

# Senior civil servant and former lecturer in medical statistics appointed to Joint Biosecurity Centre

Press release

Dr Clare Gardiner has been seconded to the role of Director General of the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) at DHSC to take it through to full operating capability.



The JBC brings together the UK's leading data analysis and epidemiological expertise with the aim of ensuring that outbreaks of coronavirus (COVID-19) are detected and brought under control quickly.

By combining multiple and new data feeds, the JBC is responsible for providing a single authoritative information picture to local, regional and national decision makers to help them respond rapidly to any outbreak. It's building on the UK's existing public health infrastructure and surveillance network, drawing on expertise from across government, industry and academia.

The JBC is also responsible for advising on the new COVID-19 Alert Level, collecting, collating and analysing data in order to provide a recommendation to the chief medical officers across the UK of the current level.

Currently Director of National Resilience and Strategy at the National Cyber Security Centre, Dr Gardiner has extensive experience in government as well as an academic and research background in medical statistics and epidemiology.

She is well placed to build on the initial operating capability of the JBC already delivered thanks to the temporary head of the unit, Tom Hurd. The JBC is expected to reach full operating capacity later this summer.

The JBC is part of the NHS Test and Trace service which is led by Executive

Chair Baroness Dido Harding in DHSC.

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## **Dounreay gives £100,000 to help businesses recover from Covid-19**

The company responsible for decommissioning the fast reactor complex on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) is making available £100,000 to help local businesses get back on their feet after lockdown.

The money is being given to the Caithness Business Fund, which is managed by Caithness Chamber of Commerce. It is intended to help companies and traders with the cost of adapting their business models in the new era of physical distancing.

Trudy Morris, Chief Executive of Caithness Chamber of Commerce, said:

The money would be made available through a fast-track application process to the Caithness Business Fund over the course of several funding rounds, [the first of which is open now to applications](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on businesses in Caithness, and while the support from both UK and Scottish Governments has been welcome, it is clear that many businesses are now facing additional challenges as lockdown restrictions ease and we move towards the reset and recovery of our economy.

We know that the local business community is keen to reopen as soon as possible, but only in a way which is compatible with ensuring the safety of their workforce and their customers. Many businesses are facing significant costs as they look to adapt their premises to meet public health and social distancing requirements.

This generous support from DSRL will enable the fund to quickly support these businesses as they look to rebuild and recover in the coming months.

During the period of lockdown, DSRL assisted several essential businesses by making available the services of joiners to manufacture and install protective screens for staff.

As society moves into phase 1 of the lockdown easing, more businesses are expected to re-open and the need for safety modifications to protect staff

and public is expected to increase.

Mark Rouse, Managing Director of DSRL, said:

We were in a unique position to help essential businesses during the lockdown because we maintained a state of operational readiness that could be deployed to support the community.

As we move into phase 1, and our own focus moves onto how we can safely restart the work of decommissioning the site, we wanted to continue being able to help other businesses as they come out of hibernation.

A resilient local economy is really important to us – both today, because it helps us retain and recruit the specialist skills and services we need, and in the future, because we want the site to leave behind a legacy of social and economic wellbeing when the decommissioning is complete.

Dounreay, which was once the UK's centre for fast reactor research, is now Scotland's largest decommissioning project. The work is being delivered by DSRL, a company owned by Cavendish Dounreay Partnership, on behalf of the NDA.

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## [World Environment Day: £10.9m for international conservation](#)

The Government has awarded £10.9 million for global projects to protect rare wildlife and vulnerable habitats to mark this year's World Environment Day (5 June).

Wildlife set to benefit include turtles in the British Virgin Islands, penguins in South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, coral reefs in Comoros and endangered chimpanzees in Uganda.

Over the next three years, 17 projects will receive £5.7 million through the [Darwin Initiative](#) – a world-renowned scheme that protects wildlife and the natural environment across the world. In addition, £5.2 million will be given to 21 projects through the [Darwin Plus](#) scheme for conservation of the unique and globally significant plants and animals that reside in UK Overseas Territories.

