



Natural  
Environment  
Research Council

UK Research and Innovation  
Appointment of Council Members – Natural  
Environment Research Council (NERC)

Applicant Pack – August-September 2024



UK Research  
and Innovation



Department for  
Science, Innovation  
& Technology

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# The Organisation

## The Organisation

UKRI is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. Operating across the whole of the UK with a combined annual budget in excess of £8 billion, we employ over 7000 staff. Between them, they support some of the world's most exciting and challenging research projects and operate some of the most remarkable scientific and innovation facilities in the world - with key activities in London, Swindon, Harwell, Daresbury and Bristol. We work in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and government to both deliver research and innovation and to create the best possible environment for it to flourish.

UKRI comprises the seven disciplinary research councils (AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC, STFC), Research England (which is responsible for supporting research and knowledge exchange at higher education institutions in England), and the UK's innovation agency Innovate UK. We manage a dynamic investment portfolio supporting people, places, infrastructure, ideas, innovation and impacts. About a third of our core budget is invested through the research councils, ensuring that all disciplines thrive. About a third is focused on sector needs, through Innovate UK, and Research England working in collaboration with their counterparts in the devolved nations. The remaining third is collectively managed across all nine UKRI councils, leveraging council-led investments to create the necessary diversity and connectivity in our investment portfolio.

Our Strategy 2022-2027 Transforming Tomorrow Together provides us with a five-year vision and unity of purpose to work together with and for our many partners and stakeholders. It sets out how we will catalyse transformational change in the system and in how we work as an organisation. UKRI has also published an annual corporate plan, which works with a set of strategic delivery plans developed by each of our nine councils. These detail the combined and collective actions we will take to deliver our strategy.

One of the unique strengths of the UK research and innovation ecosystem, and of UKRI, is the ability to bring different disciplines and sectors together to unlock new discoveries and solve the big challenges of our day. We will lead by example, exemplifying the characteristics of an outstanding research and innovation system, increasing connectivity and working collaboratively across UKRI, to break down silos, bridge the gap between innovation and research, and enhance the UK's reputation as a globally leading research and innovation nation.



We are currently undertaking an ambitious programme of organisational change that will help us to create a simpler, better, future together – where we deliver more world-leading research and innovation by being the most efficient, effective, and agile organisation we can be. This includes:

- Creating a modern technology infrastructure, giving people the tools they need to be efficient and effective.
- Streamlining processes and removing unnecessary bureaucracy to improve the funding experience for our research and innovation communities.
- Breaking down barriers so we can optimise our ability to collaborate and tap into the talents of people across our organisation.

We will transform UKRI, maximising returns for the UK taxpayer. We will engage widely and deeply with all our stakeholders, listening and course-correcting, and we will enhance our data analytics to inform all our decisions and improve our performance. We will continue to act as a responsible organisation that prioritises the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees and of those we fund. We will also act as a responsible partner, accountable for our societal, environmental, and financial impact.

### **The UKRI Board**

Delivering these ambitions requires strong and empowered leadership. UKRI is supported and challenged by an independent Chair and Board who are critical to ensuring the success of the organisation and currently comprises:

- Sir Andrew Mackenzie FRS – Chair
- Professor Sir Ian Boyd
- Dr John Fingleton
- Professor Sir Anthony Finkelstein
- Priya Guha
- Professor Nola Hewitt-Dundas
- Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser – Chief Executive Officer
- Siobhan Peters – Chief Finance Officer
- Nigel Toon
- Ruwan Weerasekera
- Sir Ian Chapman
- The Baroness Bull
- Alexandra Jones (representing the DSIT Secretary of State)

# About the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)

## Council Introduction

[NERC](#) is the driving force of investment in environmental science in the UK. We advance the frontier of environmental science by commissioning new research, infrastructure and training that delivers valuable scientific breakthroughs.

NERC invests public money in world-leading science, designed to help us sustain and benefit from our natural resources, predict and respond to natural hazards and understand environmental change.

