



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Appointment of

Veterinary Director (SCS1)

March 2025 OBTA



Saxton Bampfylde



About Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

APHA is an executive Agency sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). APHA also provides services to the Scottish and Welsh Governments, other government departments and a range of other customers. Our headquarters is in Weybridge, Surrey and we employ over 3000 colleagues in around 90 locations.

We are one of the most prestigious and critical organisations in the protection of the United Kingdom. More than ever the health of our environment, plants and animal's matter. Everyone who works in APHA is passionate about achieving this mission. Our key priorities are:

- Control and eradication of animal and plant diseases and pests, reducing the risks from new and emerging threats.
- Providing services for animal health and welfare, plant, and bee health.
- Rapidly control pest and disease outbreaks; while continuing to maintain and develop the skills and capabilities required to deliver core business and services and provide an efficient outbreak response.
- Continue to adapt and implement outbreak response plans and identify lessons from outbreaks including Bluetongue and Avian Influenza, implementing any improvements needed.
- Provide science-based evidence and advice to inform policy makers.
- Maintain national and international specialist veterinary and scientific capability and reputation.

In APHA our work sits across four core Directorates:

Service Delivery Directorate – our operational delivery arm which works across England, Scotland, and Wales. We are responsible for international trade, regulatory affairs, compliance, and enforcement. Here we also deliver our resilience and contingency planning to make sure we have the right disease outbreak preparedness in place.

Science Directorate – we provide a range of surveillance and research activities to rapidly investigate and respond to plant and animal health threats. We act as the National and International Reference Laboratory lead for many infections and non-infectious animal diseases, and we provide expert scientific advice to government to help inform policy.

Strategy, Planning & Innovation Directorate – we deliver our Agency strategy, planning, performance, project and change services. This includes our annual business plan and our major transformation programme of work – Delivering Sustainable Futures - which is an ambitious and exciting programme of change reimagining and digitising our end-to-end services for our customers and for our people.

Professional Advice & Standards Directorate – our lead for animal health technical training and standards and provision of advice and evidence to policy colleagues and the GB's Chief Veterinary Officers to formulate policy. Here we also train and regulate official Veterinary Surgeons and para-professional groups who provide services on behalf of Government.



Introduction

We are looking to recruit a new Veterinary Director to join our executive team. This is an excellent opportunity to be at the forefront of the UK's work to safeguard our animal welfare, biosecurity, and food security. As head of the veterinary profession within APHA, numbering circa 450 vets and the Director responsible for the 12,000 Official Veterinarians, you will ensure the high standards of veterinary and technical training, and high standards of practice.

You will ensure that professional and quality standards are maintained and continuously improved.

As a member of the APHA Executive Board, you will provide motivational leadership and robust governance of APHA, ensuring veterinary perspectives are considered and at the heart of decision making across the Agency.

Alongside your fellow Executive Board colleagues, you will motivate, engage and lead the 3600 strong work force of the Agency ensuring:

- We continuously improve our technical process, delivery, and quality.
- Working with the Director of Service Delivery and colleagues in Epidemiological Risk – you will ensure we are prepared for disease outbreak or pest incursion through effective horizon scanning, modelling, and operational planning.
- You will work alongside the Outbreak Director during disease outbreaks, leading the Agency's frontline response when required by the CEO or Director of Service Delivery – stepping into the role of Outbreak Director during periods of leave.
- You effectively and professionally represent the Agency and CEO to Ministers and senior external stakeholders as required by the CEO.

You will lead the Professional Advice and Standards Directorate within the Agency responsible for:

- Driving high Animal Health technical training and standards.
- Timely and appropriate provision of advice and evidence to policy colleagues and the UK, Scottish and Welsh Chief Veterinary Officers to formulate policy.
- Training and regulation of Official Veterinary Surgeons and para-professional groups who provide services on behalf of Government.
- Implementation, maintenance, and continual improvement of quality management systems across APHA.
- Veterinary aspects of contingency planning, disease surveillance and response to disease outbreaks.





The Role

As a member of the Executive Board, you will provide inspiring and motivational leadership to APHA's Professional Advice and Standards Directorate, and the wider Agency.

