



UK Health
Security
Agency

Deputy Director Bioinformatics

UK Health Security Agency



Closing date: 23:55 on 6th May 2024



Why join the UK Health Security Agency?

Dame Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive Officer

**Thank you for considering a role
at the UK Health Security Agency**



Our mission is ambitious - we exist to save lives and provide health security for the nation. Should you be successful in your application you will be joining an extraordinary and diverse team at an exciting time in our development.

UKHSA is a new organisation with a clear remit. It is the UKHSA's job to stay ahead of all threats to health, both present and future. This could be an infectious disease, antimicrobial resistance or a chemical, radiological or environmental hazard.

Whatever the threat, we will be impactful and insightful, and we will be inclusive in our approach.

To help us achieve this vital goal, we have a remarkable science capacity with some of the most prestigious lab facilities in the world. This is backed up with our greatest asset, our people. We have some of the brightest scientists, data analysts, coordinators, clinicians, logisticians and technicians.

I wish you luck in your application and look forward to working with you as together we work to protect the nation's health.

Best wishes,

Jenny

About the UK Health Security Agency

COVID-19 has reinforced the impact that threats to health can have on society and the economy and driven health security as a critical component of our national security architecture.

The United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is responsible for protecting every member of every community from the impact of infectious diseases, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents and other health threats. We provide intellectual, scientific and operational leadership at national and local level, as well as on the global stage, to make the nation's health secure.

We are a system leader for health security; taking action internationally to strengthen global health security, providing trusted advice to government and the public and reducing inequalities in the way different communities experience and are impacted by infectious disease, environmental hazards, and other threats to health. As the nation's expert national health security agency UKHSA will:

- Prevent: anticipate threats to health and help build the nation's readiness, defences and health security

- Detect: use cutting edge environmental and biological surveillance to proactively detect and monitor infectious diseases and threats to health
- Analyse: use world-class science and data analytics to assess and continually monitor threats to health, identifying how best to control and mitigate the risks
- Respond: take rapid, collaborative and effective actions nationally and locally to mitigate threats to health when they materialise
- Lead: lead strong and sustainable global, national, regional and local partnerships designed to save lives, protect the nation from public health threats, and reduce inequalities

Our immediate and most important priority is to continue the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the longer term, UKHSA will build on the legacy of the COVID-19 response to ensure resilient and scalable infrastructure to secure the UK in the

strongest position to protect the public from future threats to health.

UKHSA's mission is challenging, innovative and in the spotlight. To achieve our objectives effectively and fairly, we commit to representing modern Britain and all its diversity. We recognise that diversity of background and life experience brings different insights, creates challenge and encourages change and innovation. This in turn produces more accountable and trusted public services and better decisions.

More information about the UKHSA can be found [here](#).

About the role

Job Title

Deputy Director – Bioinformatics

Location

The role will be based at Colindale.

Relocation expenses are not available.

Salary

£75,000 - £117,800 per annum.

Existing Civil Servants will be appointed in line with the Civil Service pay rules in place on the date of their appointment.

Contract Type

Permanent

The Role

Significant developments made during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic resulted in established foundations for the improved use of pathogen genomics to protect public health. This post will provide specialist expertise to drive forwards the bioinformatics component of our core work, as well as relevant elements of the pathogen genomics programme. The postholder will also work with external specialists and other clinical partners.

This post will be responsible for providing strategic leadership for the bioinformatics function of the UKHSA, as well as operational leadership of the core bioinformatics team within the Data Operations Directorate. The postholder will be responsible for identifying emerging

trends, technologies, and tools in microbial genomics and bioinformatics so that the UKHSA stay at the forefront of the field, communicating complex technical concepts, contributing to grant applications and contributing high-level input to data analysis pipelines and interpretation.

The post holder will also undertake the important role of UKHSA Head of Profession for Bioinformatics, working to champion and establish comprehensive communities of practice within UKHSA and across wider professions networks. There is also significant potential for collaboration with academic partners.

