Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB DETAILS	
Job Title	Principal Clinical Scientist (Section Lead)
Reports to	Deputy Head of Department
Band	Band 8b
Department/Directorate	Genomic Laboratory/Specialist Services

JOB PURPOSE

The post-holder is the scientific and managerial lead for a service, responsible for the accurate and timely provision of highly specialist genomic tests. They will work closely with other Team/Section Leads to deliver the laboratory's repertoire of services.

They will lead the strategic development and delivery of the service within their area of responsibility, including redesign, innovation and translational research in collaboration with the Head/Deputy Head of Department, scientific colleagues, clinicians, senior managers, national and international research teams and other users of the service.

They will be expected to provide expert scientific and managerial leadership, and clinical advice and liaison with a very high level of scientific knowledge, skill and expertise in the clinical application of genomic testing, and the interpretation of findings in the clinical context.

The post-holder will be responsible for developing, delivering, assessing and overseeing specialist teaching, training and development of staff, students and healthcare professionals in the use of genomic testing.

The post holder will exercise considerable autonomy for their work and that of the service.

KEY RESULT AREAS/PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Act as the lead scientist, with responsibility for the strategic development and delivery of a defined specialist area.

Responsible for liaising and engaging with users of the service to ensure the services meet the patients' needs.

Lead on the design and implementation of innovative research and development activities to improve efficiency of existing diagnostic tests and set up new diagnostic services.

Manage staff within area of responsibility to ensure efficient service delivery and continuous development of the service through research and development.

Participate in and represent the Genomics Laboratory at appropriate Trust meetings and externally at professional, managerial and training meetings, as required.

Participate in workforce planning and recruitment, mentoring and developing staff by supporting CPD (Continuing Professional Development).

Develop, maintain and support a culture of continual improvement and proactive change management.

Apply knowledge and expertise of wider service management including human resources, finance, information technology, quality management and governance.

KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

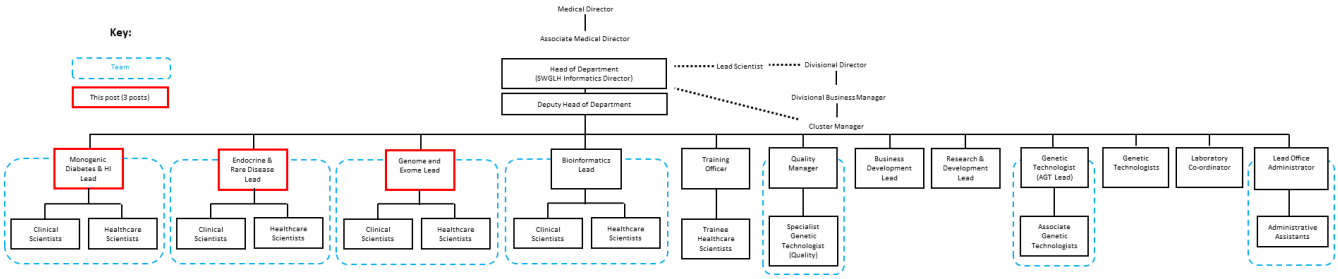
Areas of Responsibility: Responsible for leading a section of the laboratory their own work and the organisation of the work of others, working with a high degree of autonomy. The post holder is required to deal effectively with staff of all levels throughout the Trust and externally as and when they encounter on a day to day basis. This will include verbal, written and electronic media.

No. of Staff reporting to this role: 2 (direct line-management); >5 indirect line management.

Of particular importance are working relationships with:

Internal to the Trust	External to the Trust
• Clinical Scientists • Healthcare Scientists • Bioinformaticians • Trainee Healthcare Scientists • Genetic Technologists • Associate Genetic Technologists • Administrative Assistants • Medical Staff • Other Healthcare professionals • Clinical research team members, Fellows and nurses	• Medical staff • Healthcare organisations • Company representatives • Clinical Scientists • Healthcare Scientists • Trainee Healthcare Scientists • Postdoctoral research fellows, PhD students and other trainees or students • Clinical research team members, Fellows and nurses • Other Healthcare professionals

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



FREEDOM TO ACT

Work autonomously and be the lead specialist for their area within professional and regulatory guidelines, making independent decisions regarding laboratory operations, service development, and research initiatives.

Exercise considerable autonomy for their work and that of the service, including freedom to act on their own initiative.

Responsible for the application of local and national policies and support the implementation of any corresponding requirements.

Exercise significant discretion and professional judgment in troubleshooting complex technical, bioinformatics, and quality control issues, escalating only when necessary.

Develop and implement strategic plans, policies, and service improvements for their area of responsibility in line with local, regional, and national genomics strategies.

