



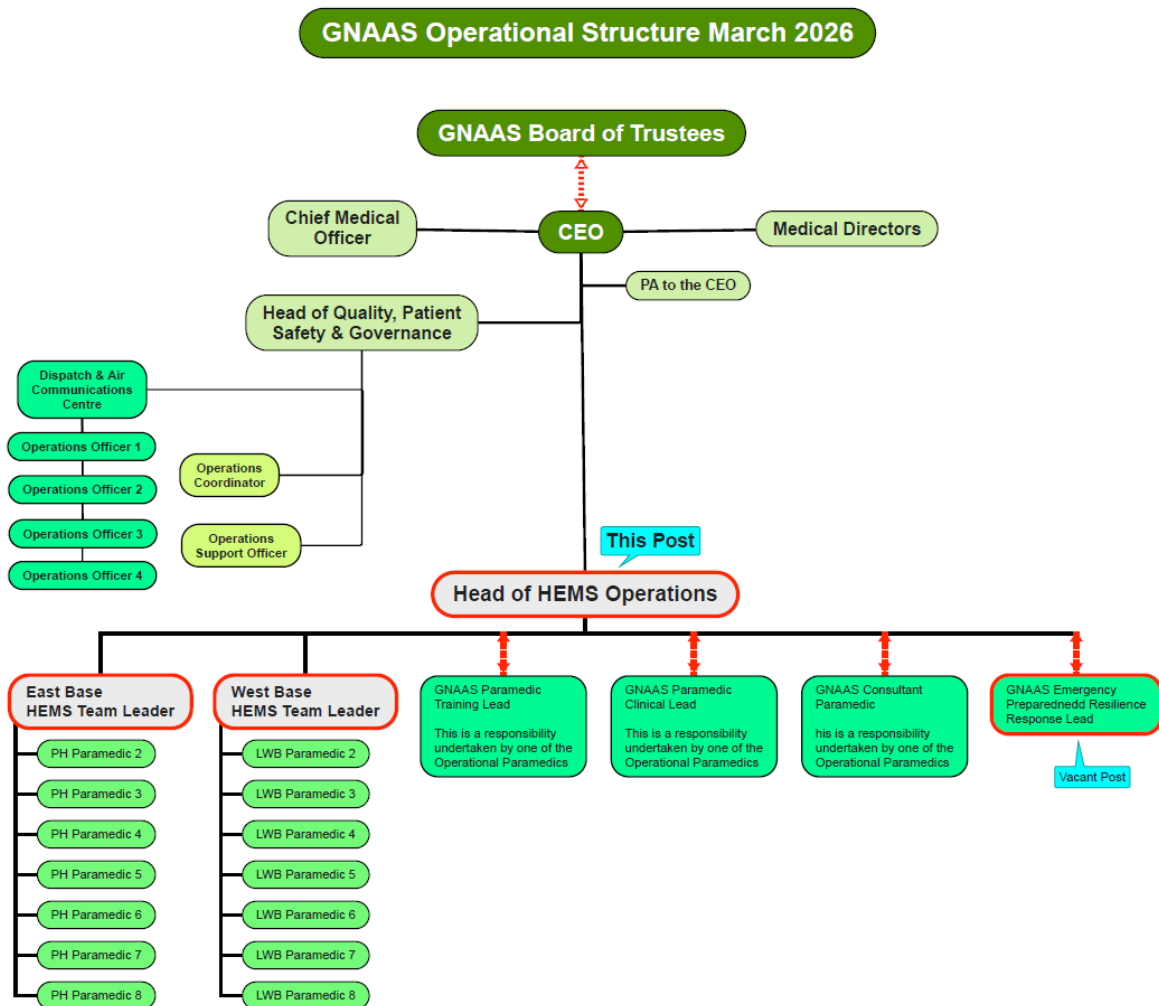
Job Description

Job Title:	Head of HEMS Operations
Department:	Operations Directorate
Main Base:	Progress House, Eaglescliffe but with regular travel to and attendance at Langwathby, Cumbria
Pay Band:	£72, 904 progressing to £84,656 after 5 years
Appointment	Full Time, Permanent

Organisational Relationships

Responsible to:	GNAAS Charity Board of Trustees
Accountable to:	GNAAS Chief Executive Officer
Key Relationships:	GNAAS Trustees, GNAAS Medical Directors, Head of Quality Safety and Compliance, Lead Paramedic for Clinical Delivery, Lead Paramedic for Training, Lead Paramedic for EPRR, GNAAS Consultant Paramedic, GNAAS Senior Leadership Team, Charity leadership colleagues, air and ground operational teams, Northern Trauma Network, pre-hospital critical care networks, North East Ambulance Service and North West Ambulance Service.

