



UK Research  
and Innovation

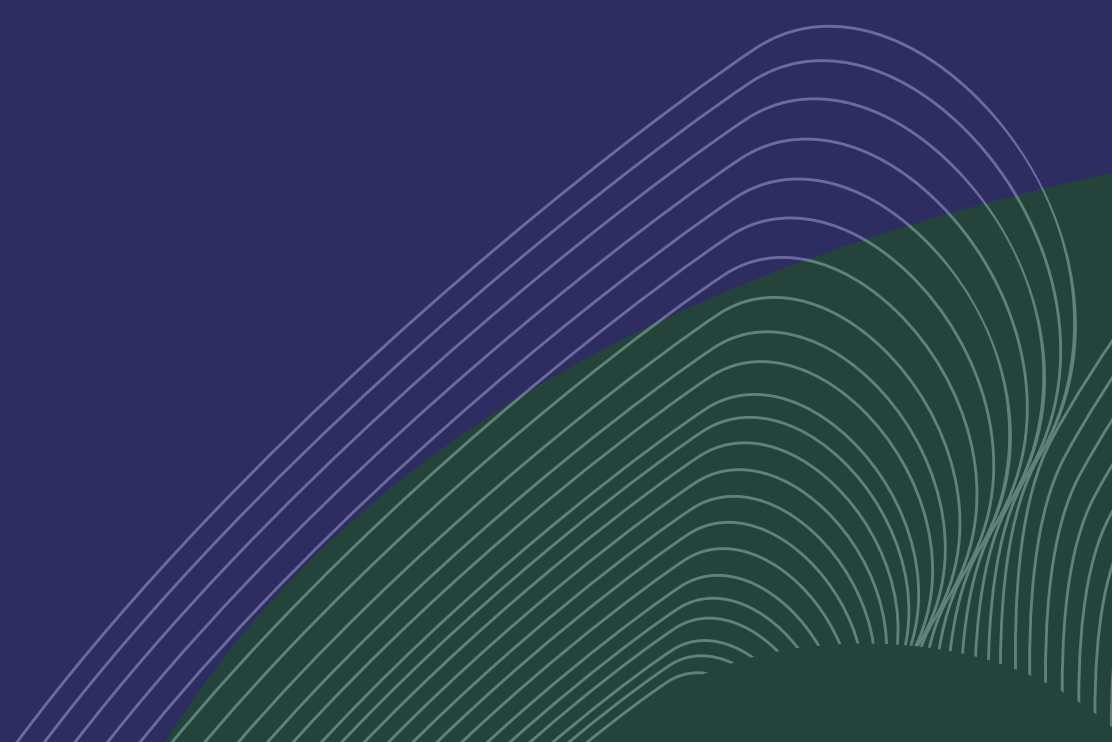
An aerial photograph of a narrow wooden walkway with metal railings, built over a deep river gorge. The river below is turbulent and white with foam. The surrounding landscape is rugged, with grey rock faces and patches of brown and green vegetation. A person wearing a red jacket and a white hat is walking on the path. The bottom half of the image is overlaid with a dark purple, semi-transparent graphic that features a pattern of concentric, wavy lines.

# Chair appointment British Geological Survey

Application Pack 2025

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# About us

The British Geological Survey (BGS), is a research centre under Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

UKRI is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). UKRI's organisation brings together the seven disciplinary research councils, 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.

UKRI's nine councils work together in innovative ways to deliver an ambitious agenda, drawing on our great depth and breadth of expertise and the enormous diversity of our portfolio.

Through the councils, UKRI maintains and champions the creativity and vibrancy of subject areas and sector-specific priorities and communities. The councils craft and deliver both sectoral and domain-specific support.

BGS has a public science role to provide an accessible and accurate assessment of the subsurface of the UK to underpin public and government requirements. The public science role is delivered through UKRI/NERC National Capability science funding and, in 2023-24 we received approximately £30 million from UKRI/NERC for this role. Annual turnover in 2023-24 was approximately £55m, with approximately £25m coming from competitively won income, such as grants and commissioned research from the public and private sectors.

The Memorandum of Understanding between NERC and the BGS sets out the BGS role as being:

- to provide the national repository of data and knowledge for geoscience in the UK
- to develop services to enable Government, business and the public to benefit from the national repository archive of data and knowledge
- to provide impartial and independent advice to Government, business and the public in relation to UK geology, natural hazards and groundwater
- to provide analytical facilities, including observatory networks, in support of earth science research and Government needs
- to provide UK leadership and to make skills, expertise and knowledge available globally
- to undertake research and development in pursuit of these aims

As part of NERC, BGS research addresses major issues linked to environmental, economic and societal sustainability. Its work includes:

- investigating the role of the subsurface in achieving the energy transition to net zero
- exploring the responsible use of natural resources
- adapting effectively to environmental change
- helping to develop community resilience to environmental hazards



As well as the three principal BGS science challenge areas, core UK and international activities are delivered through the BGS National Geoscience and BGS International programmes. These are supported by BGS Informatics, which is leading a digital transformation across BGS.

