



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Health Data Research Service Chair: information pack for applicants

Closing date: 23.59 on Sunday 21st September 2025

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Section 1 - the role

1.1 Organisation description

The health data research service (HDRS) will be a new Government-owned company set up to deliver a world-class service that will transform access to the UK's health data. This is an ambitious and unprecedented initiative backed by £600m of funding from UK Government and the Wellcome Trust which will seek to make the UK's health data assets interoperable and securely available to researchers to support innovations in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease.

The organisation will offer health data access for academic, NHS and industrial research purposes at a globally competitive and unprecedented scale with clear value capture to support benefits for the NHS and patients. This ambitious initiative will deliver a step change in the UK's provision of health data for research, utilising deep customer insights and innovation.

The health data research service will provide secure and streamlined access to curated UK health data and other health-relevant data assets for approved researchers while protecting patients' confidentiality. The service will build on the NHS Research Secure Data Environment (SDE) Network where beneficial and other national data. The service will provide a full suite of customer-centric critical capabilities generating global public and patient benefits, whilst delivering enormous value to the UK economy and life sciences sector. This newly established organisation will be directly accountable to Ministers and underpinned by strong government commitment and investment, providing the mandate, backing and resources to succeed at scale.

1.2 Role description and person specification

Background

The HDRS Chair will oversee the set-up, development and early implementation phase of the HDRS programme, which is being co-funded by philanthropic funding from Wellcome Trust, one of the UK's leading charitable funders of health research.

The Health Data Research Service itself, its governance structures and operating model are yet to be established. The Chair will play a pivotal role in shaping the organisation's strategy and formation and must bring a high level of adaptability and sound judgement in key formation decisions.

The initial appointment would be with the Department for Health and Social Care, with the appointed candidate subsequently being engaged directly by the new company upon its establishment.

Board Membership

Given the pre-establishment phase of this organisation, the Board has not yet been established. The Board's overall composition and the remit of its members is yet to be confirmed. The Chair will be the first senior management role to be hired and will lead on shaping the Board and further Board recruitment during the establishment phase.

The Board will be the primary decision making body for those matters not reserved to the DHSC shareholder: to provide leadership, assurance and support, foster collaboration, and ensure the successful set up and delivery of the Health Data Research Service.

Remit of the Health Data Research Service Chair

The role of the Chair will be to lead the board in fulfilling its responsibilities, including setting the company's direction and strategy, and ensuring the Board provides effective oversight of management. The Chair also will also act as a liaison between the Board and the company's Chief Executive, and the shareholder.

Role and responsibilities of the Chair

The Chair has the following responsibilities:

- lead the HDRS Board during the company's initial development and set up phase including supporting the recruitment of a suitable CEO and top team; the delivery of a viable business plan and target operating model; the integrity of its corporate governance and its obligations to its employees, shareholders and broader stakeholders, including ensuring value for money for the taxpayer.
- set the company's direction and strategy, and ensure the board provides effective management and governance oversight
- ensure high trustworthiness of the new entity through appropriate engagement with the public and professional groups
- work constructively and openly with the DHSC Shareholder (DHSC Secretary of State) and the sponsorship teams on HDRS strategy and policies, performance and other matters that the DHSC-shareholder has a strong interest in, including, but not limited to, where the shareholders' interests are expressed as reserved matters or delegations
- build a consensus among key stakeholders and other bodies as to the role of HDRS and garner the maximum support for achieving its objectives, ensuring patient centricity is at the heart of the vision

- build an effective working relationship of trust, openness and support with the company's Chief Executive and wider executive team
- build an excellent Board
- add value in both strategic and commercial domains through the application of intellect, commercial insight and the use of personal experience and networks

Essential criteria

To be considered for appointment, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the qualities, skills and experience to meet all the essential criteria.

You will bring the following skills and experience to this critical new role:

- an understanding of data driven research and development or life sciences and a commitment to making the UK a world leader in trustworthy, high-quality research
- excellent leadership skills
- experience operating at Board level in public, philanthropic or private sector organisations, preferably including the formation of new organisations with complex, multiple stakeholder groups. Demonstrable ability to lead board meetings effectively and ensure collective decision-making
- experience in setting strategic direction and overseeing delivery of long-term goals
- sound governance, commercial awareness and financial discipline to underpin the development of the strategic objectives and target operating model of the new body. Ability to ensure effective risk management and financial oversight
- extensive experience of building networks across public and commercial sectors, and relevant sector experience
- a strong understanding of business models and delivering a service
- highly developed interpersonal skills, with an adaptive and agile mindset. Ability to build relationships across government, academia, industry and the public

Remuneration

Remuneration will be at a rate of £50,000 per annum, payable for approximately 77 days' work per year, plus expenses. In common with other Chair roles, you will devote as much

time as is required to perform the role effectively and it is accepted that there will be times when the number of days will be more or less than the time requirement specified above.

