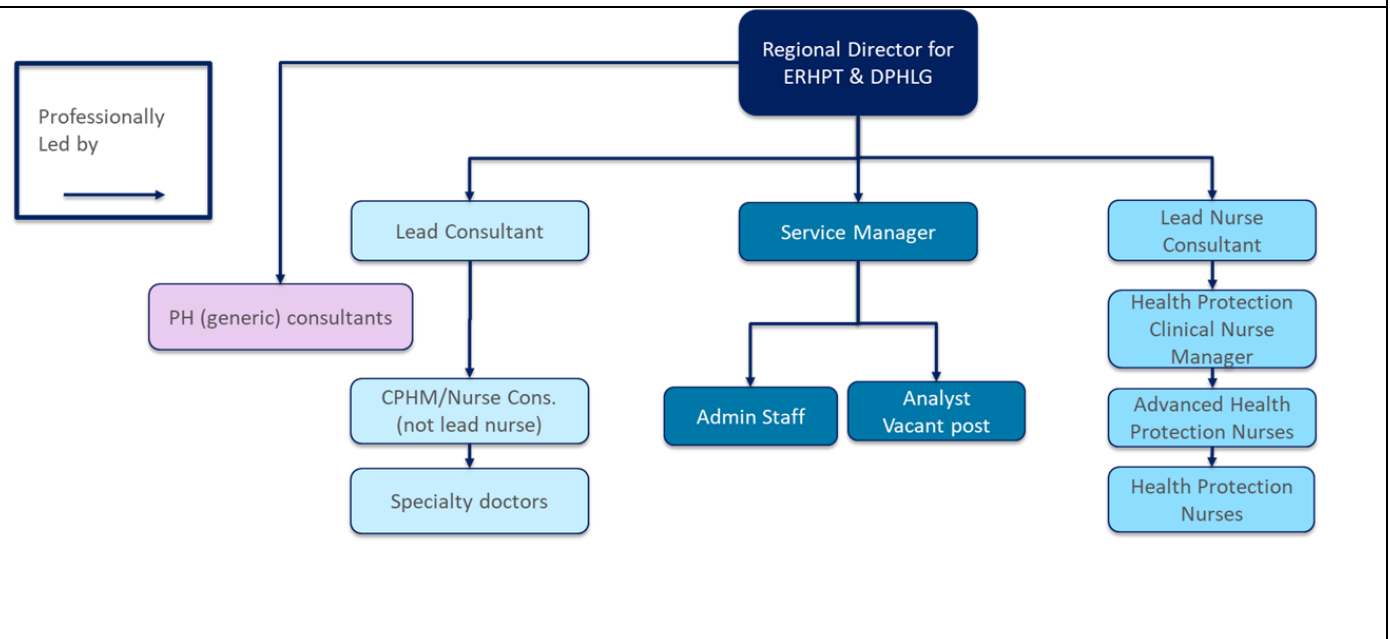
The postholder is employed within NHS Lothian and there will be a requirement to work flexibly across the East Region Health Protection Service (Lothian, Fife, Forth Valley and Borders) to meet service demands.

The health protection and community case and outbreak management remit covers a population in the region of 1,700,000 across the East region. The health protection team works closely with nine local authorities and other partners to protect the public from hazards that affect health: City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian, Fife, Borders, Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire.

The post holder is therefore expected to work flexibly across the East region to meet service demands. The post holder will be based at Waverly Gate with much of the work done by providing telephone advice, however, there may be a need to travel across the East region to acute hospitals and other community sites on visits.

The post holder will be required to support the Health Protection on-call out of hour's service.

4. ORGANISATIONAL POSITION



5. ROLE OF DEPARTMENT

The Health Protection Team (HPT) forms part of the Directorate of Public Health and Health Policy. The HPT has a health protection remit and a community case and outbreak management remit (Nurse led)

Community Case and Outbreak Management

This is a nurse led service within the Health Protection Team. The remit includes:

- The prevention, investigation, assessment and management of community cases, outbreaks and incidents for prisons, education establishments, care homes, nurseries and other community establishments.

- The development of training and tools for community establishments for infection control.

- Providing outbreak control, prevention and management advice to community establishments.

- Management of communications to the public and partners on case and outbreak management issues in the community.

- Working with colleagues in health and social care partnerships to ensure adequate governance arrangements for private practice and NHS staff in the community.

- Developing partnership agreements with Hospices to provide a specialist advice service.

Developing short and long term plans to progress the case and outbreak management agenda across the East region and with other partners.
Developing community outbreak guidance to prevent and disrupt transmission of communicable disease in community settings.