NERC is seeking four new Council Members including senior leaders and/or senior scientists with significant expertise in advanced data science and leading senior academics/researchers with expertise in environmental science for climate risk and in soil health. One of the new Council members to be a senior leader from finance, business, industry or the university sectors with an experience of finance, risk and Corporate Governance to be appointed as the Senior Independent Member (SIM).

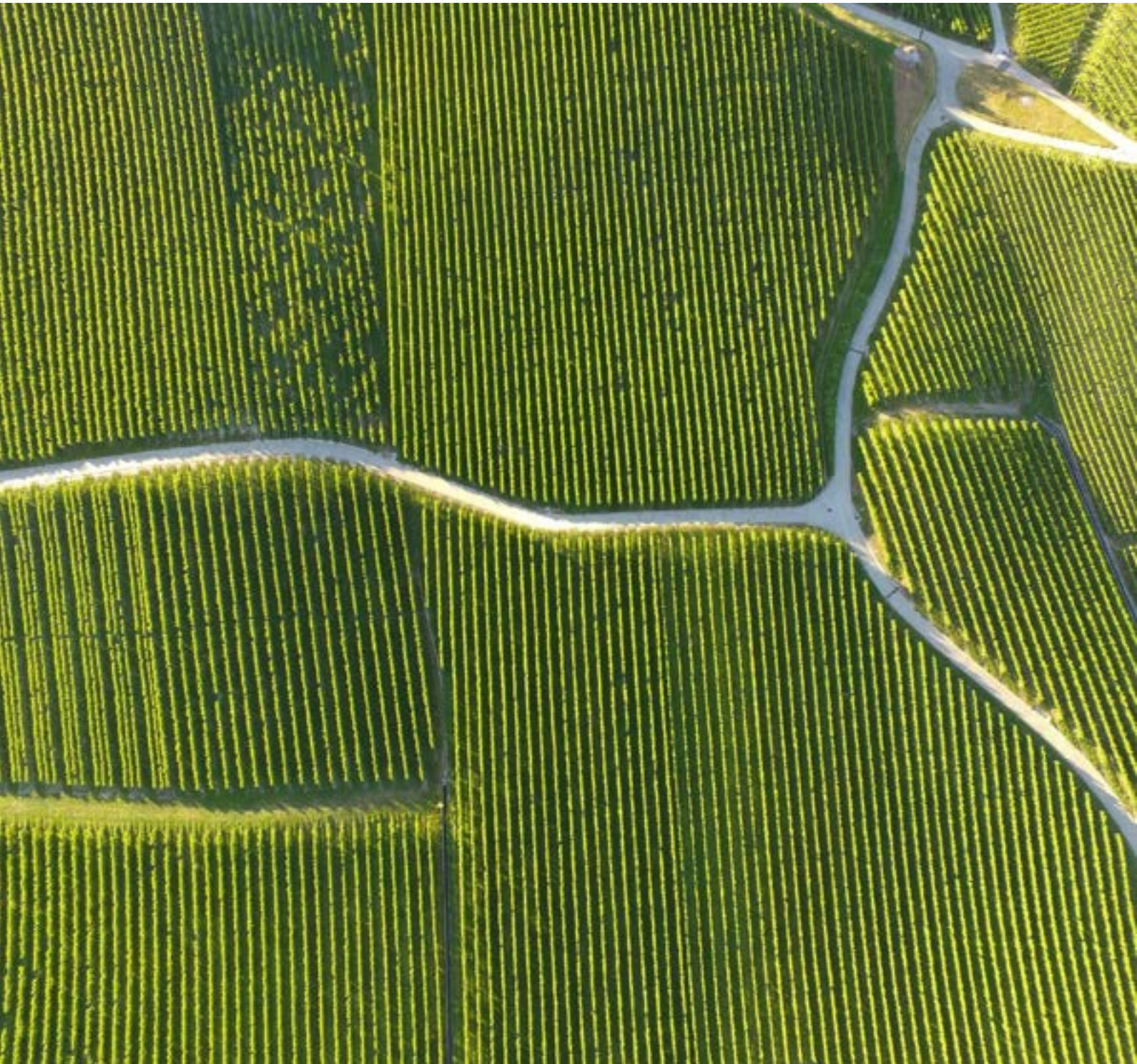
## The Role

### Council Responsibilities

In carrying out their advisory responsibilities Councils:

