

Health Data Research UK

Applicant information

Job description and person specification

Post: BHF Data Science Centre Data-enabled Clinical Trials Thematic Lead

Location: 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

Salary: This post would be suitable as a secondment

Duration: Approx. 1 day/week for 2 years in the first instance (with the possibility to extend longer term). A lesser or greater time commitment may be considered for the right candidate

Reporting to: Director, BHF Data Science Centre (Professor Cathie Sudlow)

About Health Data Research UK

Health Data Research UK (HDR UK) is the UK's national institute for health data science. Our mission is to unite the UK's health data to enable discoveries that improve people's lives. It is funded by UK Research and Innovation, the Department of Health and Social Care in England and equivalents in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, and leading medical research charities.

HDR UK was set up in 2018 to support research on health data at scale to advance our understanding of disease and enable new discoveries that will ultimately improve health and care. We have established national research programmes that use data at scale, and we are building an infrastructure to enable the responsible access and analysis of this data. Our work is structured around three key themes:

- Uniting health data – including our work with data custodians through the [UK Health Data Research Alliance](#) and on making health data discoverable and accessible through the [Health Data Research Innovation Gateway](#).
- Improving health data – incorporating contributions from HDR UK's [Human Phenome](#) and [Applied Analytics](#) priority areas, the [Health Data Research Hubs](#) and the [BHF Data Science Centre](#), including our work on improving data quality and standards, on data curation, and on developing tools and methods for sharing, linking and analysing data.
- Using health data –including our work on research discoveries and skills development across four national priority areas: [Understanding the Causes of Disease](#), [Clinical Trials](#), [Public Health](#) and [Better Care](#).

We are delivering this strategy through our inclusive, team-oriented One Institute ethos - bringing together NHS, universities, research institutes and charities.

About the BHF Data Science Centre

The [British Heart Foundation \(BHF\) Data Science Centre](#), is building on a £10m initial investment from the BHF to deliver the data and data science needed to address some of the most pressing challenges in heart and circulatory health research. For more information please see our [brochure](#).

The centre works in partnership with patients, the public, NHS, researchers and clinicians to promote the safe, ethical and scientifically robust use of data for research into the causes, prevention and treatment of all diseases of the heart and circulation (including, for example, heart attacks, heart failure, heart rhythm disorders, stroke, peripheral vascular disease and vascular dementia).

The BHF Data Science Centre does not hold data itself. Instead, it works with relevant data custodians, including through the UK Health Data Research Alliance and Health Data Research Innovation Gateway, to provide knowledge and expertise to help researchers from the NHS, academia and industry find, access, understand, connect and analyse the UK's unique cardiovascular 'big data' that is distributed across national registries, NHS electronic medical records and other relevant datasets.

The aim of the centre is to enable responsible, ethical research that combines the power of advanced analytic methods with the UK's large-scale and diverse cardiovascular data. High impact outputs will help to shape better cardiovascular health services, provide patients and health professionals with the tools to make better decisions, and bring the latest medical discoveries to patients across the UK faster than ever before.

Extensive and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders has shaped the development of the centre's six thematic areas:

- Better access to and use of structured health data UK population-wide for cardiovascular research
- Better access to and use of unstructured health data at scale for cardiovascular research
- Enabling large-scale use of personal monitoring data in a wide range of cardiovascular research
- Developing and refining computable cardiovascular phenotypes for different applications
- Supporting discoveries of cardiovascular disease causes, prediction, early detection, prognostic tools and treatments using population and disease-based cohorts
- **Developing methods and infrastructure for large, efficient, data-enabled cardiovascular trials**

The cardiovascular data-enabled trials thematic area will focus on the development of methods, tools and platforms to enable efficient, cost-effective, large-scale randomised trials that will provide reliable evidence to improve the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases. It will champion the use of UK population-scale routine health data - where appropriate combined with appropriate other novel, scalable approaches (such as web- or app-based platforms) - for planning trials, and for the streamlined recruitment and follow-up of patients with or at risk of developing cardiovascular conditions.

Purpose of the post

The Data-enabled Clinical Trials Thematic Lead will be a key member of the BHF Data Science Centre leadership team, working closely with the Director and other centre staff to identify and prioritise key areas of work in the use of large-scale, automated and streamlined approaches (with an initial focus on routinely

collected health data) in delivering efficient, cost-effective cardiovascular clinical trials, demonstrating impact at national and international level. They will have an excellent understanding of, and expertise in, clinical trial methodology and conduct and a strong commitment to developing linked healthcare data-enabled approaches to planning, recruitment and follow-up in large scale cardiovascular trials.

The BHF Data Science Centre already has a well-developed relationship with NHS Digital and strong links with the HDR UK clinical trials national priority area and [NHS DigiTrials](#). This part-time role would build on these links to work in partnership with these organisations /areas of interest and to provide leadership and strategic planning in data-enabled trials for the cardiovascular community, to meet the wider objectives of the BHF Data Science Centre in improving cardiovascular health through the use of large-scale data and innovative analytical methods.

This post would suit a clinician / methodologist / statistician who is an established leader or well advanced on a career pathway towards a leadership position within the clinical trials field.

