

---

Director of Communications  
UK Biobank  
Candidate Brief  
June 2022

---

## Introduction from UK Biobank's Principal Investigator/Chief Executive



### Professor Sir Rory Collins

UK Biobank is scientifically unparalleled and arguably the UK's most significant scientific asset. With its unique combination of scale, depth, maturity and accessibility, more than 1,700 peer-reviewed publications based on UK Biobank in 2021 alone, and an exponential increase in citations and patents, UK Biobank has become the world's most important health resource.

Its great success is testament to a visionary collaboration between successive UK Governments and scientific research funders – most notably the MRC and Wellcome – who understood the significance of advances in genomics and that information from such a database could ultimately lead to improved diagnosis, treatment and prevention strategies for the most devastating diseases, benefiting millions of people in the UK and around the world.

Since inception, UK Biobank has also leveraged £227m of industry funding with increasing levels of interest in, and use of, UK Biobank by industry. UK Biobank is a major contributor to the advancement of modern medicine and treatment and has enabled many scientific discoveries that improve human health.

UK Biobank has a unique role to play in the Government's UK Life Sciences Vision, in both its Preconditions for Success and its Healthcare Missions, set out in June 2021. UK Biobank's role can be best understood both in terms of its ability to attract vital industry investment in UK Life Sciences and in enabling major scientific discoveries that improve public health.

The key focus of UK Biobank over the last five years has been on generating increasingly detailed genetic information on all 500,000 participants and making those data available to the international research community. The unprecedented scale, detail and quality of these data has enabled researchers to make unique discoveries about the relevance of genetics for disease.

For the next five years, our focus will shift to measuring the products of the genes. In particular, the levels of different proteins and metabolites in the blood, urine and saliva collected from participants more than ten years earlier. Completion of the initial whole body imaging of 100,000 participants, followed by repeat imaging of 60,000 of them, will add to the richness of the data available for studying biological changes that lead to the development of disease, or provide protection against it.

None of this would be possible without the altruism of the 500,000 British citizens who agreed to join the study some decades ago and the many tens of thousands of scientists around the world ensuring that their contributions deliver on the long-term vision of the funders to make improvements in human health and wellbeing that are of global significance.

# Director of Communications

## UK Biobank

June 2022

---

### Company Overview

UK Biobank is a uniquely detailed large-scale prospective study, containing genomic, lifestyle, imaging and health information from 500,000 UK participants. The resource is globally accessible to approved researchers to enable novel and important scientific discoveries that improve human health.

UK Biobank's database is unique, combining several powerful differentiators, including:

- scale (500,000 people);
- depth (detailed lifestyle information, genetic and other assay data, imaging data);
- maturity (large numbers of different health outcomes available for study, 15 years ahead of any comparable cohort study); and
- accessibility (with over 30,000 researchers worldwide already using the data).

Increasing awareness of UK Biobank is more important than ever as the database grows in value. With over 75% of all new researcher registrations coming from outside the UK, it truly is a global resource accessible to approved researchers undertaking health-related research.

UK Biobank is a distributed organisation, currently headquartered in Stockport, Greater Manchester, with four imaging centres delivering the world's largest multi-modal imaging study located in Stockport, Reading, Bristol and Newcastle. UK Biobank's epidemiological, health data teams and many of our systems are hosted at the Oxford Population Health (the Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford).

UK Research and Innovation have announced that subject to final approval, UK Biobank will receive an additional £128m of funding to support the next phase of our development. This transformative award will replace and enhance UK Biobank's infrastructure, creating a state-of-the-art facility in Manchester that will become the UK Biobank's headquarters from 2026.

## UK Biobank's impact on research

With the addition of genetic sequencing data on a scale never seen before in health research, UK Biobank is one of the most significant resources for identifying target genes for drug discovery. Large scale genetic sequencing on the whole exome and whole genome of 500,000 participants is accelerating scientific discovery for human health. For example, scientists have identified rare protein-coding variants that have a large impact on complex traits, such as obesity. Individuals with a variant that suppresses protein production by the GPR75 gene expressed in the brain were observed to have significantly lower rates of BMI. The finding may lead to development of a drug that can inhibit GPR75 to offer a therapeutic strategy for treating obesity.

