



UK Research  
and Innovation

# Chief People Officer

Candidate Prospectus  
January 2025

# Contents

About UKRI . . . . .	3
About the role . . . . .	3
The team . . . . .	4
Key accountabilities . . . . .	5
Your skills and experience . . . . .	7
Knowledge and experience . . . . .	8
Terms of Appointment . . . . .	10
Timescales and selection . . . . .	10
How to apply . . . . .	11
General information . . . . .	12
– Benefits . . . . .	12
– Equality, Diversity and Inclusion . . . . .	12
– Pre-employment screening . . . . .	13
– Standards . . . . .	13
– Complaints Procedure . . . . .	14

Candidate Prospectus  
January 2025



# About UKRI

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is an independent, non-departmental public body, which invests £8bn per annum in research and innovation. We bring together nine executive council partners (the seven Research Councils, plus Innovate UK, and Research England) with a shared vision to ensure the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation. UKRI also provides coordinated strategic advice to the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology on the balance of funding between research disciplines.

We employ 8,000 staff who support some of the world's most exciting and challenging research projects. We develop and operate some of the most remarkable scientific facilities in the world and work collaboratively with industry, academia and government in exciting partnerships. We are pushing the frontiers of human knowledge through blue skies research and delivering benefits for UK society and the economy through world-class research and business-led innovation.

# About the role

UKRI invests public funds across the UK via studentships, research projects, knowledge exchange, research infrastructure, business innovation and many more. These investments are diverse and have hugely varied characteristics across the portfolio. Some are place-based, which means that they are driven by local impact and consultation with a geographic range of stakeholders.

In March 2022, UKRI published its first five-year strategy which outlines how the organisation will support the UK's world class research and innovation system, fuel an innovation-led economy and society and drive-up prosperity across the UK. One of the strategic objectives is: 'World class places – securing the UK's position as a globally leading research and innovation nation with outstanding institutions, infrastructures, sectors and clusters across the breadth of the country.' To support the delivery of this ambitious strategy, strong leadership is essential, particularly in shaping the organisation's people strategy and fostering a culture that aligns with UKRI's goals and values.

The Chief People Officer is the HR Professional Leader for UK Research and Innovation and a member of the UKRI Executive Committee; the role leads in determining the organisation's strategic People agenda, its culture and the professional HR function that works to deliver on it. As a member of the UKRI Executive Committee, the Chief People Officer will work with Council and UKRI functional leadership to ensure sound delivery of the people strategy and management of people risk across UKRI throughout its governance structures including the UKRI Board.

As one of UKRI's senior leaders, the Chief People Officer will be a strong and visible role model and will collaborate with and convene the wider people functions across UKRI to build cohesion and maximise UKRI's understanding of the priorities of our stakeholders.

The Chief People Officer is the UKRI Chief Executive's senior trusted adviser on people and organisational issues, providing challenge and supporting the UKRI Accounting Office in the undertaking of their duties, providing assurance on people issues to UKRI's parent-body DSIT, and with a specific responsibility to develop the capability of the senior team, including the coaching and development for UKRI Directors and our 9 Executive Chairs.

The Chief People Officer reports to the Chief Finance Officer, who sits alongside the Chief Executive Officer as one of the two executive members of the UKRI Board.

The Chief Finance Officer leads the Operational Leadership Team (OLT), namely:

- **Chief People Officer**
- **Chief Information Officer**
- **Chief of Investment Planning and Strategy**
- **Finance Director**
- **Legal Director and General Counsel**
- **Change Implementation Leader**
- **Chief of Staff**
- **Chief of Operational Delivery**
- **Chief of External Affairs and Communication**

## The team

The post-holder's team is currently c.126 (full time equivalent) colleagues, predominantly based in Swindon but also in London and across the UK; thus, the role will require some travel around the UK to e.g. Harwell, Daresbury, Cambridge and Bristol. As this role will be dealing with teams across the UK the role-holder must be able to build strong relationships with virtual and remote teams.

# Key accountabilities

The Chief People Officer is responsible for the delivery of the UKRI People Strategy and delivery of the following capabilities for the organisation:

## **People Strategy and Advice:**

- Ensure strategic plans are in place to implement the longer-term people strategy to support the principles, values and philosophy of UKRI. Translate strategic plans into deliverable objectives which add value to UKRI in delivering its strategy.
- Ensure proactive and responsive approaches are in place to react to complex people issues and lead crisis / incident management when required.
- Generate strategic insights with demonstrable action plans by leveraging data to ensure we have the right design, capability, performance and culture to deliver organisational priorities.
- Deliver the most professional and engaging HR support, advice, counsel and coaching through high calibre Business Partnering Teams and personally to the executive team.

