



## CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

# DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT UK BIOBANK



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# CONTENTS

THE ORGANISATION	3
THE ROLE	7
THE PERSON	10
THE LOCATION	11
HOW TO APPLY	12



# THE ORGANISATION

UK Biobank is the world's most important health research database. Half a million people from across the UK volunteered so that their health data could be used by researchers around the world, and they have helped us create the most detailed and widely used biomedical database of its kind. Over 20,000 researchers are using the unprecedentedly rich variety of genetic, biochemical, lifestyle, imaging and health-related information that has been collected, producing more than 15,000 scientific papers. For more details on what we do, see the video here: [What is UK Biobank?](#)

Our database is continually growing as our volunteer participants have given their consent for us to follow-up their health and access their health-related records. Additionally, we continue to collect extensive information about our participants, including data from questionnaires, physical assessments, activity monitors, full body and brain scans, biological tests of all the volunteer participants, including whole exome and genome sequencing.

These data are de-identified before being made available to approved researchers through a secure, online platform. Our community of researchers are applying their expertise and imagination to make scientific discoveries that will improve human health. The researchers are based in more than 60 countries around the world, and over 75% of all new researcher registrations come from outside of the UK, making UK Biobank a truly global resource.

Despite being over 20 years old, UK Biobank is still in the infancy of its mission and impact. With £127.6m funding recently committed by UKRI, the organisation is investing in its future infrastructure and will be moving to new 'state-of-the-art' premises in Manchester during 2026. Together with commitments of additional philanthropic funding, UK Biobank has an ambitious programme to build upon its existing capabilities to support the piloting of several new enhancements to the resource, and to extend its breadth of health record linkages and curated health outcomes.

## IMPACT

Data drives discovery. UK Biobank's unique, biomedical database – the largest, most detailed and most widely accessible of its kind – is enabling the global research community to make scientific discoveries that improve public health.

De-identified UK Biobank data are used by approved researchers from all types of academic, charity, government and commercial organisations for health-related research that is in the public interest.

Examples of how UK Biobank is helping scientists and researchers to evolve our understanding of human health and the most common life-threatening diseases include:

- [Predicting Parkinson's disease earlier](#)
- [Identifying drug discovery targets to manage obesity](#)
- [Illuminating the impact of diabetes on the heart](#)
- [Deciphering the links between physical activity, sleep & health](#)
- [Revealing the impact of COVID-19 on the brain](#)

## OUR IMPACT



Over  
**20,000**  
active researchers...



in  
**60**  
countries



More than  
**15,000**  
published papers



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## GOVERNANCE

UK Biobank is continuing to develop and we will work with our funders, participants, users, the wider scientific community and the public to ensure we make the right choices. We seek to implement scientifically rigorous, ethically robust, processes on a very large-scale and ensure we achieve our aim to enable novel scientific discoveries.

UK Biobank receives direction from the UK Biobank Board of Trustees who work to achieve the aims of the project. Members bring broad expertise from across academic, charitable and industry backgrounds.

The Board is accountable to the members of the company (the Medical Research Council and The Wellcome Trust), act as company directors and as charity trustees. They have overall responsibility for the direction, management, and control of UK Biobank Limited.

The Board maintains several committees that support the Board in its role to assist UK Biobank to meet its strategic goals, including:

### **The UK Biobank Access Committee**

The Access Committee of the UK Biobank Board is responsible for making the key decisions about scientific access to the resource, notably those regarding the use of depletable samples or potentially contentious research.

### **The Ethics Advisory Committee (EAC)**

The UK Biobank Ethics Advisory Committee (EAC) is a Committee of the UK Biobank Board whose remit is to provide advice on ethical issues that arise during the maintenance, development and use of UK Biobank, including:

- Identifying, defining and examining current ethical issues or those on the horizon
- Providing advice, guidance and recommendations on relevant ethical issues
- Reviewing and advising on policies which have an ethical dimension that are relevant to UK Biobank
- Conducting detailed conceptual and empirical ethics research to ensure that advice is evidence-based, and that UK Biobank maintains its robust ethical justification for current and future activity.

UK Biobank additionally receives support from a range of committees and expert advisory groups:

### **International Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB)**

The UK Biobank International Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) provides advice, support and guidance to the CEO/PI, Board and Funders on UK Biobank's scientific direction, strategy, operations and the furtherance of its scientific mission.

Members give their time and expertise to the project freely and meet annually to discuss proposals that are pivotal in advancing the resource to deliver its strategy. Their broad skills and expertise ensure enhancements to UK Biobank meet the needs of the global research community, are scientifically relevant, and will meet the challenge of improving public health.

