



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Director General for People SCS3 Candidate information pack

August 2025



Gatenby
Sanderson

Welcome message - Improving the health and care of the nation

Every day, we work to improve the health and wellbeing of citizens across the nation. This is both a privilege and a responsibility. The dedicated staff across the NHS and the civil service have achieved remarkable things in recent years – from the extraordinary response to COVID-19, to record numbers of general practice appointments, to cancer survival in England being at an all-time high – demonstrating incredible resilience, expertise and commitment.

We are now building a Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for the future – an organisation better equipped to provide publicly accountable leadership across health and care that truly serves our communities better.

This new Department of Health and Social Care will incorporate the role of NHS England to create a new accountable and agile centre. This will be a new model of leadership for the health and care system and it will require compassionate, determined and focused leadership.

Given this task, now is a particularly exciting time to join DHSC as a senior leader. The Government has just published its 10 Year Health Plan, and you will play a pivotal role in delivering national policy, stewarding system-wide reform, and delivering outcomes that matter to our patients and our citizens. We are looking for individuals who can bring strategic insight, collaborative leadership, and a commitment to public service to help us deliver on our mission to provide the highest quality, most compassionate health and care system in the world.

If you share our passion, have the capabilities set out below, thrive at delivering large-scale change and believe in the future we will build for our citizens and our communities, then we look forward to receiving your application.



Samantha Jones OBE
Permanent Secretary, DHSC



Sir Jim Mackey
NHS England Chief Executive



Context - Bold and Ambitious

The Department of Health and Social Care supports Ministers in driving forward an ambitious agenda to radically transform health and care services, with a renewed focus on prevention, digital innovation, workforce reform, and long-term sustainability.

The 10 Year Health Plan represents a historic opportunity to reshape our health and care system for years to come. It provides a clear, unified direction for the decade ahead, enabling us to meet the significant demographic and population challenges on the horizon. Our ultimate responsibility remains unchanged – ensuring we engage with people so that they are fully involved in the best care and support at the right time. To deliver on this promise, we must transform ourselves.

This transformation goes beyond internal change – it represents a fundamental shift in how we work with the entire health and care landscape. By creating a leaner, more focused centre, we will devolve greater responsibility to local systems and partners, creating neighbourhood health services that empower the development of solutions that meet the specific needs of their communities.



We will build a department that:

- provides clear leadership for the public's health, healthcare and adult social care – reflecting the differences between our collective areas of responsibility
- recognises that the coordinated care that the public want will only be created if we foster our own collective responsibility for shared objectives rather than competing priorities or silos
- empowers local systems to take responsibility for neighbourhood services with clear and streamlined priorities and accountability
- eliminates duplication, maximising value and freeing up staff to focus on the work that matters
- operates with greater efficiency and focus, with clarity on what the centre is for, and what we should leave to others
- empowers leaders to lead whilst treating every colleague with dignity, honesty and respect

By working more collectively we will help to foster stronger partnerships between healthcare providers, local authorities, and the voluntary and private sector – breaking down barriers that have hindered our health care system before.

We will enable groundbreaking neighbourhood health services to be delivered in the most-deprived areas first, where healthy life expectancy is lowest. We will provide clear national leadership and strategic direction while creating space for local innovation and collaborative problem-solving.



About the opportunity

The Director General for People is a core member of the Departmental Executive Committee, currently reporting to the DHSC Permanent Secretary and NHS England Chief Executive.

Location: National

The role will require regular attendance at both DHSC and NHS England current headquarters in Leeds and London with travel to other locations as necessary. You can be based at any of the current regional sites, with the expectation of regular time in London each week.

Salary: Up to £174,000 per annum dependent upon experience.

Grade: SCS 3

Contract Type: Permanent, full-time. Flexible working arrangements will be considered.

Clearance: Developed Vetting. If successful you must hold, or be willing to obtain, security clearance up to DV level.

Role Description

As the Director General for People, you will be responsible for setting the strategic direction for workforce policy, planning and capability. Working with colleagues from across the health and care sector to ensure that the NHS has the right people, with the right skills, in the right places to deliver health care services for patients – now and in the future. This includes taking forward delivery of the workforce elements of the Health Mission and 10 Year Health Plan. You will provide advice and support to Ministers on all workforce issues, including on pay negotiations with the sector and will be accountable for industrial relations and maintaining strong connections with all Trade Unions.

You will support the development and delivery of workforce policy and ensure that policies developed across the Department consider workforce requirements. This will require collaborative working with clinical and professional leads, including with colleagues in adult social care and public health.



