



Our People

2025 to 2030

Empowering people in the delivery of
Natural England's Strategy



Our People 2025 to 2030

At Natural England, delivering the greatest value to society through our Strategy begins with our people. 'Our People 2025 to 2030' reflects our commitment to being an employer of choice. It clarifies [how we support and value all our current and prospective employees](#) throughout long and purposeful Natural England careers, as well as setting out clear expectations of [how we will work together](#).

Our key people plans, such as the Strategic Workforce Plan, the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan, and the Strategic Pay Plan, support us in building a workplace where inclusivity, wellbeing, collaboration and personal development are central to how we work.

By sustaining a high-performance culture, based around our shared values, which embrace diverse perspectives and change, we will effectively deliver [Natural England's Strategy: Recovering Nature for Growth, Health and Security](#).

To guide us toward [our vision of Thriving Nature for People and Planet](#), we live by four core values:

-  We are ambitious
-  We act with integrity
-  We are inclusive
-  We are collaborative

We want Natural England to be a great place to work, where everyone can thrive. We are transforming how we work to achieve our goals, using digital tools and smarter systems to deliver more for nature. This begins with recruiting and retaining people who are skilled, passionate, and reflect the diverse communities we serve. We are also building on our strong partnerships and embracing fresh ideas and flexibility to make the biggest impact.

"Natural England's 'Our People 2025 to 2030' is so important because it sets out what we can expect of each other, and how we should show up to support our colleagues every day. It is this organisational culture of customer service, collaboration, and pragmatic decision making which enables us all to perform at our best for the benefit of recovering nature for growth, health and security."

Marian Spain, Chief Executive



Photo: Birmingham Settlement Nature & Wellbeing Centre



How we support Our People

We're committed to supporting all our joiners, movers and leavers throughout your entire career journey with us, from the first day you join us to the day you leave. We provide support across four key areas:

- [!\[\]\(aca6fcc8bd95e8255b9ea1b1d08ef300_img.jpg\) Recruitment, retention and talent](#)
- [!\[\]\(0083087c61cec498ac803a4aec5bb1bd_img.jpg\) Learning, skills and capability](#)
- [!\[\]\(2e94242fda9f31152eb2b29146bfce46_img.jpg\) Employee offer](#)
- [!\[\]\(680c68b4e62fe5ec9774c1168e904fbf_img.jpg\) Employee experience and wellbeing](#)

"Our Strategy sets out the difference we want to make to people and nature. 'Our People 2025 to 2030' ensures we really make that count by helping us understand what Natural England does for us, and what we do for Natural England."

John Holmes, Director of Strategy

Recruitment, retention and talent

Securing the best people with the right skills in the right place to deliver the most for nature recovery.

We are committed to building a workforce with a rich variety of skills, and creating an inclusive environment where everyone can grow. We recruit for all our available roles and apprenticeships through a fair and transparent selection process. We also have volunteering opportunities available to get involved with our organisation and provide added value to our work.

Offering people the chance to expand their capabilities is essential to our success, and enables us to retain a diverse range of employees who embrace change, innovation, creativity, and new technologies. We actively support career development and encourage all our people to take ownership of your growth and progression, driving meaningful progress in delivering our Strategy through your contributions, and thriving in long and purposeful careers.

Some examples of how we are achieving this include:

- 🔗 A refreshed [Natural England Careers website](#) and [LinkedIn Life Story page](#), showcasing real staff experiences and what it's like to work here. These will also continue to evolve and support our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) targets and attract diverse talent.
- 🔗 Plans for a new Recruitment Guidance Hub, designed to make the application process clearer and more seamless for both applicants and vacancy managers, helping everyone to navigate the different routes to joining Natural England.

"Working in planning, we get to see some of the greatest risks and the biggest opportunities for nature, and my team works at pace to support those outcomes. I am passionate about my job as a people leader, and Natural England provides me with the resources to support my team so that they are happy, healthy and achieving."

Sally Tainton, Senior Manager for Planning Delivery

Learning, skills and capability

Ensuring everyone has the skills and knowledge to thrive and create a better future for people and nature.

We provide a strong start through our comprehensive inductions and tailored career support, giving people the tools they need to thrive and deliver for nature from day one. We then continue to develop and invest in your professional skills and personal strengths through various development opportunities and ongoing support.

