

## The Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) Job Description

### Introduction

The Food and Environment Research Agency's over arching purpose is to support and develop a sustainable food chain, a healthy natural environment, and to protect the global community from biological and chemical risks. Our role within that is to provide robust evidence, rigorous analysis and professional advice to Government, international organisations and the private sector.

### Post details

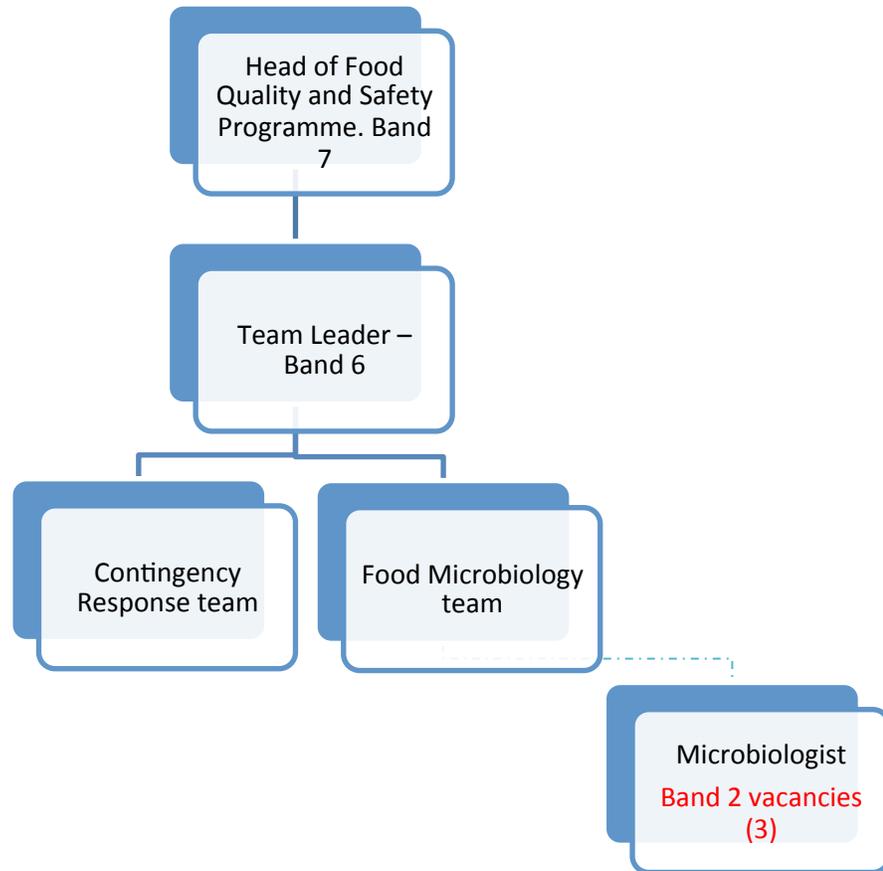
<b>Job title:</b>	Microbiologist (3 posts)		
<b>CSP ref:</b>	CSP 3961	<b>Closing date:</b>	17 February 2014
<b>Band:</b>	Band 2	<b>Location:</b>	Sand Hutton, York
<b>Status:</b>	Fixed Term Appointment ( 3 years)		

### This vacancy is within the Food Quality and Safety Programme

The Food Quality and Safety programme (FQS) is part of the Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera), an executive agency of the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The FQS Programme exists to protect consumers by monitoring the safety and quality of the food chain and the environment from which food is produced for a mixture of commercial and Government customers. We aim to deliver high value research, surveillance, regulatory support and to provide solutions to our customers in the area of chemicals and microbes (bacteria and viruses) in food, the environment and their impact on human health by supporting the consumer protection aims of UK Government, the European Commission, regulatory authorities and industry. These vacancies are in the Contingency Response and Food Microbiology team which has a focus on detecting viral and bacterial contaminants in the food chain.

## Organisation Chart

The post holder will be initially line managed by the Team Leader and functionally managed by senior specialists in relevant disciplines (microbiology, biosecurity, bacteriology and biochemistry) as appropriate.



## Purpose of job

The post holder(s) will support a mixture of research projects and service delivery with an emphasis on gaining a better understanding of the transmission of human and zoonotic-pathogens (bacteria and viruses) through the food supply chain and their reliable detection and characterisation. Projects may involve handling Hazard Group 2 or 3\* pathogens and cultures, setting up experiments designed to detect viruses and bacteria in food and/or environmental matrices, comparing microbe detection methodologies, data collection and processing, preparation of proficiency test materials and assisting with the production of reports. There is the potential of developing containment level 3 handling skills in due course. Commercial microbial analysis of foodstuffs and subsequent reporting will also be undertaken. All work will be conducted in accordance with ISO 9001 quality standards and to ISO 17025 where appropriate. Training and active support will be provided by line and functional managers in the team or external providers as required. The post will be mainly laboratory-based but some fieldwork may be necessary.

**The post holders will:**

- Support experiments to develop, assess and validate microbiological detection methods.
- Utilise their practical experience of microbiological methods on a range of test sample types (including commercial samples), sometimes at short notice, and maintain a flexible approach to their workload.
- Help maintain the Virology and Proficiency Test Material Preparation laboratories, with day-to-day duties including upkeep of equipment records and lab books in accordance with current Fera quality system requirements.
- Support proficiency test material sample preparation for microbiological contaminants.
- Work with other team members to harmonise quality control record keeping practices across the team.
- Support contingency response activities for Government and commercial customers involving microbiological examinations for hazard group 2 or 3\* organisms if necessary.
- Comply with all controls specified in risk assessments for planned studies and maintain a high standard of workplace hygiene.
- Work in an ISO9001 and ISO17025 compliant environment.
- Enter data into Word and Excel documents as required and assist in the preparation of summary reports.
- Use corporate computer packages (currently Microsoft Office plus Outlook and Firefox).

## Benefits of working at The Food and Environment Research Agency

The Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) offers an attractive benefits and salary package. This includes a minimum of 25 days leave plus 8 bank holidays plus an additional day off for the Queen's Birthday, generous maternity and paternity entitlements, flexible working hours and a pension package.

Starting salaries depend on the skills, experience and qualifications that you bring to the post.

The following are some of the benefits that our employees enjoy:

- Competitive salaries.
- Pension: A choice of a Civil Service defined benefit scheme or stakeholder defined contribution arrangement.
- 25 days annual leave, rising to 30 days with five years service. A further eight days of Bank Holidays and an additional day off for the Queen's Birthday.
- Generous maternity and paternity leave
- Salary sacrifice: childcare vouchers and cycle to work scheme.
- On-site nursery (*Sand Hutton, York site only*).
- Learning and development opportunities.
- Flexible working practices.
- Flexible working patterns: Fera encourages flexible working patterns, such as part time, job share, term time working and working from home where appropriate.
- Subsidised staff restaurant: There is a subsidised staff restaurant serving high quality breakfast, snacks and lunches on the Sand Hutton site.
- Welfare and Health & Wellbeing service.
- Subsidised Sports and Social Club, including on site gym (*Sand Hutton, York site only*).
- An extensive Information Centre (*Sand Hutton, York site only*).

For more detailed information on the Fera benefits package, please see information pack provided or visit our website.