

# SENIOR POLICY OFFICER

Candidate pack

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## Joining Meningitis Research Foundation means addressing a devastating disease of global importance

### 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 can kill in hours. Anyone, anywhere of any age can get meningitis and septicaemia, although some people are at higher risk than others.

Together, meningitis and neonatal sepsis (sepsis in babies under 1 month old when it is

difficult to distinguish from meningitis) are the world's second biggest infectious killer of children aged under 5. 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".

## 2.5 million

cases of meningitis occurred globally in 2019 – including 1.6 million cases of bacterial meningitis, which caused 240 000 deaths

## 1 in 6



people affected by bacterial meningitis die

## 1 in 5



people surviving bacterial meningitis suffer from a long-lasting disability

## 15–20 million

people were living with meningitis-induced long-lasting disabling sequelae in 2019

Meningitis is the fourth-ranked contributor to neurological disorders burden globally



## 16.3 million

disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) in 2019 because of bacterial meningitis, with >95% in low- and middle-income countries

## Using insights to drive public health policy is at the heart of what we do

At Meningitis Research Foundation we believe understanding the implications of research, insights from data and people's lived experiences are crucial for public health policy that will help to defeat meningitis. The Senior Policy Officer is a key role within our Health Insights & Policy team that will help deliver a range of our activities.

### We shape UK meningitis policy

We are a global charity with roots firmly in the UK. The UK has made significant progress in reducing cases and deaths of meningitis, thanks in large part to having one of the most comprehensive meningitis vaccine schedules in the world. We are proud of the role we played in helping to make this happen.

Our policy work in the UK has included working with people affected by meningitis, health professionals and leading medical-scientific experts to calculate the life-time cost of meningitis-induced health, using this informing to make the case for better vaccination and improved diagnosis and care. This has contributed to historic low levels of bacterial meningitis in the UK.

But for Meningitis Research Foundation, every case of meningitis is one too many. Behind each case number is a person or family whose life has been profoundly affected, sometimes with devastating consequences.

We continue to call for the widest possible vaccination against meningitis for those who need it. The Senior Policy Officer will play a crucial role to support this; analysing immunisation policy in the UK, linking data and research with the experiences of people affected, and supporting our engagement with policy makers.

### We have a global impact

The World Health Organization (WHO) has created a global plan to transform the way we prevent, diagnose and treat meningitis. support. If achieved, the *Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030* could save the lives of up to 200,000 people each year and eliminate bacterial meningitis epidemics.

As the world's leading meningitis charity we are working to ensure that health policy is developed and delivered for us all, so that the Road Map's vision of defeating meningitis by 2030 becomes a reality.

That's why we put the voices of people affected by meningitis in front of those who make decisions about healthcare. And why we support communities to drive change, giving them the tools and evidence they need to make this happen. The Confederation of Meningitis Organisations brings together people from over 50 countries (and growing) and is uniquely placed to voice the demand of people affected for the change in policies they want to see.

The Senior Policy Officer will have an active role in our global policy activities - providing policy analysis and briefing papers across a range of global health topics from the lifetime impact of meningitis to equitable access of the latest vaccines for meningitis.

### We use data for change

Progress against meningitis still lags behind that of other vaccine preventable diseases and the true burden of the disease is hidden. Defeating meningitis needs data and insights that can ensure we have greater political will, policies and budget prioritisation. diagnosis among health professionals.

We launched the Meningitis Progress Tracker in 2019 to bring available data on meningitis into one place for the first time. The global dashboard makes meningitis data accessible and is a tool that can equip civil society with the insights they need to accelerate progress toward defeating meningitis worldwide. The Meningitis Progress Tracker is now an established tool within the global meningitis research and policy community, with users across the world.

In the next five years we will use the data and insights from the Meningitis Progress Tracker to help global health actors and civil society to raise awareness of meningitis as a health priority among policy-makers. This will include developing the data we have to better describe the epidemiological burden of meningitis due to 'all causes'.

## We work hard to make MRF a great place to work

### You'll know you're making a difference in the world

The single most important benefit of working for MRF is knowing every day that you're helping to defeat meningitis. This is a devastating disease that affects more than 2 million people each year around the world, killing over 200,000 and leaving 20,000 with life-long after-effects. This can include deafness and neurological impairment. Working for MRF means you're helping to prevent new cases, save lives and support people affected. You are doing something very valuable you can be proud of. We strive to ensure everyone who works for us understands the true impact of meningitis, ensuring opportunities to hear from and build connections with those whose lives have been directly affected by meningitis at every available opportunity.