UK Biobank is also becoming increasingly important for the NHS and the public purse. Implementation of outputs derived from UK Biobank will result in significant savings of public expenditure, by improving prevention, early diagnosis and treatment, thereby improving population health and lowering NHS costs. For instance, the UK Biobank-derived polygenic risk score concept, allows a low-cost genotyping test to identify a substantial proportion of the population at high risk of one or more common conditions, such as heart disease, who could benefit from more effectively targeted prevention and screening strategies.

The unprecedented scale, detail and quality of UK Biobank's imaging project has enabled researchers to make unique discoveries about the development of many diseases in older age. These images are allowing scientists to study the impact of dementia risk factors on the brain and define early brain "signatures" of dementia that are providing clues to how cognitive decline and dementia start. When combined with the wealth of health data in UK Biobank, such as cognitive function tests, and genetics, this is allowing researchers the opportunity to spot dementia before symptoms appear.

A high degree of participant engagement within the cohort has enabled UK Biobank to play a vital role in helping to manage the global coronavirus pandemic. Surveillance studies during the COVID-19 pandemic have increased researchers' understanding of the longer-term health impacts of coronavirus infection with over 237 COVID- related publications produced based on the UK Biobank resource.

Given the current pace of UK Biobank's development, coupled with the large increase in the number of researchers accessing the resource, there is likely to be an exponential growth in the impact of the discoveries that emerge that will be of global significance.

## Overview of The Role

This role is a truly unique opportunity for an enthusiastic, experienced individual to help advance the work of a globally-leading research resource whose unique characteristics and value are increasingly recognised, and whose impact and value is growing rapidly.

This newly created role will lead the development, delivery and monitoring of UK Biobank's communications strategies to engage with different audiences, including:

- participants and their relatives;
- researchers, staff working with other population health resources and the broader scientific community;
- the mainstream and scientific press and through them the general public;
- HM Government and parliamentarians;
- internal teams;
- regulators;
- long-standing and future funders.

As part of UK Biobank's Executive Management Team and reporting to the Principal Investigator and Chief Executive, Professor Sir Rory Collins, you will work closely with senior colleagues across the organisation, and develop internal communications approaches that foster a sense of community across multiple sites.

You will have direct line-management responsibility for the Communications Team, which currently comprises three staff members based in Oxford. The role-holder will also take an active role in implementation with their team (e.g. drafting materials, dealing with journalists, using social media, etc.).

The role will be based at UK Biobank's premises in Oxford and will involve regular travel across the UK, and occasionally, internationally.

## Principal Duties & Responsibilities

- To develop and implement a strategy to engage with key stakeholder groups (including participants, researchers, funders, and partner organisations) through use of a range of media (including website, social, print, and news) and events to raise the profile of UK Biobank.
- To manage press and media relations, working with external partners where beneficial, ensuring that a clear and consistent message is conveyed across all channels.
- To develop and implement a series of flagship scientific conferences, webinars, podcasts and similar engagement opportunities as part of UK Biobank's outreach to the global scientific research community.
- To liaise with the Scientific team and the research community to identify and promote important research-related news stories.
- To develop and implement an effective multi-site internal communications strategy appropriate for a distributed organisation.
- To work closely with different groups across the organisation to develop and implement a strategy for participant engagement and involvement – e.g. participant events and focus groups.
- To oversee the ongoing development of UK Biobank's website and social media.
- To provide leadership, line-management, and development for the Communications Team and work with UK Biobank's external communications advisors.
- To take an evidence-based approach to measuring the impact and cost effectiveness of communications activities.
- To build and maintain a comprehensive database of UK Biobank's communications activities, develop and implement policy and process, and inform the development of new systems for customer / stakeholder management.
- To undertake other duties as relevant to your job.