Provide expert guidance and advice to clinical teams, researchers, and external stakeholders, influencing decisions on genomics service delivery and patient care.

Contribute to national and international genomics research, while ensuring alignment with NHS and regulatory frameworks.

COMMUNICATION/RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Maintain the highest level of patient confidentiality and comply with section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act.

Recognise and promote the importance of harmonious, collaborative, relationships and maintain an atmosphere conducive to this.

The post holder will frequently:

- Provide advice to clinicians and other healthcare professionals regarding availability and appropriate use of genomic testing to ensure suitable testing and efficient use of resources.
- Communicate specialist, highly complex data and information clearly and concisely to staff from multiple disciplines, ensuring any barriers to understanding are appropriately addressed.
- Communicate the results of analyses to clinical colleagues, ensuring that the testing performed is clearly explained, and any barriers to understanding are appropriately addressed.
- Communicate with colleagues to improve understanding of genomic variation in the human genome.
- Represent the Genomics department at regional and national meetings.
- Present highly specialist clinical, diagnostic and research findings at appropriate national and international conferences, meetings and seminars (both internal and external) and through publication in high quality journals.

- Communicate with users and other laboratories (as appropriate) to request and receive sensitive and complex information necessary for accurate and timely reporting of results.
- Use tact and persuasive skills to motivate staff to support the delivery of the strategic objectives of the laboratory.
- Communicate with clinical, scientific and commercial stakeholders to develop and deliver the strategic objectives of the laboratory.
- Communicate with relevant teams within the Trust (e.g. Human Resources, Recruitment, Occupational Health) on staff-related matters.

Deputise for the Head of Department/Deputy Head of Department in his/her absence, either individually or jointly with other heads of section for designated duties, and represent the laboratory as required.

Lead by example, provide leadership and act as a positive role model for all staff taking responsibility for your own personal development.
Maintain personal standards of conduct and behaviour which are consistent with Trust standards and requirements.

Recognise the importance of harmonious relationships and maintain an atmosphere conducive to this.

Maintain the highest level of patient confidentiality and comply with section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act.

Take responsibility for other sections as required (within areas of competence).

ANALYTICAL/JUDGEMENTAL SKILLS

Frequently review highly complex information to determine appropriateness and urgency of patient samples for testing based on specimen and information provided. This may require communication with the referring clinician, contact with specialist service providers and/or referral to guidelines for clinical criteria for testing.

Responsible for reporting of highly complex specialist genomic test results for patients and their families with rare diseases, using a high level of knowledge to analyse and interpret results in the context of the clinical referral.

Apply advanced specialist scientific, theoretical, practical knowledge and research skills for the development and delivery of genomic testing services.

Apply extensive proven expertise and knowledge of all aspects of a clinical genomic testing service across a number of subject areas (clinical, scientific, technical, managerial, problem solving, people skills and training).

Provide expert scientific and clinical advice, with a very high level of scientific knowledge, skill and expertise in the clinical application and appropriateness of genomic testing, and the interpretation of findings in the clinical context.

Interpret highly complex specialist genomic test results.

Communicate the results of analyses to clinical colleagues, ensuring that the testing performed is clearly explained, and any barriers to understanding are appropriately addressed.
Audit and monitor referrals and reporting times in area of responsibility.

Responsible for writing and maintaining accurate records of service improvements and their validation to comply with ISO15189 (UKAS) accreditation.

Abide by relevant codes of professional conduct (HCPC Standards of Proficiency).

PLANNING/ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

Work in partnership with the Head of Department and Deputy Head of Department and other relevant stakeholders in setting and delivering the overall strategic direction of their area of responsibility, encouraging their team to buy into the laboratory's vision.

Apply an agile approach to project management, such as the modification of timelines and approaches, to meet the strategic objectives of the laboratory.

Supervise all aspects of the work of the laboratory relating to area of responsibility, collaborating with other team leads to ensure appropriate resource allocation and proactively incorporating plans to ensure resilience and continuation of the service.

Apply the highest level of accuracy to minimise clinical risk (e.g. an erroneous result that results in an incorrect diagnosis or prediction of carrier status).

Lead on the planning and management of innovation and change in area of responsibility, working with key stakeholders, to ensure continued improvement of services.

Use audit data to formulate and plan education for users of the service.

Ensure compliance with all requirements of the Data Protection Act and any other relevant regulations for data protection.

Participate in the organisation and monitoring of internal and external quality control procedures, including clinical audit, incident investigation and reporting, participation in relevant external quality assessment schemes, and taking responsibility for the implementation of any learning actions.