### You'll be close to your team and the people affected

Whatever team or department you work in, you'll have the chance to directly meet with the individuals and families we work for. Many of our team talk to and meet families every day. Everyone gets the chance to be with families at least once a year. We're a close-knit organisation who meet virtually on a regular basis as a whole team, so you'll always hear what's going on in other teams and receive regular in-depth briefings from project leads who are passionate about their work.

### You'll receive a competitive salary

Within the charity sector and compared to charities of similar size, similar funds, and similar scope we work hard to make sure our salaries are competitive. We do this by benchmarking every role to available sector data. We use this to inform our salary bands that have lower and upper levels that are updated annually to account for market conditions and inflation. We publish these bands and make sure all staff know what they are.

### You'll receive career development support

Your development starts the minute you join us. You will receive a comprehensive induction to our work and your colleagues, supported

with a suite of online resources and training. Your probation goals will show the support you will need from your manager and wider organisation so you settle in quickly and can be up to speed as fast as possible. From that point on you will receive regular contact time with your manager every week who will discuss your ongoing work and development priorities.

Your development will be a continuous, year-round process. Though more formal development conversations take place at least twice each year, this is an ongoing conversation.

In your annual appraisal you will describe and set your personal development plan for the year within a wider discussion with me about your career ambitions. This discussion will also show the training support you need. We believe this works best when staff drive their career development and help research and recommend training and support needed. The more you drive this, the more ownership over your own direction you have. Halfway through the year you will have a mid-year check-in to see how your plan is going.

At Meningitis Research Foundation we believe development can take place within a role, through training, through exposure to working with colleagues in other teams, and through trying new experiences that build skills and confidence beyond the norm. This can be within your existing team or by taking the opportunity to get involved in cross-team projects. You will be given the opportunity to try all of these should you choose. To support this, we provide a dedicated training and development budget per person, per year. In addition, via our 'Great Place to Work' Sharepoint site we provide easy access to free online training and resources that can be used at any time.

### You'll design your work-life balance

We're deeply passionate about our mission and our work. But not at the cost of your wellbeing. Work is very important to us - but so are you. That's why we want you to have as much control as possible over how you work and where you work so that when you are

working you can deliver to the very best of your capabilities.

To support this before you start you will be asked where you want to work. We have staff who work at home, in the office or a mixture of the two. We have staff who choose one of these and then change their patterns. What we want are great, happy people. The roof that's over their head isn't what we measure people by.

Depending on the needs of your role, when you've chosen where you work within the UK, we can discuss how you work on a more regular basis. We have staff who work full-time or part-time though this is set by the job they applied for. We have staff who work 9-5, Monday to Friday. In fact, lots of us still choose to do that. But we also have staff working compressed hours on 4-day weeks.

And in the circumstances where there is no other choice but to pull all the stops out to make something happen and you've needed to work some extra hours you can claim it back to get the rest you need. There's a simple online form to fill in for Time off in Lieu (TOIL). That's so we can see if you need to do this too often, in which case we need to look at hiring more people or reduce your workload.

### You'll experience diverse perspectives in person

We love flexibility *and* we love commitment. You'll meet people virtually every day through MS Teams, Zoom or similar platform, but being humans we need to meet other people in person too. That's why wherever you work, our minimum commitment is that you meet your manager and team in person at least once a quarter. You'll meet everyone at MRF for a whole staff meeting twice each year, where we put just as much emphasis on ensuring you can connect with your colleagues as we do on updating, and getting your input, on our key strategic priorities. It's expected that, where practical, teams meet at HQ in person for complex problem solving, celebrating success and working on culture and behaviours that support our success. In these circumstances, the diversity of our knowledge, experience and talents is better shared in person than can ever be recreated online.

### You'll have great office facilities & location

We believe that great people need to work in a great environment. If you work from home, your décor is your own business, but we will ensure you have the right equipment including a suitable desk and chair alongside IT. When you come to work in the office, you'll find somewhere with a high-quality communal meet-and-greet area; access to great coffee and fridges that work; a cycle store and showers; touch screens in modern spec meetings rooms; and video conferencing facilities.

