

UK Centre for
Ecology & Hydrology

UKCEH People Strategy 2021





Front cover image - Stefanie Schäfer and Abhijit Kumar of the **MonkeyFeverRisk** project, which aims to better our understanding of a tick-transmitted zoonotic viral disease called Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD). This affects communities in the Western Ghat mountain range in Southern India. Photo by Sarah Burthe, UKCEH.

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Introduction

‘Scientific curiosity, integrity and transparency are at the heart of how we work’

Our ambition

We seek to understand the environment, how it sustains life, and the human impact on it – so that together, people and nature can prosper.

About our people strategy

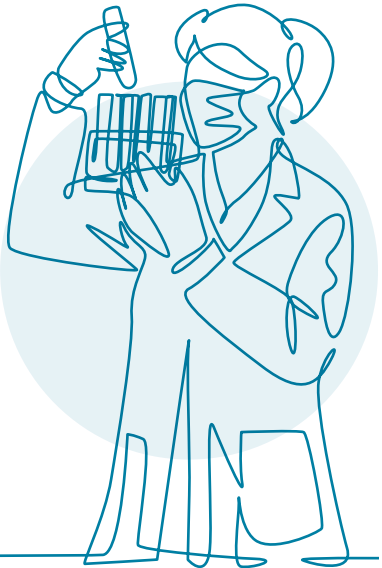
The purpose of our people strategy and associated action plan is to establish and communicate:

- UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) values
- The expertise and skills we need
- The way we will work together within UKCEH and with partners and customers
- The people related actions which underpin delivery of the UKCEH Strategy

Future vision

Excellence through integrity and teamwork

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



People strategy - aims

1. Provide world class scientific expertise.

2. Provide professional management and infrastructure, services and support functions aligned with our science strategy.

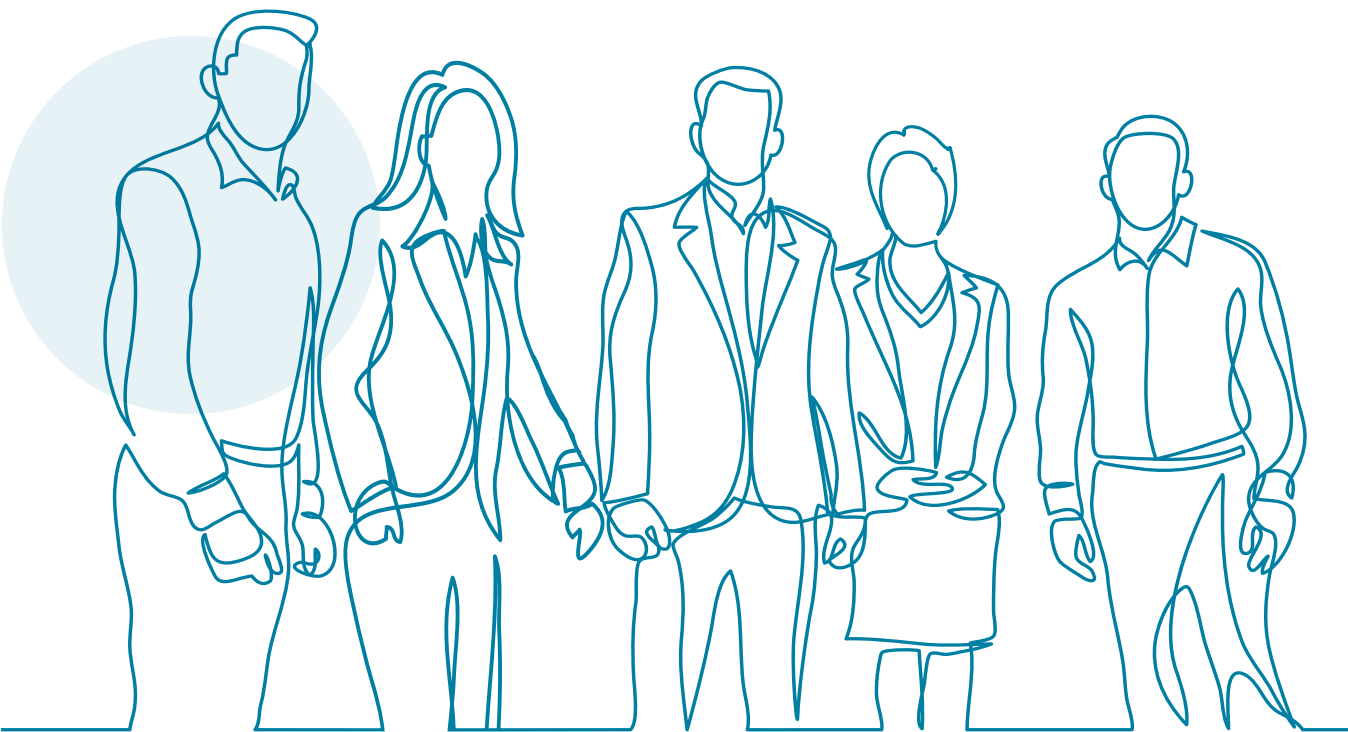
3. Ensure that the UKCEH values - excellence, integrity and teamwork - are at the heart of everything we do.

