

NIHR Regional Research Delivery Networks

Job Description & Personal Specification for RRDN Operations Director

Version P1, 23 Aug 2023

JOB DETAILS

Job Title: NIHR Regional Research Delivery Network (RRDN) Operations Director

Grade: NHS Agenda for Change Band 8d or relevant clinical scale

Hours: 1.0 WTE

Accountable to: RRDN Director

Reports to: RRDN Director

Indicative Direct Reports: Team Leaders for the following domains:

- Commercial services
- Study Support Service
- Agile Research Support
- Active National Delivery
- Finance
- Business Operations

Location: Exeter

JOB PURPOSE

The RRDN Operations Director is the senior officer responsible for the operational services of the RRDN. These services are delivered for the RRDN, partner organisations and research funders, with particular emphasis on addressing the needs of the life sciences industry (across both commercial contract and commercial collaborative research). These services include Study Support, Agile Research Support, regional support for Active National Delivery, Financial Management and Business Operations. The RRDN Operations Director line manages the Service/Team Leaders for the defined operational services.

The purpose of the RDN is to support 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 RRDN Operations Director is responsible for ensuring research sites have an appropriate level of funding to support and deliver the core NHS service support activities, in line with agreed funding principles. They will establish and maintain proportionate and nationally consistent mechanisms to ensure partner organisations use RDN funding appropriately and effectively. They will also ensure that all necessary contracts or agreements required are in place before funds are provided and will develop mechanisms to be adopted by RDN partner organisations to recover costs from commercial research funders in a timely and effective way. The RRDN Operations Director is responsible for working in collaboration with regional R&D departments in order to support those departments in the delivery of their studies. The RRDN Operations Director will also implement any delivery priorities or initiatives as required by the RDN Coordinating Centre (RDNCC). This may be as part of wider strategic or political initiatives or as part of an urgent public health response. RRDN services will need to remain agile and responsive to such demands.

The RRDN Operations Director will support national and regional initiatives to help meet the research delivery needs of the life sciences industry, including providing a key account management function. The RRDN Operations Director will also work closely with the RRDN Strategic Development Director and ensure operational intelligence and expertise is used to strengthen the 3-year RRDN Strategic Implementation Plan.

Alongside their regional responsibilities the RRDN Operations Director will co-develop and lead national programmes of work in collaboration with the RDNCC.

ROLE OF RDN

From October 2024, the current NIHR Clinical Research Network will be changing to become the NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN). The RDN will continue to support 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, with a name that better reflects the scope and purpose of the network to 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 whole of England will be supported through 12 NIHR Regional Research Delivery Networks (RRDNs). These will work with the national RDNCC to provide a joint RDN leadership function so that the NIHR RDN as a whole functions as a single organisation with a shared vision and purpose across England. [XXX] will be the Host Organisation for the [XXX] RRDN region.

The NIHR RRDNs will have three key roles.

- First, 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.
- Second, to 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.
- Third, to work jointly with the RDNCC 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 needs of researchers and R&D teams and is responsive to the changing domestic and global environment for health and care, life sciences and health research.

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 the RDNCC to support health and care research for the benefit of patients, the health and care system and the economy as a whole.

