Job description and person specification

Post:	Deputy Director, DARE UK
Location:	Flexible. 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:	Circa £115k
Reporting to:	Director, DARE UK
Contract:	Full time, until March 2027 (in the first instance, with potential to extend)

About Health Data Research UK

Health Data Research UK (HDR UK) is accelerating trustworthy use of health data to enable discoveries that improve people's lives. We are the national institute for health data science. 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.

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.

We work in partnership with the NHS, industry, charities and universities to realise the potential of the UK's 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 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.

- 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.

- The Green Algorithms initiative promotes more environmentally sustainable computational science and is run by Loïc Lannelongue and Michael Inouye at HDR UK Cambridge. They have built tools for carbon footprint estimation, raised awareness about the environmental impacts of algorithms and driven change in the computational science community.

- 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.

At Health Data Research UK, we employ talented individuals who bring their own unique skills and experience to support the Institute's 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.

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.

About ADR UK

Administrative Data Research UK (ADR UK) is a partnership of government and academic groups, led by a team within UKRI's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), working with UK government departments and devolved administrations to create linked research datasets from administrative sources, then making these available to researchers via the ADR UK Trusted Research Environment (TRE) network.

Good government policy – policy that solves social and economic problems and improves lives – needs good evidence. But good quality evidence is expensive and time-consuming to produce, and evidence from academic research can also have a different focus from what government needs most to make policy decisions and deliver effective services.

ADR UK's mission is to solve both these problems by transforming the way researchers access the UK's wealth of public sector data. By joining up the abundance of administrative data already being created by government and public bodies across the UK and making it available to approved researchers in a safe and secure way, we are enabling vital research that has the potential to lead to better informed policy decisions and more effective public services, in areas from improving education and healthcare to tackling crime.

ADR UK's work plays an important role in bridging the gap between government and academia, enabling government policy to be informed by the best evidence available, and putting us on the path to a future in which the true potential of administrative data to improve society is realised.

About UKRI

Launched in April 2018, UKRI is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

UKRI brings together the seven disciplinary research councils, Research England, which support research and knowledge exchange at higher education institutions in England, and the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK, to create an independent organisation with a strong voice for research and innovation, and a vision to ensure the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation. More information can be found at www.ukri.org.

About the DARE UK Programme

The DARE UK (Data and Analytics Research Environments UK) programme is co-led by HDR UK and ADR UK and funded by UKRI. The DARE UK central team are employed by HDR UK.

DARE UK was established with the vision for all research and innovation to benefit from seamless, secure use of diverse sensitive data at a pace, efficiency and scale that revolutionises research productivity and accelerates research to deliver public good. DARE UK's mission is to put the UK at the forefront of sensitive data research and innovation by assembling the tools, technologies and standards needed to streamline secure data linkage and use.

DARE UK is doing this by delivering:

- A mature, robust set of TRE capabilities in the areas of federation, semi-automation of export processes, training and export of AI models, and common TRE-to-TRE interoperability standards.
- A cohort of TRE partners that have tested and adopted these capabilities.
- A cohort of real-world research exemplars that have demonstrated the utility of these capabilities.
- A set of priority TRE capability prototypes, ready to be matured and adopted in future phases.
- A cohort of community groups that underpin the adoption and ongoing development of all the above.

DARE UK's scope is pan-UKRI, and includes all data infrastructures that support access to large scale sensitive datasets, including social, biological, medical and environmental science. The programme is in its second 'Build, Test and Establish' phase, securing >£20 million over 2.5 years to enhance the UK's capacity to conduct safer, more efficient, and collaborative research using sensitive data.

The current phase is focusing on creating a connected national network of secure data infrastructures to benefit UKRI funded communities of practice. These secure digital environments will allow researchers and innovators to access and analyse sensitive datasets across various fields, such as health, education, and public services, in a way that protects privacy while generating valuable insights for public benefit. Plans for phase 3 of the programme (post March 2027) are underway.

Purpose and responsibilities of the post

Purpose of the role

Reporting to the DARE UK Director, the Deputy Director is a senior strategic leader responsible for shaping and delivering the programme's next phase of impact.

The post-holder will provide intellectual and operational leadership across the programme, translating strategic ambition into executable plans while ensuring delivery at pace and scale. They will work across research communities, funders, infrastructure providers, technology partners and senior stakeholders across UKRI and government to embed community voice into the design of a UK-wide secure data research ecosystem.

This is a high-profile role requiring visible sector leadership, strong partnership-building capability and confidence operating at Board and executive level. The Deputy Director will deputise for the Director as required and play a central role in positioning DARE UK nationally and internationally.

Main Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Co-develop and evolve the DARE UK strategy, roadmap and future phases in response to emerging opportunities, policy developments and sector needs.
- Shape the long-term vision for a federated UK sensitive data research ecosystem, including shared standards for governance, ethics, metadata and interoperability.
- Identify strategic partnerships and funding opportunities to secure programme sustainability beyond the current phase.
- Represent DARE UK at senior forums, influencing policy, research and infrastructure agendas.

Programme Delivery and Oversight

- Lead end-to-end delivery of the programme, ensuring alignment between strategic objectives, commissioned work and measurable outcomes.
- Oversee commissioning, governance and performance management of programme activities and working groups.
- Ensure robust financial oversight, risk management and reporting in collaboration with HDR UK and UKRI partners.
- Maintain effective systems, governance structures and delivery frameworks across partner organisations.

Stakeholder and Community Leadership

- Build and sustain trusted relationships across UKRI councils, academia, government departments, devolved administrations, technical suppliers and public contributors.
- Convene and align diverse stakeholders to co-design standards, services and technical-social specifications.
- Lead strategic engagement and communications activity to secure sector-wide buy-in and adoption.

People and Organisational Leadership

- Lead and develop a multidisciplinary team spanning programme management, communications, public involvement and engagement, and community engagement.
- Foster a high-performance, collaborative culture aligned with HDR UK values.
- Provide clarity, direction and stability in a complex and evolving landscape.

Knowledge, skills and experience

Essential

- Senior leadership experience in complex, multi-stakeholder environments spanning research, government, infrastructure and/or technology.
- Proven track record of delivering large-scale, strategically significant programmes in fast-paced and ambiguous contexts.
- Experience working with executive teams, Boards and senior stakeholders, demonstrating sound judgement and political awareness.
- Strong strategic thinking capability, with the ability to translate vision into structured delivery plans.
- Demonstrable experience influencing, negotiating and building consensus across diverse communities.
- Strong programme governance, risk management and financial oversight experience.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to represent programmes at national level.
- Effective line management experience, leading multidisciplinary teams to deliver high-impact outcomes.

Desirable

- It is highly desirable to have a knowledge of Trusted Research Environments (TREs), sensitive data research, the AI training and development process, information governance, public involvement and engagement, software development processes, and secure data infrastructures.

- Understanding of the UK data research and infrastructure landscape.
- Experience delivering cross-sector programmes spanning academia, government and industry.
- Confidence constructively challenging technical experts and facilitating multidisciplinary collaboration.

Dimensions

- 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

Application Process

How to apply: Unless specified, please apply using our online portal. We use a recruitment process that is based on finding out more about the relevant skills and knowledge an applicant has and to help us with this we ask you 3 or 4 skills-based questions as part of the application process.

We will ask you to upload your CV and covering letter, these will be anonymised and will be used if you are shortlisted.

Please contact **recruitment@hdruk.ac.uk** if you have any queries regarding your application.

Summary of Benefits

- 35 days annual leave inclusive 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

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.

Safeguarding

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