Health Protection

The HPT are notified of incidents and outbreaks of communicable disease and environmental health issues which require immediate risk assessment and action. These can be strategic or operational in nature. The health protection remit includes:

The investigation, prevention and control of communicable diseases (including Tuberculosis) and minimising the impact of these on other NHS facilities, community establishments and vulnerable groups. The investigation, assessment and management of environmental health risks. These could include chemical, radiological and biological incidents.

Active management of internal communications, including NHS corporate communications with the public and media to protect the health of the population of Lothian.

Contingency planning and co-ordination of the NHS response to major incidents

Strategic development of policy and guidance for health protection

Planning, developing and delivering training to NHS and non-NHS staff in health protection issues. This includes training staff in the health protection role and competencies for delivering on-call.

Providing an on-call function for public health.

6. KEY RESULT AREAS

Health Protection Practice

1. With support from senior team members the post holder has responsibility for the daily management of health protection cases and incidents by providing advice to other professionals and the public on health protection action. Case management includes assessing the need for chemoprophylaxis, immunoglobulin, vaccination and other prevention measures in line with Standard Operating Procedures and national guidelines. It also involves undertaking risk assessments on the need to exclude patients and their contacts under The Public Health etc (Scotland) Act 2008.
2. To manage own caseload on a daily basis, assessing which cases and incidents should take high priority and require urgent action.
3. Provide advice and training in health protection and community infection, prevention and control to institutions (schools, nurseries, prisons etc), external agencies, Local Authorities, the multidisciplinary team, patients and their families in order to prevent and control the spread of infection and to protect the public's health.
4. Participate in development of plans and policy development at local level regarding the management of public health incidents and community infection control through liaison with NHS and non-NHS professionals (e.g. local authorities, emergency services).
5. Apply principles of epidemiology and public health in health protection practice recognising risks, patterns of communicable disease and work collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders to develop health promotion strategies and reduce health inequalities. For example, follow up of babies born to Hepatitis B infected mothers to ensure they are tested and vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

Leadership and Management

6. Develop effective partnerships and positive working relationships with a variety of internal and external agencies in order to support seamless patient care and public health management across all agencies.
7. Assist in the planning, delivery, management and evaluation of specified projects in health protection and community infection, prevention and control such as blood borne viruses, infection prevention and control in care homes, health protection in prisons etc.
8. Assist in the development of local procedures, protocols and patient information ensuring compliance with National legislation and NHS Lothian policies and identify opportunities for the continuous development of the service.
9. To support NHS Lothian's values of quality, teamwork, care and compassion, dignity and respect, and openness, honesty and responsibility through the application of appropriate behaviours and attitudes.

Practice Development and Facilitated Learning

10. Plan and deliver of a range of health protection and community infection, prevention and control educational opportunities and training sessions to internal and external professionals and agencies. For example, joint teaching sessions with Environmental Health Officers, Virology, Microbiology and Infection, Prevention and Control Team, providing training to Occupational Health Team, clinical staff, as part of higher education courses and training to care home staff.

Evidence, Research and Development

11. Promote, develop and undertake clinical audit, surveillance and evaluation programmes to support own and the team's best practice which is research and evidence based leading to continuous quality improvement in care. Contribute as required to research in public health. Many of these are progressed through the Health Protection Quality Improvement Team. Examples of these include auditing documentation on HP Zone and evaluating the management of outbreaks through the use of online surveys sent to cases and external partners.
12. Contribute towards the development of research within health protection.
13. Write summary SBARs and reports on health protection incidents which are shared with partners such as Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland.

7a. EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY

Personal computer, scanner and printer
Telephone and headset mobile telephone/Smart Phone
Laptops/tablet
Teleconference equipment.
Use of hand hygiene glow box.

Note: New equipment may be introduced as the organisation and technology develops, however training will be provided.

7b. SYSTEMS

Develop and maintain accurate and confidential records for individual cases and contacts of infection and incidents on the online case management system HP Zone.

Liaise with surveillance support staff to assist in the maintenance of the national notification reporting and other local data bases for communicable diseases.

Complete national surveillance forms on behalf of Health Protection Scotland for specific infections and environmental hazards.

Use of online databases, remote result services and online patient record management systems such as HP Zone, APEX, SIRS, Clinical Portal, TRAK, SCI store and SCI Gateway.

Maintain and develop the Health Protection Team intranet web pages.

Responsible for information gathering using electronic resources, intranet, internet and other reputable sources.

Responsible for reporting all incidents and near misses using Datix as a service improvement tool.

Manage the Health Protection inbox on Microsoft office; this includes daily enquiries, notifications and responding to these.

Note: New equipment may be introduced as the organisation and technology develops, however training will be provided.

8. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW OF WORK

The post holder will have a Professional Personal Development Plan. Participate in the appraisal process through Personal Development Planning and Review in line with the Knowledge and Skills Framework. Responsible for ensuring revalidation requirements are met as set out by the NMC.

The Advanced Health Protection Nurse will review the post holder's objectives annually through the staff appraisal and development system. Annual objectives will be reviewed 6 monthly.

Work assignment will be guided by the Advanced Health Protection Nurse and the planned Health Protection work programme, based on the prioritisation of local and national requirements and agreed with the Health Protection Clinical Nurse Manager.

On a day to day basis the post is managed with the post holder organising own workload in relation to specialist caseload to meet the demands of the service and daily generation of new enquiries, cases, incidents and outbreaks from partners agencies and the public. The post holder must be able to prioritise own workload to the unpredictable nature of health protection but will always have support from a senior member of the health protection team (Consultant in Public Health, Nurse Consultant in Health Protection, Health Protection Clinical Nurse Manager or Advanced Health Protection Nurse) in hours and out of hours.

9. DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS

Being involved in the assessments required for making complex decisions including management of communicable diseases, incidents and outbreaks. Final decisions will be made by senior members of the team. For example, assessing if an individual needs to be excluded from their work, whether a school or care home needs to be closed due to an outbreak.

Risk assessments will be guided by standard operating procedures and broad health protection and community prevention and control principles and guidelines while using professional judgement to interpret these. E.g. During assessment of contacts of a case of Meningococcal disease there may be specific situations where the contact does not fall into a category in the guidance and professional judgement is required as to what actions to take for the contact.

Judgement is required to identify situations which may require consultation and management at a more senior level. For example, difficult risk assessments, emerging infections where there is limited guidance, port health incidents or major incidents such as chemical and environmental incidents.

Maintain confidentiality while making decisions and judgements that can be highly sensitive e.g. Management of cases of Acute Hepatitis B when the case does not want to divulge contacts who may be at risk.

10. MOST CHALLENGING/DIFFICULT PARTS OF THE JOB

Responding to incidents and outbreaks at short notice and when public anxiety, Scottish Government and media interest is raised.

Responding to high call volumes to the health protection team and ensuring correct prioritisation of cases and incidents to meet the needs of the service.

Supporting patients, NHS staff and others at time of distress and high emotions in a professional, reassuring and compassionate manner while also carrying out the required health protection actions (e.g. interviewing family members after a patient has died of an infectious disease).

11. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Communicate highly sensitive and complex information to patients, relatives, internal and external professionals verbally, electronically and in writing, whilst maintaining confidentiality. This may involve speaking to patients, families and friends following life changing diagnosis, sudden deaths or informing them they are a contact of someone with a blood borne virus (BBV) or meningococcal disease. Other topics may be highly sensitive due to media interest such as Ebola.

On a daily basis motivate and influence professionals and members of the public, using negotiation, persuasion and empathy, about the importance of prevention and control of communicable diseases and environmental health and communicate clearly what actions must be taken (e.g. explaining to individuals and managers that an infectious person must remain off their work and why this is required to prevent spread of infection).

Assist in the preparation of written information for a range of stakeholders, ensuring this is accessible to all whilst conveying complex health messages and community infection, prevention and control advice. This may include GP inform and advise letters, exclusion letters, patient inform and advise letters and information, letters to schools and nurseries on outbreak management and cleaning advice etc.

Act as a patient/staff advocate through the application of ethical, legal and professional knowledge and skills.

The post holder will regularly liaise and work in partnership with the following disciplines/groups to ensure the Health Protection Function is maintained:

Internal

Health Protection Team (discuss, review and provide updates on cases/incidents/outbreak management, write SBAR's/reports for use at Incident Management Team (IMT) meetings, provide training and share learning in person, via email or by telephone/teleconference or IMT).

Consultants in Public Health (provide handovers via teleconference or in person, review cases, deliver CPD training to them).

TB nurses

Infection Prevention and Control Teams (provide care home updates by email, refer cases or joint working via email or telephone or IMT).

Medical microbiologists (interpretation and advice on laboratory results via telephone, email or IMT, joint CPD sessions in person/teleconference).

General Practitioners and Primary Care Staff (GP advice emails, requesting chemoprophylaxis, samples or vaccination via telephone, GP newsletter).

Clinical and Nursing Staff, including Community Child Health (advise on laboratory samples, deliver training/education on specific topics, vaccination advice via telephone or in person).

Occupational Health (delivering training to the team, referring healthcare contacts of cases via telephone, email or IMT).