4. Strive for excellence: effectively balancing cost, quality and time in our delivery of funder requirements.
5. Work together effectively, seeking to innovate and demonstrating continuous improvement.

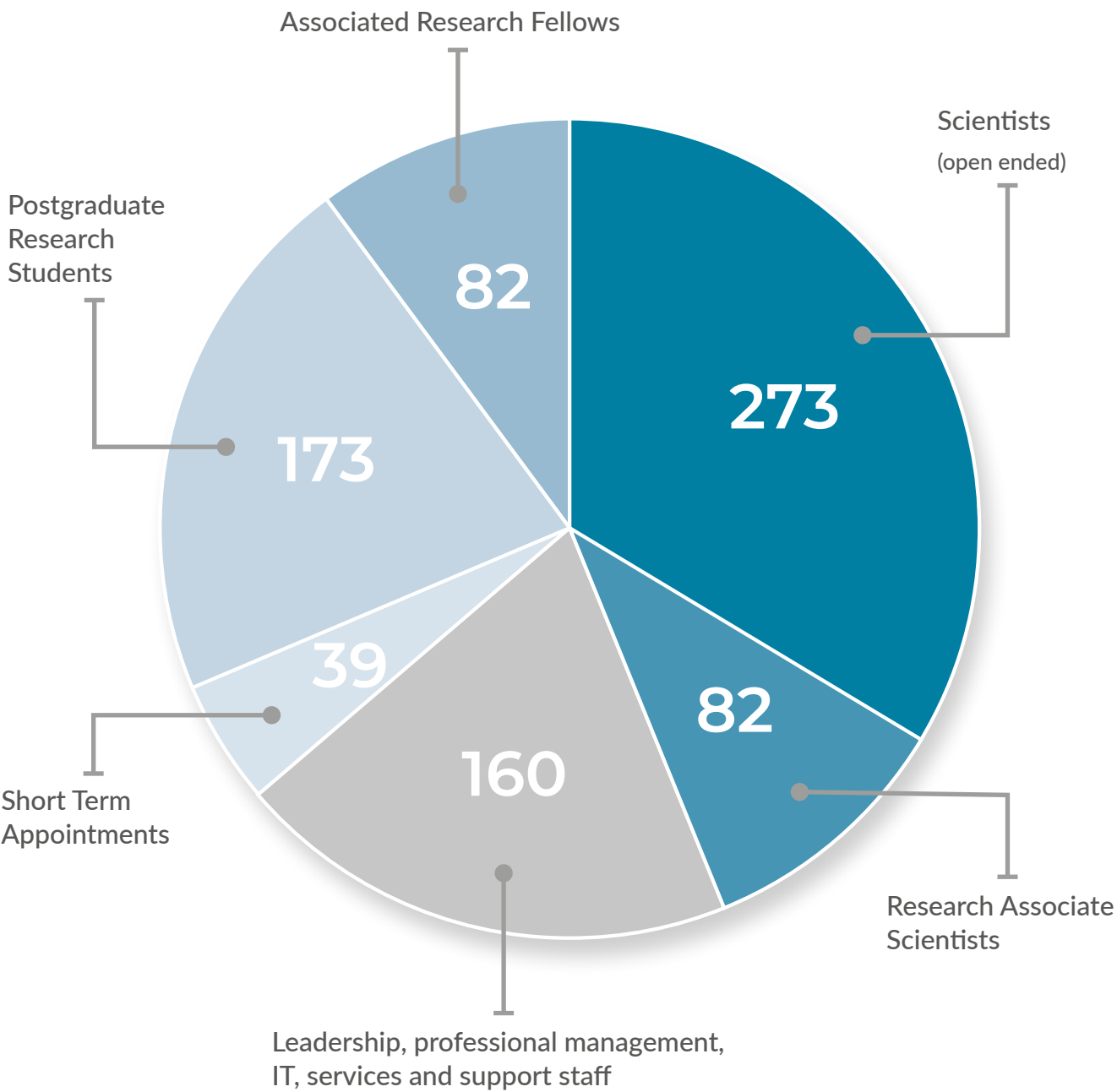
6. Facilitate flexible and agile responses to changing needs.

