Candidate Pack

Appointment of Chief Financial Officer
Health Data Research Service

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What is the Health Data Research Service (HDRS)?

The Health Data Research Service (HDRS) will enable approved researchers to access UK health data safely and securely, helping accelerate discoveries that lead to better treatments and outcomes for patients.

UK patients are waiting longer than they need to for medical innovations and treatments that could be life-changing. HDRS is here to change that. In 2025, the UK government and the Wellcome Trust agreed to invest up to £600m to create HDRS and transform access to NHS data through a secure, single access point for approved researchers. Operating across all four UK nations – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – HDRS will enable earlier diagnoses and more effective treatments, integrate data from hospitals, GP records and other sources, increase access to clinical trials and help make the UK a world leader in health data research and life sciences.

HDRS is being set up as a government-owned company, enabling it to operate at arm's length from central government. This model gives HDRS the independence and flexibility it needs to work across the health and research system, while remaining publicly owned and accountable.

Main purpose of the role

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is responsible for establishing HDRS's financial foundations and leading comprehensive financial management functions, ensuring sound financial governance, compliance with public sector and grant requirements, and commercial credibility. The CFO will manage public funds with the transparency and accountability that a government-owned company demands, whilst enabling strategic deliverdelivery and commercial growth. The CFO will provide strategic leadership across financial reporting and forecasting, grant compliance, financial controls and audit readiness, commercial revenue modelling, and financial advice to the CEO and Board. The CFO will be instrumental in demonstrating value for money on public investment and supporting HDRS's long-term financial sustainability and commercial viability.

Key accountabilities

Financial Governance, Controls & Reporting

- Establish HDRS's financial governance framework, policies, and controls in line with Managing Public Money (MPM), government financial standards, and audit requirements.
- Develop and deliver comprehensive financial reporting including annual accounts, quarterly/management accounts, and financial forecasts with clear commentary on performance and variances.
- Establish and maintain robust financial controls, segregation of duties, authorisation frameworks, and regular monitoring/reconciliation processes to protect public assets.
- Lead audit readiness including external audit coordination, preparing for annual audit cycles, and managing audit findings and recommendations.
- Present financial performance to Board and Audit Committee with clear, actionable reporting that demonstrates stewardship of public funds and value for money.
- Establish and manage HDRS's government bank account and payment infrastructure, ensuring compliance with government financial management standards and effective cash management.

Grant Compliance & Funder Relations

- Lead comprehensive compliance with grant conditions from major funders (Wellcome Trust, UKRI, DHSC), ensuring HDRS meets all financial, reporting, and operational requirements.
- Manage relationships with grant-awarding bodies and maintain proactive engagement, reporting any compliance concerns early and keeping funders informed of progress.
- Prepare grant applications and provide detailed financial forecasting to support HDRS's funding strategy and long-term sustainability planning.
- Lead HDRS's participation in government Spending Review cycles, articulating financial needs, demonstrating value for money, and supporting funding bids.

Financial Planning, Budgeting & Forecasting

- Lead annual and multi-year financial planning and budgeting cycles, working with Executive Team and functions to align resources with strategic priorities and OKRs.
- Lead financial governance for capital expenditure approvals, investment decisions and spending authorisation frameworks appropriate to the scale of the organisation.
- Monitor expenditure against budget, produce regular variance reports identifying key risks and variances, and recommend timely corrective actions.
- Manage rolling financial forecasts and re-forecasts throughout the year, providing early warning of financial risks or opportunities.
- Lead financial management and strategic investment in IT infrastructure, systems, and technology to support HDRS's operational and strategic needs.

Key accountabilities continued

Commercial Revenue Modelling & Financial Sustainability

- Develop commercial revenue models and pricing strategies for HDRS services and products, balancing public benefit mission with financial sustainability and self-sufficiency.
- Model financial scenarios and impacts of service expansion, scaling, and new strategic initiatives, supporting strategic planning and growth decision-making.
- Explore opportunities for cost recovery, commercial partnerships, and revenue diversification that support HDRS's mission whilst generating sustainable revenue.
- Lead long-term financial planning and sustainability strategy to ensure HDRS financial independence beyond initial grant funding windows.

