



Health Data
Research Service

• Candidate Pack

Appointment of Chief Trust and Engagement Officer Health Data Research Service

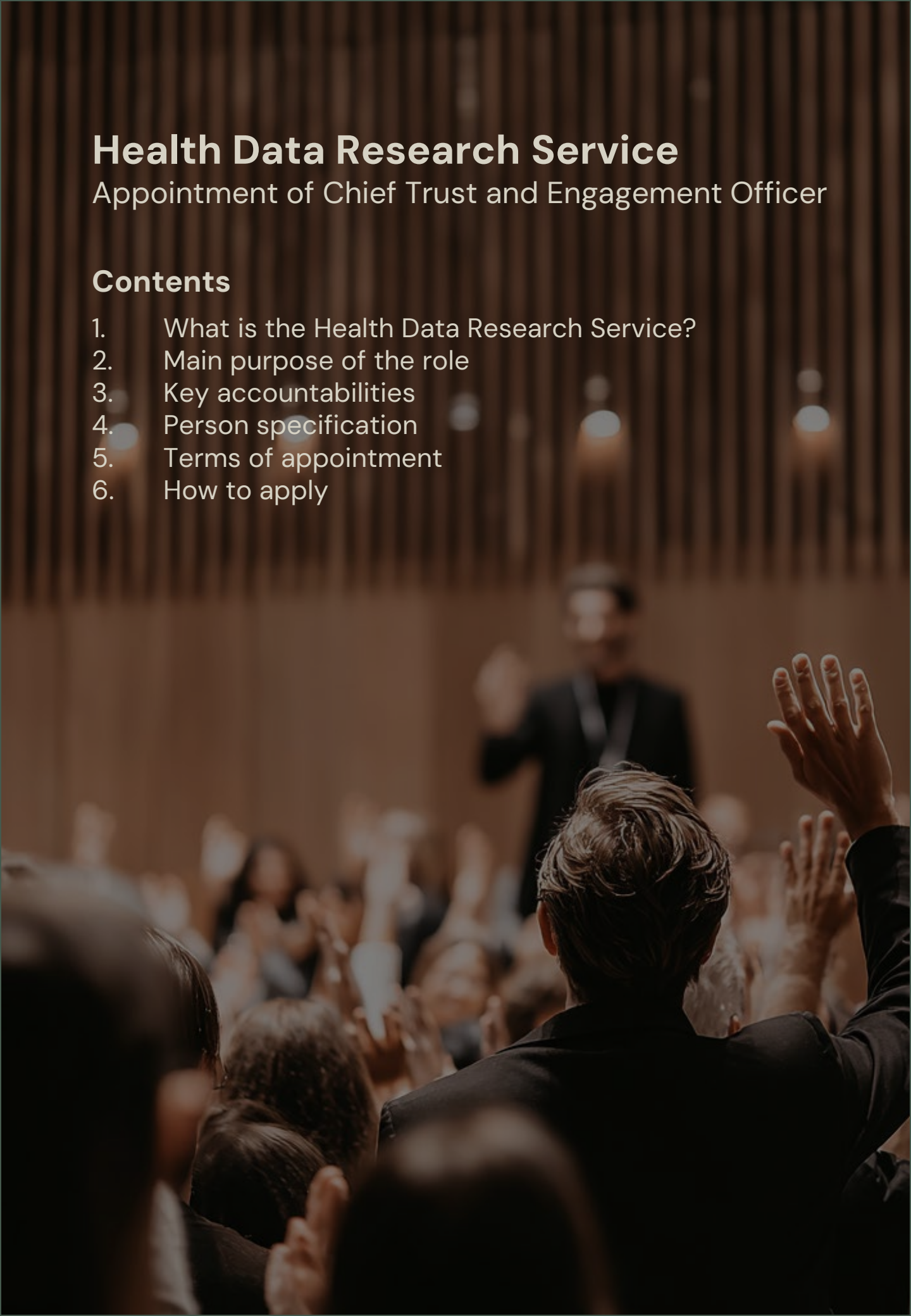


Health Data Research Service

Appointment of Chief Trust and Engagement Officer

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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 Trust and Engagement Officer is a critical executive role responsible for building, sustaining and championing public trust and the voice of the participant in HDRS.

The post holder will ensure that patients', participants' and the public's voices are embedded at the heart of HDRS's strategy, governance and operations, and that HDRS establishes itself as a trusted, ethically robust and transparent steward of health data.

