



Job Description

Job title:	Principal Scientist (Emerging Infections)
Group:	Clinical & Emerging Infections
Division/Directorate:	TARZET
Pay grade/band:	G7
Line Manager:	Lead Epidemiologist
Location	Colindale
Hours per week:	37.5
Job type: (i.e. Fixed Term/Permanent)	Permanent
Security level	Standard
Is there an on-call requirement for this role?	No

INTRODUCTION

At the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) our mission is to provide health security for the nation by protecting from infectious disease and external hazards. We are a trusted source of advice to government and to the public, focusing on reducing inequalities in the way different communities experience and are impacted by infectious disease, environmental hazards, and other threats to health.

Our mission is challenging, innovative and in the spotlight. We will work to ensure our people have the diverse skills, experiences and backgrounds we need to thrive, that our employees are representative of the communities we serve and feel valued and enabled to play their part in delivering our work.

Creating our working culture is an ongoing process which we are developing by listening and learning together, hearing and acting upon diverse voices and opinions to develop a common sense of identity and effective ways of working.

JOB SUMMARY

The Emerging Infections and Zoonoses (EIZ) Team are part of TARZET (Tuberculosis; Acute Respiratory, Zoonoses, Emerging infections, and Travel health) division. The work of the team



covers a range of activities including providing scientific support to the Human Animal Infections Risk Surveillance group (HAIRS); horizon scanning for infectious disease threats and assessing any potential threats identified on behalf of the group; coordinating activities related to zoonoses across UKHSA; participating in High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) preparedness and response activities; undertaking surveillance of zoonoses; and working closely with animal health colleagues on the assessment, management and control of zoonotic infections.

The postholder will work leading the on elements of the emerging infection horizon scanning and risk assessment activities. This includes analysing and interpreting complex data feeds about often complex and emerging situations nationally and internationally, and then make a rapid assessment of the public health significance of the data. If an event looks like it is of significance, the post holder would be expected liaise with senior staff within UKHSA and Other Government Departments (OGDs).

The postholder will also be responsible for producing the various epidemic intelligence outputs which go to a wide range of high-level stakeholders including expert committees, Government, and inter-government agencies.

They will be responsible for managing existing horizon scanning programmes as well as developing and introducing new systems as required. They will also be responsible for providing rapid assessments, situational updates, and specialist papers on emerging situations to a range of national and international stakeholders, including expert committees, Government and inter-government agencies. Timely information outputs will be a crucial aspect of the post.

The postholder will also:

- provide specialist scientific and logistical support to national outbreaks and international outbreaks requiring a cross-Government response
- present epidemic intelligence findings at a range of national and international meetings and conferences
- manage scientific staff and undertake their annual appraisals,
- develop research proposals;
- write scientific reports and papers for publication
- contribute to producing official guidance e.g. on GOV.UK
- teach and train on postgraduate level and other courses
- serve on UKHSA development/work groups.

They will be expected to work independently at a senior level and will have significant autonomy within their specialist area of expertise.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Co-ordination of Emerging Infections activities



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- Ensure the maintenance and development of horizon scanning activities with daily and monthly outputs, and lead continued participation in innovations such as the all hazards International Forward Look and High Consequence Infectious Disease monthly reports
- Identify gaps in epidemic intelligence activities, prioritizing and developing new initiatives as appropriate
- Contribute to risk assessment work and to the public health response for cross Government activities and lead on potential emerging infectious threats. This will include ensuring the scientific validity of the risk assessments and that the findings are communicated to the relevant stakeholders. Provide robust alert and communication systems for potential threats
- Provide high quality advice and guidance for those dealing with emerging infectious disease threats including in OGDs and Agencies.
- Ensure continued development of UKHSA's emerging infections and zoonoses web pages and ensuring that the advice and information is accurate and up to date

Incident support

Responsible for public health advice and assistance in zoonotic and emerging infectious incidents or outbreaks and advising their prevention and control, including contributing to the development of guidance in the management of such incidents. This may be within UKHSA or externally to partner agencies such as DEFRA, APHA, etc.

- Support cross-Government responses to emerging incidents of infectious diseases by providing technical and epidemiological information and papers for high levels groups, including COBR.
- Provide public health specialist in-put to cross-Government meetings and to OGDs e.g. FCDO. Rapidly produce high quality technical papers in non-technical language for UKHSA and cross-Government groups to inform responses to rapidly involving situations
- Write or contribute to the writing of outbreak control team reports and subsequent publications.

Section specific

- Manage scientific staff ensuring annual objectives are met and that performance is regularly appraised.
- Contribute to the management of the EIZ section and to be a positive and influential representative for colleagues.

Research



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- Initiate research or health protection projects within the postholder's area of specialist expertise.
- Write research proposals and present them to funding bodies.
- Carry out research projects and supervise the work of others.
- Write research reports and present at scientific meetings.

