Expertise and excellence through teamwork

Our People Strategy
Foreword

It is with much enthusiasm that I introduce this important document which is relevant to all of us in CEH and those we interact with. You will find this useful in understanding what we see as our values and expectations as an organisation and as individuals. This People Strategy has been shaped from many interesting discussions across CEH; simply it’s about how we can best work together to address our future challenges and continue to be successful by building on our strengths and our ethos:

- **Excellence**
- **Integrity**
- **Teamwork**

CEH is a great place to work because of its people and our shared passion; let us continue to build on the foundation of high standards, respect for each other and strong communication. As a professional research organisation our objective is performance excellence in order to deliver world class environmental science.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you who have contributed to the completion of this strategy, in particular members of our People and Communication Team for valued input.

Prof. Mark J Bailey
CEH Director

Future Vision

**Expertise and Excellence through Teamwork**

We will work together to advance scientific knowledge, understand stakeholder and customer needs, deliver excellent world class outputs to meet these requirements and continue to build skills and knowledge for the future.
Introduction

1. The CEH mission is:
   ‘To undertake world class research of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems that underpins evidence based decisions and innovation by policy makers and business and engages with people, supporting sustainable development and improving society’s environmental legacy.’

2. CEH is the UK’s Centre of Excellence for integrated research in terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems and their interaction with the atmosphere. Integral to the Natural Environment Research Council’s strategy, CEH provides the directed teams to deliver UK national capability in these sciences. Our current strengths in skills and knowledge, commitment and integrity and our flexible, directed teams are key to our current success and we aim to achieve excellence in communication both internally and with our stakeholders and customers.

3. The people who work to deliver this mission need to provide a particularly wide range of skills and expertise due to the breadth and variety of scales at which we deliver:
   - Research science disciplines ranging from physics, chemistry, hydrology and mathematical modelling to ecology, field survey and genetics.
   - Data management and scientific computing, the management and exploitation of innovation and intellectual property rights.
   - Organisational, programme and project management including stakeholder liaison and communication, IT, contracts and licensing, estates, finance and staff development.

4. As CEH moves forward to engage new stakeholders and expand our international public and private sector customer base, diversity, flexibility and team work continue to grow in importance and new specialist skills will be required. We also aspire to become an independent Company limited by guarantee with charitable status, which will require new financial and business management skills.

5. To meet these challenges, the people of CEH - in all their diversity - will be supported to reach their full potential and deliver their very best to enable CEH to continue to produce impartial and excellent integrated science to meet society’s environmental challenges.
A: Expertise – strategic aims:

- Provide world class scientific expertise.
- Provide professional management and infrastructure closely aligned with our science strategy.

Staffing composition (2017/18)

- 300 (open ended) scientists
- 35 research associates (science)
- 132 science leadership and professional management, IT and support staff (infrastructure)
- 30 short term appointments
- 60 associated research fellows
- 130 postgraduate students

1 Workforce Planning

1.1 We will develop the workforce as a whole to meet our future challenges, matched with realistic financial plans: engaging new expertise and supporting the development of existing staff.

Action 1: We will continue to plan grade and skills requirements across Business Plan periods in line with forecast income: balancing science needs with requirements for professional management and infrastructure. We will review proposed recruitment against this workforce plan and budget changes through our People Subcommittee.
2. Science Capability

2.1 CEH scientific aims necessitate high levels of expertise across a particularly broad range of disciplines and scales. These require both longstanding capability developed within CEH and recruitment and continuous development of new skills as science and technology advances.

2.2 Both new expertise and novel applications of existing skills are needed to support changes in UK Research and Innovation and National Capability support such as the Official Development Assistance funding stream and CEH ambitions to extend our international public and private customer base.

Action 2: Science capability. An annual forward look of science skills to develop our science in new directions and support growth will form the basis of our recruitment plan. This will be undertaken by the Science Planning Team. The agreed grade profile will be adjusted in line with this annual review and achieved via natural turnover wherever possible and through internal (merit) promotion as well as recruitment. It is recognised that in developing our science in light of changing requirements of Government funding for National capability commissioning, some restructuring may be required over the period. If this is necessary it will be managed through redeployment or voluntary departure wherever possible.