- Act as an advocate supporting UKRI's vision and the importance of research and innovation to society and the economy.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of overall UKRI strategy, including through encouraging collaborative working across UKRI and the wider research and innovation communities, and as required, providing advice to the UKRI Board.
- Provide expertise in the development and delivery of the Council's long-term strategy by developing the Strategic Delivery Plan for submission to the UKRI Executive Committee and UKRI Board for approval.
- Provide independent scrutiny, challenge, and support to the Executive Chair to ensure the effective delivery of the Council's mission, including:
  - the effective use of peer review;
  - the correct balance of the portfolio and delivery of outputs and outcomes;
  - distribution of funding between areas within a Council's field of activity and expertise;
  - oversight, development, and management of institutes, facilities and major investments within their area of activity and expertise;
  - advising the Executive Chair in managing risk in relation to large investments, and where applicable Institutes.

- Utilise its collective expertise and influence to help grow connectivity between the Council's business and other domains across UKRI.
- Engage with external stakeholders and thinking to develop ideas, raise awareness and disseminate latest thinking and ideas.
- Keep under review the structure and scope of any Council sub-committees, minimise their number, ensure their use is as simple as practicable, and keep as much business within the Council as possible.
- Be responsible for additional Council-specific activities as set out in the Higher Education Act and the UKRI Delegations Framework.



## Senior Independent Member (SIM) Responsibilities

A SIM's responsibility includes those of the ordinary Council member, in addition to:

- Supporting the Executive Chair and providing advice on specific issues and how to deliver the most efficient and effective operation of the Council
- Maintaining regular contact with Council members to understand their perspective, and acting as an intermediary with the Executive Chair, elevating concerns to the Executive Chair, UKRI CEO or UKRI Chair as required.

## Individual Council Member Responsibilities

The Council members responsibility includes but is not limited to:

- Supporting the UKRI Board, Executive Committee and council in operating effectively within the overall UKRI organisational framework.
- Actively participating in council business, acting as a critical friend, providing scrutiny, advice, and challenge to the council Executive Chair.
- Supporting the council Executive Chair, providing advice to ensure executive decision-making is robust and can stand up to external scrutiny.
- Supporting the council Executive Chair in discharging their responsibilities for risk and assurance in relation to large investments (and where applicable institutes and catapults).
- Encouraging and facilitating collaborative work across UKRI as appropriate.
- Acting as an advocate supporting UKRI's vision and the importance of research and innovation to society and the economy.
- Engaging with external stakeholders and thinking to develop ideas, raise awareness and disseminate latest thinking and ideas.
- Taking on ad hoc assignments as requested by the council Executive Chair, such as membership or chairing of subgroups, including cross-UKRI activity.
- Participating in the council's evaluation and planning activities
- Championing equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Championing environmental sustainability.
- If necessary, raising concerns about the operation of the council or, where policies and programmes do not appear to align with the Strategic Delivery Plan, with the Executive Chair and the Council Senior Independent Member.

## Person Specification

<b>Essential Criteria</b>	<b>Desirable Criteria</b>
An understanding of the research & innovation environment; how it can best produce knowledge and economic and societal benefit, and the elements, systems and approaches best used to affect this.	Experience leading and influencing at a senior level within a commercial environment.
A strategic and objective mindset with the ability to develop and communicate the strategic vision for the relevant council.	Experience working within academia, industry, business and innovation, user community, Governmental or third-sector organisations in England, Scotland, Wales and/or Northern Ireland.
The ability to tackle and reach conclusions on complex issues (e.g. in commercial contexts or in relation to policy).	Experience of policy-making in academia, industry, business, innovation, user community, Governmental, or third sector organisations.
The ability to critically evaluate and/or advise on new research and innovation opportunities within the remit of the respective council.	Experience of working across international boundaries.
An understanding of public engagement within research, innovation or commercial fields.	
Demonstrable experience of successfully operating within a highly complex landscape of stakeholders.	
Demonstrable behaviours that encourage inclusive and collegial operation.	
Excellent listening, influencing and communication skills.	