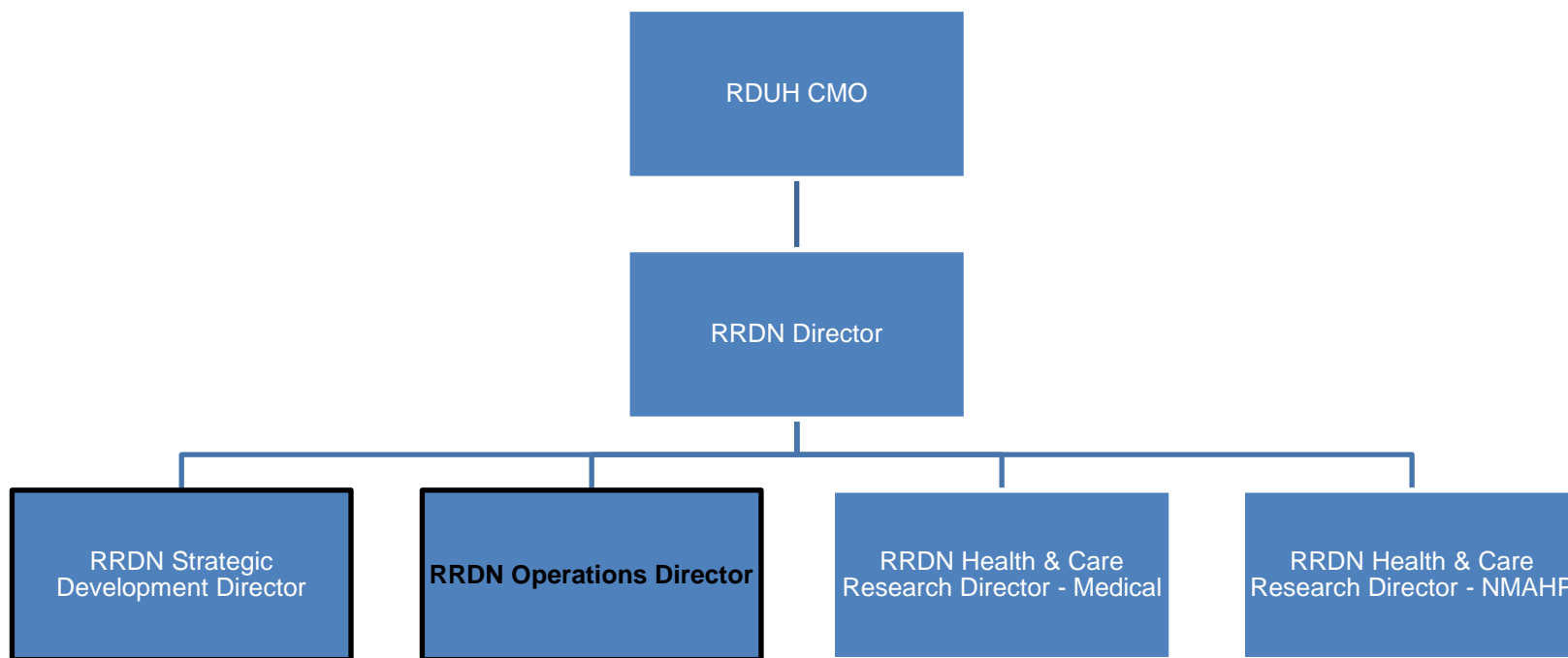
The RRDN Management Team, Agile Research Support Team and regional Specialty and Settings Leads will comprise the “RRDN Staff”.

The RRDN Management Team means the staff employed, or otherwise procured, by the Host Organisation to lead and manage the RRDN services and functions. This team includes the RRDN directors.

The Agile Research Support Team means the flexible team that will work peripatetically to ensure delivery of Portfolio studies across a range of activities in a range of settings, in line with need.

RRDN Specialty and Settings Leads will provide clinical leadership at regional level with a particular focus on strategic development and portfolio oversight. A Specialty is defined as a Community of Experts and comprises individuals able to relate health and care expertise to research. Specialty areas will cover all aspects of health and care provided directly to an individual, group or whole population by or under the direction of any health or care specialist. A Setting is defined as the environment in which the potential research participants are provided with care or support for their health or care needs. The Community of Experts within Settings will have expertise particular to that environment relevant to research. Settings are agnostic of Specialty and may include multiple types of organisations and research locations. RRDNs will include specified Regional Specialties and Settings Leads, as defined by the RDN Board, supported by RDN funding, working as part of the national Community of Experts.

