



Ministry
of Defence

Candidate Information Pack

Ministry of Defence
Director General, Defence Medical Services



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Opening message



General Sir Jim Hockenhill
Commander Cyber & Specialist Operations Command



Cyber & Specialist
Operations Command

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director General, Defence Medical Services.

For more information about this significant leadership opportunity at a pivotal moment for Defence, we invite you to watch the introduction and opening video message from General Sir Jim Hockenhill, available via the link: [here](#)

About Defence Medical Services

The Defence Medical Services (DMS) is a purpose-driven organisation within the Cyber & Specialist Operations Command (CSOC), dedicated to promoting, protecting, and restoring the health of the UK's service personnel. As the statutory Defence healthcare provider, we deliver a wide range of services. These include occupationally focused primary healthcare, mental health, rehabilitation, and occupational medicine. Services are provided in the UK, across Strategic Bases worldwide, and through deployable sovereign and internationally delivered expeditionary military medical capabilities. Together, this creates a Military Medical System and an Operational Patient Care Pathway from the point of wounding through to UK hospitals. These capabilities are all linked to support our purpose: to save lives; ensuring that service personnel are fit to fight and can fight back to fitness.

The Military Medical System is delivered by professionally regulated clinicians and support staff covering a wide spectrum of generalist and specialist medical and dental capabilities, military regulated clinicians delivering front line medical care and military and civilian administrators, managers and leaders. The fundamental difference in the healthcare provisions practised across the DMS is that it is always occupationally focussed in order to maintain the employability and deployability of the force and the readiness of military units deployed or at home in any domain – Maritime, Land, Air, Space or Cyber.

Strategic base healthcare is delivered in the UK and overseas from 72 medical practices, 98 dental practices, 121 rehabilitation facilities (including a UK-based tier two 224 bed military specialist rehabilitation facility), 16 occupational health teams, and four UK Mental Health Networks (covering 17 sites and one overseas). Secondary care in the UK is provided through the NHS with contracts in place to support rapid access where there is operational need. Also, to support the wider and overseas diaspora, outside of the care of established DMS facilities, there are healthcare contracts in place to draw on host nation or private providers. Operational healthcare is delivered through the single Services medical capabilities, (i.e., Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force) co-ordinated and cohered through DG DMS, with personnel drawn from within the Military Commands and across the DMS wider strategic base health networks. These capabilities can deploy as sovereign capability or as part of an international coalition.

A whole force functional workforce in excess of 12,000 with further responsibility for the training and assurance of non-vocational medics, the DMS is responsible for the programming and delivery of education, training and clinical currency of its workforce. This is delivered through the Defence Medical Academy and placements within Defence Primary Healthcare and the NHS. A dynamic organisation with continually changing needs, focused on patient care and enabling warfighting capability, DMS seeks innovation (evolution and revolution) and continued quality improvement of its service, doctrine and policy.

The [2025 Strategic Defence Review \(SDR\)](#) dedicates a chapter to the Defence Medical Services, recognising their pivotal role in deterrence, operational endurance, and personnel wellbeing. It identifies three core challenges for the next decade:

- Rebuilding capacity and partnership with the NHS: Strengthening the Defence–Health ecosystem across Defence, DHSC and the NHS to ensure medical readiness in both peacetime and war, including shared planning for mass casualty events and mutual workforce resilience.
- Reforming and integrating the Defence Medical Enterprise: Establishing the DMS as the functional lead across all single Services and Strategic Command, with unified training, accreditation, and workforce career management.
- Modernising infrastructure and data systems: Overhauling an ageing medical estate and legacy IT systems, accelerating digitisation through initiatives such as CORTISONE to enable seamless data sharing with the NHS.

These reforms are essential to build a medical system capable of supporting a modern, integrated warfighting force and contributing to the Government's wider mission to build an NHS fit for the future.