## Council Specific Criteria (Ordinary Council Members)

<p>Senior scientists with experience of research and/or senior leadership from any area within the environmental sciences across public or private sectors, and expertise in either advanced environmental data science; environmental science for climate risk; environmental modelling; soil health; technologies for environmental modelling in extreme environments; environmental microbiology.</p>
<p>Senior leader from the wider society including finance, business, industry, senior university leadership who possess a commitment to the importance of environmental science and the role of NERC.</p>
<p>There may be an opportunity for one member to join the NERC Management Board and one member to join the <a href="#">Building a Green Future Advisory Board</a>.</p>

## Council Specific Criteria (Senior Independent Member)

<p>Senior leader from the wider society including finance, business, industry, senior university leadership who possess a commitment to the importance of environmental science and the role of NERC with experience of finance, risk and Corporate Governance.</p>
<p>Experience as a Trustee / Non-Executive Director / Committee Member and ideally also with experience in a Chair role.</p>
<p>This role will also chair the NERC Assurance Board and may be invited to be a member of the NERC Management Board.</p>



## Selection Details

### Terms of Appointment

Members will normally be appointed for a period of up to three years. Whilst there is a possibility that Members can be reappointed or extended after their term ends, maximum overall tenures are currently set at 6 years.

An annual honorarium payment of £6,850 will be paid to eligible Council members. This is premised on an expected 20 days contribution per year, which includes regular meeting attendance. Government officials, civil or public, are not permitted to receive an honoraria payment.

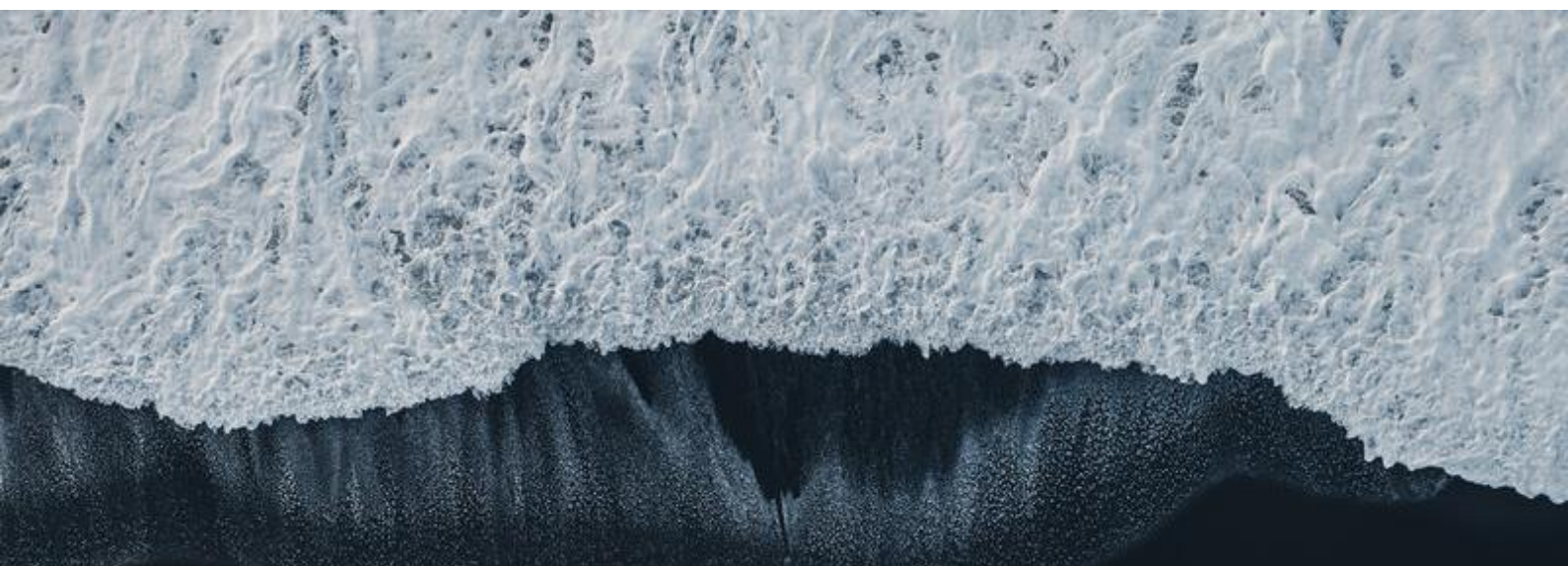
UKRI's registered address is Polaris House, Swindon, SN2 1FL. However, Council members will be expected to attend meetings in various locations across the UK.