You will also:

- Support the CEO as the lead Board Member/Director for Veterinary advice, standards, and technical assurance, working with colleagues in Defra, Scottish and Welsh Governments and stakeholders to deliver on our strategic outcomes.
- Shape and develop veterinary strategies, processes, and policies to support the CEO in meeting stakeholder requirements collaborating with HR to establish professional standards and opportunities for continuous professional development.
- During outbreaks of exotic diseases, you will work in partnership with the Outbreak Director and lead the Agency's veterinary response at the National Disease Control Centre (NDCC), ensuring effective implementation of operational activities and maintaining communication with policy colleagues and CVOs.
- Ensure effective co-ordination and timely delivery of high-quality briefing products and advice to Ministers, the CEO, Executive and Steering Boards, Welsh and Scottish Governments.
- Represent the Agency effectively and professionally at relevant Defra and Devolved Administration group Committees and national veterinary organisations on behalf of the CEO.
- Play an active role in ensuring our recruitment, talent management, and succession planning for veterinary posts within the Agency and across the GVS attract and retain the skills we need now, and in the future.
- Ensure that veterinary and technical processes meet quality standards, addressing any deficiencies or deviations from policies.
- Be a visible leader, supporting APHA employee engagement activities (such as all agency calls), ensuring our people's views are heard, and supporting professional career development through career pathways.

This role is crucial for maintaining high standards in veterinary practices within the Agency and ensuring effective responses to animal health issues



Person Specification

Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer, you will be experienced operating at a senior level and be someone who relishes making a difference at an organisational level. You will have successfully led veterinary and technical teams.

As Veterinary Director and Head of the Professional Standards Directorate, your key responsibilities will be:

Leadership and Management:

- As a key member of the executive team and APHA Board, support the CEO set the strategy and direction of the organisation.
- Be Head of Profession for the agency's veterinarians / technical staff building capability driving best practice, standards, and technical competence across APHA.
- Provide inspiring, motivational leadership to the Professional Standards Directorate and wider Agency ensuring clear development and competency goals and objectives are in place for vet and tech roles.
- Be a role model to all APHA staff, exhibiting the behaviours we expect of all our people.

Delivery:

- Ensure effective risk management and horizon scanning alongside the Director of Service Delivery and colleagues in Epidemiological Risk – ensuring we are prepared for disease outbreak or pest incursion - utilizing effective modelling and operational planning.
- Own and drive continuous improvement of the Agency's quality standards and accreditations.
- Develop and lead the Agency's veterinary and technical standards, processes, systems, and training, driving cross agency collaboration, consistency, and standards to maximise successful delivery.
- Ensure the effective application of robust management disciplines including risk management and performance management arrangements and controls for veterinary and technical roles within the Agency.
- Lead and own the framework and delivery for the appointment of official veterinarians ensuring a robust appointment and regulatory process that maintains public and trading partner trust and confidence in the system.

Financial Stewardship and Governance:

- Take personal responsibility for the Professional Standards Directorate budget, ensuring financial probity and regularity and value for money on expenditure and internal governance.
- Support the government Spending Review Submissions on behalf of APHA.
- Ensure that all financial and non-financial reporting requirements are met on a timely and regular basis.

Stakeholder Engagement and Relationships:

- Build positive relationships with APHA policy customers in Defra, Welsh and Scottish Governments ensuring all governments are involved, included in advice development.
- Build and own as lead director relationships with the RCVS, and BVA.
- Represent APHA, where appropriate at cross government and GB committees such as Science Advisory Board, Outbreak readiness Board, Animal Disease policy Group, 4CVOs, stakeholder groups etc.
- Mobilise and Chair expert meetings and committees as required to manage disease outbreaks, incursions or to achieve strategic outcomes.



Experience & Skills

You will need to demonstrate the following:

Essential experience

- Strong leadership with significant veterinary management experience, capable of handling complex technical challenges and adapting quickly to changing situations with flexibility, responsiveness, and creativity.
- Membership or Fellowship of the RCVS.
- Excellent communication, collaboration, and negotiation skills at a senior level, with the ability to influence and gain the confidence of senior leaders.
- Proven ability to drive and implement transformational change in a large, complex organisation, setting strategic direction and leading change effectively.
- Strong financial awareness and acumen, ensuring efficiencies and value for money across the organisation.
- Skilled in team building and leadership in high-pressure environments, fostering resilience, inclusivity, ambition, and professionalism while being willing to travel extensively across the UK.