2.3 Enhanced science skills needs to meet our goals are envisaged as follows:

- Science leadership in innovation and impact.
- Core business skills to engage with new customers and partners.
- Programme and large project management.
- Ability to work successfully overseas for extended periods.
- Highly numerate environmental scientists (mathematics, programming and statistics).
- Water resource scientists skilled in hydrological methods, data and modelling.
- Flood and drought estimation and modelling.
- Ecologists and field instrument engineers to enhance capacity to deliver sustainable land management and environmental audit overseas.
- Earth observation/land use scientists.
- Capability in software development, decision-support tools and spatial data analysis.
- Leading edge technological ability in instruments and sensors.
- Cloud and High Performance Computing expertise.
- Environmental economists to support partnerships with social scientists, in particular for the valuation of nature and natural capital accounting.

Note: as at January 2017

2.5 To support influx of new skills and enable advancement of new areas of science the percentage of early career research staff employed as fixed term research associates will continue to comprise ~15% of the scientific staff. Long term employment opportunities will reflect established future skills needs and proven ability.

**Action 3: Optimising Staff Deployment.** It will continue to be the responsibility of Scientific Group Leaders and Science Section Heads to fully allocate scientific staff and deploy internal skills effectively prior to submitting post requests.

**Action 4: Senior Fellowships.** Where CEH lacks essential skills in new and developing areas, a senior fellowship (Band 5 and above) will be considered alongside open ended recruitment options. Fellowships with partnership funding are envisaged as beneficial in taking forward such opportunities.

**Action 5: Allocation.** To support project delivery and enable greater flexibility to take on new work in both large and small projects as well as to enable increased skills development and personal development opportunity we will work to focus the majority of staff on fewer larger projects. We will seek to allocate the majority of research scientists at band 6 (where appropriate to roles) to no more than two large projects at any one time, building towards this from 2017/18 onwards within fully allocated profiles overall.
3 Professional Management and Infrastructure

3.1 To support revenue growth we are building capability in business development to seek and respond to new customer opportunities.

3.2 We seek to increase productivity for CEH as a whole through improved processes and systems and appropriate resourcing of management and infrastructure functions to balance optimum delivery and organisational cost.

3.3 We will invest in professional management and support skills for science and infrastructure to meet the challenges of operating as an independent organisation.

Action 6 Skills for new functions. Identify new skills required by independence and whether these are best acquired through training, recruitment or outsourcing.

Action 7 Productivity. Identify efficiency gains from streamlining of processes and systems, which will enable deployment to new functions and enable increased organisational outputs.

Action 8 Recruitment. Ensure the CEH ‘brand’ as portrayed in recruitment and public information reflects CEH values.

Action 9 Recruitment. Develop in-house recruitment systems and processes to ensure an efficient, effective and professional recruitment service is provided in support of the workforce plan, which ensures a positive candidate experience and full compliance with relevant legislative and immigration requirements.

Action 10 Business development. Build on the appointment of our new Director for Business and Finance and provide appropriate structures and skills in business engagement, planning and project management to optimise bid success and project delivery.

Action 11 Apprenticeships. Seek quality providers to support extension of our participation in the government apprenticeships initiative.

Action 12 Learning and development. Build internal training skills to enable state of the art knowledge from external training to be disseminated more widely within a tightly managed budget.
B Achieving Excellence - strategic aims

Work together with an ethos of continuous improvement. Strive for excellence in delivery to meet stakeholder and customer needs.

1 Performance & Development

1.1 Our performance management, development and reward will be designed to support our strategic priorities and key strengths:
- individual expertise coming together across CEH to deliver integrated science through teamwork;
- joining in partnership with academic institutions, fellow research institutes, industry and policy makers.