## **Functional Leadership/Management and Governance:**

- Ensure proactive and responsive approaches are in place to react to complex people issues. Lead crisis / incident management when required.
- Operate within and providing functional leadership for the UKRI Governance, Risk and Assurance frameworks with a focus on managing public money well.
- Ensure controls & procedures are in place & fully adopted to achieve governance, compliance & control for the people function in line with business requirements and meeting Government Functional Standards for HR.
- Direct management of the HR team at UKRI which comprises approximately 126 (full time equivalent) colleagues currently.
- Financial management and oversight of a £12.1M budget

### **Effective Expert Services, collectively creating a positive and inclusive employee experience, centred on:**

- Reward and Employee Relations – deliver a cohesive package of fixed and variable reward, benefits, and pensions, in line with public sector pay policy. Simplify and harmonise Employee Policies and guidance alongside maintaining a positive Trades Unions relationship to support ongoing negotiation and consultation for our 9 recognised Trades Unions.
- Resourcing – enhance our performance management, talent management and succession planning offer into an integrated framework from Operational to Strategic Workforce Planning alongside specific talent programmes including our Early Careers.
- Culture, Inclusion & Learning – Develop the heart of our employee experience through leadership in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, creation of a holistic wellbeing offer, developing our leadership journey with and alongside a strong Learning and Development offer.

### **Client focussed delivery of people centred products, services, policies, and processes:**

- Ensure the customer (employee, leader, manager, team) is at the heart of our approach when we are delivering high quality products in challenging time frames to enable and help our clients achieve business as usual and transformational goals.
- Lead the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of people-centred policies and processes that align with organisational goals and adhere to best practices.
- Ensure all policies and processes are clear, accessible, and adaptable to meet the evolving needs of employees, managers, and teams.
- Promote a transparent and consistent approach to the implementation and communication of policies, ensuring they are equitable and inclusive across all teams.
- Collaborate across the organisation to ensure that policies and processes are integrated, aligned with the organisational strategy, and supportive of both business-as-usual and transformational initiatives.
- Ensure the effective delivery and administration of our owned and out-sourced pensions schemes. Co-chair, with the Finance Director, the Pensions Steering Group, overseeing the direction of travel for the three pension schemes applicable to UKRI employees. Further details of these can be found in the UKRI Annual Report and Accounts.

The postholder will also work with UK Shared Business Services, the shared service provider for our payroll and other services, to ensure that there is effective and efficient end to end service delivery where that impacts the employee experience.

As UKRI completes a number of programmes of Organisational Change, the postholder will ensure that there is effective strategic input and support, as well as upholding UKRI policies and processes for people change.

## Your skills and experience

Candidates will be exceptionally effective and proactive leaders and possess significant experience in organisational development and change management of a similar scale and complexity. They will be able to create and articulate a compelling vision, inspire and coalesce those around them to see the potential in strong organisational design and have a demonstrable understanding of current professional HR practices.

The appointed Chief People Officer will be joining UKRI at a time where there is a palpable enthusiasm both politically and across the wider community for change and this will present an incredibly exciting opportunity to effect it at the highest level in one of the most important public sector areas, namely research and innovation.



# Knowledge and experience

## Essential Criteria

The successful candidate will be an excellent strategic leader, operating at Executive and Board level, with a breadth of experience gained whilst working in complex organisations. Whilst we have no preconceptions as to what sectors or industries you will have worked in; the successful candidate will be able to demonstrate;

- Experience in partnering with, constructively challenging and supporting the executive team, helping them consider approaches and fully evaluate options.
- Solid HR generalist experience gained through leadership in complex organisations where transformation and change are delivered alongside a focus on continuous improvement of Business as Usual.
- Proven ability to persuade, influence and secure the confidence of others and to build collaborative working relationships with a wide range of senior stakeholders across organisational boundaries inside and outside of UKRI.
- Inclusive leadership, fully able to harness the talents of the individuals in our team, creating an environment of ambition, innovation, professionalism and fostering collaboration. A strong delivery focus, able to translate our work into measurable and effectively run programmes that deliver sustainable impact and value that the client recognises in their business.
- The capacity to interpret data to create and present evidence-based insight that drives excellence across the HR function and influences the direction of the wider organisation.
- Experience of effectively managing budgets and securing value for money.
- CIPD qualified or equivalent experience

## Skills, Abilities and Personal Qualities

- Management of diverse and complex stakeholders and with the ability to negotiate successfully to meet the needs of individual parties.
- Ability to think strategically and then translate into actionable and achievable plans.
- Highly developed analytical and problem-solving skills, including the ability to quickly understand new and complex issues and to apply creative solutions.
- A willingness to challenge preconceptions and offer well-reasoned and considered judgments to all levels of stakeholders.
- Excellent communication and stakeholder management skills delivered consistently.



- Proven ability to work at Board and Executive level.
- Able to demonstrate excellent commercial and political judgement.
- A dynamic leader, able to inspire a large multi-site HR team around a common vision.
- A role model for high standards, instilling a clear sense of purpose, priority and direction.

The post holder must demonstrate a full understanding of the 7 Principles of Public Life: Selflessness – Integrity – Objectivity – Accountability – Openness – Honesty – Leadership. They must uphold and act as a role model for these.

We understand that individuals might hesitate to submit an application if they don't meet each of the criteria. If you're enthusiastic about joining our organisation and possess a majority of the skills or experience, we encourage you to proceed with an application. We recognise that a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences enriches our work environment and therefore actively welcome applications from a diverse range of candidates.

### **Independence**

No external commitments that could be perceived as a conflict of interest or material distraction from the execution of their duties.

### **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

UK Research and Innovation is a diverse workforce of people. We believe that encouraging these differences and drawing the best from them will create a productive environment in which everyone feels valued, where talents are fully utilised and in which organisational goals are met. Underpinning this is a belief that it is a fundamental right for everyone to be treated equally, with fairness, respect and dignity. UK Research and Innovation will act directly and use its influence to ensure that this right is promoted and upheld; we welcome applications from all those who meet the criteria set out in our role profiles.

# Terms of appointment

**Band:** UKRI-Band Y

**Salary:** £130,000 - £140,000 per annum

**Hours:** Full Time

**Contract:** Open-Ended. Job shares also considered.

**Location:** The post will be based at Polaris House in Swindon for 3 days a week but with flexibility for the remainder of the week. There will be travel to London and across the UK as the role requires.

# Timescales and selection

The selection process will be a panel interview which is likely to include a presentation. Interviews will be held in person in London. The timetable below is indicative, therefore dates and details are subject to change.

Process	Date
Closing date	Sunday 2nd March 2025
Shortlist panel meeting	Week commencing 3rd March 2025
Panel interviews	Thursday 27th & Friday 28th March 2025



# How to apply

Please click '[Apply](#)' to submit your application via the **Careers Portal by 23:59 Sunday 2nd March 2025.**

## You will need to supply:

- A curriculum vitae (up to two pages).
- A supporting statement/ cover letter (up to two pages).

Your Statement of Suitability should provide specific information about why you believe you would be suitable for appointment for this role. Think about your knowledge, skills, experience, personal attributes, and vision for the organisation and take full advantage of the space available. Use practical examples where possible and ensure you refer to which of the essential criteria your application is aligned to. Again, please aim for no more than 2 A4 pages.

Please note, failure to provide a supporting statement/cover letter or failure to address the above points may result in your application not being considered further.

You will only be assessed on the content of your CV and supporting statement, and not the 'experience' section of the application of Careers Portal.

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 or experience issues applying, please contact [seniorrecruitment@ukri.org](mailto:seniorrecruitment@ukri.org), so we can ensure your application has been received.



# General information

## Benefits

We recognise and value our employees as individuals and aim to provide a favourable pay and rewards package. We are committed to supporting employees' development and promote a culture of continuous learning. A list of benefits below.

- An excellent defined benefit pension scheme
- 30 days' annual leave in addition to 10.5 public and privilege days (full time equivalent)
- Employee discounts and offers on retail and leisure activities.
- Employee assistance programme, providing confidential help and advice.
- Flexible working options

Please click [here](#) for more details on the [Benefits of working for UKRI – UKRI](#)

## 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.

## Standards

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.

Consistent with the Commissioner's Code of Practice, applicants will be assessed on merit, and all candidates will need to uphold the standards of the UKRI Code of Conduct and conduct set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life, 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 the Senior Appointments team ([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](#).





**UK Research  
and Innovation**