Working closely with regional teams and local health and care systems, you will be responsible for leading the delivery, management, assurance, and reform of education and training to meet changing patient, population and service need across the NHS. This will require you to consider how workforce policies can also support greater health and care integration.

You will have the unique opportunity of shaping the future organisation as the Department of Health and Social Care incorporates the functions previously carried out by NHS England into a new entity. This will include designing the new structure for the people function to ensure that it will meet Ministerial priorities and deliver the benefits envisaged through the organisational redesign. Specifically, as the lead official for the NHS workforce, you will make sure that we have a structure that can deliver our long term workforce plans and work closely with our regional teams and local systems on education and training. This requires an ongoing focus on efficiency savings and creating a new operating model that empowers local systems.

It is envisaged that in this new Department of state, you will manage a group of dedicated and dynamic employees, creating a collaborative, cohesive and highly performing team, based across our two head offices of London and Leeds and range of regional offices. You will have a wider leadership and managerial role across the whole organisation working closely with and coaching colleagues from across the organisation – breaking down siloes to ensure delivery across all our core organisational functions. You will also be accountable for all budgets in this area. You will ensure that the Department meets all obligations to Parliament.



Key Responsibilities

- Lead the development and delivery of the Department's workforce strategy for health care, while working closely with social care and public health to consider the health and care system workforce in the round.
- Overseeing policy on workforce planning, pay, recruitment and retention, training pipelines, and future skills development.
- Constantly improving and developing a positive culture across the health workforce.
- Industrial relations with the sector, including the Department's relationship with all trade unions and negotiating pay agreements.
- Developing and implementing effective education and training reform to ensure the needs of the population can be met in the future.
- Working with regional and clinical leaders to ensure the effective delivery of key priorities in education policy and reforms, including ensuring high quality learning and wellbeing for all health and care learners.
- Ensuring the Department achieves value for money, quality, learner experience and improve patient care from investments into education and training.
- Ensuring appropriate links are in place between workforce strategy, workforce planning processes and finance strategy, and ensuring seamless internal process with strategy and health policy, communications, commercial, and finance functions.
- Leading a dynamic team, with responsibility for programme budgets.



Candidate Profile

We are seeking an exceptional leader who combines strategic workforce expertise with experience of leading complex systems and organisational transformation. You will have a strong track record of delivering reform within complex policy and operational environment. Given the context of this role, you will also need to demonstrate flexibility in your approach and an ability to motivate your teams through uncertainty. You will need to be comfortable with your role and responsibilities evolving as the new organisation is formed.

Essential Criteria

- Extensive senior experience of developing and implementing workforce, training or education strategies in complex systems, with experience of working within regulatory and professional standards frameworks.
- A substantial record of holding responsible and credible **leadership** roles in central government/ government agency, the NHS, local government or a third sector or commercial organisation. You will have significant executive experience at Board or Executive team level, with evidence of successful operating and influencing at the highest senior levels. This will include experience of effectively managing large **budgets** and securing value for money.
- A proven ability to **develop motivated, engaged and high performing teams** and a demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion. This includes demonstrating an understanding of how to lead **large scale change**, supporting your team and the wider organisation through a time of uncertainty. You will be able to demonstrate how you have supported the development of a strong organisational culture and empowered others to build successful new ways of working.
- Proven ability to persuade and influence others and establish strong collaborative working relationships with a wide range of senior **partners** across organisational boundaries inside and/or outside of Government. You will be comfortable working across organisations within a complex system and across organisational boundaries.



- Clear integrity and a commitment to maintaining the **highest personal and professional standards**, appropriate to the responsibilities attached to holding a senior position within a public body. This includes being able to demonstrate high levels of **personal resilience** and the ability to work effectively and collaboratively when under pressure.
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Desirable Criteria

- Understanding of public sector pay and conditions, industrial relations, and trade union engagement.

Diversity is vital to the success of this role, and to the Civil Service as a whole. We actively welcome applications from candidates from all backgrounds, with different experiences and perspectives - and we are committed to ensuring that we work in an inclusive way that means everyone in the Civil Service can perform at their best.



Our recruitment process

This recruitment process is regulated by the **Civil Service Commission**, and follows clear guidelines to ensure selection is fair, open, and made on merit.

The Civil Service Commission has two primary functions:

- **Providing assurance** that appointments to the Civil Service are made on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition. For the most senior posts, the Commission oversees the process directly and appoints a Commissioner to chair the selection panel.
- **Hearing and determining appeals** made by civil servants under the Civil Service Code, which sets out the values of **Impartiality, Objectivity, Integrity, and Honesty**.