This role will provide independent challenge to the organisation, ensuring that HDRS's use of health data is not only legally and technically sound, but demonstrably trustworthy, publicly legitimate, and aligned with social expectations.

Why this role matters

At HDRS patients and participants sit at the heart of everything we want to do. The success of HDRS depends on earning and maintaining the trust of:

- Patients and the public whose data underpins the service
- Researchers and delivery partners
- Government, funders and regulators

The Chief Trust and Engagement Officer will be foundational in shaping how HDRS earns and maintains that trust from inception onwards, particularly in complex areas such as consented and unconsented data use, transparency, governance and public accountability.

Key accountabilities

Strategic leadership and trust-building

- Set and lead HDRS's overall Patient and Public Involvement & Engagement (PPIE) strategy, ensuring trust is built into all aspects of the organisation from the outset.
- Act as a senior point of challenge and leadership on equity, ensuring HDRS's services, policies and internal practices are inclusive, fair and do not inadvertently disadvantage any groups.
- Act as the executive champion for participants, patients and the public, ensuring their perspectives meaningfully shape HDRS's policy, practice and priorities.
- Provide visible, credible leadership on trust, ethics and engagement with external audiences, including stakeholders, partners, government and the public.

Governance, ethics and assurance

- Establish and oversee proportionate, credible governance and assurance arrangements, including ethics advisory structures, public/participant input mechanisms and independent challenge.
- Ensure HDRS has robust approaches to navigating ethical complexity, particularly around data access, consent, transparency and public expectations.
- Work closely with other executive leaders to ensure trust, ethics and public legitimacy are embedded in decision-making, programme design and delivery.

Participant and public involvement

- Design and implement meaningful approaches to participant and public involvement, going beyond traditional consultation to genuine co-design where appropriate.
- Ensure HDRS listens to, understands and responds to public and participant concerns, expectations and evolving social attitudes.
- Ensure HDRS proactively engages with and supports underserved and underrepresented communities, removing barriers to participation and building trust with groups historically excluded from research.
- Embed participant and patient perspectives into research and service design, championing approaches such as co-design and co-production so that lived experience meaningfully shapes HDRS outputs.
- Champion inclusivity and fairness, ensuring engagement approaches reflect the diversity of the population HDRS serves and actively address inequities in representation and participation.

External leadership and thought leadership

- Act as a thought leader nationally on trust, public engagement and the responsible use of health data.
- Build strong relationships across the health data ecosystem, including regulators, delivery partners, public interest groups and comparable organisations.
- Horizon scan emerging ethical, social and reputational risks and opportunities relevant to HDRS.

Building and scaling the function

- Initially operate in a hands-on, delivery-focused way, establishing core foundations personally.
- Over time, design and scale a PPIE / Ethics / Trust function, with the latitude to recruit Directors and specialist expertise as HDRS grows.
- Build a high-performing, multidisciplinary team combining governance, engagement and thought leadership capabilities.

Person specification

Candidates will be:

- Values-driven, inclusive and trustworthy.
- Comfortable switching between hands-on delivery and strategic leadership.
- Willing and able to challenge constructively at executive level.
- Calm, thoughtful and credible in high-scrutiny contexts.

Essential criteria

Experience and knowledge

- Experience operating credibly at senior/executive level, including providing independent challenge.
- Deep understanding of trust, ethics and public legitimacy in health data, research, regulation or adjacent fields.
- Background spanning one or more of: ethics, public engagement, governance, regulation, data protection, or policy.
- Experience working with or advocating for underserved or underrepresented communities, including addressing barriers to participation.
- A strong personal commitment to HDRS's mission and a genuine belief in the public value of responsible health data use.
- Strong grasp of the UK health, research and data landscape, including the nuances of consented and unconsented data use.

Skills and capabilities

- Proven ability to work effectively in complex, ambiguous and fast-moving environments.
- Outstanding stakeholder engagement skills, with the ability to connect with the public, policymakers, technical experts and senior leaders.
- Personal credibility, integrity and judgement, with the confidence to hold firm positions where trust is at stake.

Desirable

- Experience building functions or teams from scratch and scaling over time.



Terms of appointment

Reporting to: Chief Executive Officer

Contract: Permanent

Location: Wellcome Genome Campus, Cambridgeshire and Euston, London

Salary: £140,000 – £160,000 (+ 15% PRP)

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.





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 **GCAYB**

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

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

The closing date for applications is **noon on Monday 17th August 2026**.

* 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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