Position Specification

Ref: Director General, Defence Medical Services
Ministry of Defence

This role is a Director General role. If you have never worked in the Civil Service, as a general guide, each Department is headed by a Permanent Secretary, and their direct reports (usually the Departmental Board or functional leadership) are our Directors General. Although comparisons are not always straightforward, that means this role is equivalent to an Executive Committee role in the private sector. The size and shape of Director General portfolios varies by Department, but each role will have its own delivery priorities, plus a contribution to Departmental leadership – and a broader commitment to collective leadership across the Civil Service as part of our Civil Service Leadership Group (the most senior 250 civil servants).



What does the role involve?

The DG DMS is the functional leader and head of the DMS. They are accountable to the Commander of CSOC, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Staff for the delivery of healthcare to the UK Armed Forces and maintenance of regulatory and statutory standards. They are a member of the Military Strategic Headquarters (MSHQ) Board. They are a member of the CSOC Executive Committee. They also report to a number of Defence level boards on healthcare, medical research and medically related matters such as mental health, people and safety. DG DMS is also the senior point of contact providing health and healthcare advice to Ministerial offices, and evidence to governmental committees.

DG DMS has the following key responsibilities:

- To provide leadership to the entire Defence Medical Enterprise as the most senior member of the DMS through the Lead Command model¹.
- Provide strong leadership on productivity, performance improvement, and value for money, ensuring the effective stewardship of public resources and the delivery of measurable outcomes.
- Drive a culture of continuous improvement, using performance data and evaluation to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and service quality across the organisation.
- To ensure the safe, efficient and effective delivery of healthcare globally for the Defence population and act as the patient advocate across Defence. The role is also responsible for compliance with national standards and relevant legislative obligations, adherence to statutory medical regulations and ethical considerations across the full spectrum of military tasks.
- To act as Chief Executive of the Headquarters DMS, responsible for over 5,400 specialist clinical personnel and associated clinical and administrative support services with an annual operating budget of circa £620m.
- To lead relationships between the MOD and allies, other government departments and the devolved administrations, civilian medical academic and research institutions.
- To lead the modernisation of the DMS across the entire Defence Medical Enterprise through a programme of transformation including to deliver the SDR outcomes.
- To lead the modernisation of the DMS across the entire Defence Medical Enterprise, delivering the reform priorities set out in the SDR (2025) – including strengthening the Defence–NHS partnership, implementing NATO's Medical Action Plan priorities, rebuilding clinical and deployable capacity, and delivering a digital transformation of Defence healthcare infrastructure. The DG DMS will serve as both the functional head of the DMS and a principal architect of the Defence–Health partnership that underpins the UK's resilience in crisis and conflict.

In addition, other areas of responsibility will include:

- Ensuring the provision of access to safe, effective and efficient healthcare for all entitled MOD personnel, when deployed and at home, in order both to meet their clinical needs and the requirements of their employer.
- Advising on the requirements for medical personnel and ensure that they are suitably trained, qualified and experienced for their tasks.
- Directing and delivering greater interoperability and efficiency for the development of medical capability across all Defence Lines of Operation in collaboration with the Military Commands and CSOC Portfolio office. This should include maximising innovation opportunities with our strategic commercial and international partners to de-risk high end technical advances in medical science.
- Ensuring the provision of specialist ethical advice to the chain of command, up to and including ministers.
- Reporting the performance and risks of the Defence Medical Services in line with Defence requirements.
- Supporting other key parts of Defence such as People and Safety.
- Being the senior representative for the DMS, nationally and internationally seeking to contribute to the national prosperity agenda.

¹ The Lead Command model is a way of organising Defence so that one Command is clearly accountable for a specific function or capability across the whole organisation

Defence–Health partnership

The DMS operates as part of the UK’s wider national health ecosystem, working closely with the NHS, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), private providers, and academia. The SDR calls for an urgent joint “sprint review” with DHSC to assess system-wide capacity and readiness, and to build an integrated plan for shared delivery and crisis response.

