

Breaking it down: UKHSA scientist makes Nature's top 10 of 2021

Chosen by Nature's editors, [the top 10](#) explores key developments in science and recognises individuals who, along with their colleagues, helped to make amazing discoveries and bring attention to crucial issues.

Meaghan has been recognised for helping to disseminate crucial information about coronavirus (COVID-19) by breaking down the agency's scientific reports into easy-to-understand social media posts. After spending her first 10 years at Public Health England (PHE) tracking HIV, Meaghan was drafted into the COVID-19 response in 2020.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA, formerly PHE) has brought together the UK's unparalleled expertise across genomics, epidemiology and virology to monitor and better understand SARS-CoV-2 variants. By regularly publishing detailed technical briefings, the latest data and understanding of the virus is made freely available to the rest of the world.

Scientific data is complex by nature, and it was Meaghan's ability to distil and present the cutting-edge findings into accessible content on Twitter that has secured her place on the top 10 list, alongside the scientist who placed a rover on Mars, and a former UN special rapporteur credited with protecting the rights of indigenous communities across the world.

Speaking as the list was published, Meaghan said:

I'm very humbled to be included and it's a huge honour to be recognised. Behind the many reports we publish is a large team of scientists working at pace around the clock. Back in January I was inspired to showcase our collective work, to breakdown the findings for an unscientific audience and it quickly became clear that people valued the insight.

My day job is still very much focused on understanding how coronavirus behaves and to provide the scientific basis on which public health decisions are made, to find a way through this unprecedented challenge and to protect as many lives as possible.

In my spare time, I'll continue to help people understand the science and make informed decisions. The best advice I can give now is to go out and get the vaccine, whether that's a first, second or booster shot.

Dr Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Advisor at UKHSA, added:

I'm incredibly proud that Meaghan's commitment to communicate the science is being celebrated in this way. I know that all the scientists and researchers working at UKHSA during the pandemic are delighted at this recognition. Shining a light on their work, her posts have been both a great source of information and reassurance for members of the public and the media.