Take a proactive role in maintaining high quality standards to ensure maintenance of the laboratory UKAS accreditation status, ensuring that staff based in the section abide by all statutory requirements, codes of practice, health and safety regulations and operational policies of the department and to be aware of these measures as applied to other sections.

Responsible for planning own workload, working on own initiative and acting independently to support delivery of the strategic and operational objectives of the laboratory.

PATIENT/CLIENT CARE

Work with the Laboratory Director and Deputy Director to support the provision of highly specialist genomic testing services in area of responsibility.

Responsible for ensuring that the services offered within their area of responsibility are of the highest standard by keeping up-to-take with the latest advances and developments in genomics within and outside of the NHS.

Responsible for providing highly specialist advice and communicating highly complex data and results of analyses to relevant staff from multiple disciplines, including non-experts with very limited or no knowledge of genomics.

Always work within clearly defined accountability framework.

Keep up to date with current knowledge in clinical genomics.

Provide specialist competence developed through continual professional development, reflective practice and maintain a skills portfolio relevant to the service specification.

Report any untoward incidents or complaints to the appropriate Technical or Scientific Lead within the appropriate timescales.

Prevent adverse effects on health and wellbeing.

POLICY/SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Lead on the development, critical review, interpretation and implementation of operational policies and practices within their rare disease area of responsibility, to ensure they are aligned to the needs of the organisation, remain fit for purpose and are sustainable.

Participate in the national/international genomics working groups, where relevant, to develop national polices and best practice guidelines to support high quality genomics services for patients in the NHS.

Propose and implement changes that impact on own and wider specialist area by actively participating in cross-departmental, Trust-wide and national training to support development and continuous improvement of best practice in all clinical aspects of genetic and genomic testing.

Lead agreed projects to deliver organisational strategy, such as new technology implementation and transformation programmes, ensuring compliance with all relevant policies.

Actively promote a culture of innovation and change to ensure continued improvement of services.

Participate in department-wide internal audit and clinical audit programme to ensure continuous quality improvement.

Actively seek opportunities to support the development and delivery of departmental strategic objectives, working with key internal and external stakeholders.

Write, review, update and approve quality management documentation, including policies, departmental training documentation and SOPs (where appropriate).

Actively participate in both internal and external Quality Assurance schemes to ensure the highest standards of genomic testing.

Work to Trust Policies, Procedures and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

Contribute to and work within a safe working environment by adhering to statutory requirements, codes of practice, Health and Safety and COSHH regulations, protocols and policies of the laboratory.

FINANCIAL/PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Responsible for managing assigned budgets in accordance with NHS financial policies, ensuring cost-effective use of resources while maintaining high-quality service delivery.

Support the procurement, management and optimisation of physical resources, including equipment, IT systems, and facilities, ensuring they are maintained, safe, and fit for purpose.

Support the implementation of improvements to improve service efficiency and effectiveness in their area of responsibility.

Ensure compliance with UKAS accreditation and other relevant quality and safety standards in relation to laboratory assets and financial governance.

Ensure adherence to environmental sustainability initiatives in line with NHS Green Plans, reducing waste and promoting efficient use of resources.

Evaluate the cost effectiveness of new services and technologies when compared to existing services and recommend new investments where required.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Responsible for the overall line management of the staff within their area of responsibility.

Responsible for overseeing recruitment process for new scientists working within the section, including developing and writing job descriptions, short-listing applications, interviewing and organising their laboratory induction.

Foster and maintain collaborative relationships to ensure the delivery of high quality genomic testing services.

Participate in supervision and appraisal process, supporting staff to identify and undertake relevant activities to meet objectives set in their personal development plan.

Provide oversight for the development and delivery of training programmes for their area of responsibility.

Responsible for monitoring and managing staff, performance, capability issues and attendance (e.g. sickness absence) in accordance with Trust policies and imparting unwelcome news to staff (e.g. termination of fixed term contract) where necessary.

Responsible for maintaining an up-to-date knowledge-base while demonstrating advanced competencies through a personalised Continued Professional Development portfolio.

Abide by relevant codes of professional conduct (HCPC Standards of Proficiency).

Supervise staff, troubleshoot assays and work closely with colleagues to ensure tests are performed in a timely and accurate manner. The highest level of accuracy is required to minimise clinical risk (e.g. an erroneous result that results in an incorrect diagnosis or prediction of carrier status).

In partnership with the local leads, support the education of the genomics workforce.

Participate in Continued Professional Development (CPD) in accordance with HCPC and RCPath guidelines (if appropriate).

Keep a record of own training and development, maintain a portfolio, working to sustain acquired competencies for the post.

Undertake any training required in order to maintain competency including mandatory training, (i.e. Fire, Manual Handling).