Reports and publications

- Write or contribute to scientific papers for publication in peer reviewed journals and EIZ produced reports
- Write or contribute to UKHSA reports, Annual and Update Reports
- Write or contribute to technical reports and advice documents for expert committees, cross-Government groups, and for the relevant national and local incidents

Teaching and Training

- Provide training and other presentations in the postholder's area of specialist expertise and the work of EIZ for UKHSA internal training courses, university postgraduate courses, and professional development training programmes
- Provide training for new members of staff on epidemic intelligence and risk assessment
- Collaborate with other senior members of the department in developing and managing training courses or their equivalents, for internal and external use.

Other

The above is only an outline of the tasks, responsibilities and outcomes required of the role. You will carry out any other duties as may reasonably be required by the Directorate.

The job description and person specification may be reviewed on an ongoing basis in accordance with the changing needs of the organization.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Identify, discuss and action own professional performance and training / development needs with your line manager through appraisal / individual development plan. Attending internal / external training events
- To participate in all mandatory training as required, i.e. fire safety, information governance and all other mandatory training.

KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS



The post holder will develop working relationships and communicate regularly with a wide range of individuals, clinical and non-clinical, internal and external to UKHSA. This will include;

Internal

- Medical, scientific, specialist, and administrative colleagues within the Clinical and Emerging Infections Division (particularly the Rare and Imported Pathogens laboratory) and in other UKHSA Directorates including colleagues in Health Protection, Port Health, Emergency Preparedness and Response Division, and the Communications Team

External

- Medical, veterinary, scientific officers, and policy officials across a wide range of Government Agencies and Departments including: the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Cabinet Office; Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO); Government Office for Science etc. as well as other international organizations such as the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), World Health Organization, plus colleagues from the human and animal health Agencies in the Devolved Administrations; collaborating researchers in universities; and a wide range of other stakeholders.

Person specification



Assessment will take place with reference to the following information

A - Application	I - Interview	C – Proof of qualification / membership of professional body		T - Test
Description		Essential	Desirable	Assessment
Qualifications				
Higher degree in Epidemiology or an allied subject (MSc or PhD).		X		A,C
Knowledge and experience				
Extensive experience in epidemiology and infectious disease surveillance. Providing epidemiological information and advice to colleagues and external agencies.		X		A,I
Extensive experience of collating, understanding and reporting situational analysis outputs at national level.			X	A,I
Presenting scientific papers at national and international meetings and conferences.		X		A,I
Using databases, spreadsheets, statistical and graphics packages. Ability to analyse, summarise and interpret complex epidemiological and situational awareness data.		X		A,I
Understanding of recent advances in epidemic intelligence and risk assessment of emerging infections		X		A,I
Managing collaborative, multidisciplinary projects.			X	A,I
Skills / capabilities/ behaviours				
Ability to work independently and to tight deadlines		X		A,I
Ability to plan and conduct multidisciplinary scientific projects.		X		A,I
Writing clear and concise scientific papers and/or project reports.		X		A,I
Equality and diversity				
An understanding of and commitment to equality of opportunity and good working relationships.		√		I



As a civil servant your performance and appraisal will be assessed against the civil service core competencies or success profile elements detailed below:

Strategic cluster – setting direction:	People cluster – engaging people:	Performance cluster – delivering results:
1. Changing and improving 2. Making effective decisions	1. Leading and communicating 2. Collaborating and partnering	1. Managing a quality service 2. Delivering at pace

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to the job specific requirements above this role will require adherence to the following:

Performance Development and Appraisal

All employees are required to partake in a monthly and quarterly review of their work. The process is described here: [Personal development - Performance development and appraisals \(ukhsa.gov.uk\)](https://www.ukhsa.gov.uk/personal-development-performance-development-and-appraisals)

Code of conduct and revalidation process for professionally qualified employee groups

All employees are required to work in accordance with their professional group's code of conduct and revalidation process as appropriate and relevant to their role (e.g. NMC, GMC, Department of Health Code of Conduct for Senior Managers, CIPD, etc).

Information governance

UKHSA processes (collects, uses and shares) large volumes of data and information of different types and forms, including personal data about identifiable individuals.

Information governance (IG) is about managing the risks to the confidentiality, integrity and availability of all this data and information.

UKHSA data and information must be managed in accordance with the requirements of data protection and related law, and best practice standards and guidance. As an employee, you are responsible for:

- 1) protecting the confidentiality of UKHSA data and information by:
 - complying with the Data Protection Act 2018 (incorporating the General Data Protection Regulation)
 - complying with the common law duty of confidentiality, the Caldicott Principles and the NHS Code of Practice on Confidentiality when processing personal data
 - complying with the policies, procedures and guidance in place to protect the confidentiality of UKHSA data and information, for example by:
 - only accessing the UKHSA data and information you have approval to use for your role, and not sharing this access to UKHSA data and information with anyone else



