

# Chief Operating Officer

Application pack



## Welcome

Welcome to Health Data Research UK (HDR UK). I am delighted you are considering the role of Chief Operating Officer at HDR UK for your next professional move.

HDR UK is the national institute for health data science and works to accelerate trustworthy data use to enable discoveries that improve people's lives.

Our vision is for large-scale data to benefit every interaction with patients, every clinical trial and every biomedical discovery, and to transform public health.

We work in partnership with the NHS, industry, charities and universities to realise the potential of the UK's wealth of health data in life-changing research. Patients and the public are actively involved in shaping HDR UK's work and ensuring it delivers public benefit.

The Institute played a major role in the Covid-19 pandemic, working with the NHS and collaborators internationally to link and coordinate the use of large-scale data. With access to this data, scientists and doctors could understand more about this new disease, identify which drugs were effective and provide evidence to allow the NHS and policymakers to respond to the challenge quickly.

HDR UK is building on these successes through a collaborative approach to improve the UK's data infrastructure and deliver cutting-edge research, unlocking the power of large-scale data to improve health and care.

HDR UK is a virtual institute, with staff and partners in all four nations of the UK and a small office in central London. Our funding comes from UK Research and Innovation, the Department of Health and Social Care (England) and the devolved administrations, and leading medical research charities.

We employ talented individuals who bring their own unique skills and experience to support our vision and benefit the whole team. Our values of transparency, optimism, respect, courage and humility guide how we work together within HDR UK, with our partners and other stakeholders.

Healthcare is on the cusp of a digital revolution and at HDR UK, you can be at the heart of it.

Andrew Morris, Director



## Chief Operating Officer

The UK is in a unique position to realise the potential of health data, thanks to the NHS and its cradle-to-grave records for a population of over 65 million people.

Safe and secure use of this data could improve treatments, deliver better health care and save lives. It could help tackle some of the biggest health challenges worldwide, including cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

However, access to this data for researchers is often a lengthy, fragmented process, meaning the potential for improving healthcare is far from being realised in full.

Health Data Research UK (HDR UK) is working to unite the UK's health data to enable discoveries that improve people's lives. Our vision is for large-scale data and advanced analytics to benefit every patient interaction, clinical trial and biomedical discovery, and to enhance public health.

We are a dynamic organisation, committed to accelerating trustworthy access to health data. By working in partnership with the NHS, industry and universities, we aim to facilitate research to better understand diseases and discover new ways to prevent, treat and cure them. Patients and the public are involved throughout, shaping the Institute's work and ensuring that access to data for research is enabled by safe and secure systems and generates public benefit.

The Institute played a major role in the COVID-19 pandemic, working with the NHS and collaborators internationally to link and coordinate the use of large-scale data. With these resources, scientists and doctors could understand more about this new disease, identify which drugs were effective and provide evidence to allow the NHS and policymakers to respond to the challenge.

Our successes include:

- A Trusted Research Environments (TRE) for England was created early in the pandemic with health data covering >54 million people, thanks to a collaboration between NHS Digital and HDR UK through its British Heart Foundation (BHF) Data Science Centre. TREs are highly secure computing environments that provide remote access to health data.
- In autumn 2020, HDR UK was asked to lead a Data & Connectivity programme in partnership with the Office for National Statistics. The collaboration between many partners mapped Covid-19 datasets and delivered data infrastructure and services to allow high-priority research questions to be answered.
- During the roll out of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines against Covid-19, it was vital to understand how they performed in the population. A team supported by HDR UK through the BREATHE Health Data Research Hub were able to rapidly show the high protection offered by the vaccines after a single dose, thanks to assembling linked health data for 99% of the Scottish population.
- Nearly half a million people missed out on starting medication to lower their blood pressure during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to research enabled by the BHF Data Science Centre at HDR UK. The research included 1.32 billion records of medications dispensed to 15.8 million people in England, Scotland and Wales between 1 April 2018 and 31 July 2021.
- A significant landmark early in 2024 saw the first research study of health records for 67 million people in all four UK nations. It looked at gaps in Covid-19 vaccine coverage and found that between a third and a half of the populations of the four UK nations had not had the recommended

number of vaccinations and boosters by summer 2022. The approach could be extended to many other areas of medicine with great potential for new discoveries in the understanding and treatment of disease.

HDR UK is a virtual institute, with staff and partners in all four nations of the UK and an office in central London. We are an independent, registered charity with five years of core funding from nine of the UK's leading medical research funders, including 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's strategy

Our five-year objectives are to:

### 1. Accelerate trustworthy data use by sorting the data

- Make it easier and quicker for researchers to find, access and use high-quality, large-scale data
- Fix the technical challenges needed for swift, safe and secure data use, by assembling innovative infrastructure solutions
- Increase health research efficiency and productivity by accelerating adoption of the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reuseable) data principles

### 2. Improve people's lives by unlocking the power of data

- Deliver cutting-edge research that harnesses large-scale data to change health policy and practice
- Exemplify trustworthy data use to deliver research that was previously impossible
- Test and improve the infrastructure so it serves all researchers

### 3. Shape the future of health data research

- Connect data, people and organisations to bring about cultural change and realise the UK's potential to be at the forefront of health data innovation
- Develop people and teams with diverse perspectives and skills needed to deliver health data research
- Embed good practice in patient and public engagement and involvement to build confidence in health data research for public benefit by increasing transparency and trustworthiness.

## Role profile

### Purpose of the post

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is a pivotal figure within HDR UK and reports directly to the Director as a member of the organisation's Senior Leadership Team. The COO is a high-profile internal leader, with a remit that encompasses business strategy, capacity building, communications, finance & risk, Health & Safety and HR.

