



St John
Scotland

Saving lives together

Role Description

Role title:	Head of Operations
Reports to:	Chief Operating Officer (Senior Executive)
Responsible for:	National operational delivery, service performance, operational staff, and volunteer frameworks
Status:	Full Time
Hours of work:	37.5 hours per week with occasional evening and weekend work required
Location:	Edinburgh (Head Office) with regular travel across Scotland; flexible working considered.
Salary:	£55,000

About St John Scotland

St John Scotland is a national charity and part of the global St John family. We combine historic chivalric roots with a modern mission: strengthening community health resilience across Scotland. Working alongside NHS Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service, and local partners, our staff and volunteers deliver vital services including Patient Transport, Public Access Defibrillators (PADs) and CPR awareness.

About the role

The Head of Operations is accountable for the effective, safe and consistent delivery of St John Scotland's operational services across Scotland.

Reporting to the Senior Executive, the role provides clear operational leadership, performance management, and decision-making authority, ensuring that services are delivered to agreed standards and that operational issues are resolved at the appropriate level.

The postholder is the primary operational lead for staff and volunteers and the first point of escalation for service delivery issues, enabling the Senior Executive to focus on governance, strategy, risk and external leadership.

The postholder will initially provide line management to the Service Delivery Officers responsible for Patient Transport and CPR/PAD/Volunteering.

Develop the capability of operational staff, volunteers and local leaders, ensuring sustainable succession and organisational resilience.

Key Accountabilities

1. Operational leadership & delivery

- Hold overall accountability for the delivery, quality and performance of St John Scotland's operational services.
- Ensure services operate safely, consistently and in line with agreed policies, standards, and resources.
- Lead operational planning and implementation, translating Board-approved strategy into practical delivery.
- Act as the default decision-maker for operational matters, escalating only material risk, exception or strategic issues to the Senior Executive.
- Manage operational budgets and resources within delegated authority, ensuring value for money and financial sustainability.

2. People, volunteers & boundaries

- Provide clear leadership to operational staff and volunteers, setting expectations around roles, behaviour and accountability.
- Provide line management and leadership to Service Delivery Officers and other operational managers as the organisation develops.
- Lead the organisation's volunteer operating framework, ensuring volunteers are supported, valued and operate within defined boundaries.
- Address operational performance, conduct or boundary issues directly and constructively.
- Build productive, respectful relationships with Area Committees while maintaining clear organisational authority and consistency.

3. Safeguarding, risk & compliance

- Hold operational responsibility for safeguarding practice across all services, ensuring policies are implemented consistently and effectively.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, health and safety requirements, and OSCR expectations as they relate to operations.
- Identify, manage and mitigate operational risks, maintaining robust assurance and escalation processes.
- Contribute to risk registers, incident reviews and learning cycles.

4. Performance, improvement & insight

- Establish clear operational performance measures and review mechanisms.
- Use service data, feedback and insight to drive continuous improvement.
- Lead service reviews and improvement initiatives where performance, sustainability or impact can be strengthened.
- Bring clear, evidence-based reporting to the Senior Executive and Board, focused on assurance, trends and exceptions rather than operational detail.

5. Partnerships & service development

- Lead operational relationships with partners such as NHS Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service and local stakeholders.
- Support the development and expansion of services where aligned with strategy and capacity.
- Work with fundraising and communications colleagues to ensure operational delivery supports income generation and reputation.

6. Contribution to organisational leadership

- Act as a key member of the senior leadership team, contributing to organisational planning and decision-making.
- Deputise for the Senior Executive on operational matters as agreed.
- Model professional, values-led leadership and reinforce a culture of accountability, respect, learning and trust.

7. Success in role

- Operational KPIs achieved.
- Services delivered safely and within budget.
- Volunteer retention improved.
- Safeguarding compliance maintained.
- Partner satisfaction maintained.
- Positive staff engagement measures.

About you

- You will be a confident operational leader who combines people skills with decisiveness and structure. You are comfortable holding authority, setting boundaries and making judgements in complex environments.

You will bring

- Significant experience leading operations in a complex organisation (charity, public, health or comparable sector).
- Proven ability to manage staff and volunteers within clear accountability frameworks.
- Strong understanding of safeguarding, risk management and operational compliance.
- Experience translating strategy into practical, disciplined delivery.
- Calm judgement, clarity in decision-making and confidence handling difficult conversations.
- Excellent communication and relationship-building skills.
- Strong IT literacy (Microsoft 365).
- A clean UK driving licence and willingness to travel across Scotland.

What we offer

- A senior leadership role with real authority and impact.
- The opportunity to shape and strengthen services that save lives across Scotland.
- A values-driven organisation committed to integrity, professionalism and community impact.
- Supportive leadership and scope to build strong, modern operational systems.
- Opportunities for professional development and growth.

How to apply

Please submit your CV and cover letter to recruitment@stjohnscotland.org.uk

Closing date: 9th August 5pm