1.2 We will support our senior staff and potential future leaders to continuously develop leadership and management skills, including business and science leadership qualities for a changing environment.

1.3 We will offer appropriate learning opportunities to enable staff to achieve their potential to meet CEH needs, continuously developing their knowledge and skills to ensure CEH delivery is based on sound expertise in appropriate specialisms and is authoritative and credible to stakeholders, customers and the wider community.

1.4 Participation in our research associate scheme will offer early career scientists planned learning and development opportunities, developing their skills to meet long term science needs.

1.5 We will ensure performance management and development is based upon:
- seeking to continually improve performance to achieve potential,
- seeking to learn and develop in accordance with CEH needs,
- realistic forward job planning of aims and objectives by each individual,
- clear and timely feedback: both praise and developmental needs,
- the expectation that individuals will address all feedback positively.
the importance for all staff that both delivery and core expectations of how we achieve that delivery are upheld.

**Action 13:** Review our science structure to identify change appropriate to meet current and future challenges.

**Action 14:** Develop a CEH merit promotion scheme based on the NERC merit promotion scheme, to be introduced from 2018.

**Action 15:** Produce a statement of expectations of leadership and management in differing roles and introduce a ‘manager’s toolkit’ to support delivery of improvement orientated performance management consistently throughout CEH.

**Action 16:** Develop a new appraisal scheme, including feedback for managers, which supports the appropriate balance of how we work and what we deliver, striving to continue to learn and optimise performance to meet stakeholder needs.

**Action 17:** Develop a three year learning and development plan to support delivery of the CEH strategy, recognising organisational skills priorities of leadership and management skills in our changing environment, overseas working, specialist knowledge and internal learning transfer.

**Action 18:** Use data and analytics to assess how to improve operational effectiveness and maximise utilisation of skills and expertise to deliver excellence in all we do.
2 Recognition, Pay and Reward

2.1 Our approach will reflect the importance of teamwork and the contribution made by all to the success of CEH. This will be blended with recognition of outstanding individual achievements where appropriate, underpinned by an equal pay policy and the principle of transparency and consistency in policies and their application.

2.2 We will seek to develop pay and rewards reflective of the market sector whilst maintaining affordability goals.

2.3 We aim to be an employer of choice in our total offering of both terms of employment and a stimulating and supportive working environment.

2.4 We will reward performance recognising the responsiveness, flexibility and teamwork essential to our operating model.

**Action 19:** Whilst within the public sector we will apply required pay constraints appropriately and plan for affordability whilst orientating our rewards to maximise the clear and consistent use of pay flexibility and non-pay benefits.

**Action 20:** We will review our approach to non-pay recognition to ensure the values and strategic needs of CEH are appropriately reflected.

**Action 21:** We will develop a pay strategy and policies for an independent CEH which recognise i) the value of diversity and teamwork to the overall success of CEH, ii) the culture of equality of treatment and transparency of policies and their application, and iii) that the degree of our financial success influences the affordability of pay, reward and recognition initiatives.
3 Working Culture

3.1 We will continue to provide a working environment and conditions which support flexibility, recognise and motivate individuals and provide opportunities for job growth and career development.

3.2 We seek to create a working culture which is inclusive and provides a sense of belonging with strong emphasis on working together: informing and listening at all levels and through consultation with staff representatives, particularly recognised unions.

3.3 We value the diversity within our workforce for the performance achievements and variety of perspectives and talents it provides and we will continue to develop approaches to ensure we extend opportunity. Key standards such as Investors in People and Athena SWAN will continue to be used as external benchmarks to inform our consultative approach to matching organisational needs and expectations with those of our people.

Action 22: Focus on two way communication and change support throughout CEH, take action on Staff Survey outcomes and develop the People and Communication Team (PACT) activities to ensure we a) treat each other with trust and respect, b) develop resilience and safety awareness, and c) communicate effectively with others to maintain our inclusive and open working environment.

Action 23: We will develop and deliver Equality and Diversity plans to support all staff to achieve their potential to meet CEH needs, aiming at improving diversity and equality of opportunity and treatment for all. This will include working to achieve the Athena SWAN silver award and to further improve our level in the Investors in People standard.