Wildlife to benefit from this funding include:

- The British Virgin Islands' turtle populations and their reefs and

seagrass meadow habitats through increasing local understanding of turtle conservation and fisher needs

- Endangered chimpanzees in Uganda through supporting local communities and providing training for reforestation efforts
- Coral reefs in the Comoros by helping small-scale fishers to effectively manage these habitats
- A number of species, such as Antarctic fur seals, albatross and penguin species including macaroni, king and Gentoo, in South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands will be surveyed through drones to establish their baseline populations to help monitor and manage their long-term recovery

International Environment Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

World Environment Day provides us all with a stark reminder of the need to take urgent action to reverse global biodiversity loss.

Through our Darwin Initiative and Darwin Plus programme, we are restoring many precious natural environments across the world, helping to transform the lives of the poorest communities and prevent the extinction of some of the world's most wonderful species.

Since 1992, the Darwin Initiative has funded 1,200 projects from 159 countries, with a value of over £177 million. Funding applications are recommended to ministers by The Darwin Expert Committee, which consists of experts from NGOs, government, academia, science and the private sector.

Professor E.J. Milner Gulland, Oxford University and Chair of the Darwin Expert Committee and Darwin Plus Advisory Group, said:

On World Environment Day, it's great that Darwin is able to support so many innovative, impactful projects around the world.

It was inspiring to delve into these projects during the assessment process, and I'm looking forward to seeing these projects blossom over the next few years, improving both the state of nature and people's lives.

At the [Spring Budget](#), the Chancellor announced the government would triple funding for the Darwin Plus programme to £10 million to help protect natural environments in UK Overseas Territories. This builds on the £220 million for biodiversity conservation in developing nations, and the doubling of UK international climate finance, [announced by the Prime Minister at the UN General Assembly last year](#).

A full list of projects, including a number of small schemes, to be supported by the Darwin Initiative and Darwin Plus programme is available on the [Darwin Initiative website](#).

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## National Careers Service Virtual Jobs Fair returns on June 8

To ensure people are receiving crucial careers support during the Covid-19 outbreak, the National Careers Service is working to bring job seekers and employers closer together by advertising vacancies across social media.

The Virtual Jobs Fair will virtually visit nine different regions of England throughout the week and give employers in those regions a chance to advertise current opportunities. The National Careers Service will promote these opportunities through its national and regional social media channels.

People can search for #JobsHour to find these vacancies or follow National Careers Service social media channels to find out more and see vacancies during the week. The National Careers Service will also provide free personalised careers information, advice and guidance for anyone wanting advice on vacancies, next steps or finding a role that is right for them.

Noteworthy additions to the second fair are the inclusion of more localised hashtags to help people to identify opportunities relevant to them and Wednesday's live Facebook 'Employment Workshop' which will give people tips on writing CVs and preparing for interviews. 'Jobs Hour' will run at 11am-12pm and 1pm-2pm following the timetable below.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
North East and Cumbria	Monday 8 June	11am to 12pm
North West	Monday 8 June	1pm to 2pm
Yorkshire and Humber	Tuesday 9 June	11am to 12pm
East Midlands and Northants	Tuesday 9 June	1pm to 2pm
East of England and Bucks	Wednesday 10 June	11am to 12pm
FB Live Employment Workshop	Wednesday 10 June	2pm to 2:30pm
West Midlands and Staffs	Thursday 11 June	11am to 12pm
South West and Oxon	Thursday 11 June	1pm to 2pm
South East	Friday 12 June	11am to 12pm
London	Friday 12 June	1pm to 2pm

### **Gillian Keegan, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills said:**

Following on from the success of the first Virtual Jobs Fair I am delighted that the event will be virtually touring England again next week.

It is so important that employers are able to get access to the skilled, local workforce they need at this time, and that young

people and adults looking for work are able to find the right role and careers support to progress.

