# Candidate information pack

# Director of Research, Policy and Evidence

This is an incredible role at the heart of global efforts to defeat meningitis by 2030.

The role reports to the Chief Executive and forms part of the senior management team (SMT) alongside the Director of Finance and Administration, Director of Partnerships and Funding, the Director of Communications, Advocacy and Support, the Head of Fundraising and the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (CoMO) Network Lead.

The purpose of this role is to enable MRF to achieve its goals through research, an enabling research environment, evidence-based policy, health professional guidance and the creation of associated activity and resources. The post-holder is expected to be or become one of the world’s leading thinkers on meningitis with an extensive network amongst international research, clinical and public health communities.

The role is also very close to people and families as it provides guidance to support teams working directly with families affected. The holder acts as the guardian of MRFs intellectual integrity and cements our reputation as an evidence-led organisation in the UK and around the world.

It is a highly demanding role, requiring the need to keep up to date with latest research; run suitable accredited processes for funding peer reviewed research; organise a Scientific Advisory Panel of experts and a Medical Advisory Group of clinician experts; and organise the agenda and speakers for a global scientific conference every two years. The holder will also write and oversee the production of in-house academic papers for publication in peer reviewed journals; provide evidence and content for informed public affairs, advocacy and communications work take part in media and advocacy work; and represent MRF on external bodies such as the World Health Technical Task force for the creation of the global roadmap for meningitis.

The post is being advertised now as the current holder is retiring after 25 years with MRF.

# About meningitis

Meningitis and septicaemia are serious, life-threatening illnesses. Meningitis is the swelling of the meninges, which is the lining around the brain and spinal cord, caused mainly by germs entering the body. Septicaemia is blood poisoning caused by the same germs that can cause meningitis and this blood poisoning causes sepsis. Meningitis and septicaemia are illnesses that can kill in hours. Anyone, anywhere of any age can get meningitis and septicaemia, although some people are at higher [risk](https://www.meningitis.org/meningitis/are-you-at-risk) than others

Together, meningitis and neonatal sepsis (sepsis in babies under 1 month old when it is almost impossible to separate as a diagnosis from meningitis) are the second biggest infectious killers of under 5’s globally. They kill more under 5’s than malaria as well as being a leading cause of moderate to severe intellectual disability worldwide.

The impact of the disease can be devastating for individuals and families. When we ask them what they want us to do on their behalf, families commonly say “Please make sure no one else has to go through what we have”.

# About Meningitis Research Foundation

Over the past 30 years Meningitis Research Foundation has developed into the world’s leading meningitis charity working both in the UK and internationally to defeat meningitis wherever it exists.

Our vision is of a world free from meningitis and septicaemia. A world where effective vaccinations can protect everyone.  A world where people who do get the diseases get the most effective diagnosis and treatments possible. A world where people affected and their families have the best support and information.

To achieve this, we bring together people and expertise, linking patient experience, research, policy and practice. We do this by supporting research into effective vaccines, diagnostics and treatments. We share results of the research with the public, health care professionals and research networks to raise awareness of what they can do to increase personal, family and community protection, optimise treatments and strengthen health systems. We provide direct support to people and families affected. We believe that working in partnership the knowledge, experience, skills and finance available from the private sector are essential to achieving long term and sustainable impacts. We fundraise, inform and educate.

Our flagship work includes:

* Being a member of the WHO Technical Task Force to [defeat meningitis by 2030](https://www.who.int/initiatives/defeating-meningitis-by-2030).
* Running the [Confederation of Meningitis Organisations](https://www.comomeningitis.org/) which represents 50 like-minded members in more than 30 countries.
* Hosting a one-stop-shop for the best data for modelled estimates on burden of meningitis called the [Meningitis Progress Tracker](https://www.meningitis.org/mpt) that was recently endorsed by WHO as a critical tracking mechanism for the new global roadmap.
* Co-leading on the advocacy and engagement pillar of the new global roadmap with UNICEF.
* Providing a secretariat support function for the [Global Meningitis Genome Partnership](https://www.meningitis.org/global-meningitis-genome-partnership) building on the establishment of the Global Meningitis Genome Library.
* Delivering an internationally renowned [research conference](https://www.meningitis.org/healthcare-professionals/conferences-and-symposia/mrf-conference-2019) every 2 years showcasing latest cutting-edge research on meningitis from around the world.
* [Funding research](https://www.meningitis.org/research-projects) into meningitis, especially related to genomics and the lifetime impact of meningitis.
* Providing a world class website and support service that has over 2 million uses each year.

We are currently a medium sized charity with around 25 staff and an average of £2-£3milion income each year but with a belief that there is potentially to grow from this historic base using the potential of the new global roadmap and our increased UK and international profile.