DEPARTMENTAL/DIRECTORATE ORGANISATIONAL CHART



KEY RELATIONSHIPS

- NIHR RDN Executive Team
- NIHR RDN Senior Management Team
- Peer NIHR RRDN Operations Directors

- RRDN Strategic Development Director
- RRDN Health and Care Research Directors
- Senior leaders within the RRDN region for other NIHR infrastructure and entities, NHS England, Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs), Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)/Integrated Care Systems (ICS'), NHS Trusts, Primary Care providers, Universities, Local authorities, and other providers of health and social care services
- RRDN Host Organisation Corporate Support Teams
- RRDN Partner Organisation R&D and Finance Leads

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Be responsible for ensuring research sites have an appropriate level of funding in line with their plans to support and deliver the core NHS service support activities
- Be responsible for working in collaboration with regional R&D departments in order to support those departments in the delivery of their studies
- Be responsible for the management, coordination and delivery of the following key RRDN services: Study Support Service (including Enhanced, On-Demand Study Support); Agile Research Support; Active National Delivery (regional contribution); Commercial Services; Financial management (including Excess Treatment Costs); Business Operations
- Be responsible for the coordination of AcoRD (Attributing the costs of health & social Care Research and Development) Specialists and National Contract Value Reviewers
- Budgetary management for the RRDN hosted services, NHS support costs allocation and the Operations element of the RRDN funding allocation (total RRDN funding to be £35m per annum per RRDN on average)
- Leading regional and supporting national initiatives to support research delivery needs of the life sciences industry, including acting as a key account manager
- Developing mechanisms and support for RRDN partner organisations to recover costs from commercial research funders in a timely and efficient manner
- Being a visible leader and actively promoting a culture of staff development, collaboration, positive staff experience, wellbeing and inclusion, and embedding patient, carer and public involvement within the RRDN at all appropriate levels of decision making
- Develop, lead and deliver significant national programmes of work on behalf of the RDN Board

- Support the development of a 3-year RRDN Strategic Implementation Plan in line with the RDN strategic aims and national 3-year plan. The RRDN Strategic Implementation Plan will be developed in conjunction with regional partners, including NHSE regional offices, ICSs, AHSNs, patients and the public
- Be accountable for ensuring that all necessary contracts or agreements required are in place before funds are provided to research sites
- Actively promote equality of opportunity, inclusivity and diversity in the RDN, for research participation and RDN staff
- Engage effectively with NHS organisations to maximise reach, impact and delivery of the RDN and its initiatives
- Enable collaborative relationships through effective network leadership, acting as a role model for others
- Work with partners across the RRDN region and nationally to progress improvements and transformation activities ensuring the RDN can realise the opportunities which come from working across the wider health and social care system
- Actively contribute to national NIHR community engagement initiatives to increase access to health and care research for under-served groups and lead regional strategies to deliver this across the RRDN region

BUSINESS PLANNING

- Be responsible for ensuring research sites have an appropriate level of funding in line with their plans to support and deliver the core NHS service support activities
- Be responsible for reviewing, evaluating and approving research site delivery plans, and be responsible for periodically performance monitoring against those plans to ensure that RDN funding is being used appropriately and effectively
- Contribute to the oversight and development of RRDN business, financial, strategic development and impact plans, and associated reports
- Develop and optimise potential for high quality and sustainable health and care research within the region and nationally in alignment with RDN vision, direction and strategic aims
- Ensure all business planning, implementation and reporting requirements are met in line with the RRDN Host Organisation Contract
- Ensure effective mechanisms and services are in place for the continued support of the RDN Portfolio, with particular emphasis on addressing the needs of the life sciences industry

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

- Be responsible for the management, coordination and delivery of the following key RRDN services: Study Support Service (including Enhanced, On-Demand Study Support); Agile Research Support; Active National Delivery

(regional contribution); Commercial Services; Financial management (including Excess Treatment Costs); Business Operations

- Line management of the Service/Team Leads for the above RRDN services
- Ensure that the RRDN is managed in line with the requirements of the RRDN Host Organisation Contract
- Ensure that the RRDN provides effective, high quality and nationally consistent services
- Ensure that relevant national strategies, policies and frameworks are fully implemented and associated targets met