7. Provide a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all and is inclusive, that is: individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.

8. Support the development and wellbeing of all in UKCEH to achieve our potential and realise the UKCEH ambition through our diversity.



UKCEH people



Our strategic people commitments

EXCELLENCE

- We ensure open, transparent and merit based recruitment at all levels, which attracts excellent people, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices.
- We will invest in scientific, professional management and business skills development for all our people, focussed on realising potential and encouraging innovation to enable delivery of our strategy and realisation of the UKCEH ambition.



EXCELLENCE

Scientific, technical, engineering and mathematical (STEM) skills

- UKCEH science requires high levels of expertise and innovative approaches across a particularly broad range of disciplines and scales. We combine longstanding capability, novel application of existing skills and new expertise through Research Associates and postgraduate researchers to deliver innovation and excellence.
- We have created exciting new opportunities for skilled engineers, mathematicians, statisticians, physicists, and data specialists (e.g. in AI/machine learning) as we seek to expand our existing technical capability in environmental data collection and analysis. This enables us to support the investment in large scale infrastructure to monitor environmental change, with cutting-edge data science to rapidly assess new climate policies. New roles have been created, working as part of a team to develop and deliver new skills and capabilities for environmental sciences, both in UKCEH and with our partners across academia, research centres and other sectors. These roles will also benefit from a three-year structured learning and development programme, as part of our Research Associate Scheme.
- Further enhanced science skills and roles needed to meet our goals are envisaged in the following fields over 2021 and 2022:
 - Data science including spatial data analytics and statistics.
 - Modelling including hydrological modelling, spatial modelling and integrated impact modelling.
 - Air pollution and biological risks for human health.
 - Molecular expertise including bioinformatics.
 - Quantitative ecology.
 - Earth observation expertise.
 - Analytical chemistry with specialisms in organic analysis.



EXCELLENCE

Professional management, infrastructure, services and support

- To support our partnership approach and international revenue growth we are building capability in due diligence, legal expertise and business development to seek and respond appropriately to funder opportunities.
- Our excellent quality output and ISO 9001 accreditation will be sustained and improved through learning and development investment in programme and project management following industry best practice, including JCoPR.
- We seek to increase productivity for UKCEH as a whole through improved processes and business systems: training to utilise these effectively and resourcing to balance optimum delivery and organisational cost.
- We will continue to invest in learning and development in the IT skills essential to our delivery: both to support and protect our underpinning IT infrastructure as an independent organisation and to enable effective innovation in scientific and business systems.
- We will support our people, including our potential future leaders, to continuously develop leadership and management skills, including business and science leadership qualities for a changing environment.

EXCELLENCE

Workforce planning and recruitment

- A strategic forward planning approach to workforce planning and recruitment will be further developed to forecast staffing need and reduced recruitment delivery delay.
- Science Areas will be supported to plan and resource their project needs with appropriate delegations to enable swift decision making.
- Recruitment practices will be reviewed and benchmarked against diversity best practice to provide UKCEH with a fully diverse talent pool and to ensure the best candidates are attracted and appointed.

