Role Profile Research Officer (Evidence Centre – Drug and Alcohol Research)

HRB Grade 7 Job Family (consisting of R&I IV, Services IV and Research Officer grade)

Background

The Health Research Board (HRB) is a statutory agency under the aegis of the Department of Health. As the lead agency in Ireland responsible for supporting and funding health research, generating health information and promoting the use of evidence in policy and practice, we are motivated and inspired by our vision – healthy people through excellent research and applied knowledge.

The Health Research Board’s (HRB) mission is to improve people’s health and enhance healthcare delivery. An overview of the HRB’s objectives and activities may be found in Research, Evidence, Action: HRB Strategy 2016–2020. (www.hrbstrategy.ie).

The HRB is responsible for monitoring the Steering Group Report on a National Substance Misuse [for Alcohol] Strategy February 2012. In addition, the HRB’s Evidence Centre provides a range of evidence products to the Department of Health and also manages the Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

The EMCDDA coordinates the collection, analysis and reporting of data on five key epidemiological indicators which enables it to monitor the drugs situation across EU member states. In addition to its role as Irish national focal point, Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery has designated the HRB the main information hub on evidence on the drugs situation and responses. Finally, the HRB will also take on responsibility for the new drugs strategy’s research commissioning functions.

The HRB is now seeking to recruit a permanent Research Officer who will be responsible for monitoring the Steering Group Report on a National Substance Misuse [for Alcohol] Strategy and assisting with the tendering, validation and analysis of prevalence of drug use estimates. S/he will also assist with the preparation of evidence products.

Key responsibilities of the post of Research Officer (Evidence Centre – Drug and Alcohol Research)

Duties will include (but are not limited to):

Monitoring the alcohol strategy as directed by DOH, which entails:

- Updating national alcohol surveillance figures annually
  - This will include accessing analysis for interpretation from Revenue, DOH, HIPE, NDTRS, NPRIS, NDRDI, Pulse and others
- Locate, access, validate and analyse new sources of alcohol data
- Completing articles on alcohol for Drugnet Ireland every quarter
- Completing an overview of the alcohol situation and responses every three years
- Assisting the DOH complete reports or questionnaires on the alcohol situation in Ireland for international organisations
- Representing the HRB on national level committees as requested by the DOH
- Assisting the DOH with commissioning alcohol-related research.
Participating with the validation and analysis of the general population survey of drug use, which entails:

- Checking data for validity and accuracy
- Assisting with the analysis of the general population survey of drug use to provide:
  - An overall description of alcohol use in the population
  - Estimates for the prevalence and patterns of alcohol use at national and regional level based on general population survey data
  - Prevalence and patterns of alcohol use over time using five available time points gathered through the series of general population surveys
  - Providing detailed descriptions on patterns of use of alcohol by socio-economic status
  - Other analysis as required.

Commissioning evidence reviews or other projects

- Assisting with the preparation of a business case for the executive team
- Assisting with the completion of a needs assessment for evidence reviews with policy makers or planners and agree the review questions;
- Preparing evidence review commissioning document with the Head of Unit or designate and procurement manager for the executive team and procurement review team;
- Working with the Head of Unit or designate and procurement manager to advertise the review, answer applicants questions and evaluate tenders;
- Working with the Head of Unit or designate, procurement manager and legal officer to prepare contracts and finalise the awardees work plan and timeline;
- Representing the HRB and work with the academic team and policy maker to agree changes to questions, approach to literature search and final report;
- Managing the academic team to agree search methods, agree extraction sheet, agree quality assessment, and read draft reports;
- Overseeing and negotiating with the academic team to ensure policy makers or practitioners comments are attended to;
- Securing peer reviewers and ensuring their comments are attended to;
- Managing the academic team to ensure the schedule of deliverables in the contract is complied with and payments for completed work are sanctioned;
- Preparing the review for HRB board approval.

Essential knowledge and experience:

- A postgraduate degree in epidemiology, biostatistics, health promotion or public health and have experience of analysing large datasets.
- Four to five years’ relevant research experience, which includes the completion and publication of prevalence reports or studies with a significant statistical content.
- Expert user of statistical packages such as SPSS or Stata
- Peer review publications, experience of systematic reviews, and experience in procurement would be an advantage.

Competencies

This role profile reflects the grade/responsibilities appropriate to Research Officer in the HRB and maps approximately to a Civil Service role at Higher Executive Officer level. Competencies incorporated into the role profile reflect the competency framework issued in conjunction with the Civil Service PMDS for 2013 which has been adopted by the HRB.

