



UK Health
Security
Agency

Chief Data Officer Group, UK Health Security Agency Professional Internship Placement Opportunity

The following information has been provided by the Placement Host Organisation and outlines the placement opportunity available for Doctoral Training Partnership postgraduate students.

Any queries about this placement should be addressed to the Host Organisation at the details provided below.



Name of Host Organisation:

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)

About UKHSA [UK Health Security Agency - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/ukhsa)

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). At UKHSA, our mission is to protect people's health by preventing and responding to threats—whether that's a new pandemic, everyday infections like influenza, or environmental dangers like radiation or extreme weather. We save lives, protect livelihoods, and work with partners across the NHS, care systems, and globally to keep communities safe.

We're a hub of scientific and operational expertise, tackling health challenges at every level—local, national, and international.

The Chief Data Officer (CDO) group is the analytical powerhouse of UKHSA and plays a key role in making sure data is used safely, legally, and ethically. We support every step of the data journey—from collecting and managing information to analytics and delivering insights that drive real-world action.

If you're passionate about using data to make a difference and want to help solve big health challenges, there's a place for you here in the CDO group.

Period of placement:

Placement start date: April 2026 onwards

Duration: 3 months

Working pattern and location of the placement:

Placements will be remote/hybrid with occasional office/event attendance, but this is at the successful candidate's discretion. Our head office is in Canary Wharf, we also have offices in Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham.

Full-time is preferred so you can fully immerse yourself in the team and project, but we will work flexibly if part-time hours are required. Placements must be completed in one continuous block due to IT and data access/security requirements.



Description of the placement opportunity available:

Background/ expected impact:

UKHSA's Digital Products & Services (DPS) team is offering a three-month placement for a DTP PhD student to investigate how emerging AI and automation technologies can strengthen digital delivery, DevOps practices and workforce models. The project will explore the feasibility of the "one-man squad" concept, an increasingly discussed model in modern software engineering and assess what skills, tooling and organisational conditions are required across the full software development lifecycle (SDLC) to make such an approach viable within a public-sector health security context.

The placement will examine how AI-assisted development, automated testing, infrastructure-as-code, and intelligent monitoring could streamline delivery and reduce manual overhead. The student will analyse current DPS workflows, identify opportunities for automation, and assess how AI could support or augment roles across product, engineering, DevOps and service operations. A key component will be evaluating the "one-man squad" model: mapping the end-to-end SDLC, identifying skill dependencies, and determining whether a highly autonomous delivery model is feasible, sustainable and secure for UKHSA.

Outline of duties:

- A structured assessment of AI and automation opportunities across DPS workflows.
- A feasibility study of the "one-man squad" concept, including required skills, risks and organisational enablers.
- A mapped view of SDLC roles, dependencies and potential areas for AI-supported consolidation.
- Recommendations for where automation could improve delivery speed, quality and resilience.
- A final report and presentation summarising findings and outlining practical next steps for UKHSA.

Expected output(s)/ deliverable(s):

Your analysis will help UKHSA understand how AI and automation can enhance digital delivery, reduce friction and strengthen technical capability. Your findings will:

- Inform future workforce planning,
- Help steer tooling decisions
- Improve our delivery models
- Support UKHSA's ambition to build a modern, efficient and resilient digital function.



UK Health
Security
Agency

The project will also provide evidence to guide investment in AI-enabled engineering practices and shape long-term digital strategy.

Support for student:

UKHSA is an excellent placement opportunity as we have a developed culture of learning and development, fostered in an inclusive environment. To ensure that the postholder has opportunities to expand their skillsets and to develop professionally, we can provide some training in analysis, where required, but we also encourage the student to engage with subject matter experts and other early career researchers (ECR) across the UKHSA. At UKHSA, we have a thriving Early Career Research network led by our CDO Partnerships team. The student will have the opportunity to join and be supported by the ECR network within the UKHSA, and by other ECRs and team members within the host team. The ECR network has fortnightly meetings to bring learning and development opportunities to placement students as well as quarterly away days at our head office.



Skills and experience required for the role:

Essential skills

- Strong interest in AI, automation, DevOps or software engineering research.
- Ability to analyse technical workflows and understand SDLC processes.
- Experience with systems thinking, organisational analysis or technology evaluation.
- Confidence engaging with multidisciplinary digital teams.
- Ability to synthesise complex findings into clear, actionable insights.

Desirable

- Well-developed problem-solving skills and user centred approach to developing solutions and ensure evolving user requirements are translated into clear deliverable project outcomes.

Security/ health and safety restrictions (if relevant):

Anticipated costs associated with the placement (e.g. travel and subsistence costs), and any financial contribution the Host will make to help cover these (if relevant):

This placement will be offered as an unpaid visiting worker. Applicants should seek funding through their funder/research council to complete this placement. UKHSA shall not be responsible for any payment to the Visitor or for any travelling and accommodation expenses incurred, except for necessary work related travel authorised in advance by UKHSA. The Visitor will be bound by the UKHSA Business Expense policy in respect of any such expenses.

UKHSA shall provide the Visitor with appropriate working facilities during the placement, free of charge.



UK Health
Security
Agency

How to apply:

Closing date for applications:

Application format: CV and a 500/1000-word (max) cover letter to evidence how you fit the project requirements, skills and what you can bring to this role.

How to submit an application:

Send your CV and a cover letter (max 500/1000 words) to the CDO Partnerships Team, UKHSA, CDOPartnerships@ukhsa.gov.uk with the subject line "AI Digital Delivery DTP application".

Please note this opportunity is being advertised at multiple universities.

Recruitment process:

The Host Organisation is responsible for processing the applications received for this opportunity and applications will be processed as follows:

All applications will be subject to sifting, where Statements of suitability and CV's will be assessed against the Essential and Desirable skills and experience required for the role. Applicants who successfully pass the sift will be invited for a short virtual interview on MS Teams.

BPSS (Baseline personnel security standard) will be required for this role. [Government baseline personnel security standard - GOV.UK](#)

In some cases, enhanced national security vetting may also be required. ([United Kingdom Security Vetting: Applicant - GOV.UK](#)).

Civil Service recruitment nationality rules will apply to this position. [Civil Service recruitment: nationality rules - GOV.UK](#)

The time it takes for us to onboard successful candidates can vary from case to case. It's reasonable to allow 6-8 weeks from the point of offer to starting a position.



UK Health
Security
Agency

Host contact details:

Any queries about this opportunity should be addressed to the Host Organisation.

CDO Partnerships Team, UKHSA

CDOPartnerships@ukhsa.gov.uk – *please reference the placement you are enquiring about in the subject heading.*