

NHS Lothian

Primary Care Programme Commercial Research Lead

Job Description

The programme will provide funding for two consultant PAs per week and will be offered for one year in the first instance.

We are looking for a high calibre and motivated GP to lead NHS Lothian's primary care commercial research delivery plan, to meet the objectives of the UK VPAG (Voluntary scheme for branded medicines Pricing, Access and Growth) programme. They will lead and work with a small local team with support of the NHS Research Scotland Primary Care Network and NHS Lothian R&D and CRDC teams to increase local primary care commercial research delivery.

If you are interested in the Primary Care Programme Lead and would like to discuss further, please contact Professor Alasdair Gray, NHS Lothian R&I Director (alasdair.gray@ed.ac.uk) or Dr Rebecca Sutherland, NHS Lothian Commercial Research Delivery Centre (CRDC) clinical lead (rebecca.sutherland@nhs.scot) or Penicuik Practice Embedded Research Unit (PERU) Lead Dr Drummond Begg (drummond.begg@nhs.scot)

Background

There is a UK-wide vision for the future of NHS clinical research delivery set out in "Saving and Improving Lives: The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery, 2021". The ambition is to make every patient interaction a research opportunity with the aim of improving clinical outcomes for patients. Scotland, as part of a Four Nation approach, is committed to delivering the UK clinical research implementation plan for the above strategy which addresses five key themes: (a) clinical research embedded in the NHS; (b) patient-centred research; (c) streamlined, efficient & innovative research; (d) research enabled by data and digital tools and (e) a sustainable & supported workforce plan. A subsequent report in 2023, the Lord O'Shaughnessy Review details the UK's loss of international competitiveness in terms of the delivery of commercial trials and provides a recovery road map.

In 2024 an investment programme (VPAG) was agreed between the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) to support patient access to medicines, the financial sustainability of the NHS and the UK life sciences sector ([2024 Voluntary scheme for branded medicines Pricing, Access and Growth](#)). VPAG has started and will be in place for 5 years until 31 December 2028. The four UK Nations are working together to address the key challenges to commercial clinical trial delivery. Measures are already in place to reduce commercial trial set up and approval timelines. These measures include standard contracts and the implementation of the UK-wide [National Contract Value Review \(NCVR\)](#).

The Collaborative Accelerator for Commercial Clinical Trial Delivery in Scotland (CATALYST) is a strategic initiative supported by the Scottish Government's Chief Scientist Office (CSO) designed to "pump-prime" world-class clinical trial delivery capabilities across Scotland. This initiative will augment the VPAG developments to improve the promotion, ownership, visibility, and delivery of commercial research in the NHS in Scotland. Four Clinical Research Delivery Centres (CRDCs) have been opened including one in NHS Lothian. The second phase of the CATALYST programme is to support hub and spoke models in secondary care with three secondary care spokes and the development of infrastructure to deliver primary care commercial research in Scotland in Primary Care Embedded Research Units (PERUs).

Aims and overview of the Primary Care Programme commercial research delivery lead

This post will provide funding for protected time for a GP to provide strategic and operational leadership to the delivery of the aims of Scottish CATALYST programme in primary care within NHS Lothian. The programme aims to increase the efficiency and delivery of commercial, and industry supported clinical research. This will strengthen the research culture in the NHS and increase capacity in primary care working collaboratively with R&D in NHS Lothian and similar programmes elsewhere in Scotland. Whilst the individual may already be research active in an NHS or University role and wishes to add an academic leadership role to their job plan, the post is equally suitable for a GP who has a strong record in quality improvement and delivering effective change in patient care. The scheme will support this post for one year in the first instance with an extension dependent on satisfactory delivery of objectives aligned to the overall aims of the Scottish CATALYST programme. The Primary Care Programme Lead will work with NHS Lothian CRDC, Lead and research and project managers in collaboration with the CRF and ACCORD senior management teams to meet the overall objectives of the CATALYST programme.

Candidates

This post will provide the opportunity for an established NHS Lothian or University of Edinburgh GP at any point in their career to be able to spend job planned time to lead a team to deliver the clinical research trials in primary care within NHS Lothian. This post holder will continue to be employed by their service.

General Requirements

Essential criteria:

- On the specialist register
- Be in a permanent GP position (or equivalent) within NHS Lothian (NHS or University)
- Agreement from practice, head of service (or equivalent) that you will be able to undertake this role
- Evidence of working within an effective MDT
- Evidence of being able to lead and deliver to time and target
- Clear understanding of research delivery systems within the NHS in Scotland
- Excellent communication skills.

Desired Criteria:

- Experience of delivering clinical research during training or as a GP
- Evidence of working with industry in research and innovation
- A higher degree or equivalent
- Previous research or managerial leadership role.

Application Process

Please send a CV, covering letter stating why you are a suitable candidate for this role and a letter of support from your clinical head of service stating that you would be able to be released from current commitments or they are comfortable for you to take on this role as EPAs.

Closing date for applications for this post is Friday the 27th of February 2026.

Interviews are likely to be held Tuesday 17th March 2026.