

Date 09/05/2025  
Your Ref  
Our Ref 9992

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Dear

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION - CLINICAL FORENSIC NURSES

I write in response to your request for information in relation to Clinical Forensic Nurses.

### Question:

- We are seeking the policy and procedures in place for Clinical Forensic Nurses who attend patients in police custody. Specifically, we are seeking the policy and procedure that was in place in September 2021.

### Answer:

We are not completely sure what policy and procedure you are looking for and we do not have a general Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the role of the nurse.

The core job is seeing patients who have been arrested and brought into police custody and have been identified as requiring any kind of healthcare need, whether that be people on prescribed medications, withdrawing from alcohol/drugs, mental health problems including feelings of suicide, physical injuries or other physical health problem, taking samples such as blood for police evidence during road traffic incidents. It's such a huge role. There are numerous specific SOPs for specific tasks, but not an overall SOP for the role itself. I have enclosed the job description which should outline the role.

I hope the information provided helps with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at [www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal). If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

Headquarters  
Mainpoint  
102 West Port  
Edinburgh EH3 9DN

Chair Professor John Connaghan CBE  
Chief Executive Professor Caroline Hiscox  
*Lothian NHS Board is the common  
name of Lothian Health Board*

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: <https://org.nhsllothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

**ALISON MACDONALD**  
**Executive Director, Nursing**  
Cc: Chief Executive  
Enc.

## JOB DESCRIPTION

### 1. JOB IDENTIFICATION:

Job Title: Clinical Forensic Nurse

Responsible to: Senior Clinical Forensic Charge Nurse

Department(s): Police Custody and Forensic Suites Areas, East of Scotland

Directorate: LUHD

Operating Division: REAS

Job Reference: L-REAS-FOR-CFN

No of Job Holders: 23 WTE

Last Update (insert date): September 2022

### 2. JOB PURPOSE

To carry out initial assessments of detainees with a view to identifying any pressing medical needs, determining fitness to detain, fitness to interview; fitness for custody, fitness for release; fitness for court whilst in the custody of Police Scotland, with access to Forensic Medical Examiner opinion when required.

The post holder will travel throughout the Southeast of Scotland Region when required and as determined by service needs.

### 3. DIMENSIONS

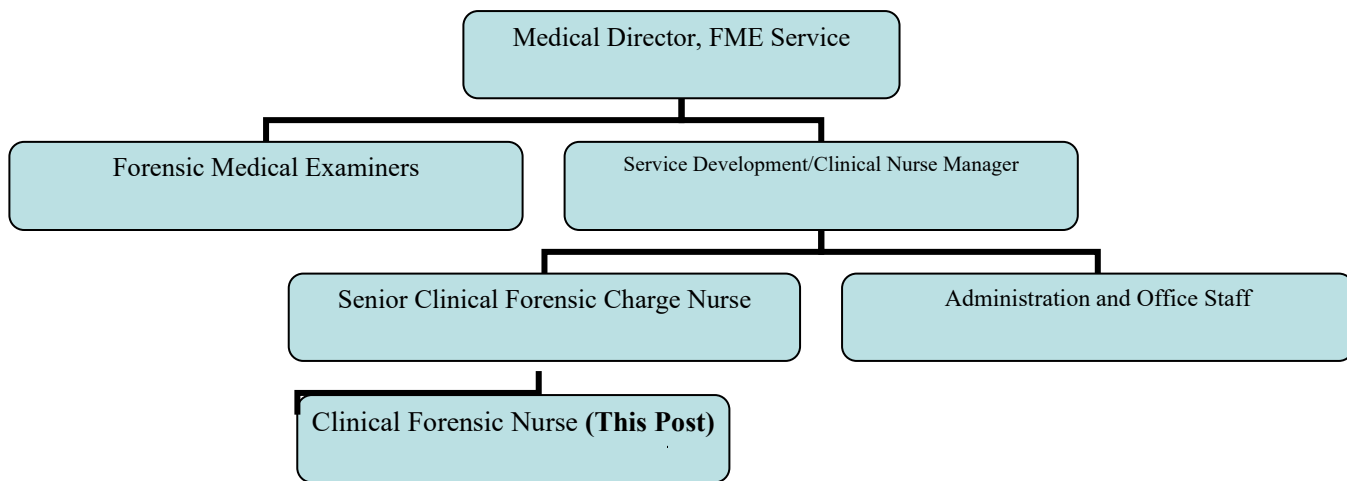
NHS Lothian is committed to ensuring the provision of a public health orientated, integrated and multi-disciplinary service in relation to the provision of clinical forensic healthcare services.

The members of the population who come into contact with the Police Service and the Criminal Justice System, can be among the most challenging, deprived and often vulnerable members of society. To meet their healthcare needs, a comprehensive integrated clinical service based on public health principals is required.

The post holder will be expected to cover all Custody Suites throughout Southeast Scotland Region.