Core Competencies for the Research Officer - Evidence role is listed in Appendix A.
**Reporting relationship**
The Research Officer will report to the Programme Manager for Drug and Alcohol Research

**Salary scale:**
Research Officer (Grade VII) €49,837 – 64,786

- This is a full-time, permanent post

Appointment will be made in accordance with the Department of Health guidelines. New entrants will be appointed at the first point of the scale.

**How to apply**
Please submit a cover letter and curriculum vitae by email to recruitment@hrb.ie. You must include the name of the post that you are applying for in the email subject line.

Closing date for applications is 12.00 Noon on Tuesday 08 September 2020.

NOTE: Interviews for this position are expected to take place during the period commencing Wednesday 16 September and Wednesday 30 September 2020.

If you require further information, please contact Karen O'Donnell, HR Officer at recruitment@hrb.ie or please refer to the Recruitment page on the HRB website at http://www.hrb.ie/about/recruitment/ for full details on this campaign.

**The Health Research Board is an equal opportunities employer**
Appendix A: Core competencies - Research Officer
Evidence Centre - Drug and Alcohol Research

Teamwork and Leadership
- Works with the team to facilitate high performance, developing clear and realistic objectives and addressing and performance issues if they arise and able to either a team leader or team member on evidence centre products.
- Provides clear information and advice as to what is required of the team and able to meet agreed deadlines.
- Strives to develop and implement new ways of working effectively to meet objectives.
- Leads and participates in the team by example, supporting individuals as required.
- Places high importance on people development, training and maximising the skills and capacity of the team.
- Is flexible and willing to adapt, positively contributing to the implementation of change.

Analysis & Decision Making
- Gathers and analyses information from relevant sources, weighing up a range of critical factors.
- Takes account of any broader issues and related implications when making decisions.
- Uses previous knowledge and experience in order to guide decisions.
- Makes sound decisions with a well-reasoned rationale and stands by these.
- Puts forward solutions to address problems.
- Judgement and decision-making.
- Identify and decide how the policy needs of the DOH staff translate into a research question(s); identify the search strategy that locates the most appropriate literature or method to answer the question(s); identify the resources required to answer the question; identify the strengths and limitations of the chosen approach; identify the most appropriate approach (layout, language, tables, graphs, word count) to present the answers the questions.
- Identify and decide the key messages for a presentation, the most effective method to communicate the messages, and the most effective method to ensure that they are retained.
- Identify and document key steps in work processes.
- Identify key DOH stakeholders in work processes and ensure that they are involved in communications and decision-making.
- Ensure that identified tasks meet the goals and objectives set out in annual business plans.

Management & Delivery of Results
- Takes responsibility and is accountable for the delivery of agreed objectives.
- Successfully manages a range of different projects and work activities at the same time.
- Is logical and pragmatic in approach, delivering the best possible results with the resources available. Completes and delegates work effectively, providing clear information and evidence as to what is required.
- Applies appropriate systems/ processes to enable quality checking of all activities and outputs.
- Practices and promotes a strong focus on delivering high quality customer service, for internal and external customer.
- Able to respond to emergency requests for the DOH and other stakeholders.
- Develop and adapt research resources to meet the identified needs of policy makers and service providers.
- Able to meet stringent time deadlines.
Interpersonal & Communication Skills

- Builds and maintains contact with colleagues and other stakeholders to assist in performing own role.
- Work as an active member of the evidence centre team.
- Encourages open and constructive discussions around work issues.
- Projects conviction, gaining buy-in by outlining relevant information and selling the benefits.
- Treats others with diplomacy, tact, courtesy and respect, even in challenging circumstances.
- Presents information clearly, concisely and confidently when speaking and in writing.
- Communicate with DOH and HSE as required, answering queries, advising on search strategies, and helping them to use research.
- Able to present the results of evidence reviews in a succinct manner using existing templates.
- Able to write brief research reviews and evidence reviews in a succinct and clear manner that require minimum proofing.

Drive and Commitment

- Strives to perform at a high level, investing significant energy to achieve agreed objectives.
- Demonstrates resilience in the face of challenging circumstances and high demands.
- Is personally trustworthy and can be relied upon.
- Ensures that customers are at the heart of all services provided.
- Upholds high standards of honesty, ethics and integrity.

Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development

- Has a clear understanding of the roles, objectives and targets of self and team and how they fit into the work of the unit and organisation and effectively communicates this to others.
- Has high levels of expertise and broad Public Sector knowledge relevant to his/her area of work.
- Able to assist with translating health policy needs into research questions.
- Able to search and retrieve health literature using a systematic approach.
- Able to manage the completion of evidence products from inception to completion within the required timeframe and to identify and present the key findings.
- Able to provide training to DOH and HSE policy makers and planners.