The new BGS strategy 2023-28, Understanding our Earth, was published in May 2023.

The BGS research portfolio is reflected in its organisational structure, which has three major science challenge areas:

- decarbonisation and resource management
- environmental change, adaptation and resilience
- multi-hazards and resilience

These challenge areas are underpinned by a digital transformation programme to ensure that digital processes and innovation support BGS' aims and meet all partners' needs.

BGS uses its research and expertise to fulfil our mission of providing impartial, independent geoscientific advice and data to governments, the public and private-sector organisations, both nationally and internationally. It leads and maintains the National Geoscience Data Centre, a repository for knowledge of the UK's geology and subsurface properties. It also maintains world class observation networks, such as the seismic monitoring network. The BGS is in an outstanding position to provide, maintain and make accessible reliable geoscientific data. The portfolio of successful research and data projects, underpinning both UK and global initiatives, demonstrates our ability and expertise.

BGS headquarters are at Keyworth, near Nottingham, with offices in Edinburgh, Wallingford, and Cardiff. BGS also has a presence in Belfast through the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, and in London at the Natural History Museum.

For further information on BGS see: [www.bgs.ac.uk/about](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/about).

# About the Board

## The BGS Board

The Chair of the BGS Board reports to and works closely with the NERC Executive Chair and leads the Board in fulfilling the role of BGS, ensuring proper organisational and operational governance and direction within the NERC/UKRI governance framework. The Chair of the BGS Board has an important role in ensuring the Executive Director of BGS achieves their and BGS' objectives.

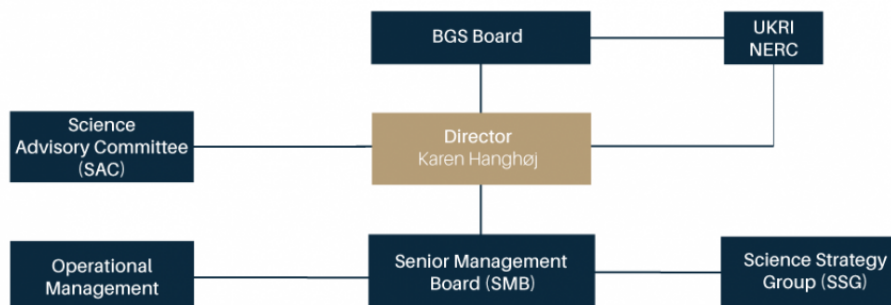
The Non-Executive members between them have a broad range of expertise and experience in research and innovation across higher education, industry and commerce, policy and/or civil society, reflecting different characteristics and professional backgrounds.

The BGS board comprises of a Chair, with six non-executive Board members and a NERC Observer. Each

non-executive member serves a set term. The BGS Director, and Director of Operations, also sit on the board. The board's actions and reporting are subject to the governance framework established by UKRI/NERC.

The BGS Board acts in an advisory capacity and advises the Executive Director and NERC Executive Chair on the companies strategic aims, providing the leadership to put them into effect, ensuring that the BGS business plan is feasible within the constraints of the NERC funding allocated to BGS. supervising, supporting and challenging the management of the business, and reporting to the shareholder (NERC) on their stewardship. Additionally, the Board is responsible for ensuring that public funds are utilised in an accountable and transparent manner.

The diagram below shows the governance structure.



## The responsibility of the Board Chair

The Chair of the BGS Board will be responsible for leading the Board to:

- Ensure BGS is a world-class geological survey
- Maintain relationships with BGS partners
- Ensure proper governance, accountability and direction of BGS
- Enable the sustainable commercial diversification of BGS
- Support the BGS Director in meeting BGS's strategic goals and those of NERC in relation to national capability

## The responsibilities of Non-Executive Board members

- The Non-Executive members will between them have a broad range of expertise and experience in research and innovation across higher education, industry and commerce, national and international scientific leadership, policy and/or civil society
- Each member must act in what they consider to be the best interests of BGS within NERC, and should adhere to the seven Principles of Public Life
- Further Non-Executive members may be co-opted as advisory members as and when necessary

# About the role

We are looking to appoint a new Board Chair to provide the leadership to ensure that BGS advances its nationally important role and meets its strategic objectives while maintaining high standards of governance, accountability and delivering public value. This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced leader with a sound understanding of the geoscientific field, to lead the BGS Board and build on BGS's current success and address new challenges. The BGS Chair will be appointed by NERC on the recommendation of a selection panel.