EXCELLENCE

Performance management and development

- Our performance management approach will evolve to develop our strategic priorities and key strengths:
 - Innovative approaches for continuous improvement and development.
 - Scientific excellence.
 - High levels of expertise across a broad range of disciplines delivering integrated science through teamwork.
 - Working in partnership with academic institutions, fellow research institutes, industry and policy makers.
- We will offer development opportunities to enable all within UKCEH to achieve their potential to support our strategic priorities. This means continuously developing knowledge and skills to provide cutting-edge expertise, innovative solutions and sound expertise which is authoritative and credible to stakeholders and funders.
- Participation in our Research Associate Scheme offers early career scientists a range of learning and development opportunities; developing their skills to meet long term science needs and support their future aspirations. Technical and professional apprenticeships offer qualification opportunities alongside on-the-job learning.
- Promotion will be conducted using a transparent, applicant-driven process, providing feedback to applicants and based on long term organisational need.
- 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 UKCEH needs. Realistic forward job planning of aims and objectives by each individual, with attention to workload management.
 - Clear, timely, honest, constructive feedback: focussed on development with praise and improvement aims recorded in annual appraisals.
 - Expectation that individuals will seek out and address all feedback positively.
 - The importance of delivery in accordance with our values and core expectations.
 - Understanding that support for wellbeing, physical and mental health underpin sustainable great performance.
 - Best practice of other research organisations, seeking to learn from others.
- All Postgraduate Researchers hosted by UKCEH will be effectively supported to achieve their qualifications and provided with appropriate learning and development opportunities and welfare support. UKCEH supervisors will be supported to recruit and supervise Postgraduate Researchers in line with sector best practice.

INTEGRITY

- We will provide a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. Our values and core expectations set out how we will work together to achieve this and create an environment which is inclusive, that is: individual differences and the contributions of all employees are recognised and valued.
- Ethics, Code of Conduct and Safeguarding – we will ensure all staff and post graduate researchers are aware, confident and supported to operate fully in accordance with these policies, including professional relationships with stakeholders. Management action will be taken promptly to address any issues arising.
- We will ensure all staff are made aware of our policies and core expectations and are suitably trained to carry out their roles. This will include full awareness of and compliance with legal and funder obligations, keeping up-to-date with change.
- We seek to maintain and further progress our highly proactive health and safety culture, supporting physical and mental health through the H&S Strategy Implementation plan.
- We seek to engage all our people to develop and deliver our leading-edge environmental policy and proactively pursue the action plan for its delivery.
- Openness and transparency – we continue to consult staff regularly via our People and Communication (staff consultation) Team (PACT) and formal Union meetings of the Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee (JCNC). We engage and consult with managers across science and infrastructure through the Science Resourcing Committee reporting to Science Board, Infrastructure Management Team and the Senior Management Forum.



TEAMWORK

Reward and recognition

- Our approach will reflect the importance of teamwork and the contribution made by all to the success of UKCEH. We aim at a culture of appreciation where people feel valued and recognised for their efforts and performance.
- We will evaluate and develop our approach to ensure that both financial and non-financial recognition of team and individual achievements reflect our appreciation of the contribution of all roles to our delivery and sustainability.
- Financial reward is underpinned by an equal pay policy and the principle of transparency and consistency in policies and their application.
- We aim to be an employer of choice in our total offering of both terms of employment and a stimulating and supportive working environment; pay and reward will balance market and affordability factors for sustainability.
- We will reflect the importance of responsiveness, flexibility, continuous improvement and teamwork, essential to our operating model, in reward and recognition of performance by ensuring criteria for reward emphasise these elements.