The DG DMS will play a central role in forging this new partnership – balancing Defence’s operational requirements with the NHS’s peacetime pressures and supporting shared workforce resilience. Experience of system-level collaboration with government and healthcare partners will therefore be a critical success factor.

This role is a key delivery appointment arising from the 2025 Strategic Defence Review – see Chapter 7.10, “Defence Medical Services” for full context on the Government’s reform priorities.

(Available via GOV.UK: [“Strategic Defence Review 2025 – Making Britain Safer: secure at home, strong abroad.”](#))

What experience will you need?

This is a demanding and high-impact leadership role. To succeed, you will need to bring a strong record of delivery in complex organisations, and a genuine commitment to improving health outcomes and operational readiness across Defence.

We are open to candidates from a range of professional backgrounds – clinical or non-clinical, Defence or civilian – who can demonstrate the following:

- **Enterprise leadership and delivery at scale:** Proven leadership at senior executive level in a large, complex organisation, with a strong record of delivery, performance improvement, and stewardship of significant resources, ideally within healthcare, Defence, or another public-service system.
- **Healthcare system understanding and governance credibility:** A good understanding of the UK health system, including clinical governance, workforce and public or occupational health, sufficient to provide credible oversight and assurance, and to work effectively with senior clinical leaders and regulators to ensure safe, ethical and regulated healthcare delivery in complex operational contexts.
- **System leadership and partnership-building:** Demonstrated ability to operate across organisational boundaries, building effective partnerships with government departments, the NHS, academia, allies, and other external stakeholders to deliver shared outcomes.
- **Transformation and reform leadership:** Significant experience leading large-scale transformation – such as service reform, digital modernisation, workforce redesign, or infrastructure renewal – aligned to strategic priorities and delivered at pace.
- **Strong personal credibility and leadership presence:** An inclusive, resilient and values-driven leadership style, with the credibility and judgement to influence Ministers, senior military leaders, clinicians and regulators, including experience operating in complex environments.

Prior experience within Defence or the Armed Forces medical community is an advantage but not essential. What matters most is the ability to lead at scale, navigate complexity, and deliver meaningful reform in partnership with others.

Diverse experience and viewpoints are essential to the success of DMS, 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

Civil Service recruitment processes at Director General level are regulated by the [Civil Service Commission](#), and we follow clear guidelines to ensure that our recruitment is fair and open. We also design our recruitment processes to reflect our values-based approach to HR (using staff engagement panels, for example) and to ensure that shortlisted candidates have the opportunity to meet key stakeholders for the role, before they join us.

Indicative Timetable: An indicative timeline is shared below, please note this may be subject to change:

Closing date for applications	23:55 Wednesday 11 March
<i>Longlist Meeting (Appointment Panel only)</i>	w/c 16 March
RRA conducts in-depth interviews with longlisted candidates	From w/c 23 March
<i>Shortlist Meeting (Appointment Panel only)</i>	w/c 6 April
Further assessments, including ILA stakeholder conversations	w/c 13 April & 20 April
Final Panel Interviews	w/c 27 April

We expect the process for this role to be as follows:

- **The closing date for applications will be 23:55 on Wednesday 11 March 2026.**
- Longlisted candidates will then be invited to meet with Russell Reynolds Associates for a preliminary interview
- A shortlist of the applications will take place with the Appointment Panel
- Following this, it is anticipated that shortlisted candidates may then:
 - Participate in a staff engagement panel with a selection of people from across CSOC
 - Undergo an Individual Leadership Assessment (ILA)
 - Meet with key stakeholders, potentially including a senior Minister and senior leaders from across CSOC and wider Civil Service
- Inputs from all of those steps will then form the basis of a panel interview, chaired by **Gisela Stuart**, First Civil Service Commissioner.

Other panel members at the interview will include but may not be limited to **Lieutenant General Sir Rob Magowan** who will succeed General Sir Jim Hockenhill as Commander CSOC in March 2026, **Philippa Hird** (a Non-Executive Director), **Ian Smith** (Chair, NHS Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System) and **Jeremy Pocklington** (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence).