Key Responsibilities

Key responsibilities will include:

- Developing and implementing the strategic vision for bioinformatics in alignment with UKHSA's wider goals and in particular its Pathogen Genomics Strategy

- Line management responsibility for the core bioinformatics team
- Delivery of complex projects that require cross Agency engagement and multi-disciplinary working
- Providing a focal point for bioinformatics within the Agency including undertaking the role of Head of Profession for bioinformatics. This will include promoting training, bringing teams together, ensuring that Bioinformaticians across the Agency are aligned to strategic priorities, are following guidelines and working within defined remit
- Identifying emerging trends, technologies, and tools in microbial genomics and bioinformatics to stay at the forefront of the field
- Communicating complex technical concepts to both technical and non-technical stakeholders across all organisation-levels
- Contributing to external presentations and grant applications, and engaging in academic collaborations relevant to genomics and bioinformatics
- Working with external partners to ensure best practice is shared and collaboration are in place to continuously improve the service
- Provide strategic and operational leadership across groups and oversee work of Programme lead to ensure all core bioinformatics projects, including managing timelines, budgets, and resources, while maintaining a high quality of work and analysis
- Contributing high-level input to data analysis pipelines and interpretation
- Collaborating with other teams and wet lab scientists to provide bioinformatics support
- Ensuring that the service provides expert advice for wider public health delivery to internal and external customers
- Having strategic and operational oversight of the development and maintenance of bioinformatics pipelines and keeping them efficient, accurate, and up to date, while ensuring that best practices are upheld
- Working closely with Data, Analytics and Surveillance colleagues, ensure strategic alignment with the UKHSA Technology Strategy, in the context of data storage, archiving etc and that technology requirements are fit for purpose to support the ongoing Bioinformatics pipelines and requirements

- Ensuring strategic engagement with all parts of the UKHSA that contribute to pathogen genomic surveillance, supporting a “one system” approach, including ensuring sequencing data are available as required

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Identify, discuss and action own professional performance and training / development needs with your line manager through appraisal / individual development plan. Attending internal / external training events and ensuring pursuit of programme of continuous professional development in accordance with any relevant professional registration or statutory requirements
- To participate in all mandatory training as required, i.e. fire safety, information governance and all other mandatory training.

This role will influence the following key stakeholders:

Internal

- Directors and Deputy Directors across
 - Science
 - Clinical and Public Health
 - Technology
 - Health Protection Operations
 - Data, Analytics and Surveillance
- Science Data and Performance Lead
- Relevant colleagues across wider UKHSA

External

- Key academic partners
- Relevant stakeholders within Cabinet Office and HM Treasury, other government departments, non-departmental bodies and potential funding organisations
- Professional leads across HMG

- Relevant stakeholders within identified external data providers and users (public and private sector)
- Devolved Administrations, departments and organisations
- Private sector leaders

As one of its most senior leaders, you will also be a visible role model for the Civil Service Leadership behaviours

We expect all our senior leaders to be:

- Inspiring – about our work and its future
- Confident – in our engagement with others
- Empowering – to allow our teams to deliver.

Civil Service Code

The [Civil Service Code](#) sets out the standards of behaviour expected of you and other civil servants. These are based on the core values which are set out in legislation.

As a civil servant, you are expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the Civil Service and its core values of:

- ‘integrity’ - putting the obligations of public service above your own personal interests.
- ‘honesty’ - being truthful and open.
- ‘objectivity’ - basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence.
- ‘impartiality’ - acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well governments of different political persuasions.

These core values support good government and ensure the achievement of the highest possible standards in all that the Civil Service does. This in turn helps the Civil Service to gain and retain the respect of ministers, Parliament, the public and its customers

Person Specification

For this vacancy we are using Success Profiles to assess your application, using Experience. It is important that through your CV and Statement of Suitability you give evidence and examples of proven experience to deliver against the following criteria:

For the full Person Specification as well as the desirable criteria please refer to the Job Description

Essential Criteria

- A PhD in bioinformatics or microbiology with a heavy bioinformatics component OR MSc / PhD (or equivalent experience) within a life sciences subject such as bioinformatics, biology, medicine, statistics, etc with significant hands-on experience in Computational Biology gained within a relevant setting.
- 5+ years relevant experience.
- Proven leadership and line management skills, demonstrating your ability to guide a team effectively.
- A track record of leading the development and implementation of bioinformatics software.
- Hands-on experience with genomic sequencing and troubleshooting of bioinformatic pipelines.
- Knowledge of microbial whole genome sequencing techniques and tools, including short and long read sequencing.
- Familiarity with Illumina sequencing platforms, such as MiSeq and NextSeq, along with expertise in Sanger sequencing.
- Proficiency in Python, Snakemake, and R, showcasing your programming expertise.

Benefits of working for the Civil Service

Whatever your role, we take your career and development seriously, and want to enable you to build a really successful career with the Department and wider Civil Service. It is crucial that our employees have the right skills to develop their careers and meet the challenges ahead, and you'll benefit from regular performance and development reviews to ensure this development is ongoing. As a Civil Service employee, you'll be entitled to a large range of benefits.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Civil Service values and supports all its employees.