## Key Accountabilities:

- Provide strong, effective leadership to the BGS Board, ensuring clear strategic direction, whilst adhering to being a key part of NERC and UKRI
- Guide the development and implementation of the BGS strategy in alignment with NERC's vision and purpose and UKRI's priorities and the national interest in geoscience, including identifying key challenge areas
- Encourage innovative thinking and ensure BGS maintains its status as a global leader in geoscience
- Ensure the BGS business plan and associated budget is aligned to NERC's goals and delivers to the terms on which funding is provided to support BGS
- Support the BGS Director in meeting the strategic goals set out by NERC
- Support the BGS in attracting external income and in diversifying commercial funding lines to enable the BGS to operate within its means
- Ensure robust governance structures are in place, overseeing risk management, ensuring appropriate health and safety measures, financial sustainability, and regulatory compliance
- Hold the BGS executive team accountable for the effective, efficient and accountable performance of BGS, ensuring clear measurement and reporting against strategic objectives
- Promote a culture of integrity, transparency, and accountability throughout the organisation
- Build and maintain relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- Ensure BGS delivers long-term public value through sustainable practices
- Advocate for BGS and engage with the wider public and scientific community.



# Your skills and experience

We recognise that a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences enriches our work environment and therefore we actively welcome applications from a diverse range of candidates.

Applications are sought from individuals with a substantial track record in strategic leadership and governance experience in the UK public, private, third sector or academia.

Applicants will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Strong personal interest and previous experience of working closely within the sectors of interest to BGS (government, private sector and academia) with the ability to build strong relationships with related stakeholders, the NERC-BGS executive and potential customers (lead criteria)
- Proven track record of effective leadership within a complex operating environment, with a strong focus on achieving ambitious and tangible outcomes and driving performance within a defined budget
- Knowledge of working within a research environment
- Strong record of sustainable business planning, delivering to goals and on target, with the ability to support BGS in expanding and diversifying sustainable commercial opportunities and income streams
- Previous experience serving on advisory boards, either as a member or Chair, with in-depth knowledge and experience in corporate governance best practices
- Ability to operate strategically, providing clear direction to guide organisational objectives, and a good understanding of the government/political environment that BGS/NERC need to operate in
- A good understanding of NERC's vision and mission and role within UKRI and the BGS place within this ecosystem and the UK geosciences sector
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to engage with diverse audiences, demonstrating proficiency in negotiation, collaboration, and diplomacy to foster positive relationships.



# Terms of appointment

**Meeting:** The Chair will be expected to lead all formal Board meetings (at least four per year). Meeting arrangements will include scope for remote participation. The precise operating model will be determined by the Board Chair in conjunction with the NERC Executive Chair, BGS Executive and Board members. The Board Chair may call further extraordinary meetings as necessary. For meetings to be quorate there must be at least half the Non-Executive members in attendance in person (plus one) or virtually. Further information can be found in [Meetings and Attendance](#).

**Location:** Meetings are held at various UK locations including the BGS offices in Keyworth (near Nottingham), London and Edinburgh.

**Duration:** The Chair will be appointed for a term of three years, with possibility of reappointment for a further term.

**Reporting:** to the NERC Executive Chair and providing updates on progress to goals

**Honorarium:** An annual honorarium payment of £6,000 will be paid to the Chair, where eligible. This is premised on an expected 10-15 days' contribution per year. Travel and subsistence is paid in line with [UKRI policy](#).

Government and public officials are not permitted to receive an honoraria payment; travel and subsistence should normally be met by their home organisation.

# Timescales and selection

The selection panel for the BGS Board appointments will be led by the Executive Chair of NERC, Professor Louise Heathwaite, who will be joined by a diverse panel which includes the Director of the British Antarctic Survey, a NERC Council representative, and an independent panel member.

Final pre-appointment vetting will be undertaken before appointments are officially confirmed.

*Indicative timescale for appointments is in the table below.*

Process	Date
Closing date	Sunday 2 March 2025
Shortlisting	w/c 17 March 2025
Interviews (in person at Caxton House, London)	Thursday 10 April 2025
Appointment starts	June 2025



# How to apply

To apply, candidates should submit the following using the UKRI Careers Portal or by email directly to [SeniorRecruitment@ukri.org](mailto:SeniorRecruitment@ukri.org) by Sunday 2 March 2025:

- a CV (limited to three sides)
- covering letter (limited to two sides).

Your covering letter is an opportunity to demonstrate how you meet the person specification. Please also give details of any business or other interests or any personal connections which, if you are appointed, could present a conflict of interest holding this role. This will formally be documented at offer stage.