### You'll get expert advice and support when you need it

Every member of staff and their immediate family (which includes spouse/partners and children aged 16 to 24 in full-time education, living in the same household) has access to a 24 hours/day, 365 days/year Employee Assistance Programme run by a company called Health Assured. This is a confidential employee benefit designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health, and general wellbeing. The service includes:

- Life support: Access to counselling for emotional problems and a pathway to structured therapy sessions (employees only) at your convenience.
- Legal information: For issues that cause anxiety or distress including debt management, consumer, property or neighbour disputes (employees only).
- Bereavement support: Health Assured offers qualified and experienced counsellors who can help with grief plus legal advisors to help with related legal matters.
- Medical information: Qualified nurses are on hand to offer support on a range of medical or health-related issues offering practical information and advice.
- Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT): We recognise the value of self-help tools in dealing with a range of issues, which is why we have a range of CBT self-help modules, informative fact sheets and invaluable advice videos from leading qualified counsellors.

We work with an outsourced specialist HR provider called Peninsula who can provide any

member of staff with confidential HR advice. As part of this service, you will receive access to an online platform called BrightHR which enables you to book holiday, TOIL and record sickness in one place. Alongside this, you will have direct access to Bright Safe which is a free online suite of training courses. We also have a nominated in-house mental health first aid member of staff you can go to any time.

We work with an outsourced IT provider called Cascade that supplies a support service for all our IT needs through a service centre, including all software, hardware and telephony given we run entirely through Microsoft Teams and Microsoft 365.

### You'll be working sustainably

We're proud of our environmental sustainability policy and network of green champions embedded within every team. It's not just words – we've divested all funds from companies associated with oil and gas. Next we're reviewing all banking and pensions too. We have no one that drives to work regularly. Our suppliers and partners need to show their commitment to working sustainably, or we won't be working with them.

### You'll be helping us get better all the time

We're proud to work at MRF, but we know we can always do better. This year we're working on a Great Place to Work Project that helps to support people to attract, recruit, onboard, develop and keep great people even more effectively. We have systems and processes for these already but it's time to make them a standout great experience.



## About Meningitis Research Foundation (MRF)

Over the past 30 years MRF 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. 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 research networks and policy-makers 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](#).
- Running the [Confederation of Meningitis Organisations](#) (CoMO) which represents over 125 like-minded members in more than 50 countries.
- Hosting a one-stop-shop for the best data for modelled estimates on burden of meningitis called the [Meningitis Progress Tracker](#), now used over 50,000 times in more than 100 countries.
- Co-leading on the advocacy and engagement pillar of the new global road map with UNICEF.
- Providing a secretariat support function for the [Global Meningitis Genome Partnership](#) building on the establishment of the Global Meningitis Genome Library.
- Delivering an internationally renowned [research conference](#) every 2 years showcasing latest cutting-edge research on meningitis from around the world.
- [Funding research](#) 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.

## 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.

More information can be found on the MRF [website here](#).



## **Job Description: Senior Policy Officer, full time, £31,500-£36,499 p/a, office, home or hybrid working based in the UK**

### **Organisation overview**

Meningitis Research Foundation is an international health charity headquartered in the UK, driven by a passionate mission to prevent the devastating impact of meningitis. Founded by individuals whose lives were profoundly affected by meningitis, we are dedicated to enabling positive change by uniting people and knowledge to save lives. The Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (CoMO) is our worldwide network of people and groups who are driven by a shared purpose to defeat meningitis. By coming together to share their diverse experience and expertise, they are a formidable global force against this life-threatening condition.

### **Role purpose**

The Policy Officer will play a key role in using health insights to shape our policy positions and make a meaningful difference to the lives of people affected by meningitis. This position involves a combination of research, analysis, strategic foresight and policy development to enable evidence-based decision making.

### **Reporting**

This role reports to the Head of Health Insights & Policy.

### **Key Responsibilities**

#### **Strategic Foresight & Horizon Scanning**

- Monitor the external policy context for meningitis in the UK and internationally, providing ongoing comprehensive policy analysis to identify drivers, trends, and priorities for MRF's policy engagement.
- Support the Head of Health Insights & Policy to maintain the internal policy foresight dashboard, organise the quarterly strategic foresight and horizon scanning session and present on key trends to Meningitis Research Foundations Senior leadership team, trustees and staff.