Demonstrate a professional and responsible manner at all times.

Take a flexible approach in supporting colleagues during times of caseload pressures.

Undertake training to develop a range of knowledge and skills in order to deliver a high quality service.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

Oversee the use of analytical data for their area of responsibility to monitor and manage turnaround times (TATs) for reports, identify trends, bottlenecks, and opportunities for process improvements to ensure timely and efficient reporting of results.

Responsible for monitoring the processing, presentation and storage of extensive and highly complex genomic data.

Responsible for maintaining accurate patient records in the laboratory information management system (LIMS).

Provide an accurate, timely and unambiguous response to queries regarding patient referrals and ensure effective communication, both within the laboratory and with associated healthcare professionals, ensuring that all records of communication are stored and maintained in an appropriate manner.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Frequently oversee the planning of research and development activities to improve service provision and the efficiency of existing diagnostic tests, including checking and validation of new diagnostic equipment and services.

Responsible for setting the strategic direction of operational and research and development activities relating to area of responsibility, ensuring appropriate resource allocation and proactively incorporating plans to ensure resilience and continuation of the service.

Work closely with senior management team to develop the strategic objectives of the laboratory and ensure that the laboratory remains at the forefront of scientific and technological advancements.

Participate in diagnostic and research projects and present the findings at scientific meetings and conferences, through talks, posters and publication in journals.

Make recommendations on clinical protocols and policy relating to area of expertise and oversee local implementation.

Regularly supervise research and development projects.

Collaborate with academic institutions, NHS Trusts, and industry partners to drive translational genomics research and secure external funding opportunities.

Contribute to national and international genomics initiatives, including NHS-led research programs.

Ensure that the laboratory remains at the forefront of scientific and technological advancements, proactively evaluating and integrating e.g. the use of AI and new sequencing technologies.

Support the development of genomics data analysis tools and informatics strategies, ensuring compliance with Trust data security and governance policies.

Mentor and support staff involvement in research projects, publications, and conference presentations, fostering a culture of continuous scientific development.

Ensure that all research activities comply with regulatory, ethical, and governance frameworks, including UKAS, Trust and NHS Research Ethics Committee (REC) requirements.

Design and carry out appropriate user satisfaction surveys to ensure continuous quality improvement of services

PHYSICAL SKILLS

Using IT equipment and working with high levels of accuracy.

Ability to work in an efficient manner to enable timely completion of tasks.

Advanced keyboard skills to support data analysis and reporting.

PHYSICAL EFFORT

Using IT equipment on a daily basis whilst seated in a restricted position.

Occasionally expected to travel offsite to regional and national meetings

MENTAL EFFORT

Frequent requirement to concentrate for long periods processing complex information.

Frequent interruptions to work patterns, with requirement to shift focus quickly in response to frequent urgent incoming requests from internal and external colleagues.

Frequent need to ensure that professional knowledge is continuously updated, and training undertaken if appropriate.

Frequent need to complete work to tight timescales to ensure that reporting times for samples are met.

Frequent working in dynamic and diverse multidisciplinary team conditions.

Significant time will be spent in meetings internal and external to the Trust, requiring high levels of concentration.

EMOTIONAL EFFORT

Frequent exposure to emotional or distressing circumstances relating to patient referral information.

Ability to cope with difficult staff issues, occasionally.

Ability to cope and deal with areas of conflict, occasionally.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Frequent daily contact with visual display unit (VDU).

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Take part in regular performance appraisal.

Undertake any training required in order to maintain competency including mandatory training, e.g. Manual Handling

Contribute to and work within a safe working environment

You are expected to comply with Trust Infection Control Policies and conduct him/herself at all times in such a manner as to minimise the risk of healthcare associated infection

As an employee of the Trust, it is a contractual duty that you abide by any relevant code of professional conduct and/or practice applicable to you. A breach of this requirement may result in action being taken against you (in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary policy) up to and including dismissal.

You must also take responsibility for your workplace health and wellbeing:

- When required, gain support from Occupational Health, Human Resources or other sources.
- Familiarise yourself with the health and wellbeing support available from policies and/or Occupational Health.
- Follow the Trust's health and wellbeing vision of healthy body, healthy mind, healthy you.
- Undertake a Display Screen Equipment assessment (DES) if appropriate to role.

APPLICABLE TO MANAGERS ONLY

Leading the team effectively and supporting their wellbeing by:

- Championing health and wellbeing.

- Encouraging and support staff engagement in delivery of the service.
- Encouraging staff to comment on development and delivery of the service.
- Ensuring during 1:1's / supervision with employees you always check how they are.

