

**CANDIDATE BRIEF
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NIHR RESEARCH DELIVERY NETWORK**



Competitive salary

This role will be based at the RDNCC Leeds office, with hybrid working arrangements, and will require substantial national travel.

NIHR RESEARCH DELIVERY NETWORK (RDN) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

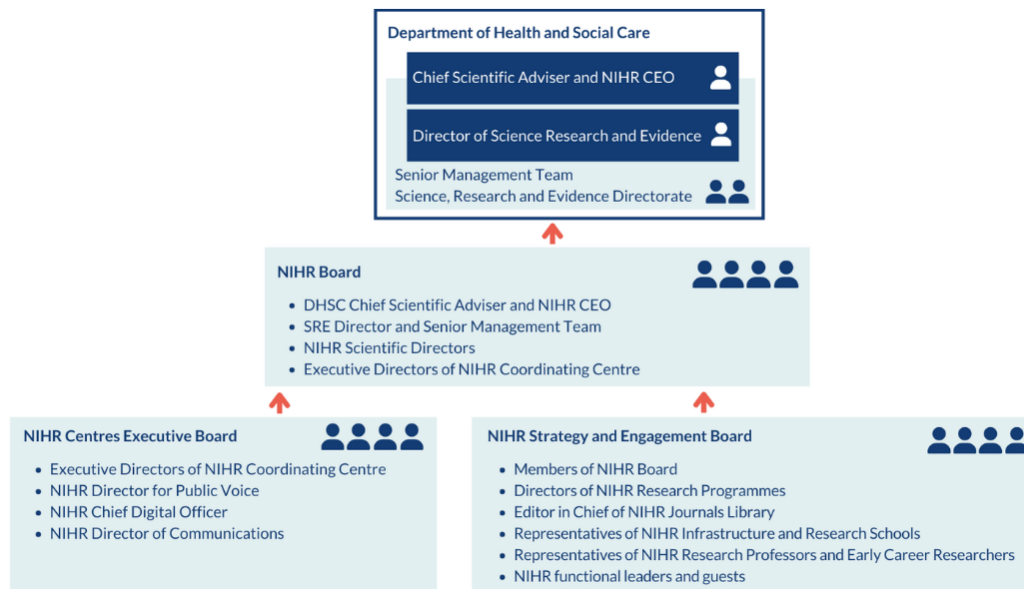
BACKGROUND

The National Institute for Health and Social Care (NIHR) funds, enables and delivers world-leading health and social care research. The work of the NIHR is directed by the Chief Scientific Adviser at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), who is also NIHR's Chief Executive Officer, and by the Senior Management Team of DHSC's Science Research and Evidence (SRE) Directorate.

The NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN) launched in October 2024 and supports the country's world-class research system to deliver high quality research. Through a network of 12 Regional Research Delivery Networks (RRDNs) and a coordinating centre (the RDNCC), the RDN operates as a single organisation across England. Through a unified approach, the RDN balances regional context, expertise and leadership with national coordination and strategy involving government policymakers.

The NIHR Coordinating Centre (NIHRCC) has operational responsibility for the NIHR. DHSC contracts directly with a number of NHS trusts, universities and life science organisations that between them host the NIHR Coordinating Centre (NIHRCC).

The RDNCC is part of the NIHRCC, and as NIHR RDN Executive Director, the postholder will be an Executive Director of NIHRCC and sit on NIHR Board, NIHR Strategy and Engagement Board, and NIHR Centres Executive Board. You will also work closely with the Director and Senior Management Team of DHSC's SRE Directorate.



As Executive Director of the NIHR RDN your role will form part of NIHR's operational leadership, working closely with DHSC policy officials to implement government policy in priority areas, including the 10-Year Health Plan. The NIHR RDN will have a vital role in bolstering the UK's position as one of the world's key destinations for health and care research delivery. This in turn will enable more people to take part in research wherever they live - helping to address changing population needs, support the health and care system and the economy, and become a routine part of care.

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE

As NIHR RDN Executive Director you will provide visible and expert leadership for research delivery staff across the health and care system in England.

The NIHR RDN is a new organisation which has been set up to respond to the changing requirements of the health and care research system, building on the success of the NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN). Research delivery is taking place in more settings than before, and as part of that change the NIHR RDN needs to be more strategic across all regions, and united as it drives consistent, continuous improvement. You will lead the organisation-wide shift in ways of working and culture that is required to ensure the network functions as a single organisation with a shared vision and purpose across England.