# Our values

Our values are extremely important to us and mean far more to us than words on a page.

## We are evidence-led

We pride ourselves on being grounded in facts. Research and evidence are at our core and remain essential to our work today – guided by our panel of scientific advisors and disease specialists. This approach ensures we provide considered responses to the challenges brought about by the disease, wherever they may be found.

## We operate with integrity

To the people we support and work with, we are a trusted source of information and learning. We weigh all of the evidence and operate with openness and transparency to exceed expectations and deliver the best services and responses - be that helping a family or working with health organisations around the world.

## We pursue our goals with determination

We will not stop until we defeat meningitis. We will relentlessly seek answers, work tirelessly with purpose and are driven by those we help. Our dedication enables the best modern science, research and on-the-ground learning to work in the positive interests of individuals, families and communities impacted by meningitis and septicaemia, both here in the UK and in communities around the world

## We are a passionate advocate

We are a united voice against meningitis and septicaemia and a dedicated champion for those it affects. We exist to ensure that the voices of our members, supporters and those impacted by meningitis and septicaemia in the UK and around the world, are heard and not forgotten. We are highly focused in our work and inform and advise health policy and practice, driven to make a contribution to reducing the burden of the disease and its aftermath.

## We collaborate to make progress

We believe in partnership and collaboration. Whether we are supporting individuals and families who have been impacted by the disease, working with international funding partners or supporting on-the-ground health teams working in challenging environments, we combine resources and expertise to deliver the very best results. We share the knowledge we’ve gained through more than 30 years of work to support and enable those impacted by or battling to defeat the disease.

## We act with compassion

We are driven by the stories of those we work for and with. We care deeply, listen and take the best action for each unique circumstance. Whether it’s providing direct support, finding the right information, or campaigning for the change that will make a real difference.

If you have read and understand these values and they appeal to you they are a good indicator of what it is like to work at MRF. If these are not your values, we encourage you to seek work with another employer whose values better match yours.

More information on MRF [website](https://www.meningitis.org/). Our new strategy will be released publicly in summer 2021.

# Job description: Director of Research, Policy and Evidence

## Core Purpose

To lead on research, evidence and policy for the charity to enable the translation of best practice into policy impact.

## Reports to

Chief Executive

## Responsibilities

* **Strategy**: to develop, lead the implementation and monitor and report on the success of the Directorate strategy and input to organisation wide strategy as part of the SMT, including a specific approach to research and what this means to MRF.
* **Research:**
	+ **Scientific panel and Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) accredited research funding**: lead on all aspects of the organisation and management of MRFs Scientific Advisory Panel including recruitment and relationship management of the Panel; research funding rounds; grant awards; grant management and all aspects of reporting for the research portfolio and impact of projects funded by MRF.
	+ **Academic papers:** based on research conducted in-house, write, develop and produce peer-reviewed academic papers of relevance to MRFs strategy.
	+ **Policy papers:** based on research conducted in-house, write, develop and support the production of policy papers of relevance to MRFs strategy.
* **WHO Global Roadmap for Meningitis:**
	+ **Representative** on the WHO Technical Task force for the implementation of the global roadmap.
	+ **Meningitis Progress Tracker (MPT):** lead on the development and maintenance of the content of the MPT as a global monitoring and communication tool for the World Health Organization (WHO) Defeating Meningitis by 2030 Global Roadmap.
	+ **Monitoring and Evaluation:** represent MRF on the Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Committee of the Global Roadmap.
	+ **Global Meningitis Genome Partnership (GMGP)**: lead on the development and management of the MRF secretariat for the international GMGP in support of the Global Roadmap.
* **Meetings:**
	+ **MRF conferences, symposiums and meetings:** working with external experts, lead on the development and agreement of suitable agenda, speakers and formats for the MRF Scientific Research conference and other research or clinically focused symposia hosted by MRF; and promote meetings through extensive networks.
	+ **External conferences and events**: be the MRF senior representative at key research events, including seeking opportunities to present latest in-house research and projects.
	+ **Convening:** oversee the development and coordination of new opportunistic key events and meetings that support our goals.
* **Medical information and resources:** lead the development of new and updating existing resources, content (online and offline), fact sheets, website, training materials and courses for health professionals and public based on latest evidence and research.
* **Support:** as required**,** provide disease knowledge and guidance to teams across MRF and especially the Support team to ensure MRF is communicating appropriately about the disease to all relevant audiences.
* **Evidence**: where necessary, lead on the development of suitable evidence for use in policy, advocacy and communications work in collaboration with the Director of Advocacy, Communications and Support.
* **Consultations:** lead on the identification of health and public health related consultations requiring a response from MRF andwork closely with the Director of Advocacy, Communications and Support to develop and submit suitable responses.
* **External senior stakeholder relationship management**: Represent MRF on relevant sector bodies and working groups; present to high level external stakeholders about our work; represent beneficiaries of our work to various bodies including national and international health bodies; industry; researchers, public health officials and civil society representatives; deputising for CEO as required.
* **Media:** advise communications teams on media content and approach; represent MRF in the media as required; liaise with stakeholders such as Public Health professionals like Public Health England and international organisations like the World Health Organization to ensure alignment of evidence and media activity.
* **Services:** advise on the developmentand implementation of MRFs support services and portfolio of associated activity (helpline, ambassadors, befrienders and outreach programmes).
* **Team recruitment and development**: recruit, retain and develop a high-performing team in accordance with the strategy, operating plans and values of the organisation.
* **Governance and Reporting**: report quarterly to CEO on performance of the Directorate and prepare papers and presentations as required for sub-committee and full Board meetings; represent the Directorate at the Board meeting as required; report monthly to the SMT on the performance of the Directorate against agreed Key Performance Indicators.
* **Finances and Budgets**: develop and recommend an annual budget and operating plan for the Directorate to the CEO; monitor and report on implementation throughout the year; liaise with the Director of Finance and Administration to ensure accurate and timely production of management accounts; inputs to development of other departments; and uphold the financial policies and procedures of the charity.
* **Internal senior stakeholder relationship management**: be an active member of the senior management team, supporting other departments and teams to achieve their goals and helping to communicate progress of the charity with staff and volunteers.

