



NATIONAL  
DOCTORS  
TRAINING  
& PLANNING

## Lead NCHD Job Description 2023/2024



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## Background and Context

The Lead NCHD Programme is one of a range of initiatives taken at national level to improve NCHD recruitment and retention in the Irish public health system. Its introduction was welcomed by the Strategic Review of Medical Training and Career Structure ('MacCraith Report') which was established in 2013 by the Minister for Health and chaired by Professor Brian MacCraith to address the challenge of doctor recruitment and retention. The 'MacCraith Report' recommended that structured communication arrangements should be established for trainees, including engaging trainees in solutions for patient care. The report recognised the Lead NCHD initiative as having the potential to assist with these communication arrangements.

The Lead NCHD Programme is a response to the historic deficit in NCHD representation at executive level in Irish hospitals and is a means of contributing to the improvement of NCHD welfare and working conditions. This initiative is implemented by HSE – National Doctors Training & Planning (NDTP) Funding for the initiative is provided by HSE – NDTP.

The initiative has been welcomed by the Department of Health, the Medical Council, the Joint HSE/Forum of Irish Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies, the Clinical Director/Clinical Programme Steering Group, the Forum Trainee Subcommittee and the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO).

The initiative was piloted by the HSE in January 2014 in five hospitals. Following a review of the pilot programme the Lead NCHD Initiative was rolled out nationally in 2015. Today, there are lead NCHDs across 32 acute hospitals, and the Community Health Organisations (CHOs), with approximately 90 leads in total. The Lead NCHD is not a specialty specific role (however CHOs currently appoint mental health and GP leads) and does not serve as a direct link to training requirements or training specific needs.

## National Level Structures to Support the Lead NCHD Initiative

The HSE supports the Lead NCHD initiative at national level, through National Doctors Training & Planning (NDTP). Each year a number of workshops are organised for the cohort of Lead NCHDs to support them in taking on the role and to provide an opportunity for the Lead NCHDs to meet each other.

**In 2015 a memo issued from National HR regarding development and support of the Lead NCHD role which includes provision for four hours per week protected time.**

The HSE aims to support the Lead NCHDs in developing consistency in the application of the role across the various clinical sites and to facilitate continuity as the role passes from one NCHD to another. In an effort to do this a Lead NCHD Handbook is available to each new Lead NCHD. The handbook contains a mix of both national and site specific information to assist the Lead NCHD getting up and running in their new role. As the initiative continues to evolve the HSE will seek ways to strengthen and embed the role further in conjunction with the Lead NCHDs and the clinical sites.

### **National Lead NCHD/NDTP Fellow**

The National Lead NCHD/NDTP Fellow role was launched in July 2016 as an additional support for the Lead NCHD cohort. The Fellow is employed directly as a member of the NDTP team for the duration of the Fellowship and works in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to strengthen current initiatives and develop additional initiatives to further embed the Lead NCHD role in clinical sites around the country.

## Reporting Relationship at Hospital/CHO Level

The Lead NCHD will report to the Lead Clinical Director/nominated Clinical Director/ Executive Clinical Director/nominated Executive Clinical Director in their service. Meetings should be held on a regular basis at agreed intervals i.e. fortnightly and no less than once per month to discuss matters of mutual interest, progress initiatives and to ensure that the Lead NCHD is aware, and has an opportunity to input into issues being discussed at the clinical site that are of relevance to and/or affect NCHDs. Lead NCHDs are also supported by NDTP Training Leads who are appointed at hospital group level.

## Key Working Relationships

In the execution of the role, the Lead NCHD will, as required, be supported by and engage with:

- NCHD Committee
- CEO / General Manager / Chief Officer
- Chief Operating Officer / Head of Mental Health
- Clinical Directors/ECDs
- HR Director
- Medical Manpower Manager
- Hospital / Mental Health Service Executive Management Team
- Nursing Representatives
- Nursing Management
- Health and Social Care Professional Representatives
- Other Senior Management
- NDTP Training leads (where available)
- Group Clinical Directors for Education and Training (where available)
- NCHD Reps (CHOs)
- Community Healthcare Network Manager (GP Leads)

## Purpose of the Role

The role of the Lead NCHD is to provide a formal link at management level between the relevant NCHD cohort, NCHD Committee and management structure, thereby enabling a structured, continuous two-way flow of engagement and communication between management and NCHDs. The Lead NCHD role should help to integrate NCHDs within their clinical site and improve the employment experience of NCHDs. The Lead NCHD role should facilitate enhanced communication between NCHDs and management in a way that provides NCHDs, through the Lead NCHD, with an opportunity to participate in service discussions and decision making regarding; matters that affect NCHDs, the day-to-day running of hospitals/ mental health services, and solutions/improvements to enhance patient care.

**“Improving NCHD recruitment and retention, in the Irish public health system”**

## Work Programme

Following their appointment, the Lead NCHD should meet with the Hospital CEO/General Manager/Head of Mental Health and the Lead Clinical Director/Executive Clinical Director/nominated Clinical Director to agree the work programme for their tenure as Lead NCHD. This may include a number of objective(s) to be achieved, agreement as to how the objectives will be progressed and provide a means of tracking progress towards their achievement which can be reviewed at intervals as agreed. This work programme should be regularly reviewed and a service improvement or quality Improvement project should be identified early on in the tenure of the Lead.

