

[Home](#)

Permanent Secretary, Chief Medical Officer, and Expert adviser

Professor Chris Whitty



Biography

Professor Chris Whitty is Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for England, the UK government's Chief Medical Adviser and head of the public health profession. He is currently the Interim DHSC Permanent Secretary pending the appointment of a new permanent secretary

Contents

- Biography
- Role
- Announcements

Chris is a practising NHS Consultant Physician at University College London Hospitals (UCLH) and the Hospital for Tropical Diseases, and a visiting professor at Gresham College.

Chris is an epidemiologist and has undertaken research and worked as a doctor in the UK, Africa and Asia. He was Professor of Public and International Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) before becoming CMO and remains an honorary professor.

Chris was the Chief Scientific Adviser for the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) from January 2016 to August 2021, with overall responsibility for the department's research and development, including being head of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the government's major funder of clinical, public health, social care and translational research.

Chris was the interim Government Chief Scientific Adviser from 2017 to 2018, including during the Novichok poisonings. Before that, he was the Chief

Scientific Adviser at the Department for International Development (DFID), which included leading technical work on the West Africa Ebola outbreak and other international emergencies.

Conflicts of interest:

- honorary professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) (unpaid)
- consultant physician, University College London Hospital and Hospital for Tropical Diseases (UCLH) (unpaid)
- honorary member, National Fever Service (unpaid)
- visiting professor, Gresham College (stipend)
- International Scientific Advisory Board, Malawi/Liverpool Wellcome Unit (unpaid)
- non-executive trustee, Sightsavers charity (unpaid)
- expert adviser to Active Travel England (unpaid)

The Chief Medical Officer never endorses, advertises or encourages the public to buy specific commercial products. People should be alert to the risk of scams including fake advertisements. [See GOV.UK guidance on avoiding and reporting internet scams and phishing](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avoiding-and-reporting-internet-scams-and-phishing) (<https://www.gov.uk/report-suspicious-emails-websites-phishing>).

Annual reports

The Chief Medical Officer has a duty to publish an annual report.

Professor Whitty has published 5 annual reports so far:

- [Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2024: health in cities - 12 December 2024](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2024-health-in-cities) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2024-health-in-cities>)
- [Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2023: health in an ageing society - 10 November 2023](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2023-health-in-an-ageing-society)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2023-health-in-an-ageing-society>)

- [Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution - 8 December 2022](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2022-air-pollution)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2022-air-pollution>)
- [Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2021: health in coastal communities - 21 July 2021](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2021-health-in-coastal-communities)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2021-health-in-coastal-communities>)
- [Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2020: health trends and variation in England - 18 December 2020](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2020-health-trends-and-variation-in-england)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2020-health-trends-and-variation-in-england>)

In December 2022, the UK Chief Medical Officers, Government Chief Scientific Adviser, UK Deputy Chief Medical Officers, the NHS England National Medical Director and UK Health Security Agency Chief Executive published a [technical report on the scientific, public health and clinical aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 4 nations of the UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-report-on-the-scientific-public-health-and-clinical-aspects-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-the-4-nations-of-the-uk)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-report-on-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-the-uk>).

Lectures

Professor Whitty is also a visiting professor at Gresham College and Emeritus Gresham Professor of Physic (the term for medicine when the post was created in 1597) at the college. His lectures are aimed at the general public and cover a wide range of medical and public health topics, including: infectious diseases, chronic diseases such as stroke, diabetes and dementia, major cancers and current debates in public health and medicine.

[View the lecture recordings](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/chief-medical-officer-annual-reports-and-lectures)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/chief-medical-officer-annual-reports-and-lectures>)

Permanent Secretary

The Permanent Secretary leads the day-to-day running of the department and heads the department's senior team.

Along with other members of the departmental board, the Permanent Secretary is responsible for:

- advising ministers on strategy and objectives for the health and social care system
- setting standards within the department
- making arrangements for governance, assurance and risk management
- overseeing the department's performance and assuring the performance of sponsored organisations
- approving the department's business plan, resource accounts, departmental report and major spending

[Department of Health and Social Care
\(/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care\)](https://government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care)

Chief Medical Officer

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) acts as the UK government's principal medical adviser, and the professional head of all directors of public health in local government and the medical profession in government.

The CMO provides public health and clinical advice to ministers in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and across government.

The CMO is an independent position at permanent secretary level.

The CMO is supported by 3 Deputy Chief Medical Officers:

- [Dr Thomas Waite](https://www.gov.uk/government/people/thomas-waite)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/thomas-waite>)
- [Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy](https://www.gov.uk/government/people/jeanelle-de-gruchy)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/jeanelle-de-gruchy>)
- [Dr Aidan Fowler](https://www.gov.uk/government/people/aidan-fowler)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/aidan-fowler>)

[Follow the CMO on Twitter.](https://twitter.com/CMO_England)

(https://twitter.com/CMO_England)

[Department of Health and Social Care](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care)

([/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care))

Expert adviser

Professor Chris Whitty is also an expert adviser to Active Travel England. Expert advisers support Active Travel England's aim to make walking, wheeling and cycling the first choice for everyday trips.

[Active Travel England](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/active-travel-england)

([/government/organisations/active-travel-england](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/active-travel-england))

Announcements

Protecting children, families and vulnerable from tobacco harms

([/government/speeches/protecting-children-families-and-vulnerable-from-tobacco-harms](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/protecting-children-families-and-vulnerable-from-tobacco-harms))

05 November 2024 Authored article

Chief Medical Officer for England on the Tobacco and Vapes Bill

([/government/speeches/chief-medical-officer-for-england-on-the-tobacco-and-vapes-bill](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chief-medical-officer-for-england-on-the-tobacco-and-vapes-bill))

15 April 2024 Authored article

Using NHS data to improve healthcare

[\(/government/speeches/using-nhs-data-to-improve-healthcare\)](/government/speeches/using-nhs-data-to-improve-healthcare)

29 September 2023 Authored article

Chief Medical Officer for England on vaping

[\(/government/speeches/chief-medical-officer-for-england-on-vaping\)](/government/speeches/chief-medical-officer-for-england-on-vaping)

29 May 2023 Authored article

CMO for England announces 2 new cases of novel coronavirus

[\(/government/news/cmo-for-england-announces-2-new-cases-of-novel-coronavirus\)](/government/news/cmo-for-england-announces-2-new-cases-of-novel-coronavirus)

27 February 2020 News story

New chief medical officer appointed

[\(/government/news/new-chief-medical-officer-appointed\)](/government/news/new-chief-medical-officer-appointed)

14 June 2019 News story

[View all announcements \(/search/news-and-communications?people=christopher-whitty\)](/search/news-and-communications?people=christopher-whitty)



All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright