NIHR Regional Research Delivery Networks

Job Description & Person Specification for Study Support Service Senior Manager

# JOB DETAILS

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| **Job Title:** | Study Support Service Senior Manager |
| **Grade:** | NHS Agenda for Change Band 8a |
| **Hours:** | 1.0 WTE |
| **Reporting to:** | Head of Partner Liaison and Planning |
| **Direct Reports:** | Study Support Service Managers |
| **Location:** | *Base can either be Somerset, Devon or Cornwall* |
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# JOB PURPOSE

The Study Support Service Senior Manager will have overall responsibility for leading the local operational aspects of the Regional RDN (RRDN) Study Support Service, which will be seamlessly integrated within the collective national Study Support Service, which serves as the cornerstone of the NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN), facilitating the effective delivery of studies throughout the system while enhancing strategic capacity and capability.

This role will have overall responsibility for ensuring local services within the Study Support Service are delivered to a high quality and consistently in line with nationally defined standards and operating processes. These encompass pre-approval services such as Planning and Placement Service/national cost and attribution tools, as well as post-approval services including portfolio oversight and on-request services. The role will also serve as a primary escalation point to identify issues necessitating regional or national resolution and attention. The role will work in collaboration with Regional Specialty and Settings Leads, ensuring seamless coordination and alignment with broader strategic objectives.

The role will provide operational management of the Study Support Service, and line management of a team of Study Support Service Managers. Line management of staff members will include undertaking staff reviews to identify training and development needs, and establishing how those needs will be met, and managing performance against agreed objectives. The postholder will ensure the same review processes take place for all staff with the defined function via appropriate line management arrangements and that skills and capabilities exist to meet current and future business needs.

# ROLE OF THE NIHR RESEARCH DELIVERY NETWORK

From October 2024, the current NIHR Clinical Research Network will be changing to become the NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN). The RDN will build on the successes of the CRN in supporting the effective and efficient initiation and delivery of funded research across the health and care system in England for the benefit of patients, the health and care system and the economy. The RDN will support:

* Clinical trials and other well-designed health and social care research studies

(including studies that are delivered outside of an NHS setting);

* Public health studies that require the recruitment of individuals within an NHS setting (that is, acute, ambulance, mental health, community or primary care) or an episode of care which involves contact with the NHS.

The RDN is a new organisation with new structures, governance and ways of working. Study delivery in England will be supported through 12 NIHR Regional Research Delivery Networks (RRDNs). These will work with the national Coordinating Centre (RDNCC) and the Department of Health and Care to provide a joint RDN leadership function via the RDN Board, so that the NIHR RDN as a whole functions as a single, transparent organisation with a shared vision and purpose. The Royal Devon University Hospitals will be the Host Organisation for the South West Peninsula RRDN region.

The NIHR RRDNs will have three key roles which it will fulfil via new models of service delivery and functions, to:

* provide support to research sites to enable the effective and efficient initiation and delivery of funded research across the health and care system in England;
* enable the strategic development of new and more effective research delivery capability and capacity. This will include bringing research to under-served regions and communities with major health and care needs;
* work jointly with the Coordinating Centre in the strategic oversight of the NIHR RDN. This will ensure that the Portfolio is maintained as a cohort of high-quality, fully-funded, viable and deliverable studies. It will also ensure that the NIHR RDN as a whole serves the research delivery needs of investigators and R&D teams and is responsive to the changing domestic and global environment for health and care, life sciences and health research.

The NIHR RRDNs will need to develop excellent relationships with the organisations commissioning and providing health and social care across their regions, which are mapped onto NHS regions and Integrated Care Systems. They will help support research undertaken by those providers and at sites across the region, and promote research meeting the needs of local populations. NIHR RRDNs will work together with an RDN Coordinating Centre to support health and care research delivery for the benefit of patients, the health and care system and the economy as a whole.

**DEPARTMENTAL/DIRECTORATE ORGANISATIONAL CHART**

# KEY RELATIONSHIPS

* Directors in the RRDN
* RDN Heads of Service
* RDNCC Heads of Service
* National/RRDN Specialty and Settings Leads
* Other NIHR regional infrastructure (e.g. Clinical Research Facilities, Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres)
* Commercial and non-commercial sponsors and their delegates (e.g. Chief Investigators, Study Teams, Contract Research Organisations and Clinical Trials Units)
* Senior leadership at research site organisations participating in RDN portfolio studies
* Regional research delivery leaders and staff (e.g. Principal Investigators, R&D Offices, RRDN Management Team and Site Research Delivery staff) ● Research funders

**MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

# STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

* Act as a senior leader within the RDN, providing strategic direction and guidance
* Work as part of a community of senior leaders across the national network, exercising shared leadership and promoting the consistency of experience across a nationally-harmonised Study Support Service
* Collaborate with Local Specialty and Settings Leadership to align operational activities with strategic objectives
* Provide strategic support to research delivery sites, drawing on and contributing to national network intelligence
* Manage the Implementation and cascade of national strategic Study Support direction within the region and the local RRDN

# BUSINESS PLANNING

* Support the contribution to collective national business planning for the Study Support and Partner Liaison services
* Contribute to reviewing, evaluating and approving research site delivery plans, and have delegated responsibility for periodically performance monitoring against those plans to ensure that RDN funding is being used appropriately and effectively
* Contribute to business planning for the Study Support Service and Partner Liaison functions, ensuring effective implementation and reporting

# INFORMATION & ADMINISTRATION

* Understand and interpret highly complex information, data and situations to inform plans and make decisions. This may include communicating and presenting to a variety of audiences and the facilitation of collaborative discussions
* Provide operational leadership and support for the implementation of Information Governance best practice within the Study Support Service
* Manage the implementation and effectiveness of the Study Support Service processes that ensure data integrity within relevant RDN systems, enabling the identification of potential concerns and patterns and supporting RDN customers and partners in resolving issues
* Promote the use of digital innovation and effective Business Intelligence across all the Study Support Service and Partner Liaison functions
* Implement and manage the activities that support study sponsors, funders and investigators to access data to enable them to effectively manage the delivery of their studies (and enable them to request support from the RDN as required)
* Manage the use of national costing and attribution tools, processes and guidance for studies in the region, working as a supporting member of the UK community of practice for costing and AcoRD specialist community
* Manage the implementation of DHSC RDN Portfolio Policy Compliance to ensure that the process, procedure and monitoring of studies enables sponsors / delegates, research delivery sites and funders to understand and adhere to their roles and responsibilities. For example, this may include satisfying the Eligibility Criteria for NIHR support before they are included on the portfolio and subsequently adhering to the expected actions and requirements set out in the NIHR RDN Portfolio Terms and Conditions
* Manage the oversight of the RDN portfolio across all specialities and settings to proactively identify potential issues and opportunities, working as an active partner to resolve and action follow-up activity
* Oversee the coordination of National Specialty and Settings Groups

# OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

* Ensure high-quality delivery of Study Support Service operations in accordance with nationally defined standards and processes
* Oversee delivery of pre-approval services, including Planning and Placement Services as well as national policy driven cost attribution services (National Contract Value Review and AcoRD specialist review)
* Oversee post-approval services, such as portfolio oversight and on-request services, to maintain efficient study support
* Be responsible for the coordination of AcoRD (Attributing the costs of health & social

Care Research and Development) Specialists and National Contract Value Reviewers

* Manage the alignment and coordination of the NS&SL support for funders and sponsors in study design, deliverability and participant access to bring compatibility with the advice and guidance provided by the Study Support Service to further ensure optimal planning, placement and 'on request' performance monitoring of studies
* Manage programmes and projects within the remit of the Study Support Service. This may include national projects, the oversight of local programmes of work, and coaching and supporting team members in their project management
* Lead cross-specialty and cross-setting communities of practice and events, facilitating system-level collaboration and learning to solve operational challenges and pursue opportunities for strategic development
* Manage a team of Study Support Service Managers, providing guidance and support

# SERVICE IMPROVEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

* Promote a Nationally consistent customer-centric approach to service delivery, ensuring that the needs and expectations of stakeholders are met or exceeded
* Maintain high level understanding of innovations for study delivery, for example Be Part of Research, just in time site activation or digital recruitment and engagement offers provided by public sector data service providers (Find, Recruit and Follow-up)
* Actively seek and share feedback from customers and partners, so as to provide a responsive service and identify opportunities for improvement, sharing insights and learnings across the national network
* Identify and implement strategies to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Study Support Service operations regionally and nationally, including piloting and evaluating ideas as part of national working
* Supporting Study Support Service Managers with problem-solving, particularly in more complex or sensitive situations, or with cross-specialty or cross-setting issues
* Support the building of capacity and capability for study delivery across specialities and settings, including:

○ In collaboration with Specialty and Settings leadership, undertake horizon scanning to ensure there is the capacity and capability within the research

system to accommodate new and emerging technologies ○ Assist in the development of research delivery staff

# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

* Monitor and evaluate performance metrics to ensure service delivery meets or exceeds established benchmarks
* Maintain high level understanding of processes and tools related to national policy implementation (cost attribution, commercial costing and contracting, internal disbursement)
* Ensure seamless coordination with other services and functions within the RRDN and across the national network, working with other teams to provide a consistent experience and work as one organisation

# LIFE SCIENCES INDUSTRY

* Champion the RDN’s capacity and capability to support Life Sciences Industry research and the contribution of the Life Sciences Industry to the NHS
* Ensure that RRDN Study Support Services provided to the Life Sciences Industry are managed consistently, within the required timeframes to a high quality standard and in line with identified national RDN requirements
* Identify and develop opportunities to engage in and support, business development activities, including: Providing clinical research expertise and knowledge to support optimal research delivery in discussions with commercial organisations; and attending meetings and presenting at events, webinars etc

# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

* Make recommendations for funding allocations, including those to research delivery sites and any strategic development funding
* Support in overseeing the effective financial management of any budget allocated to the

Study Support Service and associated functions

# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

* Foster a culture of continuous improvement, encouraging team members to seek out opportunities for innovation
* Jointly consider new improvements for national adoption, escalating local challenges and sharing all innovations
* Facilitate and promote cross-specialty, cross-setting and Study Support Service collaborations for improved research delivery

# COMMUNICATION & STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT (NHS AND NON-NHS)

* Maintain effective communication and coordination with stakeholders across the Research Delivery Network
* Communication of highly complex and difficult information both orally and in writing, both internally to colleagues and externally to a range of audiences. This may include delivering presentations and writing reports, and can involve communication where there may be barriers to acceptance
* Act as first point of escalation to resolve issues arising from regional partners to ensure continued alignment with national research policy and processes
* Work across the health and care specialties and settings to identify and develop further opportunities to embed research into the NHS, non-NHS and wider health and care environment

# ENSURING PATIENT, CARER AND PUBLIC INFORM AND INFLUENCE DELIVERY OF RDN STRATEGY

* Act as a champion for patients, carers and the public, ensuring that their interests are meaningfully incorporated into the development and delivery of the RDN and RRDN
* Actively promote equality of opportunity, inclusivity and diversity in the RDN, for research participation and RDN staff, supporting sponsors and sites with research inclusion and providing constructive challenge where appropriate

# CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

* Manage the team's compliance with RRDN contractual requirements (e.g. the

Performance and Operating Framework) and with Host-related policies and procedures

* Maintain working knowledge of, and act in accordance with current legislation, including Good Clinical Practice, research governance legislation, and the Data Protection Act. ● Support the effective contribution to the corporate risk register
* Develop and implement Standard Operating Procedures, ensuring national consistency and involving the interpretation of broader policies relating to health and care research

# KEY RESULT AREAS

● Ensure high-quality delivery of Study Support Service operations and Partner Liaison functions in accordance with nationally defined standards and processes

# RISK ASSESSMENT

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| **Mental Effort** | There is a frequent requirement for intense concentration |

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| **Physical Effort** | A combination of sitting, standing and walking with little requirement for physical effort. There may be a requirement to exert light physical effort for short periods |
| **Working Conditions** | Exposure to unpleasant working conditions or hazards is rare. Requirement to use Visual Display Unit equipment more or less continuously on most days |
| **Emotional Effort** | Occasional exposure to distressing or emotional circumstances |

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

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|  | **Attribute** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
|  | **Education and Qualifications** |  |  |
|  | Masters level qualification or equivalent experience. | ✔ |  |
|  | Degree | ✔ |  |
|  | Degree in health or science discipline |  | ✔ |
|  | Training in project management |  | ✔ |
|  | Management qualification |  | ✔ |
|  | Evidence of continual professional development | ✔ |  |
|  | **Knowledge and Experience** |  |  |
|  | Comprehensive understanding of research, the NHS and the wider health and care system including associated responsibilities to the public and patients | ✔ |  |
|  | Highly developed understanding of life science industry’s needs and requirements with regard to health and care research | ✔ |  |
|  | Highly developed understanding of governance and legislative framework for clinical research in the NHS | ✔ |  |
|  | Highly developed understanding of the UK research pathway and funding | ✔ |  |
|  | Specialist knowledge of RDN Portfolio eligibility (including terms and conditions) and of cost attribution (ACoRD, SoECATs, NCVR). | ✔ |  |
|  | Knowledge of national systems, structures and processes for supporting clinical research in NHS and non-NHS settings | ✔ |  |
|  | Knowledge of utilising Business Intelligence solutions to work within a performance management framework, and good understanding of performance management techniques | ✔ |  |
|  | Knowledge of methods, tools and techniques for problem-solving and continuous improvement that are relevant to system-level health and care working | ✔ |  |
|  | Experience of health and care research management, including the support of studies pre-approval and post-approval | ✔ |  |
|  | Experience of chairing and facilitating meetings. | ✔ |  |

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|  | Experience of delivering health and care research support services including the management of people and finances | ✔ |  |
|  | Experience of developing and managing high quality customer centric services for commercial and non-commercial customers | ✔ |  |
|  | Experience of working collaboratively and in partnership with other organisations, with demonstrable experience of delivery across organisational boundaries | ✔ |  |
|  | Professional operational research leadership at system level | ✔ |  |
|  | Experience of direct line management and managing teams to deliver clear objectives and performance targets, including through organisational change | ✔ |  |
|  | Experience of supporting business planning and operational implementation, preferably within an NHS organisation. | ✔ |  |
|  | Experience of leading continuous improvement projects | ✔ |  |
|  | Project management experience, delivering complex projects involving multiple agencies and individuals to tight deadlines | ✔ |  |
|  | **Skills and Abilities** |  |  |
|  | Highly developed leadership, strategic thinking and planning skills | ✔ |  |
|  | Proven interpersonal skills to work with clinical and management colleagues at all levels across a range of organisations and the ability to develop strong working relationships with external stakeholders | ✔ |  |
|  | Demonstrable ability to use autonomy to undertake actions as a result of own interpretation of policy and guidance, providing a source of expert advice to the organisation | ✔ |  |
|  | Strong problem-solving skills, including a proactive approach to identifying and addressing potential future issues | ✔ |  |
|  | Ability to communicate highly complex and difficult information both orally and in writing, both internally to colleagues and externally to a range of audiences | ✔ |  |
|  | Ability to analyse and interpret highly complex information and to  make judgments regarding a range of highly complex management issues | ✔ |  |
|  | Ability to plan, manage, adjust and deliver complex projects, involving multiple agencies and individuals and a broad range of activities, to tight deadlines | ✔ |  |

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|  | Excellent IT skills, particularly in the use of web applications, Google Workspace and Microsoft Office | ✔ |  |
|  | Empathetic approach to resolving conflict, with the ability to work with sensitivity and tact | ✔ |  |
|  | **Values and Personal Qualities** |  |  |
|  | Flexible approach to working and enthusiastic attitude towards challenges | ✔ |  |
|  | Meticulous attention to detail, exhibiting thoroughness and efficiency | ✔ |  |
|  | Acts as a champion for patients, carers, the public and their interests, ensuring the public voice has an impact on RDN activities | ✔ |  |
|  | Constantly strives for improvement, bringing a 'can do' attitude and seeking out innovation | ✔ |  |
|  | Goal-oriented, with a focus on tangible results that are aligned with overarching national objectives | ✔ |  |
|  | Committed to ongoing learning and development, proactively seeking opportunities for personal and team growth | ✔ |  |
|  | Takes a professional approach to all interactions, remaining diplomatic under pressure and fostering a solution-focused environment | ✔ |  |
|  | Prepared and able to travel to different locations across the region and nationally to attend meetings and conferences | ✔ |  |
|  | Highly motivated with the ability to lead and inspire others, internally and externally to the organisation | ✔ |  |
|  | Promotes inclusion within and beyond the organisation, listening to, involving, respecting and learning from the contribution of others | ✔ |  |
|  | Role models and works in accordance with the values of the RDN and the employing NHS Trust | ✔ |  |