TEAMWORK

Working culture

- We will continue to provide a working environment and conditions which support flexibility and wellbeing, recognise and motivate individuals and provide opportunities for job growth and career development. This will be re-evaluated in light of the changing world of work to ensure a match to both changing external and internal need and opportunity.
- We encourage all science staff to combine their individual expertise with skills of others across UKCEH to provide a systems approach to integrated science solutions, and (we will) support those who take a proactive role in pulling together and managing these integrated teams.
- We seek to take up the opportunities of distributed and remote working and resolve the challenges it brings, in order to maximise the benefits, minimise the risks and enable safe and effective working conditions for all.
- We will seek to further develop links and understanding across the organisation: between functions and science and across functions, Science Areas and sites.
- Conduct expectations are clearly defined, we expect everyone to abide by them to ensure UKCEH provides a safe and supportive working environment in which the wellbeing of all provides a platform for our success.
- We seek to further develop our working culture as one which is fully 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.
- We will ensure the important role of postgraduate researchers in UKCEH is recognised appropriately and that they are fully represented in feedback fora and surveys.



TEAMWORK

Working culture

- We will utilise data from exit questionnaire results to bring understanding of areas for improvement and focus for retention.
- We will build respect in professionalism and new ideas, valuing new staff and contributions from all ages and bands through communication of different team skills and knowledge, training in empowerment skills and delegation of decision making to appropriate levels to support career development and succession opportunity.
- We value diversity within our workforce for the variety of talents and perspectives it provides to our performance. We will increase that diversity and extend opportunity.
- We will promote equality of opportunity and equitable treatment for all existing and prospective employees, postgraduate researchers, students and visitors; ensuring job and role selection is based on skills, knowledge and demonstration of our values.
- We have recognised that a specific action plan is required to address longstanding diversity challenges effectively and this will be taken forward proactively under the key areas of:
 - Collecting relevant data to understand our diversity.
 - Promoting an inclusive culture.
 - Supporting achievement of potential.
- Key external standards such as UK Researcher Concordat and Investors in People will continue to be used as external benchmarks to inform our consultative approach to matching organisational needs and expectations with those of our people.



UKCEH values

- 1. **Excellence** - delivering world class science supporting global environmental challenges; valued by stakeholders and meeting funder requirements.
- 2. **Integrity** - maintaining the highest standards of research and professional ethics and impartiality.
- 3. **Teamwork** - working together effectively with colleagues, partners and customers to achieve long-term success.

Core expectations link to each of these values.



EXCELLENCE

1 EXCELLENCE – DELIVERY FOCUS

Core expectations:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1.1 Demonstrate a continuous improvement approach. | 1.5 Take responsibility for achieving the best outcome within agreed stakeholder and customer requirements (balancing quality with cost and time). |
| 1.2 Seek to make a positive impact. | 1.6 Prioritise and plan effectively. |
| 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. | |

INTEGRITY

2 INTEGRITY – MAINTAIN HIGHEST STANDARDS OF RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Core expectations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1.1 Reach conclusions based on robust and ethical scientific and professional practice. | 2.5 Recognise appropriately the contributions of others. |
| 2.2 Follow UKCEH policies and procedures and lead colleagues to do so. | 2.6 Develop and maintain professional relationships with stakeholders and customers, representing UKCEH appropriately and respecting diversity and cultural difference. |
| 2.3 Seek good value for money, complying with financial policies and procedures. | 2.7 Disclose and actively manage any conflicts of interest, maintaining ethical standards. |
| 2.4 Be open and transparent about reasons for decisions and in undertaking activities. | |

TEAMWORK

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 UKCEH needs through the following:
- | | |
|--|---|
| 3.1 Carry out risk management responsibilities effectively e.g. health, safety and information security. | 3.6 Be flexible to adapt to organisational need. |
| 3.2 Treat others respectfully and professionally, respecting confidentiality. | 3.7 Listen to colleagues, staff and managers with respect and challenge constructively. |
| 3.4 Work collaboratively. | 3.8 Engage effectively in communication through meetings and in writing. |
| 3.5 Act inclusively: share ideas, opportunities, information and data etc across UKCEH. | 3.9 Value and respect diversity and cultural difference. |
| | 3.10 Deal positively with change and help others to do so. |
| | 3.11 Support others' wellbeing and development as well as your own. |



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