### **The UK Biobank Strategic Oversight Committee**

The UK Biobank Strategic Oversight Committee acts as an adviser to Professor Rory Collins, the project's Principal Investigator and Chief Executive Officer.

The Committee comprises leading scientists from a wide range of health research backgrounds and they provide expert knowledge on how UK Biobank might best achieve its aims to enhance the resource through detailed, accurate data collection. This knowledge enables robust scientific measures to maximise cost-effective, efficient, and scientifically valuable future enhancements.

### **Expert working groups**

UK Biobank's expert working groups play a key advisory role in supporting the Executive Team to develop and implement important project enhancements that will support world leading health research.

Members guide UK Biobank to develop new data collection that provides the most scientific value to the global health research community. Our current working groups focus on our most recent, large-scale projects (whole-genome sequencing on the full cohort of half a million people, and the detailed imaging of 100,000 participants), and an additional Informatics Working Group has recently been formed.



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## STAKEHOLDERS

### **Our Participants**

Our 502,000 participants were aged between 40 and 69 years old when they were recruited throughout England, Wales, and Scotland between 2006 and 2010. The participants were representative of the national distribution for different ethnic groups at the time of recruitment. There are slightly more women than men in the study, and participants are slightly healthier and wealthier than the UK population across the same age range, though they include large numbers of individuals from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. We currently engage with our participants to encourage ongoing involvement in follow-up activities and ensure awareness of our activities. We use a number of channels including a participant newsletter, social media, press, our website and our participant contact centre (which handles over 50,000 phone and email contacts each year). We also have a very engaged Participant Advisory Group that meets regularly to discuss and harness the views of participants as we develop and grow UK Biobank and its data.

### **Our Researchers**

More than 20,000 academic and industry researchers worldwide are actively using UK Biobank data, with 3,500 projects underway, increasingly via our cloud-based researcher environment (the UK Biobank Research Analysis Platform). UK Biobank data are now being used in over 60 countries worldwide, with this growth occurring organically from UK Biobank's increasing profile and distinctive features of our data resource (a combination of breadth, depth, duration and accessibility). Our business plan anticipates further growth in research usage of the data, arising from focused efforts to be led by this role, to raise awareness of UK Biobank in existing and new scientific fields, institutions and geographies currently under-represented in our user base, including in lower-income countries.

UK Biobank also engages with a wide range of other stakeholders, including our funders, the public, government, the media, suppliers, and other associated partners, with these relationships managed by individuals and teams across the organisation.

# THE ROLE

**REPORTS TO:** Deputy CEO

**LOCATION:** UK based at UK Biobank's facilities in Greater Manchester (initially based in Stockport with a move to Manchester Science Park mid to late 2026). Hybrid working, with travel to partner sites in Oxford and London and other meetings with key stakeholders.

UK Biobank is creating a new Director of Engagement role, which for the first time brings together our participant and researcher-facing engagement functions under a new senior leadership role. The Director of Engagement will be responsible for creating and executing strategies that focus on 'customer excellence' in all our interactions with participants and researchers so that we maximise the value of our engagement activities.

This leadership role will drive service excellence, including for how we:

