Director

UK Trusted And Connected And Data Analytics Research Environments (DARE UK) Health Data Research UK

Candidate Prospectus
January 2026

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About the organisations

Health Data Research UK (HDR UK)

HDR UK is the national Institute for data science in health. Our UK team of experts develops and applies cutting-edge data science approaches to clinical, biological, genomic and other multi-dimensional health data to address the most pressing health research challenges facing the public.

Our mission is to accelerate trustworthy data use to enable discoveries that improve people's lives. Our vision is that large-scale data will benefit every interaction with patients, every clinical trial and every biomedical discovery, and will transform public health.

For the first time we are bringing together the UK's population-wide health data assets, enabling specialists across academia, industry and healthcare to unlock knowledge and deliver new insights from molecules to humans.

By undertaking research at scale, across a population of up to 67 million people, we have an unrivalled opportunity to use data to the highest ethical standards to drive breakthroughs in medical research. This unleashes the potential to improve the way we are able to prevent, detect and diagnose diseases such as cancer, heart disease and asthma.

At Health Data Research UK, we employ talented individuals who bring their own unique skills and experience to support the vision and benefit the whole team.

Administrative Data Research (ADR UK)

ADR UK is a partnership of government and academic groups, led by a team within UKRI's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). We work with UK government departments and devolved administrations to create linked research datasets from administrative sources, then make these available to researchers via the ADR UK Trusted Research Environment (TRE) network.

Good government policy (policy that solves social and economic problems and improves lives) needs good evidence. But good quality evidence is expensive and time-consuming to produce, and evidence from academic research can have a different focus from what government needs most to make policy decisions and deliver effective services.

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ADR UK's mission is to solve both these problems by transforming the way researchers access the UK's wealth of public sector data. We join up the abundance of administrative data already being created by government and public bodies across the UK and make it available to approved researchers in a safe and secure way. As a result, we are enabling vital research that has the potential to lead to better informed policy decisions and more effective public services, in areas from improving education and healthcare to tackling crime.

ADR UK's work plays an important role in bridging the gap between government and academia, enabling government policy to be informed by the best evidence available, and putting us on the path to a future in which the true potential of administrative data to improve society is realised.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

UKRI is an organisation that brings together the seven disciplinary research councils, Research England and Innovate UK. Together we build an independent organisation with a strong voice and vision ensuring the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation.

Supporting some of the world's most exciting and challenging research projects, we develop and operate some of the most remarkable scientific facilities in the world. We are pushing the frontiers of human knowledge through fundamental research and delivering benefits for UK society and the economy through world-class research, skills and business-led innovation.

UK Trusted and Connected Data and Analytics Research Environments (DARE UK)

The formation of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) provides an opportunity to develop a collective and coordinated vision for the research data and related digital infrastructures in the UK. It enables UK researchers and innovators to harness the full power of multi-dimensional data, modern digital platforms, tools, techniques and skills.

DARE-UK aims to support the development of a national federated digital infrastructure, working with trusted research environments (TRE) across the UK to achieve this. DARE-UK delivers:

About the organisations

- a mature, robust set of TRE capabilities in the areas of:
  - Federation
  - semi-automation of export processes
  - training and export of AI models
  - common TRE-to-TRE interoperability standards
- a cohort of TRE partners that has tested and adopted these capabilities
- a cohort of real-world research exemplars that has demonstrated the utility of these capabilities
- a set of priority TRE capability prototypes, ready to be matured and adopted in future phases
- a cohort of community groups that underpins the adoption and ongoing development of all the above

DARE-UK's scope is pan-UKRI and includes all data infrastructures that support access to large scale sensitive datasets including:

- social
- biological
- medical
- environmental science

The programme has just entered its second 'build, test and establish' phase, securing £18.2 million over 2.5 years to enhance the UK's capacity to conduct safer, more efficient and collaborative research using sensitive data.

With £18.2 million in funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), this new phase will focus on creating a connected national network of secure data infrastructures to benefit UKRI-funded communities of practice.

These secure digital environments will allow researchers and innovators to access and analyse sensitive datasets across various fields, such as health, education, and public services, in a way that protects privacy while generating valuable insights for public benefit.

Further phases will be dependent on the iterative success of phase 2.

About the role

We are seeking an exceptional individual to lead, in this instance, the second phase of the DARE-UK programme. The key role is to further support for the development of a national federated digital infrastructure and, working with TREs across the UK, to deliver three key work programmes as part of the phase 2 programme.

Transformational programmes

- building new capabilities to support sensitive data research across the UK
- supporting the testing and adoption of these capabilities
- demonstrating real-world scientific impact using these capabilities.

These capabilities include support for:

- federated projects
- AI training
- standardisation
- interoperability

Next-generation proof of concepts

Developing prototypes of next-generation capabilities needed to enable future innovative sensitive data research.

Community building, engagement and standards

Supporting a vibrant community of:

- researchers
- information governance professionals
- computer scientists
- technologists
- public involvement and engagement practitioners
- software engineers.

Through collaboration, the programme will promote information sharing and consensus building around common standards and good practice.

The DARE UK programme will also continue to be underpinned by public involvement and engagement (PIE) across all work programmes.

The Programme Director will lead a core team and report to the DARE UK Programme Board.

They will be supported in their role by HDR UK and ADR UK, including respective partner organisations, to access wider expertise that can inform sustainability planning for continued investment and progress in this critical national research infrastructure domain.

About you

S: assessed at shortlisting
I: assessed at interview
S&I: assessed at both shortlisting and interview

- the ability to lead, persuade and inspire a new team and a complex network of stakeholders around a common vision for TREs across the four nations and different data domains. This Includes engaging with a very wide stakeholder group to identify opportunities for expansion of DARE UK across the UKRI remit (I)

- proven capability to develop and implement new programmes within an organisation and across organisations at pace and on a significant scale. These programmes include community programmes, software and infrastructure programmes specialising in TREs and research and development programmes (I)

- experience in the delivery of complex, large-scale, user-focused software and infrastructure products, resources and services; with good understanding of ethical and public trust dimensions. (S&I)

- good understanding and experience of secure data infrastructures for research including:
  - security
  - privacy
  - cybersecurity
  - storage
  - analytics
  - standards (S)

- experience of operating with executives, boards and senior external stakeholders including:
  - academic
  - industry
  - senior policy and ministerial stakeholders. (S)

- effective leader and manager of teams of professionals and functional leads spanning a range of expert areas eg:
  - data science
  - PPIE
  - software
  - secure infrastructures
  - communications

About you

They should lead others using a coaching, supportive, and visionary style. (S&I)

- experience working with cross-functional teams and with many delivery partners demonstrating an ability to build a strong relationship and credibility with technology, engineering and science teams in:
  - industry
  - NHS
  - academia
  - charities
  - government (S&I)

Terms of appointment

Salary

£165,000 - £175,000 per annum before pro-rating

Location

Flexible. Primary base could be anywhere in the UK but must be willing and able to travel to London and elsewhere (mainly UK) in connection with the role.

Reporting to

DARE UK Programme Board.

Hours

Full Time

Contract

Concluding 31 March 2027

Secondment

The successful applicant will join HDR UK as their employer, while spending the majority of their time (0.9 FTE) seconded to UKRI's Medical Research Council (MRC). This unique arrangement offers the best of both worlds: you'll enjoy HDR UK's supportive employment terms and conditions, while being embedded within the MRC to collaborate closely with leading stakeholders with the weight and backing of UKRI behind you.

Summary of benefits
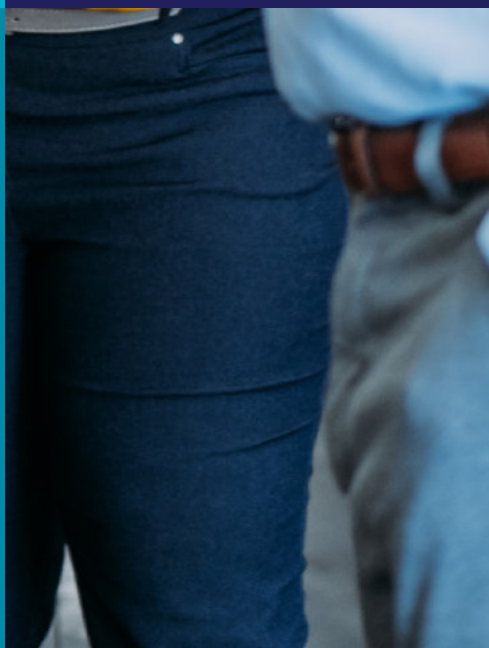
- 27 days annual leave plus eight days for bank holidays
- Annual leave purchase scheme
- Medical cash-plan and Doctorline
- Wellbeing support including access to the TogetherAll app
- Generous pension scheme, with 10% employer contributions

Timescales and selection

The selection process will include a panel interview with questions assessing your skills and experience against the advertised criteria of the role.

Closing date

18 January 2026

Shortlisting

23 January 2026

Interviews

W/C 2 February 2026

Please note, dates and details are subject to change.

How to apply

Please submit your application via the Careers Portal by 23:55 on 18 January 2026

You will need to supply:

- A curriculum vitae (up to two pages)
- A supporting statement / cover letter (up to two pages)

Your statement of suitability should provide specific information about why you believe you would be suitable for appointment for this role. Think about your:

- Knowledge
- skills
- experience
- personal attributes
- vision for the organisation

Take full advantage of the space available. Use practical examples where possible and ensure you refer to which of the essential criteria your application is aligned to. Again, please aim for no more than two A4 pages.

Please note, failure to provide a supporting statement/cover letter or failure to address the above points may result in your application not being considered further.

You will only be assessed on the content of your CV and supporting statement.

If you experience any issues while applying, please contact seniorrecruitment@ukri.org

General information

Equal opportunities policy statement

Health Data Research UK is an equal opportunities employer and as such aims to treat all employees, consultants and applicants fairly. It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

- gender, including gender reassignment
- marital or civil partnership status
- having or not having dependants
- religion or belief
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- disability
- sexual orientation
- age

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants and employees who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be unfairly discriminated against on any of the above grounds.

Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

Values

HDR UK's values guide how we work together within HDR UK and with our partners and other stakeholders:

Transparency

We will share information, insights and innovations so that we learn faster together.

Optimism

We believe that we can make things better, that we can do things differently and that we can overcome challenges to create a new and thriving health data ecosystem that benefits patients and the public, the NHS, scientific discovery and industry.

Respect

We deliver better results when we work in a truly interdisciplinary way. We listen, share and respect a diversity of thought and opinion, perspective and experience. We are inclusive; leveraging and fairly attributing the expertise and capabilities of others.

Courage

We are leading the way and will be prepared to try new things, take risks, embrace ambiguity and challenge the status quo. We will contribute opinions to shape the future of health data research.

General information

Humility

We have a lot to learn from others; and aim to be free from pride and arrogance.

Safeguarding

HDR UK is committed to robust safeguarding policies, we expect everyone who works with us to share our commitment to safeguarding.

Complaints procedure

If you feel you have reason to complain, you should direct your concerns in the first instance to the Senior Appointments team (SeniorRecruitment@ukri.org) who will make every effort to deal with this and respond to you within 48 hours.

If your complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily, you can find information about the steps you can take under UKRI Complaints Procedure