### Timescales and Selection

Please note that these dates are only indicative at this stage and could be subject to change.

Stage	Timescale
Application closing date	Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> September
Shortlisting	Late September
Panel Interviews	Early October

Executive Chairs of councils will recommend new appointments to be approved by the UKRI Chief Executive Officer.



## How to Apply

If you wish to apply for this position, you will need to supply the following for consideration:

- A comprehensive CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements. Please provide details of two professional referees together with a brief statement of the capacity and over what period of time they have known you. Referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.
- A supporting statement (maximum two sides A4) highlighting your suitability and setting out, with clear examples, how you meet the essential criteria, including those specific to the Council, as highlighted in the person specification. Please note that the supporting statement is an important part of your application, it is an evidence-based document and is as much the means by which you will be assessed as your CV. Please include where you heard about this role.

You will also be asked to complete a Diversity Monitoring Form as part of your application.

The closing date for applications is **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September**.

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Lucy Roper on [Lucy.Roper@perrettlaver.com](mailto:Lucy.Roper@perrettlaver.com).

Application is by submission of a curriculum vitae and a covering letter of application, addressing the job description and person specification. Completed applications should be uploaded at <https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies/> quoting reference **7445** by the deadline **23:59 BST on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September**.

We welcome your interest and look forward to receiving your application. Please specify in your covering note the Council you wish to apply to; this is to ensure your interest is captured correctly.

Thank you for taking the time and effort to apply for this role. All data is processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

UKRI is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all. Applications from women, those with a disability, and members of minority ethnic groups, who are currently under-represented at senior levels in some sectors of the research and innovation community, are therefore especially encouraged. UKRI is a Disability Confident Employer.

# Annex 1: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

UKRI is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all. Applications from women, those with a disability, and members of minority ethnic groups, who are currently under-represented at senior levels in some sectors of the research and innovation community, are therefore especially encouraged. You can read more about our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion here.

## Key Principles

- Equality, diversity and inclusion is a critical aspect of a healthy research culture – from how it's designed, how it's carried out and who is involved.
- Research and innovation should be 'for everyone, by everyone' – a dynamic, diverse and inclusive research and innovation system in the UK is an integral part of society and should give everyone the opportunity to participate and to benefit.
- We need to be diverse to accommodate that research and innovation is unpredictable, is often created through new and unanticipated combinations, and can take many forms.
- By recognising and nurturing all people in the system and diversifying interactions, we will enrich our lives by creating knowledge, enabling us to understand the world around us and empowering us to tackle the many challenges we face as individuals and as communities, nationally and globally.
- The whole workforce are key contributors in the research and innovation system – from the lead researcher or innovator to those who keep the lights on or maintain the large infrastructure and equipment in our laboratories, small businesses or on our research vessels.
- By valuing all, we recognise that a diversity of ideas, opinions, knowledge and people enriches our work and enlarges our knowledge economy.



## Annex 2: The Seven Principles of Public Life

The seven principles of public life (the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes people who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in:

- The civil service
- Local government
- The police
- The courts and probation services
- Non-departmental public bodies
- Health, education, social and care services

### 1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### 2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### 3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### 4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### 5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### 6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### 7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Complaints Procedure

If you feel you have reason to complain you should direct your concerns in the first instance to the Senior Appointments team ([SeniorRecruitment@ukri.org](mailto:SeniorRecruitment@ukri.org)) who will make every effort to deal with these and respond to you within 48 hours.

If your complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily, you can find information about the steps you can take under [UKRI Complaints Procedure](#).



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