This post is internal rotation, and the post holder will work night shifts, day shifts and weekends on a rotational basis

#### 4. ORGANISATIONAL POSITION



#### 5. ROLE OF DEPARTMENT

To provide a comprehensive, integrated, and seamless Clinical Forensic and Nursing Service, based upon an integrated multi-disciplinary managed clinical and care network to Police Scotland throughout its entire area of operation in the East of Scotland.

To provide a professional forensic clinical medical, forensic and custody nursing service delivered on request timeously and efficiently which is regularly monitored to assess its compliance with contractual obligations.

To liaise with the various departments within Police Scotland that may seek medical and/or nursing assistance and to agree joint service protocols.

To ensure that those making complaints of crime to the police, who require to be examined medically, are always looked after efficiently and respectfully.

To provide a collaborative clinical service together with the Police and Custody Officers to those detained by the Police in custody cells throughout the East of Scotland Police area

To liaise with Community Paediatricians, Community Psychiatric teams, other NHS Lothian departments and Social Work departments throughout the geographical area covered by the Lothian and Borders Police Force.

To ensure, through the Police, that medical examination and treatment rooms are well maintained, fully stocked and cleaned.

## 6. KEY RESULT AREAS

1. Develop Health Promotion and education activities as appropriate to area of responsibility.
2. Support the Service Development/Clinical Manager in nursing team development. In partnership with others, develop, implement, and evaluate professional development programmes that support the achievement of clinical expertise and leadership. Participate in teaching sessions for internal/external study programmes.
3. Act as a resource of specialised knowledge and clinical expertise to ensure care delivered to detainees is appropriate, optimum and evidence-based e.g., care of diabetic, learning difficulties.
4. Lead specific allocated projects regarding future service development changes. Implement audit and research findings where appropriate to ensure quality of service.
5. Preparation of reports and case note management as required. Ensure that written documentation is clear, concise, timely and complies with NMC standards for Records and Record Keeping and complies Police Scotland guidance for completing documentation.
6. Recognise importance of and responsible for resolving complaints timeously and effectively at local level and escalate as appropriate.

### Clinical

7. Inform the decision making of the custody Sergeant as to the welfare and medical needs of detainees with respect to drug and alcohol issues. To provide clinical advice to Custody Officers for detainees under the care of Police Scotland in a professional manner. This will involve provision of a nursing service to St Leonard's, Dalkeith, Livingston, Hawick, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, Stirling and Falkirk police stations, (and others within the Region should they develop).
8. To provide telephone healthcare advice to Lothian and Forth Valley prisons during out of hours when Prison Healthcare staff are not available.
9. The post holder will be experienced in making clinical assessment of detainees, provide nursing interventions as required and be able to identify when medical assessment of detainees is required e.g., observations, basic life support, neurological assessment, management of wounds. Assessments will include fitness to detain, fitness to interview, fitness for custody, fitness for release & fitness for court and where necessary to seek professional help, to provide advice about appropriate adults, in consultation with the Forensic Medical Examiner as required (in person or via telephone).
10. To undertake basic 'forensic' procedures as agreed. Duties include but are not limited to accompanying the forensic physician during sexual assault and rape examinations (as the second professional in attendance to corroborate, provide trauma informed support and complete the relevant healthcare forms for alleged victims. Undertaking Section 4 and Section 5 (Road Traffic procedures) in line with legislation including gaining consent for bloods to be taken and completion of appropriate documentation and making a informed clinical judgement that impairment is due to drugs rather than physical illness and been able to justify this in a court of law.,
11. Undertake agreed clinical activities with individuals in line with agreed protocols e.g., venepuncture, blood glucose monitoring, administration of medications. To comply with systems in place to identify clinical risk and reporting of incidents.

12. Competent to practice single nurse administration of medication and receive telephone prescriptions in line with protocols and within the Scottish legislative framework. The post holder will be expected to consult with a sometimes volatile client group, make a clinical diagnosis and formulate treatment by prescribing medication for a variety of clinical conditions on a regular shift by shift basis and be responsible for monitoring the effects of any medication administered and acting accordingly should any adverse reaction occur.
13. Assume responsibility and accountability for clinical leadership, encouraging active membership on relevant committees, shared governance councils and project groups relevant to the service.
14. Proactively manage resources to ensure efficient and effective use of resources within the area of responsibility. Ensure that equipment – disposable and non-disposable, is maintained, stocked, and managed within the available financial resource.

#### **7a. EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY**

PC/VDU, Printer, Fax Machine, Photocopier, telephone, document scanner

Portable suction, Oxygen cylinder, automated defibrillator, Sphygmomanometer, Tympanic thermometer, Blood Glucose Machine, breath alcometer and calibration system.

#### **7b. SYSTEMS**

Local Information Systems.

Other systems as required by Police Scotland.

TRAK, PIMS. Genysis; ECS, Toxbase.

#### **8. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW OF WORK**

The post holder's work is generated from the needs of detainees in police Custody, the services within NHS Lothian, legislation, and performance indicators.

The post holder will be responsible to the Senior Clinical Forensic Charge Nurse who will provide clinical guidance and professional management, work review and formal appraisal of performance.