The post requires strong strategic and organisational skills with the ability to "think on your feet" to provide creative solutions to problems. The COO is responsible for providing support and advice to the Director in his leadership and management of HDR UK. Working with the Director and other senior executives, the COO will demonstrate the strong leadership, organisational and operational skills required to scale the institute during this next phase of its development.

The COO will also develop an external profile, building and maintaining the links critical to the delivery of the Director's vision and the development of HDR UK at local, national and international levels, increasingly networking with other research establishments and key stakeholders such as the public, the NHS and industry.

### Main responsibilities

#### **Strategy and Governance**

As a member of the HDR UK Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the COO will play a leading role in shaping strategy and aligning operational delivery to that strategy. This includes:

- Oversee HDR UK's strategic financial and resource planning to enable effective financial management and sustainability of HDR UK
- Leadership contribution to multi-cycle delivery planning (e.g. 1yr, 5yr), reporting, monitoring and tiered operational review. Ensure effective tracking and management of our overall performance via formal governance routes
- Coordinate all of HDR UK's external corporate reporting
- Attend the Board and Board Committees. Manage high level interactions with HDR UK's funding partners – in particular via the HDR UK Core Funders Committee
- Take responsibility for risk management at both strategic and operational levels, managing HDR UK's assurance mechanisms, and advising the Director on risk management issues.
- Provide leadership for the regular senior team meetings including prioritisation, action tracking and agenda setting.
- Assist the Director in fundraising ventures and diversification of funding sources, participate in expansion activities (investments, acquisitions, partnerships and alliances etc.).

#### **Senior Operational Leadership**

This role will provide vision, strategic direction, and leadership for the organisation's corporate services.

(including business strategy, capacity building, programmatic integration, human resources, finance, risk management, communication, Health & Safety, and administration)

- Work to enable integration, community and teamwork between all HDR UK teams. Ensure the organisation provides a modern and responsive service and that staff are motivated to deliver a high-quality level of service to all stakeholders. Leadership of change via a culture of continuous improvement. Initiate, lead and manage change across HDR UK activity to improve policy and procedure, including proposing and contributing to strategic change across our landscape. Manage the intersection and impact between change and BAU
- Ensure that all activities and operations (including health and safety) are performed and reported as by the law and/or relevant regulations.
- People Management including ensuring effectively coordinated EDI, staff management and progression and adherence to TORCH values
- Responsible for the majority of HDR UK's policies, ensure alignment between policy and purpose, as well adherence and adoption.

### **External Partnerships**

HDR UK's success is built upon a culture of close collaboration and cooperation, within a framework of robust governance and an ethos of trust. The COO will play a central role in this by developing and maintaining strong, positive relationships with key HDR UK stakeholders including partner research organisations, UK government departments and related bodies, and the wider public, ensuring HDR UK's interests are recognised by stakeholders and are properly represented and protected.

### **Guidance for, representation of, senior colleagues**

Line manage multiple members of the SLT team and contribute as a member of that team to all strategic decision-making in HDR UK. Advise the Director on matters of policy, strategy, risk, process and planning and provide leadership and guidance on strategic management issues to the Institute's senior academic managers and for senior academic and professional services staff in the Institute's associated collaborative ventures. Exercise delegated authority of behalf of the Director as agreed (e.g. management of projects, deployment of staff resources).

## **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.

## **Who we're looking for**

You must have a track record of success in:

## Experience

- leading, at senior level, outstanding organisational performance in a Higher Education Institute or equivalent context
- strategic communication and the management of a wide circle of partnerships specifically in the context of data science
- data science training, and skills development, in clinical and non-clinical contexts, and, in credit and non-credit bearing learning modes
- working closely with Boards, advising on complex operational and strategic issues and implementing decisions effectively
- business planning, staff performance management, and the handling of substantial and complex budgets (+£100million per annum)
- leading a culture that is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion
- operating at a senior level to drive business success via continuous improvement, end to end process enhancement and change management. The ability to work through to a solution with resilience and persistence

## Skills

- strong interpersonal skills including motivating and developing staff and colleagues, mentoring/coaching skills, communication, negotiating and influencing skills
- the ability to lead, inspire trust, and find common ground among competing view points
- creativity when it comes to building and strengthening organisational alliances and relationships
- a working style that is up tempo, entrepreneurial, and consultative
- outstanding project and programme management abilities
- Ability to analyse complex issues and innovate to resolve problems

## Working at Health Data Research UK

HDR UK offers an attractive package and working environment. Since the pandemic we offer flexibility on working location and the primary base could be anywhere in the UK, but the successful applicant must be willing and able to travel to London and elsewhere (mainly in the UK) in connection with the requirements of the role. This is a senior appointment, to be a member of HDR UK's Senior Leadership Team, reporting into the Director Andrew Morris.

## Summary of Benefits

- 27 days annual leave plus 8 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

## Dimensions

- The role line manages 8 senior staff across the corporate services portfolio
- This is a full-time role. Travel in the UK may be required to partner organisations
- HDR UK is a national institute, and our activities take place across the UK
- The salary band for the role is £145,000 - £151,000

## Recruitment process

### How to apply for this role

Candidates should apply by submitting a full CV plus supporting statement of suitability for the role using our online portal. All CVs will be anonymised for shortlisting.

If you have any general questions about the role, please contact our Head of People Tammy Palmer in the first instance: [Tammy.palmer@hdruk.ac.uk](mailto:Tammy.palmer@hdruk.ac.uk)

### Interview

1. A 60-minute panel interview with a technical presentation followed by a series of structured questions.

## Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

HDR 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.

## **Safeguarding**

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