**Healthcare Improvement Scotland**

**Job Description**

**JD Ref: JD449**

**Title of Post: Lead Health Services Researcher**

**Department: Research and Information Service**

**Title of Manager: Head of Research and Information Service/Deputy Director of Evidence**

**Band: AfC Band 8a**

**Location: As detailed in the conditions of service**

**Number of Job Holders: 4**

1. **Job Purpose**

To lead on the provision of applied health services research and methodology, managing a wide range of health technology assessment and guideline projects. Post-holder will subsequently develop recommendations on the delivery of healthcare for NHSScotland; particularly in response to work identified by The Research and Information Service (RIS). Additionally, post-holder will provide a range of health services research skills to the wider work of the organisation.

1. **Job Dimensions**

Annual work programme of the health services research team included: 2 HTAs/systematic reviews; 5-10 Evidence Notes; 10 scoping reports; 4 horizon scanning reports for SHTG and other ad-hoc products as required.

HSR input and advice to other Healthcare Improvement Scotland products e.g. literature reviews, methodological advice, best practice statements.

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| Authorised signatory on purchase orders up to a value of £5,000 and on travel and expense claims for non- Healthcare Improvement Scotland staff | £5000 |
| Service staff numbers  Health Services Research Staff | 24WTE  10WTE |
| Number of direct reports | 6 WTE |

1. **Organisational Position/Department Structure**

See organisational chart in appendix

1. **Key Result Areas, or Main Tasks Duties and Responsibilities**
2. Lead RIS projects to ensure key issues in topic area are identified and addressed appropriately resulting in a high quality reports delivered to pre-agreed timescales with robust recommendations for improving clinical and cost effectiveness of healthcare interventions for NHSScotland.
3. Ensure the Standard Operating Procedures for RIS products are scientifically robust and able to withstand challenge.
4. Ensure efficient team working by developing and maintaining effective internal communication and productive working relationships
5. Provide technical HSR expertise and guidance to the Research and Information Service to assist them in making national recommendations
6. Oversee the NICE commentary status function ensuring that timely reports are issued to the service
7. Ensure that the stakeholders of RIS are provided with quarterly horizon scanning reports on the potential implications of emerging international evidence for NHSScotland
8. Provide line management function for the Health Services Researchers, including development of health services research skills required for RIS outputs
9. Delegate and supervise administrative duties associated with projects to Project Officers
10. Develop answerable HTA/Guideline questions in collaboration with health economists and statisticians and identify ways of establishing an evidence base to answer these questions
11. Critically appraise evidence sources and devise and implement ways of extracting relevant data in an unbiased and systematic manner
12. Co-ordinate the use of questionnaire surveys within the Unit and analyse survey results
13. Effective liaison with ISD and knowledge of other sources of epidemiological and health service data, for example, to obtain data for inclusion in HTA modeling
14. Interpret the output of mathematical models developed by statisticians in the course of HTA/Guidelines and communicate the results to health service providers and users
15. Ensure that research activity complies with the Data Protection Act, Research Governance guidelines, Public and Patient Involvement initiatives and other relevant legislation and codes of practice
16. Establish budgets for RIS projects and administer appropriately ensuring work is carried out within budget.
17. Develop recommendations for NHSScotland with major policy and associated financial implications from complex scientific findings resulting from RIS productss
18. Write up findings of research e.g. in sections of HTA reports, Evidence notes and in papers for publication in medical and scientific journals
19. Research and develop, in conjunction with other members of the appraisals team, evidence methodology with specific reference to health services research functions.
20. Collaborate with members of the Directorate to ensure an evidence-based approach to other Healthcare Improvement Scotland products, including identifying training needs, developing and providing training in aspects of evidence-based policy and practice.
21. Collaborate with members of the Evidence Directorate providing HSR input into aspects of their work, encouraging partnership working between the units
22. Support the Head of Unit in making strategic partnerships with academia and other organisations to the benefit of Healthcare Improvement Scotland’s work programme
23. Present the work of Healthcare Improvement Scotland at local, national and international meetings and conferences in formats appropriate to the audience
24. Provide education and training to the wider organisation in relation to research methodologies
25. **Equipment and Machinery**

* Computer
* Office equipment: Telephone, fax, photocopier
* Teleconferencing and videoconferencing facilities

1. **Systems,**

Specialised software

* Statistical software: Minitab, SPSS
* Reference Manager
* Microsoft windows packages: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, MS project
* Cedar finance and time recording systems

Systems

* Knowledge of international HTA systems, SIGN & NICE processes, with the objective of optimising Healthcare Improvement Scotland systems by capitalising on ideas and developments from these systems
* NHS Unified Board planning and decision making systems, to ensure relevance of Healthcare Improvement Scotland products within the service and alignment of objectives
* NHS data collection, databasing (e.g. literature databases) and analysis systems to facilitate the use of optimal and relevant data sources when conduction HTAs
* Healthcare Improvement Scotland product processes (HTA, Evidence Notes, SIGN guidelines, Best Practice Statements), to ensure adherence to the agreed procedures
* Staff appraisal documentation and KSF to understand the process for such appraisals both from a staff and manager perspective
* Annual leave and attendance records, to comply with Human Resource requirements

1. **Decisions and Judgments**

Work is driven by the organisation’s wider work programme and the RIS. The post-holder reports to the Head of Health Services Research and Effectiveness and is expected to work autonomously within a framework of annually agreed objectives. Work on RIS projects, in the Healthcare Improvement Scotland work programme, must be planned and carried out by the post holder. This requires decision making by the post-holder on the focus of topic area and the methods to be used to answer the policy question. The Head of Unit, or other members of the Senior Management or Executive teams will sign off the approach to be used prior to commencement of the work.

In the main, following identification of suitable approaches to a particular project, all subsequent health service research, or project management activities e.g. steering group structure and remits, assimilation of the clinical and cost-effectiveness evidence and recommendations to NHSScotland will be entirely determined by the post holder. Co-ordination of these activities with statistical, economic and other researchers inputs is achieved through discussions within the team. Judgment calls regarding projects’ resources, budget, direction and priorities to ensure that relevant quality outputs are delivered on time and that project risks are minimised.

The constraints that exist are determined by NHSScotland health policy, Healthcare Improvement Scotland corporate plan and legislation e.g. the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act.

1. **Communications and Working Relationships**

The post holder is required to chair relevant project meetings and to ensure good lines of communication are established between other team members. In addition the post holder will participate in on the Senior Staff Team which meets regularly to discuss issues relating to the operational management of the Unit and general approach of Healthcare Improvement Scotland. This post requires sensitivity to the barriers to understanding of complex concepts and subsequently communication of these concepts must be tailored to the audience, in particular when communicating with stakeholders. The post holder is required to present complex scientific findings at open meetings and conferences which may be attended by a range of individuals including senior clinicians and academics and lay individuals. This also requires the ability to answer questions effectively and sensitively.

**Internal**

Internal communications with various Healthcare Improvement Scotland staff, particularly those with associated work programmes. These include

* Information scientists, for assessment of evidence base
* Health Economists, for collaboration on Healthcare Improvement Scotland topics
* Statisticians, for development of appropriate mathematical/economic models for HTA
* Medical writers, for collaboration on the writing of Healthcare Improvement Scotland products
* Project officers, for administration delegation and collaboration on process documents
* Guidance and Standards team, for health services research collaboration on standards
* SIGN, for development of common methodologies to allow greater collaboration
* Communications staff, for internet publishing and issues related to Healthcare Improvement Scotland products
* Implementation and Improvement Support Staff, for health services research issues related to Healthcare Improvement Scotland products
* Senior Management, to keep abreast of Healthcare Improvement Scotland product matters
* IT, for hardware/software related matters
* Finance, for budget related matters

###### External

This post requires significant engagement with individuals external to the organisation including:

* Chair and members of the SHTG/SIGN, which include chief executives, Finance and Planning Directors, Industrial representatives etc; face-to-face, by telephone and email to update on project progress and seek information/advice
* The Chair and other members of project steering groups, senior professionals within NHSScotland, face-to-face, by telephone and email to update on project progress and seek information/advice
* NHS Scotland clinical and scientific staff, university based academic staff and manufacturers to obtain data or other forms of evidence and to discuss project methodology.
* Staff from various agencies, including the Scottish Executive Health Department, Information and Statistics Division, NHS boards and NHS operating divisions to discuss current health policy and the potential effects of HTA findings on health policy.
* Representatives of patient groups, members of other voluntary agencies and the public who may wish to input to the HTA process
* Presentation of aspects of Healthcare Improvement Scotland work to clinical groups

1. **Physical, Mental and Emotional Demands of the Job**

Physical

* Keyboard skills

Mental

* Extensive knowledge management needed to inform decisions on a wide range of clinical areas and to keep abreast of developments in the disciplines of clinical practice, and health services research
* The need to multitask e.g. leading on HTA reports, contributing to the RIS Working Group functions and contributing to the broader work of the Unit and organization.
* The post requires the ability to read and absorb information at 2 levels. High level scanning of the scientific literature to rapidly gain knowledge of the main issues at the project development stage, and very close examination of the detail of research publications at the critical appraisal stage.
* The post requires a high level of concentration and mental ability to deal with complex scientific information and to conduct statistical analysis
* The ability to both critically appraise numerical results and interpret them for a wide range of audiences is required.
* The ability to respond to developments during the course of the project and to take appropriate remedial action is necessary
* The post involves extensive technical report and publication writing
* Management of staff and own workload

Emotional

* Dealing with complex and sensitive employment issues including discipline, grievance and performance
* Communication of results of HTA/Research findings which may be perceived as negatively impacting on the current clinical practice from a resource perspective.
* Dealing with the complexity of relationships between SHTG, SMC, SIGN, SGHD, HSRE and other members of Healthcare Improvement Scotland senior management, prioritizing accordingly.

1. **Most Challenging/Difficult Parts of the Job**
   * Ensuring a coordinated, systematic and unbiased approach to HTA topic questions, involving a team of internal and external staff, to establish an evidence base which is sufficiently robust to allow recommendations to be made on policy decisions to NHSScotland given the changing working environment.
   * Managing a demanding workload, multi-tasking and ensuring output is delivered on time and within budget.
   * Ensuring methodologies adopted in HTA work programme can withstand international, scientific, clinical and legal scrutiny.
2. **Knowledge, Training and Experience Required to do the Job**
3. A first degree in a numerate or biomedical discipline
4. Postgraduate degree in a relevant subject and demonstrable ability to synthesise complex information.
5. Extensive practical experience in applied health services research focused on critical appraisal and quantitative research methodology & analysis, including appropriate IT skills.
6. Substantial, hands on experience leading effective multidisciplinary research teams.
7. Strong inlfuencing skills to inform the decisions of senior clincians, academics and senior managers in the NHS.
8. A good understanding of a wide range of other health services research skills, including qualitative research methods, statistical analysis and epidemiology.
9. Strong interpersonal skills supported by very well developed writing and verbal presentation skills
10. Ability to present complex information in format suitable for different target audiences.
11. Project management skills and ability to deal with and prioritise a varied and demanding workload.

Appendix