Desirable

- Excellent knowledge of statutory animal diseases and their control in the UK context.





Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We passionately believe in equality, diversity & inclusion and we match that belief with action.

APHA is committed to being an organisation in which fairness and inclusion are central to all our working relationships. At APHA we want you to have a respectful, welcoming and engaging working environment, free from discrimination regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, social background, trade union activity, caring responsibilities or working pattern. We encourage applications from neurodiverse people and believe it is only through having a mix of ideas and ways of thinking that we will be able to have a culture which produces high quality work.

We have many active staff networks including: Age, Mental health, Cancer, Carers, Disability, EU nationals, Ethnic Minority, Faith, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Asexual and Transgender (LGBAT +), Social Mobility, Women and Work life Balance. They are supported by senior champions and encouraged to take an active part in the development of our organisation.

We offer career development through a range of both internal and Civil Service wide talent schemes, mentoring, sponsorship and reverse mentoring. Our senior leaders talk authentically and with passion about what they are doing personally to support equality, diversity and inclusion. We promote and support a range of flexible working patterns to enable staff to balance home and work responsibilities, and we treat people fairly irrespective of their working arrangements. We want to create inclusive cultures where employees from all backgrounds thrive; and to build and sustain a diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of the UK working age population. We want everyone, regardless of background or of grade, to have a sense of belonging, to feel able to bring their authentic self to work, and to have a voice in the organisation. We will not tolerate discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation or negative stereotyping.

Our aim is a working environment where you feel you belong and have a voice, whatever your job or your grade.





Terms of Appointment

Salary: £76,000 - £86,000

Grade: SCS 1

Contract Type: Permanent

Benefits

We will support your ongoing personal development through appropriate training. Inclusion, support as the development of our people matter to us. We aim to support the career and personal wellbeing of everyone in APHA. Everyone in APHA is supported to develop their skills and capabilities. Your line manager will also work with you to establish your priorities for the year, developing a performance, learning and development plan tailored to you and your role.

Location

Any APHA site: Weybridge, Exeter, Cardiff, Bristol, Carlisle, York, Perth, Carmarthen.

Ways of working/Location

Expected to spend 3 days a week at an APHA site. There is frequent travel amongst both APHA and Defra sites, particularly London, as necessary. The post is full-time and we are supportive of job share applications.

Security

CTC with an expectation that SC will follow. More information about the vetting process can be found [here](#).

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 28.97% of salary as explained at [Contribution rates - 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).
- Unfortunately, we will not be able to reimburse you for any expenses incurred as part of this recruitment process.



Things you need to know

To be eligible for employment to this role you must be a national from the following countries:

- UK nationals
- Nationals of the Republic of Ireland
- Nationals of Commonwealth countries
- European Economic Area (EEA) nationals with (or eligible for) status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS)
- Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service
- Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service certain family members of the relevant (European Union) EU and Turkish nationals.

(*Commonwealth citizens not yet in the UK, who have no right of abode in the UK and who do not have leave to enter the UK are ineligible to apply.) For further information on whether you are eligible to apply, please visit [Civil Service recruitment: nationality rules - GOV.UK](#). Please email Maria.Dodson@saxbam.com if you have any questions.

Pre-Employment Checks

Everyone employed by the Civil Service is subject to security checks. These security checks, known as pre-employment checks, are conducted to verify your: identity, employment history; right to work; eligibility under nationality

rules; and any unspent criminal convictions.

These checks ensure that candidates are entitled to work in the UK and possess the honesty, integrity and values for government-related work.

Depending on the level of checks needed for the role, you may need to provide at least three documents so we can evidence your Identity, nationality, full permanent address, signature and date of birth.

These would include:

- Current British Passport
- Birth Certificate - Issued within 12 months of Birth
- Bank, building society or credit card statement*
- Current photo card driving license
- Original utility bill*
- Marriage certificate/Civil Partnership certificate

Documents marked with an * must be dated **within the last 3 months** and clearly show your current address.

