# Candidate information pack

# Research Officer

This is an exciting role at Meningitis Research Foundation (MRF) reporting directly to the Head of Research, with responsibility for maintaining the charity’s international research grants programme, including co-ordinating processes to support the funding of new research and ensuring that meningitis research findings are appropriately disseminated.

The role will form part of the Research Evidence and Policy (REP) Team along with the Head of Research, Head of Evidence and Policy and Data Visualisation and Intelligence Manager. There will be frequent cross team working with the Communications, Advocacy and Support Team.

In addition to overseeing the research grants programme, the successful candidate will work with the Head of Research to support the organisation and delivery of MRF’s programme of conferences, symposia and virtual events; and will support the REP team to produce and maintain accurate information on meningitis and septicaemia.

If you are looking to develop your career in the medical/research sector, have a keen interest interest in developing a comprehensive understanding of meningitis and septicaemia, and are equipped with strong organisational and administrative skills, this could be the new challenge you have been waiting for.

# 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](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 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, measles and tetanus combined as well as being a leading cause of 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/) (CoMO) 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 to be the 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 20 staff and an average of £2-£3milion income each year but with a belief that there is potential 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 2022.

# Job description: Research Officer

## Context

The role sits within the Research, Evidence and Policy Department. The team is responsible for all aspects of our AMRC accredited research funding portfolio; provision of guidelines and tools for health professionals; sharing latest knowledge about the diseases to a wide range of stakeholders including professionals and public; ensuring MRF’s policies on the best ways to prevent, diagnose and treat the diseases are evidence-based; and contributing to programmes of work associated with the WHO Global Roadmap to Defeat Meningitis by 2030.

## Core Purpose

The purpose of this role is to maintain and manage the charity’s research grants programme, including co-ordinating processes to support the funding of new research and ensuring that research findings are appropriately disseminated.

The post holder will also be responsible for supporting the organisation and delivery of MRF’s programme of conferences, symposia and virtual events; supporting MRF’s work associated with the Global Roadmap to Defeat Meningitis by 2030; and supporting the Research, Evidence and Policy department to produce and maintain accurate information on meningitis and septicaemia.

This role requires excellent administrative skills, high attention to detail, and an ability to quickly develop a comprehensive understanding of meningitis and septicaemia.

## Reports to

Head of Research

## Responsibilities

**Research administration**

* Support Head of Research in development of new Research Strategy aligned to MRF’s Organisational strategy.
* Enable the selection of new research projects by
	+ processing grant applications
	+ identifying peer reviewers
	+ co-ordinating the peer review process
	+ liaising with the Scientific Advisory Panel and external referees, organising meetings (in-person and virtual), preparing meeting papers, attending meetings, writing minutes, communicating Panel recommendations to applicants and referees, and preparing grant award letters
* Monitor progress of research projects: request annual reports and circulate to designated Panel members, act on outcomes of annual review of progress in consultation with Head of Research
* Ensure that grant information, forms and procedures are continually reviewed and updated to comply with best practice, suggest improvements and implement any necessary changes in line with the new research strategy
* Liaise with the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) and ensure compliance with their membership regulations (including the annual data collection and peer review audit every five years) and statement of best practice.
* Develop and maintain databases and spreadsheets containing the charity’s research management information, grant review process and lists of contacts.
* Maintain the Research Impact Matrix to ensure that the outputs of MRF funded research are captured and shared

**Research dissemination**

* Work with the charity’s Communications team and Principal Investigators on research news releases and other communication about Foundation-funded and relevant external research, and initiatives. Write about research and related health information for the charity’s website and for electronic communications as appropriate.
* Keep briefing sheets and the charity’s website up-to-date with information on charity research projects.
* Keep abreast of general research developments and publications, and respond to enquiries from researchers, members and supporters and the general public.
* Develop and input in to reports for funders (including trusts, the pharmaceutical industry and high value independent donors), to demonstrate the value of their investment in MRF’s work.