## Principal Duties & Responsibilities

The Lead NCHD role encompasses the following key elements:

- When interacting with hospital / mental health service / CHO management act on behalf of all NCHDs; training, non-training and interns within the clinical directorate structure
- This is not an industrial relations role - industrial relations matters will continue to be progressed via existing mechanisms, however pertinent IR issues should be fed to the National Lead NCHD for onward management
- It is not the role of the Lead NCHD to devise the rotas or fill rota gaps
- Organise regular meetings with the (Executive) Clinical Director(s) and Medical Manpower Manager to discuss issues pertinent to NCHDs including; NCHD welfare, training provision and access, EWTD, any executive decisions affecting NCHDs and individual/group grievances
- Regularly attend the hospital/ mental health service / CHO executive management team meetings and participate in discussions and decision making regarding; the day-to-day running of the hospital/mental health service, solutions/improvements to enhance patient care and matters of importance to NCHDs; · Chair the NCHD Committee
- Attend or nominate other NCHDs to attend key meetings and hospital/mental health service committees such as:
  - Hospital Executive / ECD management team
  - Medical Board/Medical Executive
  - Clinical Directors Meeting
  - Physicians Sub-Group
  - Surgical Sub-Group
  - EWTD
  - Transfer of Tasks
  - Bed Management
  - Infection Prevention and Control
  - Drugs and Therapeutics
  - Audit Committee
  - Quality and Patient Safety
  - Other meetings as appropriate such as: Quality, Risk, HIQA, Mental Health Commission
- Where appropriate attend hospital/mental health service/CHO inspections such as accreditation, college and Medical Council inspections
- Work in conjunction with NCHDs and the NCHD Committee at all times
- Consider nomination of directorate specific NCHDs if these are currently not nominated and meet with these regularly for the purposes of directorate integration and improved flow of information
- Meet NCHDs within their hospital/ mental health service or directorate in a regular and structured fashion to inform and be informed of all issues pertinent to NCHDs

- Aim to ensure that NCHDs feel engaged and empowered to improve their working conditions and patient care, ensure they are knowledgeable of their contractual entitlements and supports available to them
- Advise on workloads and appropriate allocation of NCHD posts and tasks
- Liaise with relevant medical departments and with individual consultants as required
- Liaise with health and social care professional representatives and nursing management representatives, on any matters of joint interest, including transfer of elements of NCHD workload, and support for NCHDs on-call
- Raise awareness of wellbeing supports for NCHDs such as Employee Assistance Programme etc...
- Submit a QI project to the National Lead at the end of their rotation
- Ensure a smooth handover to their successor at end of their tenure as Lead

## Requirements of Lead NCHD to Engage with National Initiatives

Each Lead NCHD is required to:

- Contribute to the wider Lead NCHD initiative, through participation in the National Lead NCHD Committee and attendance at the National Lead NCHD workshops
- Provide feedback as requested by the National Lead and NDTP
- Roll out an improvement initiative for NCHDs
- Interact and engage with the National Lead NCHD/NDTP Fellow; and
- Promote continuity of the Lead NCHD role on their site by facilitating a smooth transition and handover to the incoming Lead NCHD

## Educational Fund

In acknowledgement of the work associated with the Lead NCHD role and with a view to supporting same from an educational perspective, each Lead NCHD will have access to an educational fund to undertake an academic qualification in Management and/or Leadership Skills in the Republic of Ireland. This funding will be applied to the Lead NCHDs NER account when their appointment has been confirmed to NDTP.

- Funding up to the amount of €2,500 will be provided for leads in place for a year or €1,250 if in place for a 6 month period.

**Please Note: It is the responsibility of each Lead NCHD to ensure they engage with the National Lead to determine course suitability for this funding in advance of registration.**

## Eligibility to Compete

- Be employed as an SHO, Registrar, Specialist Registrar or Senior Registrar, with an NCHD contract and an appropriate clinical commitment in the relevant hospital/CHO/mental health service for the period 2023/2024
- If not already a member of the NCHD Committee, be appointed automatically to same once appointed to the Lead NCHD role and act as Chair
- Demonstrate a successful track record in engaging and contributing positively to change programmes
- Demonstrate a commitment to participation in and delivery of training
- Experience of engaging with and working with a range of stakeholders including NCHD colleagues
- Possess the requisite knowledge, skills and attributes to develop this new role within the health service and the capacity to discharge the principle duties and responsibilities associated with the role

## Duration of Appointment

The Lead NCHD will be appointed for a 12-month duration with a recommended review at the 6 month or midway mark. Exceptions to this will be allowed in sites where the majority of NHCDs are in rotating on a six month basis

## Application & Selection Process

All applications must be made by submitting to the relevant Medical Manpower Manager or mental health service equivalent the documents listed below:

- a) A comprehensive CV clearly showing your relevant achievements and experience in your career to date
- b) A short (i.e. no more than 2 pages) cover letter/personal statement outlining why you wish to be considered for this role, what you hope to achieve as Lead NCHD and where you believe your skills and experience meet the requirements for the position of Lead NCHD

Applications received will be reviewed and shortlisted as appropriate by hospital/mental health service management, with the final appointment being determined by means of an interview panel. Indicative panel members could include the CEO/Manager of the hospital/ Head of Mental Health, Lead Clinical Director and ECD.