Organisational Chart



Organisational Mission & Values

GNAAS is a charity-funded Helicopter Emergency Medical Service working alongside NHS ambulance services across the North East and North West of England. The charity provides critical care response through air and road operations and is committed to delivering safe, high-quality care while being a trusted, progressive and values-led organisation.

**We are Committed, we are Courageous, and we are Caring
We will treat Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime**

Job Role Summary

This is a senior operational leadership role with responsibility for leading a complex, multi-site HEMS and critical care response service across air and road-based operations. The post holder will provide visible, strategic leadership that strengthens service resilience, operational grip, accountability and performance, ensuring delivery is safe, effective, responsive and aligned to organisational priorities.

Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer, the role carries broad accountability for operational leadership, service performance, workforce leadership, resilience, governance, service development and resource stewardship. It requires a leader who can direct leaders across a complex response

service, translate strategy into delivery, maintain strong operational control, and build effective relationships with trustees, medical leaders, senior paramedic colleagues and external partners.

Success in this role will be reflected in high-performing operational teams, confident and consistent leadership across sites, effective service coordination, strong governance, resilient delivery and measurable progress against key organisational priorities.

Core Responsibilities

- Provide strategic and operational leadership for GNAAS's complex HEMS and critical care response service across air and road-based operations.
- Lead leaders across the service, strengthening accountability, operational discipline, resilience, readiness and consistently high standards of delivery.
- Ensure operational delivery supports safe, high-quality and effective critical care practice through strong coordination of the clinical-operational interface.
- Work closely with medical and senior paramedic colleagues to support governance, learning, service development and assurance.
- Represent GNAAS confidently at senior level on operational leadership, service performance, complex response delivery, organisational priorities and partnership working.

Leadership, Management, Training and Supervision Responsibilities

- Provide visible, values-led operational leadership across a complex response service, setting clear expectations for performance, behaviour, accountability and standards.
- Lead operational and clinical operational leaders, maintaining strong service grip and robust arrangements for appraisal, development, conduct, attendance, capability and succession.
- Drive workforce readiness, service resilience, recruitment, professional standards and service improvement in partnership with senior colleagues.
- Communicate complex operational, governance and workforce issues clearly to senior leaders, trustees and wider stakeholders.
- Participate in senior on-call arrangements and provide operational leadership during significant incidents, service pressures or major operational disruption.

Operational Governance and Clinical Interface

- Ensure operational systems, teams and processes support safe, clinically effective and timely critical care response.
- Work closely with medical and clinical leaders to align operational delivery with clinical governance, patient safety, quality assurance and performance requirements.
- Maintain oversight of clinical operational performance indicators, risk, learning, incident review and service improvement activity across the service.
- Undertake clinical operational exposure or role-relevant training where appropriate to maintain service understanding, credibility and assurance.

Communication and Relationship Responsibilities

- Build effective relationships across the charity and with external partners, including on complex or sensitive matters.
- Provide clear briefings, corporate messages and operational updates to teams and stakeholders.
- Act as an ambassador for GNAAS and contribute to cross-organisational and partnership working.

- Support agreed engagement and representation activity on behalf of the charity where required.

Planning and Organisational Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain operational plans, priorities and delivery arrangements aligned to organisational strategy and service demand.
- Ensure effective leadership and oversight across multiple sites, with strong arrangements for readiness, continuity, resilience, escalation and compliance.
- Lead service planning and prioritisation to support safe, efficient and sustainable operational delivery.
- Oversee operational information assets, systems and reporting processes within the scope of the role.