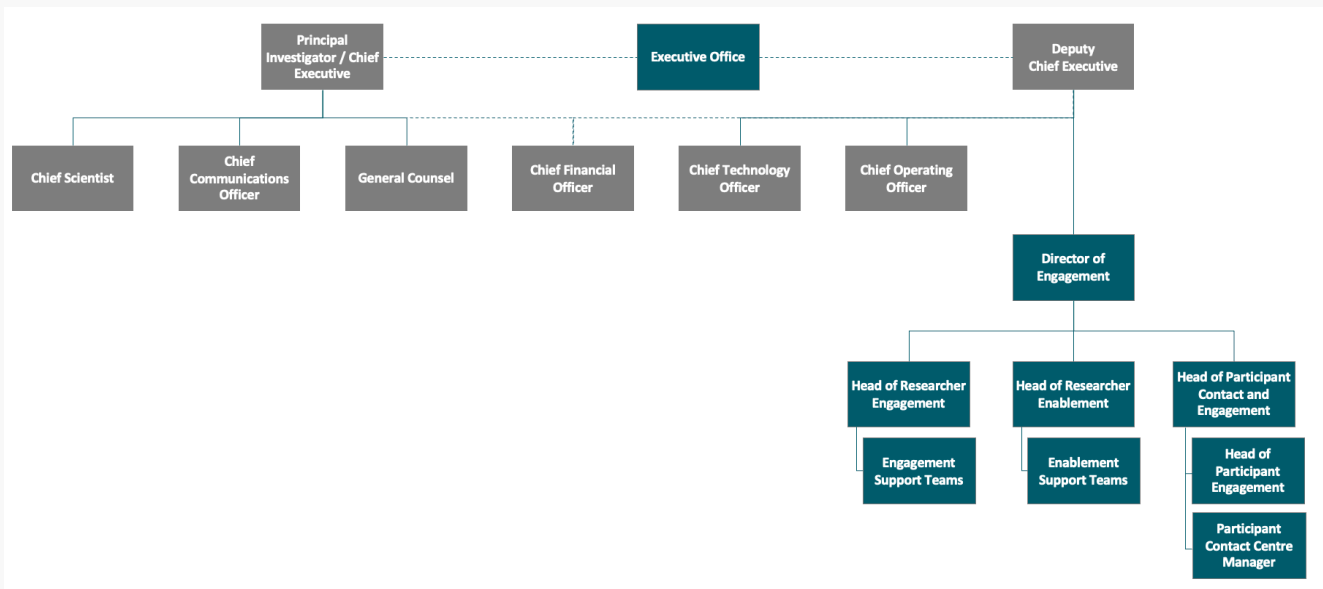
- Engage with, involve and retain volunteer participants who are fundamental to the ongoing success of UK Biobank.
- Grow use of UK Biobank by researchers by devising and deploying marketing strategies, and seeking continuous improvement of data access processes, systems, training and financial support for researchers.

The ideal candidate will be a strategic thinker with a passion for people-centred engagement and delivery of great customer service and experience. The Director of Engagement will have a unique opportunity to advance UK Biobank's strategic vision and deliver meaningful improvements to our researchers and participants.

The Director of Engagement will lead a newly created Engagement directorate, encompassing strategies to engage with both participants and researchers (recognising some needs overlap despite the differences in end user communities). This includes oversight for our contact services (each year we receive around 30,000 emails and 1,700 applications from researchers and have over 50,000 contact points with participants). The Director will engage all levels of the organisation to manage change seamlessly and effectively, fostering a proactive transformation culture focussed on providing excellent customer services to researchers and participants. They will also work closely with internal teams to ensure that participant and researcher data is handled securely, responsibly, and in alignment with organisational goals.

The Director of Engagement will report to the Deputy CEO of UK Biobank. The post will involve some national travel (principally between the main UK Biobank sites: Manchester, Oxford, and London) and has the potential for ad hoc international travel to researcher events, seminars and conferences.

The organogram below depicts reporting lines within the organisation:



## PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Leadership, Collaboration and Team Development:** Form and lead a new directorate from hitherto separate functions, supporting participant and researcher engagement and associated support services. Collaborate across the organisation to ensure participant and researcher engagement delivers against organisational objectives. Build and maintain a high-performance management team and support professional growth through mentoring, training, and leadership development.
- **Participant Involvement and Engagement:** Lead participant involvement and engagement across UK Biobank, developing and implementing strategies with your directorate to enhance participant involvement and engagement, encourage retention, and recruit existing participants to take part in new activities. Ensure participant feedback, including from the Participant Advisory Group, is monitored and engagement strategies reviewed and fine-tuned based on evidence. Oversee communication plans to keep participants informed, motivated, and valued. Work with the Communications Team to ensure effective use of digital tools, print, social media, events, and other communication channels to create a positive participant experience.
- **Researcher Engagement:** Lead researcher engagement across UK Biobank, developing and implementing strategies with your directorate to increase use by researchers globally. Develop a team that works with the support of the Communications Team, Researcher Enablement Team, and others to:
  - identify, target and engage potential research users;
  - develop and issue mass communications to all researchers or researcher segments;
  - seek community feedback, particularly regarding the UK Biobank Research Analysis Platform and its tools, and use a data-driven approach to optimise interactions with researchers and identify barriers to access and use;
  - develop and distribute engaging multi-channel digital content, appealing online and in-person events and compelling web and social media presence for researchers;
  - increase advocacy by building on relationships with world-class scientists and key opinion leaders.

- **Researcher Enablement:** Oversee delivery of the processes that researchers use to gain access to our data, developing and implementing strategies to ensure customer service at increasing scale, alongside compliance requirements. Work alongside the General Counsel to ensure data accessibility policies are clear and updated in response to new regulations or evolving data sharing practices. Collaborate with Data and Technology, Data Management and Scientific teams to ensure data is made accessible to researchers effectively and efficiently, taking account of researcher feedback, whilst safeguarding data security. Ensure communications to researchers are clear, appropriate and effective, and curate the UK Biobank Researcher Community. Ensure training and other support is provided to researchers to support their research goals, and compliance.
- **Contact services:** Ensure effective and efficient processes, systems and monitoring arrangements are in place to manage contact with our participants and researchers. Act as project sponsor for the implementation across the directorate of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which will be integral to future participant and researcher engagement and enablement.
- **Analysis and Reporting:** Develop and monitor Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for participant and researcher engagement (including data access), using them to develop insight, inform evidence-based strategies, and identify improvements. Ensure metrics are reported to the Executive Leadership Team and others. Develop and monitor metrics to measure effectiveness and cost-benefit of engagement initiatives. Monitor the impact of UK Biobank on published research, public policy, intellectual property, health services and outcomes.
- **Governance and Compliance:** Ensure compliance to standards, regulatory requirements, and internal frameworks, reporting on risks and issues as appropriate (including but not limited to the GDPR, ISO 9001, ISO 27001 and ethics approval). Ensure role holder and directorate stay updated on regulatory change.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Support the embedding of a culture focused on continuous improvement by influencing behaviours and informed by evidence and post-implementation review. Seek to identify within the new Directorate opportunities for co-working to support quality, efficiency and effectiveness. Ensure role holder and directorate stay updated on best practices, trends and new developments.

# THE PERSON

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE & KNOWLEDGE:

- Degree in Communications, Public Affairs, Customer Services, Marketing, Business Administration or a related field, or equivalent experience.
- Significant senior-level experience in stakeholder engagement, customer services, marketing or a related role.
- Proven track record of developing and implementing successful engagement strategies.
- Strong understanding of data privacy regulations (e.g., GDPR)
- Experience in leading cross-functional teams and managing projects with multiple stakeholders.
- Exceptional communication, interpersonal, and presentation skills.
- Strong problem-solving skills, with the ability to think strategically and execute tactically.
- Familiarity with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools and approaches, business intelligence or engagement tracking systems and their value in achieving organisational goals.
- Ability to manage multiple priorities in a fast-paced environment.

## DESIRABLE EXPERIENCE & KNOWLEDGE:

- Experience of implementing a CRM in their organisation.
- Experience of promoting and supporting researcher communities to use a large-scale scientific resource or facility.
- Experience of healthcare, research, or non-profit sector.
- Experience with informatics and/or data sharing platforms.
- Understanding how research impact is monitored, measured and assessed.
- Understanding of public and participant involvement and engagement strategies (PPIE).
- Experience in or dealing with data-rich or biomedical environments or similar organisational complexity and challenges, especially in sectors with large-scale stakeholder involvement.



# THE LOCATION



Manchester is a vibrant and dynamic city that offers a unique blend of rich industrial heritage and modern innovation. As one of the UK's largest and most influential cities, Manchester is renowned for its thriving cultural scene, diverse population, and strong economic growth. The city boasts an array of world-class amenities, including top-tier restaurants, shopping districts and entertainment venues, ensuring a high quality of life. The city offers excellent educational institutions and numerous green spaces.

Providing access to a robust business ecosystem, with key industries such as finance, technology, and media driving the local economy, Manchester is home to numerous multinational corporations, innovative startups and prestigious universities, fostering a collaborative and forward-thinking professional environment. Manchester's well-connected transport infrastructure, including an international airport and extensive rail and road networks, ensures seamless connectivity both domestically and internationally.

UK Biobank's new home at Manchester Science Park will occupy 3 floors, including laboratory space and a latest-generation robotic freezer that stores and retrieves UK Biobank's 20 million biological samples 4 times faster than before, revolutionising the pace of scientific discovery. It will increase UK Biobank's capacity, speed and efficiency and is supported by a £127.6m award from UK Research and Innovation for the next phase of UK Biobank's development.

UK Biobank will be located alongside fast-growth life science businesses working in diagnostics, genomics, biotech and precision medicine in the highly specialist purpose-built building, which includes features such as, enhanced service resilience, cooling and ventilation systems, high security access and 100GB superfast connectivity. The new facility will be 100% electric and net zero carbon in construction and operation in its shared spaces - one of the first lab spaces in the UK to be so.



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# ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS

## SEARCH AND SELECTION PROCESS

UK Biobank holds a passion for diversity and equality means creating a work environment for all employees that is welcoming, respectful, engaging, and enriched with opportunities for personal and professional development.

Applications or enquiries should be made to WittKieffer, the executive search firm exclusively engaged to assist with this appointment. Applications should include:

- A cover letter; and
- a curriculum vitae

For a confidential discussion about the role and expectations, please contact:

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