#### **Policy Analysis & Development**

- Proactive analysis of the UK policy context for meningitis, with a focus on immunisation and long-term support for those affected.
- Track and analyse UK immunisation policy developments, including vaccine development and policies, and broader public health initiatives and context related or relevant to meningitis prevention.
- Provide policy analysis as required on the global policy context for meningitis, with a focus on the WHO's Global Roadmap to Defeat Meningitis by 2030 and the Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Brain Health.
- Draft policy briefing and position papers and reports on priority topics relevant to meningitis for internal and external audiences.
- Support the Health Insights, Policy and Disease Information Manager to identify and respond to relevant health and public health related consultations in the UK and internationally.

#### **Collaboration & Engagement**

- Build and maintain relationships with key UK policy stakeholders, including government bodies, NHS England, public health organisations, and patient advocacy groups.
- Work with the Advocacy team to promote health insights and priority policy positions through our advocacy initiatives and external networks.
- Liaise closely with colleagues from the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (CoMO) and the Support team to ensure the experiences of people directly affected by meningitis is at the heart of our insights and policy work in the UK and internationally, and to identify opportunities for policy to support the aims of CoMO and members.
- Collaborate with Research colleagues, to enable research to inform policy positions.
- Liaise with the Communication & Engagement team to maximise opportunities for external dissemination of our policy analysis and positions.
- Represent Meningitis Research Foundation externally at conference, events, meetings and civil society networks.

### Policy strategy & operational plans

- Support the Head of Health Insights & Policy to deliver the Health Insights & Policy operational objectives & work plan
- Carry out other activities to support international and national policy work as and when required.

### Qualifications & Experience

- Experience in health policy in the UK and internationally, preferably on infectious disease related policy.
- Experience of undertaking policy research, having written reports and briefs and evaluated evidence of their impact
- Demonstrable understanding of local, regional and national government, the healthcare system in the UK, the current health policy landscape and UK parliamentary processes
- Understanding and experience the international development or global health sector is desirable.
- Ability to quickly build strong internal and external relationships with a wide range of actors
- Ability to translate complex arguments into accessible language for varied target audiences in a clear and engaging style
- Experience presenting to internal and external stakeholders in a range of forums
- Attention to detail, with strong analytic, writing and proof-reading skills
- A second European language, ideally French or Spanish, desirable

### Key competencies

#### Values

- Evidence-led: Uses evidence to inform team activities.
- Integrity: Practices honesty and ethical behaviour.
- Determination: Committed to achieving team goals.
- Passionate Advocate: Advocates for the Foundation's vision and mission.
- Collaboration: Encourages team collaboration and support.
- Compassion: Ensures a supportive environment for patients and team members.

### Annual salary

£30,000-£35,000 (depending on experience) including 2% employee pension contribution + 6% employer pension contribution. Paid in arrears on or around 25th of each month

### Contract Type

Two year fixed term contract. This post is currently funded from reserves. If funding allows, the post could be made permanent following the end of this contract.

### Hours of Work

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

### Annual Leave

25 days annual leave and statutory & public holidays. The Charity's holiday year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March.

## Application Process

Interested candidates are invited to submit their CVs with a cover letter detailing their relevant experience and interest in the position. CVs sent through without a covering letter will not be considered.

Applications should be sent to Kate Gill, HR manager, at [talent@meningitis.org](mailto:talent@meningitis.org) by 5 pm on Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2025.

Candidates wishing to have an informal exploratory conversation before applying can also contact Kate to set up a call with Brian Davies.

Candidates who have been shortlisted for interview will be notified by Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Interviews will take place with the Head of Health Insights and Policy on 6<sup>th</sup> of May. The interview will include a presentation from candidates and questions, and answers.

A second interview may be held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May. There will be no presentations at the second interview.

The successful candidate will be offered a position by 5 pm on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> of May. A preference is for all interviews to take place in person in Bristol. Where this cannot be arranged, interviews may take place via MS Teams.

## Equal Opportunities

Applications are particularly encouraged from candidates who 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.

## Safeguarding

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