More information about the Civil Service Commission is available at:

<https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk>

Selection Panel

The selection panel for this role will be chaired by:

- **Christopher Pilgrim**, Civil Service Commissioner (Chair)

Other panel members

- **Samantha Jones OBE**, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health and Social Care
 - **Sir Jim Mackey**, NHS England Chief Executive
 - **Additional Panel Members – To be confirmed**
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You will receive an acknowledgment of your application. The panel will assess applications to select those demonstrating the strongest fit with the role, based on the evidence provided against the **Essential criteria**.



It is essential you address all criteria in your application. Failure to do so may affect your progression.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to take part in a series of assessments, which may include:

- A Stakeholder Engagement Panel Exercise
- Mock Public Accounts Committee Exercise
- Meetings with key departmental stakeholders, which may include a Minister

Details of the final assessments including briefs will be confirmed with shortlisted candidates.

Shortlisted candidates will then progress to a **final interview (face-to-face in London) with the selection panel**

Full details of the assessment process will be shared with candidates invited to interview.



Indicative Timetable

Please note that dates may be subject to change:

Stage	Indicative Timing
Closing date for applications	9am 15 September 2025
Shortlist Meeting - Selection Panel	w/c 22 September 2025
Stakeholder engagement and discussions	w/c 29 September 2025
Final panel interviews	w/c 13 October 2025

All shortlisted candidates will be advised of the outcome as soon as possible after each stage.



How to apply

All applications must be submitted using the link
<http://www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe124148>

The closing date for applications is 9am on 15 September 2025

If you do not receive confirmation that your application has been received please contact devon.coates-leaning@gatenbysanderson.com.

Your submission should include:

- The **role title** and reference number in the subject line of your email.
- A **current CV**, including your educational and professional qualifications and full employment history (explaining any gaps), with details of budgets and teams managed and highlighting key achievements.
- A **covering letter**, no more than **two A4 pages**, explaining why this appointment interests you and how you meet the criteria set out in the candidate profile.
- Please note that **references and open-source due diligence checks** (including into social media accounts) may be undertaken for all short-listed candidates.
- **A declaration of interest form.**
- A completed **Monitoring Form** to support the Department's commitment to equality and diversity. The form includes:
 - Monitoring questionnaire (reported anonymously)
 - Information on the **Disability Confident Scheme** for candidates with disabilities who meet the minimum criteria.

If you require any adjustments to make the recruitment process more accessible, please contact the recruitment team at the application address above.

Helen Barkham, Principal Researcher
E: helen.barkham@gatenbysanderson.com

Michelle Atkinson, Principal Consultant
E: michelle.atkinson@gatenbysanderson.com

Michael Dobson, Partner and Sector Lead, Central Government & DDaT
E: michael.dobson@gatenbysanderson.com



Detailed terms

This role is being offered on a permanent basis. Requests for secondments and loans will be considered, should this be your preference.

If you are successful and are from outside of the Civil Service, you can expect your salary on appointment to be up to **£174,00 per annum**. If you're an existing Civil Servant, your salary will be agreed in line with the Civil Service pay rules in place on the date of your appointment.

This is a full-time role, but all flexible working arrangements are welcomed and will be considered (including existing job share arrangements). You can be based at any of the current regional sites, with the expectation of regular time in London each week.

Please note that:

- **Civil Service pension** arrangements will apply and you will have the option of joining the Civil Service Alpha Pension Scheme, a defined benefit (DB) pension scheme. The current employer contribution rate for this salary level is in excess of 30% of salary as explained at Civil Service Pension Scheme
- The role includes **25 days annual leave**, increasing on a sliding scale to 30 days after 5 years' service. (This is in addition to 8 public holidays and one privilege day).
- If successful you must hold, or be willing to obtain, security clearance up to **DV** level. More information about the vetting process can be found [here](#).
- You will need to hold the **right immigration status and nationality requirements for this role** - please contact devon.coates-leaning@gatenbysanderson.com if you have any questions.
- Unfortunately, we will not be able to reimburse you for any **expenses** incurred as part of this recruitment process.

Business appointment rules

The Government's [Business Appointment Rules](#) apply to all Ministers and Crown servants. The Rules seek to protect the integrity of government, while enabling individuals to move to roles outside of government. The Rules are owned by the Cabinet Office and administered by the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOPA) at the most senior level and by departments in all other cases. For appointments at this level (SCS3), these rules apply for 2 years after you leave Crown Service.