Workload will be in the main, self-directed under the leadership of the Senior Clinical Forensic Charge Nurse and at the request of the Custody Sergeant.

The post holder will act on behalf of the Senior Clinical Forensic Charge Nurse during periods of annual leave, sick leave etc.

## **9. DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS**

The post holder will be expected to make clinical and professional autonomous decisions on a daily basis, examples including but not limited to the provision of advice to the multidisciplinary team within the Custody Suites, clinical assessment of detainees, fitness to detain, fitness to interview, fitness for custody, fitness for release & fitness for court.

The post holder will work independently and autonomously, treat detainees, arrange follow-up or refer to another member of the multidisciplinary team for advice/admission.

Informed clinical decision-making regarding detainee's health care, through stringent monitoring of the detainee's condition and acting on clinical judgements. Clinical Forensic Nurses have wide discretion to accept those detainees whose presentations are within their parameters of practice. Such decisions may be complex, involving multiple factors. Judgements are made taking into account priority of care and availability of resources.

Freedom to act is guided by precedent and clearly defined Divisional policies, protocol/procedures, and codes of conduct in accordance with NMC regulations, Clinical and Staff Governance Framework.

## **10. MOST CHALLENGING/DIFFICULT PARTS OF THE JOB**

Improving and streamlining the process of care for detainees who they are asked to review by the Custody Sergeant.

Continued development and promotion a nursing service within a secure environment through challenging the boundaries of the current parameters of practice, in order to enhance personal professional development and improve care given to detainees.

Making independent clinical decisions in complex clinical presentations and improving communications between the professions involved in the care and treatment of detainees with minor injuries and acute illness.

To fulfil the role of clinical expert and to act as a resource to colleagues whilst supporting the development and implementation of a new service.

## 11. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The post holder will be involved in highly sensitive and emotive communications with a sometimes volatile and often distressed/anxious/worried patient group and their families requiring a high level of communication skills in a range of situations.

The post holder is required to develop working relationships and communicate both verbally and in writing, on a regular basis, with a wide range of people both internal and external to NHS Lothian. including:

### **Internal**

NHS Mental Health Services – regarding patient care and allocation of work.

Accident & Emergency Departments – regarding patient care.

Community Drug Teams – regarding patient care.

GUM Clinics – regarding patient care.

Pharmacy – regarding medication for the patient.

### **External**

Professional bodies for continual professional development, collaboration and national guidelines, accreditation standards and proposed national changes.

Police Scotland.

Local Authority partners e.g. Social Work Department.

Clinical Forensic Service (including Psychiatrists).

G4S.

Prison Medical Services.

GPs.

Community Pharmacists.

Team of 'Custody Visitors'.

Rape Crisis Centres.

## 12. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS OF THE JOB

### **Physical Skills:**

Techniques of patient physical and mental health clinical examination.

Administer medication as required.

Application of glue or wound closure strips to wounds.

Wound care management including application of dressings materials.

Blood Glucose monitoring.

Basic life support Level 2 – adult and adolescent.

Automated defibrillator.

Portable suction machine.

Computer and keyboard skills requiring dexterity, accuracy, and speed.

Moving and handling tasks.



**Physical Demands:**

Handling of wheelchairs.  
Stand/walking for the majority of shift.  
Ergonomics.

**Mental demands of the job**

Concentration required due to the nature of the role. Giving full concentration to a succession of complex clinical presentations throughout a long working shift ensuring safety and accuracy of assessment. (sometimes during periods of extreme noise levels).  
Multi-tasking several cases at various stages at the same time. Coordinating their management ensuring maintenance of detainee safety and accuracy of examination and recording of findings.  
Making complex clinical decisions on management of detainees.  
Maintenance of precise and accurate patient records.

**Emotional Effort**

Emotional demands of working with alleged victims of sexual abuse. (Corroboration at sexual assault examinations).  
Working with a particularly challenging client group.

**Working Conditions**

Frequent exposure to verbal aggression.  
Exposure to body fluids.  
Exposure to physical aggression on an occasional basis.

**13. KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB**

Minimum required to undertake the role:

First level RGN/RMN nurse with relevant experience able to demonstrate the appropriate competencies and skills commensurate with fulfilling the key areas of this post.  
Educated to degree level.  
Nurse prescribing qualification.  
Evidence of further education and continuous professional development.  
Evidence of continuous professional development in forensic medical examination and police custody healthcare including completion of NHS NES 'New to Forensic Medicine' programme.  
Completion of NHS NES Essentials in Sexual Offences Forensic Examination.  
Excellent team working skills with the ability to work using own initiative.  
A commitment to the precepts of Clinical Governance, and demonstrated insight into how they can be applied to the post in areas such as research, audit, risk management and evidence-based practice.  
Effective listening and interpersonal skills.

Time management skills and the ability to prioritise own workload. IT skills.
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<b>14. JOB DESCRIPTION AGREEMENT</b>	
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A separate job description will need to be signed off by each jobholder to whom the job description applies.	
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Job Holder's Signature:	Date:
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Head of Department Signature:	Date:
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