Remuneration will be paid via the Department for Health and Social Care's payroll and is taxable, and subject to National Insurance contributions, both of which will be deducted at source under PAYE before you are paid. Remuneration is not pensionable.

The Chair will not become an employee of DHSC or the new company and will not become a member of the Civil Service. They will not be subject to the provisions of employment law.

This appointment does not attract any benefits under any Pension Scheme. The appointee will not be eligible for redundancy pay as they will not be an employee. No other arrangements have been made for compensation upon termination because an office holder who is appointed for a limited duration would have no expectation of serving beyond that period.

1.4 Accountability

The Chair, representing the views of the Board of Directors, will report to the DHSC Permanent Secretary, and via them to Ministers.

The Board of Directors will be independent of but established by DHSC. As such, ultimately accountability to Parliament is through the CEO and DHSC Permanent Secretary. The Board will report through the Chair to DHSC Permanent Secretary and Ministers. Full governance arrangement will be set out in a framework agreement between DHSC and the company.

1.5 Time commitment

The role is intended to begin in Autumn 2025, following the successful completion of onboarding, including pre-appointment checks and security clearance. The role will be conducted on a part time basis involving approximately 77 days work per annum.

1.6 Location

The postholder must be UK based and able to conduct Board meetings in person at the Wellcome Genome Campus or any other location in the UK chosen by the Board but will also be able to work remotely/from their usual working location.

1.7 Tenure of office

The role will be from Autumn 2025 to Autumn 2028 but could be subject to extension or renewal.

Section 2 – the recruitment

2.1 How to apply

Thank you for your interest in the appointment of the Chair for the Health Data Research Service. Green Park is managing this recruitment.

If you wish to express your interest in the role, please submit your CV and a supporting Letter through <https://micro.green-park.co.uk/hdrs/>. Password: GreenParkHDRS

Applications must be received by: 23:59 on Sunday 21st September 2025.

In making an application, please note the following:

CV

Please ensure your CV includes:

- your full name, title, home address, personal contact telephone numbers (mobile and, if applicable, a land line), personal email address and details of any social media accounts and LinkedIn accounts, including your social media handles/usernames
- brief details of your employment and other experience (e.g. voluntary roles) and details of any past or present Ministerial appointments
- contact details for two referees who will support your application. One referee should be the person to whom you are/were accountable in your current/most recent appointment or position of employment. Please indicate the relationship of each referee to you. Referees would be approached prior to formally offering you the role

Please limit your CV to two sides of A4 in size 12 font.

Supporting letter

The supporting letter is your opportunity to demonstrate how you meet each of the essential criteria set out in the person specification, what you will bring to the role and your ambition for the role.

We recommend that you are clear which specific evidence you provide relates to which criterion. Providing separate paragraphs in relation to each criterion is common practice.

Please ensure your full name and the role for which you are applying are clearly noted at the top of your letter. Please write all acronyms in full first, and limit your letter to two sides of A4 in size 12 font.

Conflicts of interest

If you or a party related to you have any interests which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest if you were to be appointed, please provide details in your supporting letter. This can be in addition to the two-page limit.

Conflicts of interest may include (without limitation), any personal or business interests (including direct and indirect financial interests), positions of employment, other appointments or other positions of authority, that you or any party related to you have and which may influence your judgement in performing your appointment or may be perceived by a reasonable member of the public as having scope to do so.

A 'party related to you' could include for example (but without limitation) a spouse/partner, a business partner, a close family member or a person living in the same household as you or a close family member.

Failure to declare a potential conflict of interest may become grounds for withdrawing an offer of appointment. If offered the role, you will also be required to make a Declaration of Interests and to keep the Declaration up to date throughout the tenure of your appointment. The requirement to declare interests will also be included in your Terms and Conditions of appointment. Failure to disclose an interest may, subject to the interest and the circumstances, become grounds for suspension or termination of your appointment.

Standards in public life and ensuring public confidence

If there are any issues in your personal or professional history (including any convictions or bankruptcy) that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment to Ministers or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised, it is important that you bring them to our attention and provide details of the issue/s in your supporting letter.

In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media and blogs. Due diligence may be carried out on any publicly available information.