Analytical and Judgemental Responsibilities

- Interpret complex information, balance competing priorities and make sound operational decisions.
- Lead or contribute to incident review, learning, root cause analysis and corrective action where required.
- Use national guidance, performance data and professional judgement to inform service decisions and improvement.

Financial, Physical and Information Resource Responsibilities

- Manage designated operational budgets and resources responsibly, taking action to address risks, pressures and changing service demands.
- Lead the stewardship of physical assets, systems and investment decisions that support operational readiness and service delivery.
- Ensure operational resources, information and reporting arrangements support effective oversight, assurance and decision-making.

Policy and Service Development Responsibilities

- Develop, implement and review policies, plans and improvement activity that support operational and strategic priorities.
- Provide reports, assurance and strategic advice to the Chief Executive Officer, trustees and relevant committees.
- Lead or support working groups, audits and service development activity that helps deliver GNAAS objectives.

Safeguarding Children

- To recognise and report to the appropriate authorities any concerns regarding Child Protection issues to include possible child abuse.
- Under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 all staff must ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015).
<http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/index.html>

Safeguarding Adults

- To recognise and report to the appropriate authorities any concerns regarding Vulnerable Adult issues to include social care and mental health.

- All staff must comply with mandatory training requirements and ensure that adult safeguarding is embedded as an essential part of their daily practice.

Disclosure and Barring Service Check

- This post may be subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions Order) 1975 and as such it will be necessary for a submission for Disclosure to be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly known as CRB) to check for any previous criminal convictions.

General

- This role may regular travel to work bases, stakeholder locations, and/or other business-related venues. The post holder must therefore be willing and able to travel as required to fulfil the duties of the position. Occasional overnight stays and work outside normal business hours may also be required.
- This job description is intended to provide an overview of the main duties and responsibilities of the role. It is not an exhaustive list, and the post holder may be required to undertake other duties commensurate with the level of the position, as reasonably requested by management. The Charity reserves the right to amend the duties and responsibilities of this role in line with business needs.
- All employees are required to complete mandatory training relevant to their role and in accordance with organisational policies, statutory requirements, and regulatory standards. The post holder is expected to maintain compliance with all required training within the specified timescales.

Prepared/Reviewed by: Chief Executive Officer

Approval Date: June 2026

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and Training	<p>Degree level education or equivalent senior leadership experience in a complex, regulated environment.</p> <p>Relevant professional qualification or equivalent senior operational leadership experience in healthcare, emergency services, aviation or a comparable high-reliability setting.</p>	<p>Postgraduate study or evidence of advanced leadership development.</p>
Skills and Knowledge	<p>Strong knowledge of operational governance, assurance, performance, risk and service resilience within a regulated environment.</p> <p>Sufficient understanding of pre-hospital, emergency, aviation or comparable operational settings to lead credibly and make sound service decisions.</p> <p>Able to work autonomously, exercise sound judgement and take clear accountability for outcomes.</p> <p>Strong personal credibility, with the ability to influence, challenge constructively and lead through complexity.</p> <p>Ability to lead service improvement and change with pace, discipline and measurable outcomes.</p> <p>Strong analytical capability, using performance, workforce and risk information to inform action.</p> <p>Confident in the use of Microsoft 365 and digital systems to support oversight, reporting and decision-making.</p>	<p>Knowledge of HEMS, urgent and emergency care, or other high-reliability response services.</p>
Experience	<p>Substantial experience of leading complex operational services across teams, sites or functions, with accountability for performance, governance, resilience and improvement.</p> <p>Understanding of major incident preparedness, business continuity or emergency planning.</p> <p>Experience of using performance dashboards, digital reporting tools or data to drive improvement.</p>	<p>Experience of contributing to board, committee or trustee reporting and assurance.</p> <p>Experience of leading across professional boundaries in partnership with clinical and operational colleagues.</p>