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Be a visible leader and actively promoting a culture of staff development, collaboration, positive staff experience, wellbeing and inclusion, and embedding patient, carer and public involvement within the RRDN at all appropriate levels of decision making
- Be an ambassador for RDN and actively modelling and championing RDN values
- As part of the RRDN Senior Leadership Team, advance the development of a highly professional and expert team to ensure effective delivery through appraisal, personal development planning, coaching and mentoring
- Develop effective working relationships with NHSE regional offices, ICSs, AHSNs, LETBs and other local stakeholders and partners
- Ensure professional supervisory arrangements are in place for the RRDN Staff (the RRDN Core Team, RRDN Agile Research Support Team, and RRDN Specialty and Settings Leads)
- Promote a learning organisation that uses the knowledge and skills of all members to improve performance and generate helpful and shared outputs
- Contribute to the ongoing development of the vision and direction for the RDN and translate into deliverable priorities for the RRDN

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- Provide strong leadership, engaging with the regional research community to support and enable the efficient set up and delivery of RDN Portfolio research, with particular emphasis on addressing the needs of the life sciences industry
- Contribute to the establishment and oversight of effective systems and processes for robust performance management to ensure the RRDN Host Organisation Contract is adhered to
- Analysis of complex and often conflicting data to identify strategic priorities and business plan activities
- Identify areas of underperformance and take the necessary action to resolve, using appropriate risk management approaches and escalations

LIFE SCIENCES INDUSTRY

- Establish mutually beneficial relationships with life sciences industry partners in collaboration with the RDNCC to maximise the opportunities available for the benefit of our population
- Champion the RDN's capacity and capability to support Life Sciences Industry research and the contribution of the Life Sciences Industry to the NHS
- Drive forward the RDN strategies to support the needs of Life Sciences Industry research regionally and nationally
- Ensure that RRDN services provided to the Life Sciences Industry are provided consistently, within the required timeframes and to a high quality standard and in line with identified national RDN requirements

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Budgetary management for the RRDN hosted services, NHS support costs allocation and the Operations element of the RRDN funding allocation (total RRDN funding to be £35m per annum per RRDN on average)
- Ensure that effective financial procedures and arrangements are in place and that these are in line with the RRDN Host Organisation's financial regulations, RDNCC guidance and the RRDN Host Organisation Contract
- Ensure value for money and strive for continuous efficiencies in use of funding

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

- Utilise performance and other available data including benchmarking to identify and drive forward improvements in service delivery and performance
- Utilise service improvement approaches, such as 'Lean', or as directed by RDNCC, to streamline operational delivery systems and processes in order to optimise efficiency, delivery and value for money.
- Ensure robust mechanisms for continuous operational and business improvement processes are in place, supporting the delivery of transformational change across the RDN
- Take responsibility for the implementation of all relevant RDN and RRDN policies and procedures

NHS AND NON-NHS ENGAGEMENT

- Develop and foster effective relationships and collaborations with stakeholders such as, but not limited to, ICS/ICBs, HEIs, charities, other NIHR infrastructure, NHSE/I, AHSNs, to enhance and promote research and development across the health and care economy
- Ensure engagement and commitment from regional NHS organisations / providers of NHS services, other parts of NIHR and key external stakeholders as appropriate to enable implementation of RDN strategies
- Work across the health and care specialties 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 IMPACT ON 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
- Ensure all patient, carer and public involvement and engagement activities of the RRDN are of the highest professional standard
- Embed patient, carer and public involvement within the RRDN at all appropriate levels of decision making

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- Be accountable for ensuring that all necessary contracts or agreements required are in place before funds are provided to research sites
- Ensuring that the RRDN and it's associated services are provided in line with the RRDN Host Organisations corporate governance requirements

PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Attribute	Essential	Desirable
	Education and Qualifications		
1.1	Masters level qualification or equivalent	✓	
1.2	Management qualification	✓	