Failure to disclose such information could result in an appointment offer being withdrawn or the appointment being terminated, as the person appointed to this role will be expected to demonstrate the highest standards of corporate and personal conduct in line with the principles set out in the [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#), which includes the Nolan Principles regarding conduct in public life. As part of agreeing to the Terms and Conditions of appointment you will be expected to agree to meeting the principles set out in this Code.

Security clearance

An offer of appointment will be conditional on relevant security checks being completed to DHSC's satisfaction. This process is referred to as BPSS (Baseline Personnel Security Standard) and is undertaken by HR and the Government Recruitment Service as part of the onboarding process.

In addition, additional checks may be required in order to access restricted systems, information or sites. These checks form the National Security Vetting (NSV) process and provide an individual with an additional clearance level. Where this applies, candidates will be notified during the appointment process. Further information on [National Security Vetting](#) can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Eligibility criteria

You should have the right to work in the UK to be eligible to apply. There are a small number of specialist roles that are not open to non-British citizens. Any nationality requirements will be specified in the vacancy details.

The Government expects all holders of public office to work to the highest personal and professional standards.

You cannot be considered for appointment if:

- you are disqualified from acting as a company director (under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986)
- you have an unspent conviction on your criminal record
- your estate has been sequestrated in Scotland or you enter into a debt arrangement programme under Part 1 of the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act

2002 (asp 17) as the debtor or have, under Scots law, granted a trust deed for creditors

When you apply, you should declare if:

- you are, or have been, bankrupt or you have made an arrangement with a creditor at any point, including the dates of this
- you are subject to a current police investigation
- you must inform the sponsor department if, during the application process, your circumstances change in respect of any of the above points

When you apply you should also declare any relevant interests, highlighting any that you think may call into question your ability to properly discharge the responsibilities of the role you are applying for. You should also declare any other matters which may mean you may not be able to meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.

2.2 Application process

We will deal with your application as quickly as possible and will advise you of the likely timetable at each stage.

Planned timetable

Closing date: 23.59 Sunday 21st September 2025

Panel Sift: W/C 22nd September 2025

Panel Interview: W/C 6th October 2025

Confirmed appointment: from October 2025

All applications will be assessed against the essential criteria in the published person specification in this document. The applications will be sifted and shortlisted, and successful candidates will be invited to interview. The assessment panel for the interviews will include:

- Vin Diwakar, NHSE, National Director of Transformation
- Beth Thompson, Wellcome, Executive Director
- Others TBC

We will notify you of the status of your application. We regret that due to the volume of applications received, we are only able to offer feedback to candidates who have been unsuccessful at the interview stage.

2.3. How we will manage your personal information

Your personal information will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. You will not receive unsolicited paper or electronic mail because of sending DHSC any personal information. No personal information will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes.

When we ask you for personal information, we promise we will:

- only ask for what we need, and not collect too much or irrelevant information
- ensure you know why we need it
- protect it and insofar as is possible, make sure nobody has access to it who shouldn't
- ensure you know what choice you have about giving us information
- make sure we don't keep it longer than necessary
- only use your information for the purposes you have authorised

We ask that you:

- provide us with accurate information
- inform us as soon as possible of any changes or if you notice mistakes in the information we hold about you

2.4. Diversity

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our leadership and bringing in talent, regardless of its origins. We encourage applications from all candidates regardless of race, religion or belief, sex, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity.

We are a member of the Government's Disability Confident scheme. We use the Disability Confident scheme symbol, along with other like-minded employers, to show our commitment to good practice in employing people with a disability. The scheme helps recruit and retain disabled people.

As part of implementing the scheme, we guarantee an interview for anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the role and who has asked that their application is considered under the scheme. Indicating that you wish your application to be considered under the scheme will in no way prejudice your application. By 'minimum criteria,' we mean that you must provide evidence which demonstrates that you possess the competencies required under each of the essential criteria, as set above. When you apply you should indicate if you would like your application considered under this scheme.

Adjustments: All candidates are entitled to request reasonable adjustments at any stage of the application process. If you would like to discuss reasonable adjustments prior to submitting your application, please contact: laura.blight@green-park.co.uk.

2.5. Contact details

We aim to process all applications as quickly as possible and to treat all applicants with courtesy.

If there is anything further you would like to discuss or if you require further assistance when making this application, please contact Laura Blight from our Executive Search partners, Green Park by emailing laura.blight@green-park.co.uk.

If you would like to make a complaint regarding your application, please contact the laura.blight@green-park.co.uk. They will acknowledge your complaint upon receipt and respond within 15 working days.