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- not attempting to circumvent the managerial, procedural and technical security controls in place to protect UKHSA data and information
 - not processing UKHSA personal data outside UKHSA office sites without approval
- 2) complying with the policies, procedures and guidance in place to protect the integrity (in other words, the accuracy and completeness) of UKHSA data and information, for example by:
- only altering UKHSA data and information if you have approval to do so as part of your role
- 3) complying with the policies, procedures and guidance in place to protect the availability of UKHSA data and information, for example by:
- complying with the policies, procedures and guidance on the secure and acceptable use of UKHSA ICT systems and equipment
- 4) complying with the law and UKHSA policies, procedures and guidance on the management of records, including the proper use of the Government Security Classifications.
- 5) reporting incidents affecting the confidentiality, integrity and availability UKHSA data and information, for example, unauthorised access to UKHSA data and information, or the loss or compromise of UKHSA ICT systems or equipment
- 6) completing the annual information governance training appropriate to your role

UKHSA reserves the right to monitor your access to UKHSA data and information, including your use of UKHSA ICT systems and equipment, in order to assure your compliance with data protection and related law, and with the UKHSA policies, procedures and guidance in place to support this.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disciplinary action being taken, and sanctions being applied up to and including your dismissal.

You are personally accountable for deliberate or avoidable data protection breaches. Failure to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 may result in you being reported by UKHSA to the Information Commissioner's Office, which may lead to criminal prosecution.

Conflict of interests

UKHSA employees must not use their official position, or any information obtained through their role in UKHSA to further their private interests or the interests of others. This means any circumstances where there is, or could be perceived to be, a conflict of interest between the individual's role in UKHSA and any other business or private capacity interests that they are involved with, where the other interests could influence how an individual carries out their role.

In accordance with UKHSA [Code of Conduct Policy](#), and based on the requirements set out in the [Civil Service Code](#), the [Civil Service Management Code](#), you must declare all Outside Interests, both before commencing in-post and within ten working days of any addition or change. Outside



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interests, be they business, hobby or trade, must not compromise or conflict with the appointment and role in UKHSA.

A key test of whether an Outside Interest could be perceived to be a conflict of interest is where there is a risk that a fair-minded outside observer, acting reasonably, would conclude that there is a real possibility of bias.

A Conflict of Interest Declaration Form must be completed when joining the department and If there is the possibility of a conflict of interest whilst in-post. You must also inform your Line Manager whenever you make a declaration/register an interest.

In addition, the Policy requires you to declare all situations where you or a close relative or associate has a controlling interest in a business (such as a private company, public or voluntary organisation) or in any activity which may compete for any contract to supply goods or services to UKHSA. You must register such interests with UKHSA, either on appointment or within ten working days of whenever such interests are acquired.

You should not engage in these activities or outside employment without the written consent of UKHSA, which will not be withheld unreasonably. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are not placed in a position that may give rise to a conflict between your private interests and your UKHSA duties and that these do not bring, or potentially bring, UKHSA into disrepute.

Diversity

An important part of our mission at the UKHSA is to help reduce health inequalities across the UK. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted how certain groups are impacted negatively by health inequality, and we want to ensure we learn from these challenges. To do that effectively we need to continue building a talented workforce that represents the diversity of our population. Our ethos is to be an inclusive organisation for all our employees and stakeholders, where differences drive innovative solutions to meet the needs of our workforce and wider communities. This in turn produces more accountable and trusted public services and better decisions; better because they are more attuned to the needs and interests of all our communities, helping to address inequality. We are committed to ensuring our culture and ways of working allow all of our people to thrive at work.

Emergency Response

Given the nature of the work of UKHSA, as a Category 1 responder, you may be required in an emergency, if deemed a necessity, to redeploy to another role at short notice. You may also be required to work at any other location, within reasonable travelling distance of your permanent home address, in line with the provisions set out in your contract of employment.

Health and safety

You must co-operate with management in discharging its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and take reasonable health and safety of yourself and others and ensure the agreed safety procedures are carried out to maintain a safe environment for service users, employees and visitors.

Centre/divisional directors - are responsible for coordinating health and safety activities in their centres/divisions and will determine the necessary management structure and arrangements. Directors will ensure that their actions and decisions at work reinforce the requirements of UKHSA's health and safety policy and arrangements.

Managers - are responsible for implementing the organisation's health and safety policies and arrangements and for ensuring that risk assessments, safe systems of work, control measures and



employee training are up to date and effective. Managers will inspect premises, ensure accidents and incidents are reported/investigated and assist in auditing health and safety management arrangements.

All employees must comply with any health and safety training: report all accidents, incidents, illnesses and untoward occurrences to line management without undue delay and must not interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of the health, safety and welfare of other employees.

Risk management

All employees have a responsibility to report all clinical and non-clinical accidents or incidents promptly and, when requested, to co-operate with any investigation undertaken.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (If applicable)

If the post holder is required to have contact with vulnerable adults or persons under the age of 18 then the post holder will be subject to a criminal record check from the Disclosure and Barring Service prior to the appointment being confirmed. The disclosure will include details of cautions, reprimands, and final warnings, as well as convictions if applicable. All employees must be familiar with and adhere to the UKHSA child protection and safeguarding adult and children policies and procedures. Employees must comply with all statutory legislation and guidance relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. All employees are required to attend child protection and safeguarding adults awareness training, additional training and supervision regarding child protection relevant to their position and role.