We have strong and pro-active staff networks, special leave policies for hospital appointments, flexible working policies, workplace adjustments put in place for those who need them, and talent programmes to help everyone irrespective of background, to achieve their potential and thrive.

Pension

Your pension is a valuable part of your total reward package.

A competitive contributory pension scheme that you can enter as soon as you join where we will make a significant contribution to the cost of your pension; where your contributions come out of your salary before any tax is taken; and where your pension will continue to provide valuable benefits for you and your family if you are too ill to continue to work or die before you retire. Visit [Civil Service Pension Scheme](#) for more details. If joining on Medical & Dental terms and conditions you will retain your NHS pension arrangements.

Generous Annual Leave and Bank Holiday Allowance

25 days annual leave on entry, increasing on a sliding scale to 30 days after 5 years' service. This is in addition to 8 public holidays.

This will be complemented by one further day paid privilege entitlement to mark the Queen's Birthday.

Staff Wellbeing

Flexible Working Schemes allowing you to vary your working day as long as you work your total hours.

Generous **paid maternity and paternity leave** which is notably more than the statutory minimum offered by many other employers.

Onsite facilities Opportunity to use onsite facilities including fitness centres and staff canteens (where applicable).

Season Ticket and Bicycle Loan

Interest-free loans allowing you to spread the cost of an annual travel season ticket or a new bicycle.

Sick Pay

Occupational sick pay.

The Recruitment Process

Application

To apply for this post, you will need to complete the online application process accessed via the advertisement listed for this role. This should be completed by no later than 23:55 on 6th May 2024 and will involve completing the following application form sections:

1. A **CV** setting out your career history, with key responsibilities and achievements and relevant professional qualifications. Please ensure you have provided reasons for any gaps within the last two years; and
2. A **Statement of Suitability** of up to 1500 words detailing how you meet the essential criteria referencing evidence of your experience and skills.

Failure to submit a full application will mean the panel only have limited information on which to assess your application against the criteria in the person specification.

Please ensure that your application form contains your full name.

As part of the online application process, you will be asked a number of diversity-related questions. If you do not wish to provide a declaration on any of the particular characteristics, you will have the option to select 'prefer not to say'. The information you provide when submitting your application will help us monitor our progress towards the Civil Service becoming an inclusive employer and a

great place to work. See the [Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) for more information or go to [Equality and Diversity](#)

Should you encounter any issues with your online application or are unable to apply online please contact scs.mdrecruitment@ukhsa.gov.uk

Shortlist

You will receive an acknowledgment of your application through the online process.

The panel will then assess your application to select those demonstrating the best fit with the role by considering the evidence you have provided against the criteria set out in the 'Person Specification' section. Failure to address any or all of these may affect your application.

The timeline later in this pack indicates the date by which decisions are expected to be made, and all shortlisted candidates will be advised of the outcome as soon as possible thereafter.

A long list stage may be introduced if we receive a large number of very credible applications.

Assessment

If you are shortlisted, you will be asked to attend a panel interview in order to have a more in-depth discussion of your previous experience and professional competence in relation to the criteria set out in the Person Specification. The interview will consist of Technical, Strength and Experience based questions.

As part of the interview, candidates will be required to deliver a 5-minute presentation, the topic of which will be confirmed prior to the interview.

Full details of the assessment process will be made available to shortlisted candidates. Feedback will only be provided if you attend an interview.

In the Civil Service we are challenging ourselves to become a more diverse and inclusive organisation. We recognise that recruitment and inclusion of individuals with diverse skills, perspectives and backgrounds will bring real strength to the organisation, the wider Civil Service and to society. To help support this aspiration all selection panels will have both female and ethnic minority and/or disabled membership.

Offer

Regardless of the outcome, we will notify all candidates as soon as possible after the final interview.

Expected Timeline

We will try and offer as much flexibility as we can, but it may not be possible to offer alternative dates for assessments or interviews. You are therefore asked to note the below timetable, exercising flexibility through the recruitment and selection process, in order to meet the dates given. Please note that these dates are indicative and may be subject to change.

The anticipated timetable is as follows:

Advert Closing Date	6 th May 2024
Shortlist Meeting	TBC
Final Interviews	TBC

FAQs

Can I apply if I am not currently a civil servant?

