



Dear Colleagues,

NHS SCOTLAND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPC) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING IPC TEAM (IPCT) AND SPECIALIST IPC ROLE DESCRIPTORS.

This letter replaces the previous [HDL \(2005\) 8](#) and builds on evidence and lessons learnt following: [The Vale of Leven Hospital Inquiry Report \(2014\)](#), [The Queen Elizabeth University Hospital Review \(2020\)](#) and [The Queen Elizabeth University Hospital/ NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Oversight Board: Final Report \(2021\)](#). It outlines the main responsibilities for Boards in relation to the infection prevention and control (IPC) service and introduces the team and specialist IPC role descriptors.

The Role of the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for ensuring successful prevention and control of infections within their NHS Board area. This accountability requires that the Chief Executive:

- Is aware of their legal responsibilities to identify, assess and control risks of infection in the workplace,
- Appoints an Executive Lead to be the Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) Executive Lead,
- Appoints either a Clinical Lead and/or Infection Control Manager to have responsibility for the IPC service with sufficient resource to provide IPC support and advice and is able to demonstrate clear lines of governance throughout the organisation, and
- Ensures that prevention and control of infection is a core part of their organisation's clinical governance and patient safety programmes.

From the Interim Chief Nursing Officer

Anne Armstrong

02 May 2024

DL (2024) 11

Addresses

For action

NHS Scotland Chairs,
NHS Scotland Chief Executives,
Chief Officers Health and Social Care Partnerships,
Local Authorities,
HR Directors,
Medical Directors,
Nurse Directors,
Primary Care Leads,
Directors of Pharmacy,
Directors of Public Health,
Directors of Dentistry,
Optometric Advisors,
All Independent Contractors (Dental, Pharmacy, General Practice and Optometry),
Infection Control Managers,
Infection Control Doctors,
Infection Control Nurses.

Further Enquiries

Scottish Government Directorate for Chief Nursing Officer

Email: cno@gov.scot

Role of Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) Executive Lead

The HAI Executive Lead holds delegated accountability for the IPC service function within their portfolio answering directly to the Chief Executive in line with the Board's internal scheme of delegation. HAI Executive Leads are responsible for:

- Annual workforce planning to establish an IPCT appropriate to the size and complexity of the Board, in line with the requirements of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019,
- Responsible for the management of any IPC associated risks which have been escalated to ensure appropriate mitigation steps are taken,
- Ensure the IPC service can provide the function required and have an appropriate work programme which supports provision and continuous improvement, and
- Responsible for chairing the NHS Healthcare Associated Infection Executive Committee (HAIEC)/ Infection Control Committee (ICC)
- Oversee and ensure relevant and required IPC/ healthcare associated infection (HCAI) reports are published and/or sent to the appropriate National Board/Scottish Government.

Infection Control Manager and/or Clinical Lead

[The Infection Prevention Workforce: Strategic Plan \(2022-2024\)](#) and accompanying [CNO letter](#) states that both the complexity and size of the Board should be considered when determining whether there is a need for a dedicated IPC Clinical Lead.

The Clinical Lead role **may not be required in all boards** and is distinct from the role of the HAI Executive Lead which will retain the delegated accountability within the Board for HAI.

Team and Specialist IPC Role Descriptors:

The Infection Prevention and Control Team (IPCT)

The function of the IPCT is to advise on the prevention,

surveillance, investigation, and control of infection across health and care settings in collaboration with other key service partners. The IPCT works collaboratively with microbiology, virology and other services and departments, including operational and senior management teams, health protection teams, care home providers and the health and social care partnerships, to provide infection, prevention, and control (IPC) subject matter expertise, safe, effective, and person-centred communications and advice and support to help reduce the risk of infection to patients, service users, staff and visitors.

The membership, structure, and scope of an IPCT should reflect the geography, function, size, and complexity of the NHS Board it serves.

A descriptor of an IPCT can be found in ANNEX A.

IPC Specialist Role Descriptors

Since the publication of the [Infection Prevention Workforce Strategic Plan 2022- 2024](#) in December 2022, the Healthcare Associated Infection (HCAI) and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Policy Unit has been engaging with national and territorial Boards to produce a Clinical Lead role descriptor for Scotland and update the existing Infection Control Manager (ICM) descriptor within HDL(2005)8.

During the first stage of engagement with IPCTs from across Scotland, the HCAI/AMR Policy Unit was asked by key stakeholders to develop role descriptors for Infection Control Doctors, Nurses/Practitioners and Infection Control Support Workers.

ANNEX B holds role descriptors for all of the aforementioned team members. It is recognised that some staff may have additional responsibilities based on local need which would not necessarily be considered as a core responsibility for that role across Scotland, and therefore such responsibilities are not included within the descriptors.

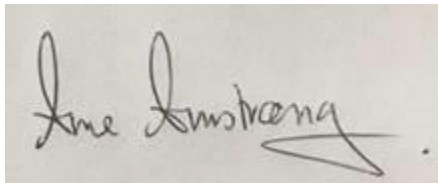
The individual role and team descriptors outline the main responsibilities for IPC specialists across Scotland. The individual role descriptors were developed with an initial draft created by NHS Education for Scotland, based on current job descriptions for IPC posts across Scotland and England, which was followed by consultation with

NHS Scotland IPC staff representatives, HAI Executive Leads and Scottish Government Professional Advisors.

All descriptors emphasise that IPC teams are responsible for the provision of IPC advice to other areas and departments, noting that this does not mean they are accountable for IPC practice in those areas.

The IPCT and team member descriptors **are not mandatory**. They have been developed as a support tool and guide for Boards to refer to when reviewing local roles or IPCT structures as part of workforce planning in line with the requirements of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Armstrong', on a light-colored background.

Anne Armstrong
INTERIM CHIEF NURSING OFFICER

Annex A – IPCT DESCRIPTOR



IPC Team Descriptor
ANNEX A.docx

Annex B – SPECIALIST ROLE DESCRIPTORS – CROSS READ TABLE



Role Descriptors -
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