You will directly lead your executive team who will be key in supporting and sustaining this change. You will ensure that they are equipped to deliver the strategic vision and operate together as the face of the NIHR RDN, working effectively and credibly with other stakeholders, and leading their teams through the period of transformation and beyond. You will lead by example and with integrity, inspiring others with your vision and drive, demonstrating significant people skills. You will be politically astute, adaptable and a skilled negotiator with a proven track record of building and maintaining relationships to ensure a successful and collegial joint leadership function across the NIHR RDN.

The NIHR RDN is multifaceted, diverse and ambitious, and you must be able to work flexibly and effectively in a developing organisation, to manage change and to support others to deliver measurable results that make the NIHR RDN vision a reality.

Strategic Leadership

- Be responsible for the active, dynamic leadership, organisation and management of the NIHR RDN to ensure excellent delivery of research in England.
- Act as an ambassador for the NIHR's vision as part of the NIHRCC leadership team, with gravitas and ability to command the respect of the senior stakeholders across government, and in public sector, charity and life sciences organisations.
- Work closely with DHSC to advise on the strategic direction and use of funding within the NIHR RDN, and strategic positioning of the NIHR RDN within the wider research system.
- As the face of the NIHR RDN, you will be able to deal with complex problems, often novel to the organisation, which will require innovative and multifaceted solutions. You will be expected to mediate across a range of viewpoints and bring together regional and national leadership to reach decisions that are critical to moving the RDN toward its overall goals.
- Ensure the skills and capabilities exist across the organisation to meet current and future objectives. To achieve this, significant knowledge and expertise across a broad range of service areas will be required to achieve organisational effectiveness.
- Oversee the design, development and implementation of the RDN Strategy to ensure the successful development, management and performance of the RDN.

Partnership Working

- Work in partnership with DHSC and leadership across the RDN to maximise reach, impact and delivery of the RDN and its initiatives, driving forward business change management.
- Ensure effective consultation and partnership working with the NHS and health and social care system including but not limited to: UK Research & Development (UKRD), the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), NHS England (NHSE), representatives from the life sciences industry, and the Health Research Authority (HRA).

Business & Financial Planning

- Direct and oversee the development, implementation and continuous improvement of the services delivered by the RDNCC and wider RDN. This includes senior responsible ownership of business cases and plans across the RDNCC and wider RDN.
- Act as the overall responsible budget holder for the RDNCC, delegate budget authority as appropriate, and ensure robust financial procedures are in place.

These duties provide a framework for the role and should not be regarded as a definitive list. Other reasonable duties may be required consistent with the grade of the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

It is essential that candidates demonstrate their achievements, ability and expertise against the following criteria:

Knowledge & Experience

- Successful track record of running a large and complex organisation and/ or managing significant people and financial resources.
- Extensive experience of successful senior leadership of complex networks and management in the context of government, the NHS, life sciences industry, social care, public health or academia.
- Evidence of leading significant transformational change resulting in the delivery of operational excellence and a high-performance culture.
- Experience of developing, building and nurturing external partnerships and networks, with a demonstrated ability to work with health and care leaders and senior managers of research.
- A sound understanding of the NHS and wider health and care system and ideally of research in the wider health and care system.
- An understanding of delivering life sciences industry contract and collaborative research and/or field experience of health and care research and/or its management are desirable.

- Experience of working in the NHS or across health and care sectors is highly desirable as is a proven track record of working in a political context or with government policymakers.

Skills & Attributes

- Strategic and innovative leader with the drive and enthusiasm to deliver services and outcomes at pace.
- Passion for improving the care and health outcomes of patients through the delivery of high quality and world-leading research.
- Emotional intelligence with the ability to motivate, engage and enthuse others, capable of inspiring colleagues and partners at all levels.
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to build strong relationships, mediate and work effectively with a variety of partners and stakeholders, drawing on well-developed influencing and negotiation skills to achieve results.
- Commitment to continuous improvement, efficiency and operational excellence.
- Excellent organisational skills with a proven ability to balance operational and strategic requirements to meet targets and deadlines.

The NIHR RDN Coordinating Centre is hosted by the University of Leeds. This role will be based at the RDNCC Leeds office and will require substantial national travel.

The reporting arrangements for this role are as follows:

1. Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health: for the purposes of University line management, professional development, and other employment matters; and
2. Deputy Director, Research Capacity and Growth, Science, Research and Evidence Directorate (SRE), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC): for DHSC policy, strategic and operational direction, and NIHR RDN performance oversight.

The postholder will have a joint annual staff review meeting (appraisal) with both University and DHSC reporting managers.