Please note, to apply via the UKRI Careers Portal you will receive a notification confirming your profile has successfully been created (if you have not previously set up an account) and a second notification confirming your application for this role has been submitted. If you do not receive the second notification confirming your application for this role has been submitted, please contact [seniorrecruitment@ukri.org](mailto:seniorrecruitment@ukri.org), so we can ensure your application has been received. *Note that failure to address the above criteria or submit an application without a covering letter may result in the application not being considered.*

Receipt of applications (covering letter and CV) will be acknowledged, and then reviewed by selection panel against the person specification. The panel will agree selected applicants for interview. At the final appointment stages, where applicants are equally as qualified on merit, the selection panel will seek to achieve a balanced membership in terms of, for example, diversity, expertise and experience.

## Privacy Notice

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) understands the importance of protecting personal information and is committed to complying with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR).

For more information on how we handle personal data please visit our webpage [Privacy notice – UKRI](#).



# General information

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

UKRI believes that everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with equal opportunities to flourish and succeed within an ethical and trusted working environment that is attractive and accessible to everyone who is interested in developing their career with us.

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our board and executive positions and bringing in talent, regardless of its origins. We encourage applications from all candidates regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or gender identity. We also value diversity of thought and experience and are committed to creating systems that value difference so that everyone can feel welcomed, included and nurtured throughout their time with us.

As a Disability Confident Leader, UKRI will offer interviews to disabled candidates who meet the published minimum requirements for a job or role. Whether you choose to apply under the Disability Confident scheme or not, you can still ask us to make particular adjustments for you when attending an interview.

We know actions speak louder than words. For further information, please visit the UKRI web page: [‘How we support EDI in the workforce’](#)

## Pre-employment screening

To enable us to hire the very best people and to safeguard our people, our assets and our important role we will conduct a comprehensive pre-employment check on successful applicants as part of the recruitment process.

UKRI supports research in areas that include animal health, agriculture and food security, and bioscience for health which includes research on animals, genetic modification, and stem cell research. Whilst you may not have direct involvement in this type of research, you should consider how this aligns with your personal values or beliefs. Our pre-employment requirements include a security check and an extreme organisation’s affiliation check.

The role holder will be required to have the appropriate level of security screening/ vetting required for the role. UKRI reserves the right to run or re-run security clearance as required during the course of employment. In addition, and as part of the overall recruitment process, the successful candidate will also be required to register their [Declarations of Interest](#).

# General information

## Terms of reference

### Purpose of the Board

The responsibilities of the board include setting the BGS's strategic aims, providing the leadership to put them into effect, supervising, supporting and challenging the management of the business, and reporting to the shareholder (NERC) on their stewardship. The board's actions are subject to the governance framework established by NERC/UKRI.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the BGS Board Chair and the NERC Executive Chair on 2 April 2020 defines the overarching responsibility of the board. The Terms of Reference can be found on the BGS website – [www.bgs.ac.uk/about-bgs/our-team/bgs-board/#info](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/about-bgs/our-team/bgs-board/#info)

### Meetings and attendance

- 1 The quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting of members is 50% plus one of the memberships. The quorum does not include the NERC Observer.
- 2 The Board should meet sufficiently regularly to discharge its duties effectively; there will be at least four meetings in each 12-month period.
- 3 Members will be expected to participate in all formal Board meetings. Meeting arrangements will include scope for remote participation. The precise model will be determined by the Chair in conjunction with the Board. The Chair may call further extraordinary meetings as necessary.
- 4 The agenda for each meeting shall be agreed 4 weeks prior to each meeting through discussion between the Chair and Board Secretary, consulting other Non-Executive Directors as necessary. Papers for each Board meeting will be issued no later than 7-10 days prior to each meeting to allow members sufficient time to consider the items for discussion.
- 5 The Chair shall preside at every meeting of the Board. In the event of the Chair being unable to attend a meeting (or be present for a specific item), the board will agree which of them should take on that role for the meeting.
- 6 Where a vote is required on an issue, the majority view of those members present will be accepted. The NERC observer shall not participate in any vote. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair will have the casting vote.
- 7 The Board Secretary will minute the proceedings of all meetings. Draft minutes of Board meetings will be circulated to members within three weeks of the meeting following review by the Board Chair. Members will be asked to confirm the minutes at the next meeting.
- 8 Each Board agenda and a summary of the meeting will be published on the BGS website for transparency purposes.

### Standards and conduct

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way.

## General information

Consistent with the Commissioner's Code of Practice, applicants will be assessed on merit, and all candidates for public appointment will need to uphold the standards of conduct set out in UKRI's policies and standards, including the UKRI Code of Conduct and the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles), which are:

### **Selflessness**

Holders of Public Office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

### **Objectivity**

Carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

### **Complaints procedure**

If you feel you have reason to complain, you should direct your concerns in the first instance to [SeniorRecruitment@ukri.org](mailto:SeniorRecruitment@ukri.org) who will make every effort to deal with this 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.