	<p>Experience of working at senior level within a charity, NHS, ambulance, aviation or similarly complex public service environment.</p> <p>Experience of leading leaders, strengthening accountability and developing workforce capability and succession.</p> <p>Experience of delivering governance, assurance, service improvement and organisational change in an operational setting.</p> <p>Experience of budget responsibility, resource prioritisation and performance oversight within a service-led environment.</p>	
Other	<p>Visible, credible and emotionally intelligent leader able to inspire confidence and build trust.</p> <p>Commitment to inclusive leadership, staff development, wellbeing and a respectful high-performing culture.</p> <p>Resilient, calm and decisive, with the ability to lead effectively in high-pressure, fast-changing situations.</p> <p>Able to meet the travel, visibility, cross-site and occasional out-of-hours requirements of the role.</p> <p>Commitment to continuous professional development as a senior organisational leader.</p>	



Job Risk Profile Head of HEMS Operations						
This Role Involves	Details of Risk Level					Examples
	Yes	No	Rare	Occasional	Frequent	
Lifting Weights/objects between 6 to 15 Kg	X			X		Laptops, meeting materials, light equipment, training aids and occasional operational kit
Lifting weights/objects above 15 Kg	X		X			Occasional movement of training equipment or operational resources with support as required
Using equipment to lift, push or pull patients/objects	X		X			Occasional handling of equipment, training resources or operational materials
Lifting heavy containers or equipment	X		X			Occasional movement of operational equipment or supplies between sites
Running in an emergency	X		X			Rarely, where immediate movement is required during site-based operational oversight or incident attendance
Driving alone/with passengers/with goods	X				X	Frequent cross-site travel, meetings, visits to operational bases and occasional transport of work materials
Invasive surgical procedures		X				Not a routine requirement of the role
Working at height	X		X			Occasional authorised exposure during operational oversight, site visits or significant incidents
Concentration to assess patients/analyse information	X				X	Frequent analysis of operational data, service performance, staffing, incidents and governance information

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This Role Involves	Details of Risk Level					Examples
	Yes	No	Rare	Occasional	Frequent	
Response to emergency situations	X			X		Occasional senior on-call response, operational coordination or leadership attendance at significant incidents
To change plans and appointments/meetings depending on the needs of the role	X				X	Frequent reprioritisation of meetings, site visits and workload to meet operational demands, incidents or service pressures
Clinical Interventions	X		X			Rare and only where limited operational exposure is undertaken to maintain service understanding or credibility
Informing patients / family / carers / stakeholders of unwelcome news	X			X		Occasionally in relation to staff matters, incidents, complaints or significant service issues
Caring for terminally ill patients		X				Not a routine requirement of the role
Dealing with difficult family situations	X			X		Occasionally when providing leadership support around incidents, complaints or service concerns
Caring for/working with patients with severely challenging behaviour	X		X			Rare and generally limited to leadership presence or oversight during significant incidents or operational exposure
Typing up of minutes/case conferences	X		X			At governance days
Clinical hands-on patient/client care	X		X			Rare and not a routine expectation; limited operational exposure only where appropriate. Only applies if the postholder is a qualified HEMS paramedic
Contacts with blood/bodily fluids	X		X			Rare and limited to occasional operational exposure or attendance at significant incidents. Only applies if the postholder is a qualified HEMS paramedic

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This Role Involves	Details of Risk Level					Examples
	Yes	No	Rare	Occasional	Frequent	
Exposure to verbal aggression	X			X		Occasional exposure during operational visits, significant incidents or difficult stakeholder interactions
Exposure to physical aggression	X			X		Occasional exposure during operational visits, significant incidents or challenging service environments
Exposure to unpleasant working conditions dust/dirt/fleas	X				X	Occasional exposure during site visits, service reviews, exercises or significant incidents
Attending the scene of an emergency	X			X		Occasional attendance where leadership oversight, coordination or assurance is required
Use of road transport, travelling at high speeds and claiming traffic exemptions when safe to do so	X		X			Rare and only if undertaking specific authorised operational mobility or response activity
Use of rotary aircraft transport, travelling at height and high speed	X			X		Occasional flying to support service understanding, site visits, exercises or leadership oversight where appropriate
Use of aircraft communications systems, listening to critical messages through helmet-mounted audio equipment	X			X		Occasional use during authorised familiarisation, flight observation or operational oversight activity
Use of in-flight navigation equipment and screen-based technologies	X			X		Occasional use or observation during familiarisation, service review or operational oversight activity