	Knowledge and Experience		
2.1	Comprehensive understanding of research, the NHS and the wider health and care system including associated responsibilities to the public and patients	✓	
2.2	Experience of working in the health and care research sector, the health and social care service sector or academic environment at a senior level	✓	
2.3	Comprehensive understanding of the UK research pathway and funding	✓	
2.4	Experience of managing health and care research support services including the allocation of both funding and human resources	✓	
2.5	Experience of developing and managing high quality customer centric services for commercial and non-commercial customers	✓	
2.6	Comprehensive understanding of life science industry's needs and requirements with regard to health and care research	✓	
2.7	Experience of contributing to the develop of national policy or strategies and translating those into regional plans	✓	
2.8	Professional research leadership, both strategic and operational at a senior level	✓	
2.9	Experience of working across complex organisational structures and effective matrix management	✓	
2.10	Significant experience of managing a large budget with solid knowledge of financial process requirements	✓	
2.11	Direct experience of business planning and robust financial management at appropriate scale	✓	
2.12	Knowledge of national systems, structures and processes for supporting clinical research in NHS and non-NHS settings	✓	

2.13	Experience of working collaboratively and in partnership with other organisations, with demonstrable experience of delivery across organisational boundaries	✓	
2.14	Evidence of managing effective collaborations and partnerships	✓	
2.15	Good understanding of performance management techniques	✓	
2.16	Knowledge of utilising Business Intelligence solutions to work within a performance management framework	✓	
2.17	Political astuteness and understanding of the health & social care context	✓	
2.18	Comprehensive knowledge of programme sponsorship and management	✓	
2.19	Experience of leading continuous improvement	✓	
2.20	Understanding of governance and legislative framework for clinical research in the NHS		✓
2.21	Executive level experience		✓
	Skills and Abilities		
3.1	Highly developed leadership, strategic thinking and planning skills with the ability to demonstrate these in highly political environments	✓	
3.2	Proven leadership skills in the management of change	✓	
3.3	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	✓	
3.4	Ability to make decisions autonomously, when required, on difficult issues	✓	

3.5	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 senior stakeholders	✓	
3.6	Ability to deal with challenging situations in a formal setting	✓	
3.7	Strong external communications skills in a politically sensitive environment with knowledge of and experience in handling media relations	✓	
3.8	Ability to communicate highly complex, sensitive or contentious information orally and in writing, both internally and externally, to a range of audiences	✓	
3.9	Extensive experience of delivering presentations to large groups of stakeholders in often pressured and politically sensitive environments to a high standard (Board level quality)	✓	
3.10	Ability to analyse and interpret highly complex information to make judgements regarding a range of highly complex management issues	✓	
3.11	Strong problem solving skills	✓	
3.12	Ability to grasp critical issues and distil them into clear arguments/cases and be able to articulate these verbally or in written form	✓	
3.13	Ability to plan, manage, adjust and deliver complex projects involving multiple agencies and individuals and a broad range of activities to tight deadlines	✓	
3.14	Ability to work independently	✓	
3.15	Ability to understand the long term or widespread implications of decisions	✓	
3.16	Willingness to challenge existing practice	✓	
3.17	Good IT skills, particularly in use of Web applications and MS Office applications	✓	
3.18	Ability to travel to different locations across the region and nationally to attend meetings and	✓	

	conferences, representing the RDN		
3.19	Ability to use Google Suite products	✓	
	Value and Personal Qualities		
4.1	Highly motivated with the ability to lead and inspire others	✓	
4.2	Appreciation of the impact of organisational culture on service delivery	✓	
4.3	Lives by values which include openness, collaboration, responsiveness, inclusion, personal integrity and creating positive cultures where these values thrive	✓	
4.4	Commitment to supporting the development of staff and understanding of workforce planning	✓	
4.5	Flexible approach to working	✓	
4.6	Attention to detail	✓	
4.7	Outcomes focussed	✓	
4.8	Acts as a champion for patients and their interests, ensuring the patients' voice has an impact on RDN activities	✓	
4.9	Commitment to and focused on quality, promotes high standards in all they do	✓	
4.10	Able to make a connection between their work and the benefit to patients and the public	✓	
4.11	Works well with others, is positive and helpful, listens, involves, respects and learns from the contribution of others	✓	
4.12	Consistently looks to improve what they do and seeks out innovation	✓	

4.13	Self-awareness with regard to emotional intelligence, biases and sensitivities	✓	
4.14	Demonstrates honesty and integrity and promotes organisational values	✓	