Action 24: Develop our employee relations mechanisms to continue to enable effective discussion and consultation with union representatives regarding an independent CEH and terms and conditions for our staff.

Action 25: Welfare: Review the best mechanism to continue welfare provision to support wellbeing in the workplace in the context of UKRI and independence and recognising the new challenges of increased overseas working.
Research Associate experience

We will ensure that all CEH Research Associates have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge effectively in line with CEH needs and the future skills requirements of the terrestrial and freshwater community.

**Action 26: RA scheme.** CEH will review the current and planned operation of the RA scheme and recommend future approaches.

Student experience

We will ensure that all students co-supervised by CEH will be effectively supported by CEH to achieve their PhD and are provided with appropriate learning and development opportunities and welfare support.

**Action 27: Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs).** CEH will review the experience of participation in DTPs and assess how to improve participation and approach to the next DTP opportunity round.

**Action 28:** CEH will review how best to provide learning opportunities to all the students it supports in a cost effective manner.
CEH Values

This strategy will be supported by the way we work together in accordance with the three CEH values:

Excellence - delivering world class science supporting global environmental challenges; valued by stakeholders and meeting customer requirements.

Integrity - maintaining the highest standards of research and professional ethics and impartiality.

Teamwork - working together effectively with colleagues, partners and customers to achieve long term success.

Quotes from CEH staff

“Working on some globally important environmental issues that affect the future of us all.”

“Pride in working for an organisation that is ethical, has impact and is independent.”

“We address big questions at the national and international levels.”

“Having the best staff in their field who enjoy working here and are passionate about their role.”

“A trusted impartial and honest organisation.”

“My work is valued and therefore I feel valued.”

“Freedom and trust.”

“Equality across gender and roles.”

“Consultative-staff and union views matter and are taken into consideration.”

“Fulfilment in my role.”

“Support from my managers; learning new skills and opportunities to get involved with different activities.”

“Transparency through all levels of management.”
Core Expectations link to each of these values

1 Excellence – delivery focus

**Core Expectations:**

1.1 Demonstrate a continuous improvement approach.
1.2 Seek to make a positive impact.
1.3 Think and act proactively and innovatively to meet changing priorities.
1.4 Apply the skills appropriate to your role: learn from feedback and undertake continuous professional development.
1.5 Take responsibility for achieving the best outcome within agreed stakeholder and customer requirements (balancing quality with cost and time).
1.6 Prioritise and plan effectively.

2 Integrity – maintain highest standards of research and professional ethics

**Core expectations:**

2.1 Reach conclusions based on robust and ethical scientific and professional practice.
2.2 Follow CEH policies and procedures and lead colleagues to do so.
2.3 Seek good value for money, complying with financial policies and procedures.
2.4 Be open and transparent about reasons for decisions and in undertaking activities.
2.5 Recognise appropriately the contributions of others.
2.6 Develop and maintain professional relationships with stakeholders and customers, representing CEH appropriately and respecting diversity and cultural difference.
2.7 Disclose and actively manage any conflicts of interest, maintaining ethical standards.
3 Teamwork – working together effectively with colleagues, partners and customers to achieve long term success

Core Expectations:

Whether a team member, project or line manager, strive for high performance and continuous improvement to meet CEH needs through the following:

3.1 Carry out risk management responsibilities effectively e.g. health, safety and information security.
3.2 Treat others respectfully and professionally, respecting confidentiality.
3.3 Work collaboratively.
3.4 Act inclusively: share ideas, opportunities, information and data etc across CEH.
3.5 Be flexible to adapt to organisational need.
3.6 Listen to colleagues, staff and managers with respect and challenge constructively.
3.7 Engage effectively in communication through meetings and in writing.
3.8 Value and respect diversity and cultural difference.
3.9 Deal positively with change and help others to do so.
3.10 Support others’ wellbeing and development as well as your own.