## Person Specification

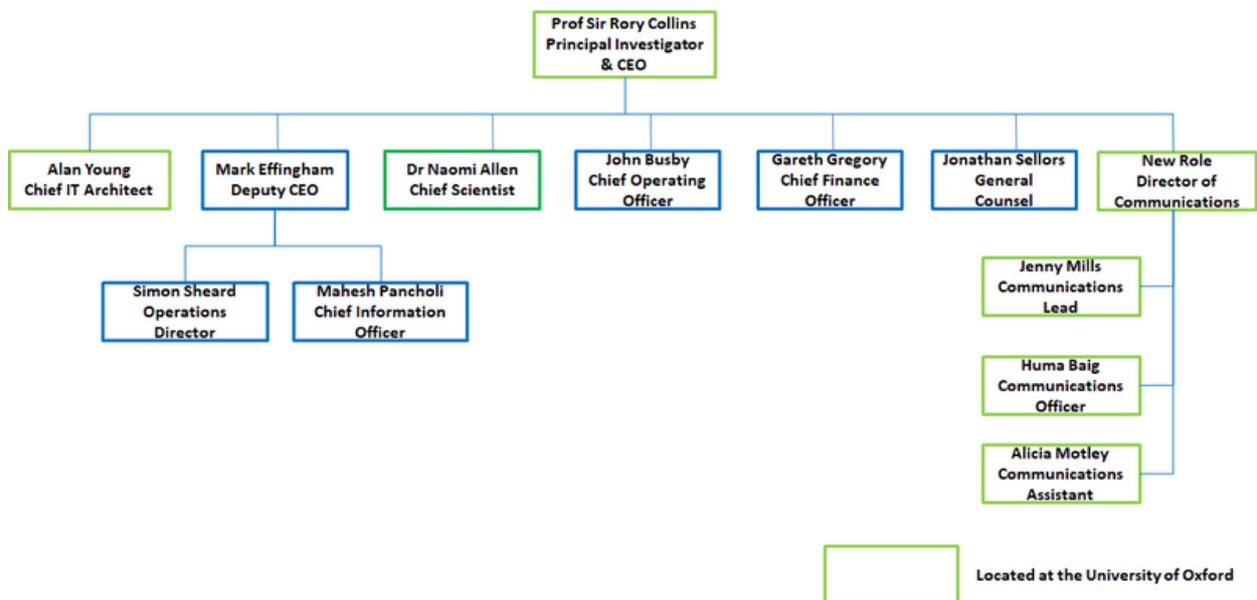
### Essential

- A degree or equivalent experience.
- Significant relevant professional experience at a senior level in developing and implementing both external and internal communications strategies across different stakeholder groups.
- In-depth knowledge, understanding and experience of print, broadcast and online news media and social media.
- Demonstrable experience of assimilating complex information and ideas quickly, identifying the pertinent points and making them accessible for a wider audience.
- Ability to translate science into meaning for a variety of stakeholders by creating engaging and impactful content.
- Ability to work with complex figures and statistics.
- Experience of measuring impact using qualitative and quantitative measures.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, including superb written accuracy.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including diplomacy, confidentiality and the ability to inspire the confidence of senior researchers and others.
- Resilient, calm and effective under pressure, with the ability to juggle priorities and meet tight deadlines.
- Line management and budget management experience.
- Strong organisational skills, with the ability to identify trends and forward plan.

## Desirable

- Experience of public engagement.
- Experience of working in the medical research sector.
- Experience of supporting philanthropic fundraising and stewardship from a communications perspective.
- A professional qualification in a relevant area, e.g. Chartered Institute of Public Relations /Chartered Institute of Marketing diploma.
- Evidence of continuing professional development.

## Organogram



## Employee Benefits

- 26 Days Annual Leave (increasing with length of service) + Bank Holidays
- USS salary sacrifice pension scheme (9.8% employee contribution & 21.6% employer contribution)
- Life Assurance Cover
- Enhanced maternity/paternity/adoption/shared parental leave
- Enhanced Compassionate Leave
- Enhanced Reserve Forces leave
- Enhanced company sick pay scheme
- Cycle to work scheme
- Health and wellbeing initiatives including
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Eye-care scheme
- Annual Flu vaccination
- Employee discount platform scheme
- Active social committee
- Flexible work life balance policy
- Onsite restaurant

## How to Apply

Applications are welcome by sending a CV and covering letter by 5pm on 11th July 2022 to [jobs@ukbiobank.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@ukbiobank.ac.uk). First stage interviews are expected to take place during week commencing 18th July 2022.

For informal enquiries ahead of submitting an application, please contact [jobs@ukbiobank.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@ukbiobank.ac.uk) before the closing date.

All candidates are also requested to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, which will be emailed to you upon receipt of your application. Information on this form is not shared with any of the interview panel.

Our 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.

For detailed information on how we process your personal data, please review our privacy policy [here](#).

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

Click on this link for further information on [Working for UK Biobank](#).