**Event organisation and delivery**

* With Head of Research, and colleagues in communications and administration, work to organise and deliver MRF’s biennial international medical-scientific conference; including supporting programme development, uploading material to the conference app, acting as a key contact for speakers and chairs, taking responsibility for academic posters, and promoting the conference to scientific and medical contacts. In years where funding is secured, oversee the bursary application process; from supporting the selection of successful candidates to supporting visa applications and travel requirements.
* With Head of Research, and colleagues in communications and administration, work to organise and deliver MRF’s biennial virtual webinar series: including supporting programme development, acting as a speaker liaison, and taking responsibility for the oversight of the virtual event delivery – including selection of appropriate virtual events provider.
* Organise key research project meetings related to the Global Roadmap to Defeat Meningitis by 2030
* Represent MRF at relevant external meetings and conferences

**Evidence and Information**

* Respond to basic helpline calls and in-depth requests for information on medical information issues (liaising with Head of Research, Head of Evidence Policy and our medical and scientific advisers as appropriate) and research enquiries, including external MRF-funded projects and those undertaken internally
* Develop and maintain factsheets, which provide the public with accurate information on meningitis and septicaemia, and their prevention, diagnosis and treatment.
* Provide information and input into the creation of other resources for use by the public and professionals. Including supporting Head of Evidence and Policy with updates to health professional resources.
* Provide advice and support for wider teams to ensure that content contains accurate disease/medical information and evidence (such as the latest statistics, up to date references)
* Support Head of Research and Head of Evidence and Policy in responding to consultations

## Person specification

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|  | Essential or Desirable  |
| Training, Experience and Qualifications | Background in biology/biomedical sciences or human sciences or related discipline | E |
| Educated to degree level or equivalent | D |
| Experience of working in a research environment or for a medical research charity | D |
| Experience of working in a similar role for a minimum of a year | D |
| Experience of writing evaluation and impact reports | D |
| Administrative experience | E |
| Experience of conference or event organisation | E |
| Demonstrable interest in scientific affairs and medical research | E |
| Understanding of research management | D |
| Understanding of financial management  | D |
| Excellent communication skills – both written and oral, including the ability to convey complex scientific ideas and concepts to the public and those personally affected by meningitis and septicaemia | E |
| Strong administrative and organisational skills, including ability to juggle multiple tasks and work under pressure to meet deadlines | E |
| Able to establish and maintain good working relationships with people from a wide range of personal and professional backgrounds and at all levels of seniority | E |
| High competency using Excel, Word, Powerpoint, Outlook,Pubmed or similar | E |
| Experience in reporting to external senior stakeholders e.g. funders | D |
| Personal Attributes | Able to quickly master new concepts/complex information | E |
| Reliable in all situations, and with high integrity | E |
| Able to respond to new opportunities and manage alongside planned work | E |
| Effective team player with an ability to build effective working relationships | E |
| Energetic, self-motivated and able to work on own initiative | E |
| Excellent and consistent attention to detail | E |
| Self-confident and willing to ask clear questions and challenge in a sensitive and professional manner | E |
| Commitment to the vision of Meningitis Research Foundation | E |
| General | Willingness to travel and work flexible hours when work requires | E |

## Terms and Conditions

## Location

Flexible location, either head office in Bristol or home-based. Occasional requirements to visit Bristol office if home based. Occasional work elsewhere if required to travel for work purposes which could include international travel.

## Annual salary

£26,000-£28,000 (depending on experience) including 2% employee pension contribution + 6% employer pension contribution. Paid in arrears on or around 25th of each month.

## Contract Type

Permanent

## Hours of Work

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

## Annual Leave

25 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 GMT on Wednesday 24th May 2022.** If we find a suitable candidate before the deadline, we may close this vacancy early.

Interviews are planned to take place in person in Bristol and candidates should be prepared to travel if necessary to attend this interview.

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 Liz Rodgers, Head of Research at elizabethr@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.

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.