The full list of acceptable documents will be provided to you if we wish to make you an offer of employment.

NB Only original documents will be accepted; photocopies and online documents (e.g. bank statements, e- bills, eP60's etc.) cannot be accepted.



Things you need to know

What reasonable adjustments can be made if I have a disability?

APHA is a Disability Confident Leader and therefore part of the Disability Confident Scheme (for further information on the Disability confident scheme please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/collect/disability-confident-campaign>).

If you have a disability defined by the Equality Act 2010 you're eligible to be considered for the Disability Confident Scheme. In order to qualify you must have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term negative effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities (Further information regarding disabilities covered under the equality act please visit www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010).

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments for Disability Confident Scheme applicants and will try to remove any barriers so you are not at a disadvantage during the selection/recruitment process/ Interview / assessment including; allowing extra time during selection tests: ensuring that information is provided in an accessible format or; by providing training. We are also committed to interviewing all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for the role applied for.

If you feel that you may need a reasonable adjustment to be made, or you would like to discuss the disability confident scheme in more detail please contact us in the first instance. If you wish to receive a hard copy of the information,

or in an alternative format e.g. Audio, Braille or large font then please contact: Maria.Dodson@saxbam.com

Disability Confident Scheme for Disabled Persons

The Civil Service embraces diversity and promotes equal opportunities. As such, we run a Disability Confident Scheme (DCS) for candidates with disabilities who meet the minimum selection criteria. You should indicate this on your application form if you would like to be considered under this scheme.

Once you are appointed your line manager will work with you to identify how they can put in place reasonable adjustments to enable you to carry out your work.

Equal Opportunities

APHA values equality and diversity in employment. We are committed to being an organisation in which fairness and equality of opportunity is central to the approach in business and working relationships and where the organisational culture reflects and supports these values. In APHA you have the right to a working environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation regardless of race, ethnic or national origin, age, religion, sex, gender Identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, working hours, trade union membership or trade union activity.



The Selection Process

Timeline:

We will try and offer as much flexibility as we can, but it may not be possible to offer alternative dates for assessments or interviews. You are therefore asked to note the below timetable, exercising flexibility through the recruitment and selection process, in order to meet the dates given.

Please note that these dates may be subject to change.

Application Closing Date: 12 noon Monday 21st April

Longlist Meeting: w/c 28th April

Preliminary Interviews with Saxton Bampfylde: w/c 5th & 12th May

Shortlist Meeting: w/c 19th May

Staff Engagement Session: w/c 26th May

Interviews: w/c 2nd June

Assessments:

If shortlisted, you may be asked to take part in a Staff Engagement Exercise (SEE). This assessment will not result in a pass or fail decision. Rather, it is designed to support the panel's decision making and highlight areas for the panel to explore further at interview.

Interview:

You will be asked to attend a panel interview in order to have a more in-depth discussion of your previous experience and professional competence in relation to the criteria set out in "The Role" section.

The interview panel may give a presentation topic to candidates for preparation ahead of the interview.

Interviews are scheduled to take place **in person in London**.

Further details will be provided to shortlisted candidates. An alternative date may be possible for candidates who cannot make this date, please indicate if you will need this on your application.

Offer and feedback:

The timeline later in this pack indicates the date by which decisions are expected to be made – all candidates will be advised of the outcome of their application as soon as possible thereafter.

Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles

Civil Service Commission 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. In accordance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Principles, our recruitment and selection processes are underpinned by the requirement of appointment on the basis of merit by fair and open competition. If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Recruitment Principles and you wish to make a complaint, in the first instance you should contact; scscandidate.grs@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive you can contact the Civil Service Commission at info@csc.gov.uk and more information can be found at www.civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk



How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to APHA on this appointment. Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **OBTAA**.

You will need to complete and/or attach the following information:

- 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 essential criteria above;
- 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;

The closing date for applications is **noon on Monday 21st April**

Disability Confident Scheme

APHA 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 earlier in this pack. If you wish to claim a guaranteed interview, you should declare so at the point you submit your application.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.



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