Please note that references and open-source due diligence checks (including into social media accounts) may be undertaken for all shortlisted candidates.

Full details will be provided to shortlisted candidates and recognising that there are a number of steps in the process, we will do our best to arrange the sessions in a way that works for you. We hope that this process will be conducted in face-to-face sessions, but if you need any adjustments do let us know.

Detailed terms

- This role is being offered as a **three-year fixed term** appointment, with the opportunity to extend.
- If you are successful and are from outside of the Civil Service, you can expect your salary on appointment to be **£235,000 per annum**. In addition to this a performance related **bonus of up to £25,000** is available.

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 flexible working arrangements are welcomed and will be considered (including existing job share arrangements).
- The DMS **Headquarters is located at Whittington Barracks, Lichfield** and the postholder should expect to spend a significant amount of their time here. The postholder will also be required to travel across MOD sites and internationally as needed.

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 just under 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 **Developed Vetting** 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 as it is a reserved post** - please ask Russell Reynolds Associates if you have any questions.
- Candidates should note that on completion of the appointment the post holder will be subject to the government's **Business Appointments Rules**, with the possibility of restrictions on future employment imposed by the Prime Minister. If you would like to discuss what this means, please get in touch with Russell Reynolds Associates.
- Unfortunately we will not be able to reimburse you for any **expenses** incurred as part of this recruitment process.

To ensure the integrity of the judgments and decisions they make every day, all civil servants must make sure that no conflict arises - or could be perceived to arise - between their public duties and their private interests when joining, or leaving, the civil service. This is a requirement of our Civil Service Code and is designed to protect both individual civil servants and their employing departments. If you believe you have any interests that might be relevant (or be perceived as relevant) to your ability to undertake this role, please let Russell Reynolds Associates know early in the process. Such interests may be financial or may be related to the relationships you have with specific individuals, organisations, or employers.

How to apply

The recruitment is being undertaken by Russell Reynolds Associates on behalf of the DMS.

[Please click here to apply](#) using job reference number **2601-029L**. You will be asked to register your details, answer any application questions and upload your CV and Statement of Suitability (covering statement). Should you wish to speak with someone before submitting an application, or if you have difficulty in accessing the online platform, please contact responses@russellreynolds.com in the first instance, quoting reference number **2601-029L**.

We should receive your application by **no later than 23:55 on Wednesday 11 March 2026**.

Your submission should include:

- **Your CV**, with educational and professional qualifications and full employment history, including an explanation of any gaps in your employment history, and details where possible of budgets and numbers of people
- A short covering statement of **no more than two A4 sized pages (1000 words)** explaining why this appointment interests you and how you can evidence your suitability for the role, with particular reference to the criteria in the 'what experience will I need' section.
- A **diversity monitoring form**. All applicants are invited to complete this information to assist the Civil Service with monitoring its recruitment process. All data is reported in an anonymous and aggregate format and will not be seen by anyone assessing your application. Please complete that via the electronic link [here](#)
- A **declaration of interest form**, which can be found [here](#).

This vacancy is part of the [A Great Place to Work for Veterans](#) initiative. For further information on whether you are eligible to apply under this scheme please follow the link above. Should you wish to be considered under this scheme please note this when you complete the Diversity Information Form above.

In addition to this, the Ministry of Defence is an accredited 'Disability Confident Employer' under the government's **Disability Confident Scheme** which denotes organisations that have a positive commitment towards disabled people. We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the role, as outlined in the 'what experience will you need section'. If you wish to claim a guaranteed interview, you should declare so at the point you submit your application.

The law requires that selection for appointment to the Civil Service is on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the [Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles](#). If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Recruitment Principles, and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact Sarah Vale [sarah.vale@cabinetoffice.gov.uk] in the Senior Talent and Resourcing Team, Government People Group in the first instance.