I'd encourage all employers and anyone looking for a new role, or for additional support, to get involved and explore the opportunities on offer throughout the week.

**Sophie Graham, a National Careers Service adviser said:**

Back in May our Virtual Jobs Fair saw over 1,000 job opportunities posted across England in just four days. Due to its success, the National Careers Service will be hosting a second Virtual Jobs Fair to continuously support citizens across England with getting back into work.

Our advisers will also be on hand to support with CVs, covering letters, applications and interview skills, to ensure that jobseekers are in the strongest possible position to succeed.

You can follow the National Careers Service on:

For further support, the National Careers Service is available for free, personalised and impartial careers advice for people who need help to find learning and work that's right for them. To contact the service call the helpline on 0800 100 900, open 7 days a week from 8am until 10pm, or visit the [National Careers Service website](#).

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## **Chancellor announces Richard Hughes as preferred Chair of the Office for Budget Responsibility**

The statutory term of the current Chair of the OBR, Robert Chote, comes to an end later this year. Mr Chote was the first permanent Chair of the OBR and has served two terms since his initial appointment in 2010.

Richard Hughes is currently a Research Associate at the Resolution Foundation and Advisor to the IMF, and brings twenty years' experience to the role, having worked on economic and fiscal issues both outside and inside of government.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

At an unprecedented time when the state has had to take unprecedented action, it is essential that our institutions work as they should to ensure that we retain our complete commitment to strong public finances and responsible management of tax-payers' money.

That makes the independence and role of the Office for Budget Responsibility all the more important. So I am delighted to nominate Richard Hughes to be the next Chair of the OBR. We're doing so months ahead of the handover to give the institution the certainty it needs to continue to play its vital role in supporting the credibility of the UK's fiscal framework.

I would like to thank Robert Chote for the excellent work he and his team have done over the past ten years.

Richard Hughes said:

I am honoured to be nominated to be the next Chair of the OBR. It is both a great privilege and a tremendous responsibility to be proposed for this position during one of the most challenging times for the UK economy and public finances in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

I would like to thank the current Chair Robert Chote, Charlie Bean, Andy King and the staff of the OBR for all the work they have done over the last decade to establish it as one of the preeminent independent fiscal agencies in the world. Like them, I am committed to upholding the OBR's well-deserved reputation for objective, transparent, and rigorous analysis of economic and fiscal developments.

The OBR has executive responsibility for producing the official UK economic and fiscal forecasts, assessing the Government's performance against its fiscal rules and reporting on the sustainability of and risks to the public finances. As an independent institution, the OBR is committed to providing objective, transparent and impartial analysis.

The Treasury Select Committee (TSC) approve all appointments to the Budget Responsibility Committee, including the chairman. Following the Chancellor's announcement today, Richard will appear before the TSC for a pre-appointment hearing in due course.

As with all Treasury appointments, the recruitment process for the next OBR Chair was designed to ensure that the most qualified candidate was appointed from the broadest possible pool of applicants.

#### **Further information**

- Robert Chote was the first permanent Chair of the OBR and was first

appointed in 2010, when the OBR was first established.

- He has served two 5-year terms after he was reappointed in 2015 – appointments to the Budget Responsibility Committee cannot serve more than two terms.
- Richard Hughes was a Division Chief in the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) Fiscal Affairs Department where he led their work on fiscal transparency, governance, and risk management in the wake of the global financial crisis. More recently, as Research Associate at the Resolution Foundation he published papers on fiscal rules, public investment, and the economic and fiscal implications of coronavirus. Over the last year, he has also served as Senior Counsellor to France's independent High Council on Public Finance (Haut Conseil des Finances Publiques) and Lecturer at Sciences Po university in Paris. Richard also has an in-depth understanding of the economic forecasting and fiscal policymaking process in the UK having served as Director of the Fiscal Group and Acting Chief Economist in HM Treasury where he led the department's efforts to improve the disclosure, analysis, and management of fiscal risks and the public sector balance sheet.