Main responsibilities

- Provide leadership to bring together research, clinical trials and data science networks, professional societies, patients and wider stakeholders within the cardiovascular clinical trials community to shape and influence the way cardiovascular clinical trials are planned, designed and delivered at scale, build consensus and sustain support within that community. An ability to see the bigger picture is key in order to ensure benefit to the wider community.
- Create and maintain new partnerships and build on existing partnerships with the cardiovascular and clinical trials communities, patients and data custodians to identify and prioritise the key challenges of carrying out clinical trials and how these can be addressed through the use of large-scale health data. The candidate will build on existing partnerships and collaboration opportunities with HDR UK initiatives, such as the [clinical trials](#) national priority area and the [NHS Digitrials Hub](#).
- Work with the cardiovascular and clinical trials communities and the BHF Data Science Centre Director to identify suitable exemplar driver trials and projects that will address key requirements in this thematic area. In collaboration with the wider cardiovascular clinical trials community, provide strategic leadership in the development of novel methodological approaches.
- Provide strategic direction and champion the team science approach to deliver projects, providing negotiation and brokering skills where necessary to drive improvement within data-enabled clinical trials.
- Lead on the development of strategic plans for this thematic area in collaboration with the BHF Data Science Centre Director and her team. Work with the centre's team to direct the development of full-scale project plans and subsequent reporting for this thematic area. Day-to-day project management and administrative support will be provided by the centre's team.
- Contribute to and lead on funding applications and, in collaboration with the BHF Data Science Centre and HDR UK, identify opportunities to communicate milestones, deliverables and impact of the data-enabled trials thematic area activities.

Planning and organising

The post-holder will lead on the development of a strategy and delivery plan to meet the objectives of the BHF Data Science Centre in data-enabled trials. This will require leading the small BHF Data Science Centre team in planning and organising project plans for this area as well as providing oversight across a number of complex projects to ensure delivery of objectives within deadline.

Problem solving

This role involves significant application of prior knowledge accumulated from professional and /or academic experience. An enhanced level of initiative and problem-solving is needed to develop new ideas and novel approaches in response to issues and research problems, as well as tenacity to resolve infrastructure, organisational or governance bottlenecks. This approach will involve sharing knowledge and development with leading experts in the field specialism, requiring collaboration, excellent negotiating skills and creative thinking. Considerable strategic awareness will need to be used.

The post holder will operate with significant independence and will make an effective judgement on when to escalate issues to the Director or other senior HDR UK colleagues.

Decision making

Responsibility for developing and delivering on the strategy for the data-enabled trials thematic area, in collaboration with the Director.

Initiate, develop and build on opportunities for collaborative working with the broader members of the cardiovascular and clinical trials communities, wider HDR UK community, relevant national and international partners and organisations.

Continuous improvement

HDR UK is dedicated to continuous improvement through our quality management system and has achieved ISO 9001 accreditation. The post-holder will review, analyse, identify and implement opportunities for quality improvement within their role and as part of the wider team through our strategy development and internal audit processes.

Key contacts/relationships

The post holder will work closely with the BHF Data Science Centre Director and her team. They will build and maintain effective working relationships with colleagues within and across HDR UK, partners in the British Heart Foundation, the wider cardiovascular, clinical trial and health data science communities, partners in substantive HDR UK Hubs and sites, public and patients and other key stakeholders.

Knowledge, skills and experience

Experience

- Experience in the design, running, analysis and reporting of clinical trials of relevance to prevention or treatment of cardiovascular diseases in the UK, bringing expertise as a clinical trialist leader, as a clinician / methodologist / statistician.
- Proven leadership skills to provide direction and deliver change across the UK.

- Experience of health data science and national health data linkages, and knowledge of its uses and potential limitations in planning, recruitment and follow-up of large research studies.
- Excellent understanding of the complexities of clinical trial research and health data science and of the specific health data science and information governance issues relevant to clinical trials
- Ability to lead and inspire trust in a wide range of stakeholders and to build consensus across multiple stakeholders.
- Connected with networks, professional societies and wider stakeholders in one or more of the following: clinical trials, cardiovascular and data science communities
- Commitment and ability to bring together people and infrastructure to drive forward improvements/changes through exemplar projects.

Skills

- Excellent influencing and negotiating skills
- Creative and innovative thinker
- Personal drive and ambition to provide leadership in the area of data-enabled cardiovascular trials
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to listen to and bring on board a wide range of stakeholders with competing priorities and views
- Excellent networking skills with a desire to work collaboratively to achieve goals
- Excellent organisational and time management skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities and issues under time pressures.
- Ability to work flexibly with a small core support team.

Dimensions

- This role is a secondment for approx. one day/week to provide leadership and strategic planning in cardiovascular data-enabled trials. This is one of the BHF Data Science centre's six thematic areas enabling cardiovascular health data science.
- The expectation is that the post holder will work with the BHF Data Science Centre Director, other thematic area leads and the team to meet the objective of improving the UK's cardiovascular health using large-scale data and advanced analytics.
- The BHF Data Science Centre will provide project management and administrative support to the post-holder in their role.
- The post-holder will be expected to work flexibly to fit the requirements of the role.
- HDR UK is a national institute, and our activities take place across the UK. Therefore, the post-holder should be willing to undertake travel within the UK and occasionally internationally when required.

Application Process

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact the BHF Data Science Centre Director to discuss further:
Cathie.Sudlow@hdruk.ac.uk

Please apply with a CV and covering letter of no more than 500 words explaining what you can bring to this role to: hdruk@gravitatehr.co.uk

The closing date for this vacancy is 5pm on Thursday 4th March, 2021
Interviews are expected to take place between 11th and 16th March, 2021

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.