Value for Money, Procurement & Asset Management

- Establish and maintain value for money (VfM) framework and metrics, demonstrating the impact and return on public investment across HDRS functions and services.
- Lead procurement and commercial contract management financially, ensuring competitive procurement processes, strong commercial terms, and supplier performance management.
- Work closely with operational leadership to identify efficiency improvements, cost optimisation opportunities, and productivity enhancements.
- Advise on capital investment, asset management, and long-term facilities strategy to support HDRS's operational and technology requirements.

Financial Analytics & Strategic Advisory

- Develop financial analytics and business intelligence capabilities to support evidence-based decision-making across the Executive Team.
- Provide financial analysis and strategic recommendations to CEO and Board on major decisions, investments, and strategic initiatives, including cost-benefit analysis.
- Support Board Audit Committee with financial oversight, risk management, and audit coordination.

Person specification

Candidates will be:

- Detail-oriented and rigorous with zero tolerance for financial inaccuracy or compliance gaps.
- Demonstrable integrity and unwavering commitment to ethical practice and public fund stewardship.
- Pragmatic and flexible, able to balance financial rigour and governance requirements with organisational agility and innovation.
- Collaborative and collegial, viewing finance as enabling and facilitating business delivery rather than constraining.
- Genuine passion for health data, research, and public benefit, committed to ensuring public funds deliver value, impact, and improved patient outcomes.

Experience

- Senior financial leadership experience as a CFO or equivalent in complex, multi-stakeholder organisations with P&L responsibility.
- Experience of operating within public sector, government-funded or similarly regulated environments, with an understanding of public accountability and governance.
- Experience managing complex funding arrangements, grants or multiple funding streams.
- Strong track record of financial reporting, audit, risk management and the establishment of effective financial controls.
- Experience establishing, scaling or transforming finance functions, systems and processes to support organisational growth and change.
- Experience supporting commercial decision-making, financial sustainability and long-term business planning.
- Experience within healthcare, research, life sciences or another knowledge-intensive sector would be advantageous.

Skills & capabilities

- Outstanding financial and commercial acumen, with the ability to translate organisational strategy into robust financial plans, forecasts and investment decisions.
- Excellent analytical skills, with the ability to interpret complex financial information and provide clear, evidence-based advice.
- Outstanding communication and influencing skills, with credibility at Board level and the ability to build strong relationships across finance and non-finance stakeholders.
- Pragmatic judgement and problem-solving skills, with the ability to operate effectively in a complex, fast-moving environment.
- High levels of integrity, professionalism and commitment to sound stewardship of public funds.

Education and qualifications

- Professional accounting qualification (ACA, ACCA, CIMA, or equivalent) is essential.
- Degree (preferably in Finance, Accounting, Economics, or related discipline).

Terms of appointment

Reporting to: Chief Executive Officer

Contract: Permanent

Location: Wellcome Genome Campus, Cambridgeshire and Euston, London

Salary: £155,000–£174,000 plus up to 15% Performance-Related Pay (PRP), capped at £25,000

Hybrid working: Two days a week at the Wellcome Genome Campus, two days in Euston, and one day remote.

Placed candidate must have the right to work in the UK.

Indicative timetable

Please note that the timetable below is indicative and may be subject to change. Candidates will be kept informed of any amendments as the process progresses.

Stage	**Date**
Closing date for applications	12 noon on Monday 24 August 2026
Screening conversation with the CEO	Tuesday 1 September 2026 (between 10.00am – 12.00pm)
Final Panel Interview *(in person at the Wellcome Genome Campus, Cambridge)*	Monday 7 September 2026

How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to HDRS on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at **roles.saxbam.com** using code **GCAYC**

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is **12 noon on Monday 24 August 2026.**

Please note, the placed candidate must have the right to work in the UK.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

GDPR personal data notice
According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

- **Read our guide to writing cover letters**


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