Specialist community teams, for example Harm Reduction Team (refer cases with complex needs, provide advice regarding drug alerts or outbreaks via email, telephone or IMT).

Communications team (advising and providing information to them, written and verbal, for press statements, questions and answers etc via email, telephone or IMT).

Translation Services (use the service via telephone or in person to interview cases or provide advice or request translation of factsheets or letters).

External

Health Protection Teams in other Health Boards (liaise/refer cases, inform them of exposures/sources/suspected outbreaks via telephone, email, HP Zone or IMT).

Local Authority staff, including Environmental Health Officers, Emergency Planning Officers, social services, education departments and others (send, receive and review Communicable Disease Investigation Forms regarding cases and potential sources via email, joint visits to premises/port health, joint CPD sessions, joint working on incidents/outbreaks via IMT).

Care Home staff (provide training and advice in person or via telephone or email).

Pre-five and further education establishments (training and advice in person, telephone or email, provide factsheets and letters for parents via email).

Voluntary and private sector (refer or discuss cases, provide advice via telephone or in person).

General Medical Practices (provide advice and request chemoprophylaxis, samples or vaccination via telephone or email).

General Public (provide advice, reassurance and information on communicable diseases, outbreaks or Public Health Scotland (complete and send them national surveillance forms, discuss and seek advice on cases/incidents/outbreaks, attend national IMT's, receive and review alerts via email, in person or by telephone/teleconference).

Fire Service (receive, interpret and complete risk assessments regarding information on fire/chemical incidents received via telephone, in person or by email).

Police (receive, interpret and complete risk assessments regarding information on incidents, drug alerts, unexpected deaths etc received via telephone, in person or by email).

Ambulance (receive, interpret and complete risk assessments regarding information on incidents/cases, request SORT ambulance(s) or provide advice on chemoprophylaxis for ambulance crew via phone, in person or by email).

Scottish Water (receive and interpret water quality failure notifications, discuss sample results and request input on incidents or outbreaks).

Scottish Government (provide SBAR's or reports regarding cases, incidents or outbreaks via email, telephone or attendance at IMT meetings).

NHS 24 (request dedicated helpline and provide crib sheets/Q & A's to NHS 24 on specific diseases, incidents or outbreaks via telephone, email or IMT).

Other NHS Boards (liaise regarding national incidents or outbreaks and national resources via email, telephone or IMT).

12. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS OF THE JOB

Physical:

Daily requirement to sit for long periods using a keyboard.

Mental:

Regularly requires frequent and prolonged concentration when writing reports and present information to a high standard and sometimes at very short notice. For example providing SBAR's/reports for Problem Assessment Group Meetings or Incident Management Teams.

Regularly having to respond to the demands of other healthcare professionals, external partners and general public. This can create sudden and unexpected demands on workload necessitating the need to balance workload and competing priorities. This requires a very flexible approach to working practice.

Emotional:

Frequently communicating sensitive and emotional information to distressed patients who are ill or relatives of a patient or child who is ill or has died suddenly.

Daily exposure to traumatic, sensitive or complex information.

Discussing highly personal issues with patients and their families.

Frequent handling of sensitive information which has to be treated as strictly confidential or has to remain embargoed until the date of official release (e.g. patient specific information in "look back exercises") ethical decision making.

Dealing with the public who have concerns due to outbreaks, incidents or issues highlighted in the local or national media. This may include verbal aggression over the phone.

Remain calm in highly charged situations with relatives, the public, NHS staff and non-NHS staff.

Working Conditions:

Regular travel across Lothian.

Working in an open plan office, maintaining confidentiality.

Occasional exposure to areas where there is a risk of transmission of infection (e.g. investigating viral outbreaks in care homes, visiting cases of infectious illness to gather information on contacts and possible sources etc).

Visiting areas and institutions in a lone working capacity where people may potentially be aggressive or there may be people in crisis situations (e.g. prisons, homeless hostels).

Lone working across various NHS sites and other non-NHS sites.
Occasional exposure to distressed or aggressive patients at TB clinics and BCG vaccine clinics.

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

Degree in Nursing.
Plus post graduate experience or training in Infection control, community nursing or infectious diseases.
Knowledge of Public Health aspects of the management, control and prevention of communicable disease.
Knowledge of infection, prevention and control.
Experience in education and training.
Experience of multi-agency working, including developing networks.
Excellent interpersonal and organisation skills.
Excellent time management skills.
Effective communication skills both oral and written.
IT skills
Experience of quality improvement methodology and practice.

14. JOB DESCRIPTION AGREEMENT

A separate job description will need to be signed off by each jobholder to whom the job description applies.

Job Holder's Signature:

Head of Department Signature:

Date:

Date: