



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

Model job description for a Head of Department

Title of employing organisation

Title of post

Post

Head of Service, Directorate of Pathology/Laboratory Medicine.

There are programmed activities (PAs) available to carry out the duties of this post.

Reports to professionally:

Reports to clinically (if relevant):

Tenure:

Remuneration (if any):

Eligibility

To be medically qualified consultants or equivalent consultant clinical scientists who have worked in the service for at least five years. They should possess the FRCPATH or an equivalent qualification.

Job purpose

The Head of Service is responsible for the leadership, communication and team working within the laboratory, providing advice to the Clinical Director on specialty issues. This includes accountability for all aspects of clinical governance, including quality assurance and accreditation, and development of services.



Key responsibilities

Strategic and professional leadership and communication

The appointee leads the teams within the service, ensuring a culture of maintenance and continuous improvement of quality. In this role, the appointee is responsible for:

- multi-professional team working within and across the specialty
- ensuring appropriate communication and team working with other services in the Directorate
- professional leadership for all consultant and clinical scientist staff
- team briefings and regular open staff meetings to actively obtain staff views and promote staff involvement
- developing and monitoring service level agreements (SLAs) between the laboratory and users
- introducing service developments and improvements
- understanding the requirements of users of the service
- developing patient-focused pathways
- auditing, reviewing and planning services
- developing business cases
- developing the service in line with the national and local Pathology Modernisation agenda
- consulting all sections of the service about changes, including the procurement of equipment
- strengthening working relationships with primary/community care providers and commissioners
- representing the service through membership of the Pathology Management Group/ Laboratory Medicine Directorate.

Operational management

The appointee will be responsible on a day-to-day basis for:

- planning, with the laboratory manager, of skill mix, staff numbers and training requirements to enable the workload of the service to be accommodated
- acting as budget holder for the service, in compliance with the Standing Financial Instructions of the Trust
- reviewing laboratory workload and costs with the laboratory manager
- ensuring that the service provided complies with all relevant SLAs, contracts and Memoranda of Understanding
- overseeing appraisal for all departmental consultants and clinical scientists
- approving leave and expense requests of medical and clinical scientific staff
- ensuring that health and safety standards within the service are met (usually through the appointment of a laboratory safety officer)
- ensuring that general and clinical risks are assessed annually and that controls assurance and appropriate standards are implemented
- ensuring that clinical governance objectives are agreed with the Clinical Director and Divisional Director and are achieved/implemented, including:

- achievement of standards set by relevant accreditation bodies (e.g. Clinical Pathology Accreditation (UK) Ltd), including appointment of a quality manager
- regular monitoring of performance in internal and external quality assurance schemes, with investigation and remedial action as necessary
- compliance with National Service Frameworks, clinical standards and guidelines of relevant professional bodies
- coordinating the reporting, investigation and follow up of adverse events within the service as described by Trust/hospital policies and national schemes
- demonstrable improvements as a result of clinical audit and patient satisfaction surveys or complaints
- ensuring that the Trust/hospital policies and procedures are available to staff and are implemented
- a system for staff to learn the lessons from incidents, litigation and complaints ensuring that national Patients' Charter targets are monitored and achieved.

Key working relationships

The appointee will need to forge close working relationships with staff at all levels. Of particular importance is the need to establish effective working relationships with:

- users of the service
- chief biomedical scientist and other biomedical scientists
- directorate and divisional directors
- directorate and divisional managers
- other members of the pathology management group/laboratory medicine directorate
- executive directors
- medical staff
- clinical scientists
- other operational managers within the Trust/hospital
- heads of service, ward managers, nursing and allied health professionals
- assistant medical directors
- senior personnel including clinicians and managers within the local health community (e.g. primary care Trusts) and other agencies such as Social Services
- mortuary staff (if relevant)
- clerical staff
- equivalent heads of service and professional colleagues in other trusts/hospitals.

Review

This job description is not definitive or exhaustive. It may be reviewed in the light of changing circumstances following consultation with the appointee, and does not form part of the contract of employment.