Professor John M Watson, Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England

Prof Watson trained in clinical respiratory medicine and infectious disease epidemiology. He headed the Respiratory Diseases Department at the Health Protection Agency’s (now Public Health England) national centre for infectious disease surveillance and control in London from 1989 to 2013. In addition to developing national surveillance systems for tuberculosis, influenza and other respiratory infections, he oversaw responses to a range of respiratory infection threats including SARS, legionnaires disease, plague, MERS and avian and pandemic influenza.

Prof Watson has teaching and research collaborations with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (where he is an Honorary Professor) and with University College London (where he has a Visiting Chair). He has worked with a range of international organisations on the surveillance, prevention and control of respiratory infections including the European Centre for Disease Control (where he chaired advisory committees on influenza and TB) and the WHO (he is currently a member of the WHO Advisory Committee on the Global Action Plan for Influenza Vaccines). He was a founder member, and Chairman from 2009 to 2013, of the International Society for Influenza and other Respiratory Virus Diseases (ISIRV).

Professor Watson joined the Department of Health in London in 2013. His responsibilities span health protection with a particular focus on anti-microbial resistance, influenza, immunisation policy and emergency preparedness and response.