Yes. This role is open to suitably qualified people in the external market as well as existing civil servants.

Can I join on secondment terms?

Yes, a secondment may be possible. If you are considering a secondment contact scs.mdrecruitment@ukhsa.gov.uk before applying.

Is this role suitable for part-time working?

This role is available for full-time, part-time, job share or flexible working arrangements. The importance and nature of the role makes this a demanding and sometimes time critical work delivery agenda so you should discuss any proposed alternative working pattern with scs.mdrecruitment@ukhsa.gov.uk before applying.

Will the role involve travel?

Some travel may be required for this role, including to represent the organisation across the UK.

Where will the role be based?

The post will be based at Colindale, London.

Unfortunately, relocation costs will not be reimbursed.

Can I claim back any expenses incurred during the recruitment process?

No. Unfortunately we will not be able to reimburse you, except in exceptional circumstances and only when agreed in advance.

What nationality do I need to hold in order to apply?

To be eligible for employment to this role you must be a national from the following countries:

- The United Kingdom;

- The Republic of Ireland;
- The Commonwealth*;
- European Economic Area (EEA) nationals with (or eligible for) status under the EU Settlement Scheme;
- Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals already working in the Civil Service;
- Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to working the Civil Service; and
- Certain family members of the relevant EU and Turkish nationals.

**Individuals will need to demonstrate that they meet the relevant immigration requirements.*

For further information on whether you are eligible to apply, please visit [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Is security clearance required?

No. You will be required to undergo Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) checks. More information about the vetting process can be found [here](#).

What reasonable adjustments can be made if I have a disability?

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments in order to support disabled job applicants and ensure that you are not disadvantaged in the recruitment and assessment process.

If you feel that you may need a reasonable adjustment to be made, or you would like to discuss your requirements in more detail, please contact scs.mdrecruitment@ukhsa.gov.uk in the first instance.

Do you offer a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Disabled Persons?

Disabled applicants who meet the minimum selection criteria in the job specification are guaranteed an interview. Selection will be on merit. If you wish to claim a guaranteed interview under the Disability Commitment, you should complete the relevant section of the online application. It is not necessary to state the nature of your disability.

Will this role be overseen by the Civil Service Commission?

No, this role is not required to be overseen by a Civil Service Commissioner

More detailed information can be found on the Civil Service Commission [website](#).

What do I do if I want to make a complaint?

The law requires that selection for appointment to the Civil Service is on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the [Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles](#).

If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Recruitment Principles, and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact scs.mdrecruitment@ukhsa.gov.uk in the first instance

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from the Department, you can contact the [Civil Service Commission](#).

What should I do if I think that I have a conflict of interest?

Candidates must note the requirement to declare any interests that might cause questions to be raised about their

approach to the business of the Department.

If you believe that you may have a conflict of interest please contact scs.mdrecruitment@ukhsa.gov.uk before submitting your application.

Diversity & Inclusion

The Civil Service is committed to becoming an exemplar employer on inclusion.



We know that working inclusively and harnessing a range of talents means solving problems better, making better decisions and delivering better public services. We are committed to representing as broad a range of views and backgrounds as we have in UK society, focused not just on the characteristics protected under law but equally committed to greater socioeconomic diversity, greater regional diversity and to building teams where effectively harnessing cognitive diversity is the way decisions are made. We know that diverse perspectives and experiences are critical to an effective, modern Civil Service that delivers policies and services for all of our citizens.

Our vision is to ensure the Civil Service represents modern Britain and is a truly inclusive employer – an example to other employers. We will create an organisation where diversity and fairness are not only respected and valued – but celebrated - and where everyone can see where they belong and no one feels excluded.

What's in it for me?

We want to maximise the potential of everyone who chooses to work for us – regardless of background, working style or career experience.

If you're interested in becoming a world class leader, developing your career with us – starting with this interesting and challenging role – or doing things differently and inspiring colleagues, then the Civil Service is the place for [you](#).

Our passion for inclusion and equality means creating a work environment for all employees that is welcoming, respectful, fair, engaging, and enriched with opportunities for personal and professional development

What's next?

You've taken the first step and looked through this job pack to understand the skills and experience needed to perform this role. Now join us in achieving our ambitions and let us help you achieve yours. [Read more.](#)



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Contact us

Should candidates like to discuss the role in more detail before submitting an application, please contact us via scs.mdrecruitment@ukhsa.gov.uk to arrange.

Our work is regulated by the Civil Service Commission.

UKHSA is a Disability Confident employer.