GENERAL

This is a description of the job as it is now. We periodically examine employees' job descriptions and update them to ensure that they reflect the job as it is then being performed, or to incorporate any changes being proposed. This procedure is conducted by the manager in consultation with the jobholder. You will, therefore, be expected to participate fully in such discussions. We aim to reach agreement on reasonable changes, but if agreement is not possible, we reserve the right to insist on changes to your job description after consultation with you.

Everyone within the Trust has a responsibility for, and is committed to, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults, children and young people and for ensuring that they are protected from harm, ensuring that the Trusts Child Protection and Safeguarding Adult policies and procedures are promoted and adhered to by all members of staff.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title	Principal Clinical Scientist (Section Lead)

Requirements	Essential	Desirable
QUALIFICATION/ SPECIAL TRAINING		
PhD degree or equivalent in a relevant subject, or equivalent relevant experience	✓	
HCPC registration as a Clinical Scientist	✓	
Fellowship of the Royal College of Pathologists, part 1	✓	
Fellowship of the Royal College of Pathologists, part 2		✓
Recognised management qualification or completion of relevant management courses (recruitment and selection, appraisal etc.).	✓	
Recognised training qualification.		✓
KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS		
Extensive specialist knowledge of the clinical application of genomic testing/analysis in the clinical context.	✓	
Comprehensive understanding of the practice and principles of molecular biology and its application to diagnostic testing.	✓	
Ability to critically analyse and interpret highly complex scientific data, troubleshoot analyses, and design laboratory experiments.	✓	
Ability to supervise laboratory workload by allocating tasks to team members, multitasking of complex procedures and ensuring prioritisation of urgent samples.	✓	
Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills, both verbal and written.	✓	
Ability to facilitate effective team working	✓	
Excellent organization, verbal and written communication skills.	✓	
Good computer literacy.	✓	
Evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) with RCPath scheme or recognized equivalent.	✓	
An understanding of academic research practice.	✓	
Up-to-date knowledge of new developments, technologies, national services in genetics and their impact on service provision.	✓	
Up-to-date awareness of national policies affecting the NHS and genomic testing.	✓	
EXPERIENCE		
Substantial experience as a Clinical Scientist in a genomics laboratory.	✓	
Experience managing and leading a service in a genetic laboratory.	✓	
Experience of writing and checking laboratory genetic reports of a complex nature.	✓	
Experience of supervisory work.	✓	
Experience of training scientific and technical staff.	✓	
Experience of ISO15189 lab accreditation assessment process.	✓	
A record of research and development experience as appropriate to the service including experience of presentation of scientific data at regional, national and international meetings and in peer-reviewed journals	✓	
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES		
Friendly, trustworthy and ability to work as a team member	✓	
Self-motivated with a proactive approach to work	✓	
Excellent communication skills (ability to write clear and concise e-mails, presentations and phone conversations)	✓	
Meticulous attention to detail.	✓	
Ability to concentrate and work under pressure.	✓	
Enthusiastic, able to work on own initiative and to lead and motivate others.	✓	
OTHER REQUIRMENTS		

Positive commitment to uphold diversity and equality policies approved by the Trust	✓	
Flexibility in approach towards working hours	✓	
Ability to travel to other locations as required.	✓	-

WORKING CONDITIONS/HAZARDS		FREQUENCY (Rare/ Occasional/ Moderate/ Frequent) R	O	M	F
Hazards/ Risks requiring Immunisation Screening					
Laboratory specimens	N				
Contact with patients	N				
Exposure Prone Procedures	N				
Blood/body fluids	N				
Laboratory specimens	N				
Hazard/Risks requiring Respiratory Health Surveillance					
Solvents (e.g. toluene, xylene, white spirit, acetone, formaldehyde and ethyl acetate)	N				
Respiratory sensitisers (e.g isocyanates)	N				
Chlorine based cleaning solutions (e.g. Chlorclean, Actichlor, Tristel)	N				
Animals	N				
Cytotoxic drugs	N				
Risks requiring Other Health Surveillance					
Radiation (>6mSv)	N				
Laser (Class 3R, 3B, 4)	N				
Dusty environment (>4mg/m3)	N				
Noise (over 80dBA)	N				
Hand held vibration tools (=>2.5 m/s2)	N				
Other General Hazards/ Risks					
VDU use (> 1 hour daily)	Y				X
Heavy manual handling (>10kg)	N				
Driving	Y		X		
Food handling	N				
Night working	N				
Electrical work	N				
Physical Effort	N				
Mental Effort	Y				X
Emotional Effort	Y		X		
Working in isolation	N				
Challenging behaviour	Y		X		