## Experience

* Published researcher or research management health or scientific environment/field.
* Research grant management and portfolio oversight.
* Experienced presenter at international research conferences.
* Extensive relevant networks in research and academic community in UK and internationally.
* Highly experienced at representation of complex research/information in media-friendly formats both remotely (writing for the press) and in person (TV, radio).
* Experience at producing medical information for health professionals and public.
* Have represented a research unit or equivalent body on inter-organisational working groups of relevance to public health.
* Experience within organisations delivering direct services to individuals.
* Extensive experience leading teams including budget setting and strategic planning.
* Have advised on and supported services for people affected by health conditions that help to maximise their quality of life.
* Strategy development and implementation.
* Senior external stakeholder management.
* Representation or accreditation with or on a professional body relevant to the area of subject expertise.
* Budget management experience relevant to Directorate scale and strategy.
* Have presented to Boards/Snr stakeholders internally and externally on multiple occasions.
* Lead, developed and managed a team/department/organisation/operation >10 people.
* At least MSc degree in relevant discipline or relevant equivalent life experience.
* A second European language, ideally French, desirable.

Terms and Conditions

## Location

Your normal place of work will be either in the Bristol office or working from home with occasional work elsewhere if required to travel for work purposes which could include international travel.

## Annual salary

£60,000 including 2% employee pension contribution + 6% employer pension contribution. Paid in arrears on or around 25th of each month.

## Contract Type

Permanent

## Hours of Work

36.25 hours between 8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday. Occasional unsociable hours.

## Annual Leave

30 days + statutory & public holidays. The Charity’s holiday year runs from 1st April to 31st March.

# Application process

All candidates are requested to complete the standard application form. Applications are particularly encouraged from candidates that may previously have, or feel like they have, experienced being excluded from generally advertised roles due to their gender, ethnicity, disability status or sexual orientation. All applications will be reviewed and shortlisting will take place without candidates personal details being available to reviewers in order to minimize unintended bias.

**The closing date for completed applications is 5pm BST on Friday 3rd December 2021.**

If invited to interview, first interviews will be held w/c 13th December 2021 with second interviews for successful candidates at first stage taking place the following w/c 4th January 2021.

Subject to latest COVID control guidance from Government, first interviews are planned to take place in person in Bristol and candidates should be prepared to travel if necessary to attend this interview.

Second interviews will take place via Zoom or in person. Travel expenses will be reimbursed and candidates with individual travel, access or disability support requirements are encouraged to communicate their needs to enable appropriate support to be provided to ensure access to interviews.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the role further please contact Vinny Smith, CEO, by email at vinnys@meningitis.org.

Please return application forms via e-mail to beckym@meningitis.org or post to Becky Miller at Meningitis Research Foundation, 10 Park Street, Bristol, BS1 5HX.

Please be advised that CVs alone will not be considered.

MRF is committed to safeguarding, and any advertised role will require references and confirmation of your identity will be undertaken. Following receipt of satisfactory references the successful candidate will be able to start work soon after receiving their offer of employment.