Each year, we actively encourage everyone to make full use of your 10 dedicated learning and development days, supporting personal growth and progression. We proudly nurture a learning culture which empowers everyone to grow and builds strong leaders who inspire others to confidently drive forward nature recovery.

We are proud to support our people through:

- 🔗 Extensive leadership programmes.
- 🔗 The development of a refreshed Skills Framework that supports strategic decision-making and individual's development, integrated into the new [Government Skills Campus](#) platform.
- 🔗 Developing tools to improve the access, quality and commercial maturity of our learning offer, such as our Learning Launchpad.

"Natural England has really invested in me over the years, including two apprenticeships and externally recognised training courses. Coupled with supportive colleagues with shared values and great expertise, it is a stimulating place to work."

Charlotte Rose, Principal Strategy Officer for Water Reform

Employee offer

Recognising and valuing achievement; celebrating our successes.

We are creating a rich and fulfilling workplace that celebrates achievement and empowers people to reach your full potential through a range of staff benefits including flexible working, a generous annual leave entitlement, a Civil Service Pension scheme, and in-year awards.

Our approach to reward and recognition is fair, transparent and inclusive. Our Strategic Pay Plan describes the progress we want to make to ensure our salaries and benefits remain competitive, so we can bring in the best people and keep them engaged for the long term.

We are striving to continually enhance our employee offer, and some examples of how we are achieving this include:

- 🔗 Delivering an approach to the pay award each year that aligns with our Strategic Pay Plan objectives.
- 🔗 Monitoring for any protected characteristic pay gaps to identify any priority areas for focus and address the root causes.
- 🔗 Continuing to offer a variety of staff benefits to suit our people's needs during differing stages of your personal lives and careers, helping to balance work and home life.

"I feel very privileged to work in the Customer Engagement team at Natural England, where we collaborate closely with colleagues across the organisation and maintain a broad view of the work happening in our various teams. While our core mission is centred on nature, our customers also play a vital role in our success. I really enjoy working with the public to listen, support, and solve problems together, and I'm always looking for new, innovative ways to improve their experience and deliver positive outcomes for people and nature."

**Tina Bige,
Principal Manager for Customer Engagement**





Employee experience and wellbeing

Having a well-supported and engaged workforce.

We care about our people's wellbeing – physically, mentally, and socially – which we are committed to through meaningful actions and support.

We promote a culture of respect and inclusion where everyone can belong, and we have 12 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion staff networks, alongside wider Defra group networks, that play an active role in shaping our positive workplace culture, championing inclusion and wellbeing, and offering spaces to form connections and access peer-to-peer supports.

Everyone at Natural England has equitable access to opportunities and resources, and we actively support all our people to bring your authentic selves to work. We value each person for your own unique skills, knowledge and perspectives.

Part of our commitment to our people's wellbeing means continuously improving our health and safety standards so everyone can work confidently and safely. This work includes:

- ✔ Support available through our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- ✔ Real-time incident reporting through our 'MyH&S' application, including our 'Good Spots' system, leading to lessons learned.
- ✔ Providing up-to-date guidance, accessible training and advice via our Health & Safety SharePoint hub.
- ✔ Delivering our Health & Safety roadshows.



How we will work together

Nature recovery is a team effort and everyone at Natural England plays a vital role in making this an inclusive and collaborative workplace, and to deliver on our vision of [‘Thriving Nature for People and Planet’](#).

Our people are passionate about nature and what we do, with a focus on internal and external communities, strong partnerships and leadership being key to our successes. Hybrid working supports us to stay connected and allows us to work flexibly, whether it’s in the office the required 20% of your time, out in the field or elsewhere.

We also work closely with recognised Trade Unions - the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), Prospect and the FDA - through a shared commitment to collaboration and championing employee voices.

Our shared expectations – what we ask of you

We are all contributors to our working culture and share in our mission. To thrive together and deliver for nature, we commit to a shared set of expectations which guide how we all work, and how we will support and connect to one another.

We expect every member of our team at Natural England to:

-  **Live our values:** Be ambitious, act with integrity, collaborate openly, and champion inclusivity in everything you do.
-  **Uphold Natural England’s Code of Conduct:** Demonstrate honesty, objectivity, impartiality and integrity in your work, including following the restrictions for political activities.
-  **Connect with colleagues, customers and partners:** Whether we are in offices, out on site or working online, our people always strive to be present, respectful and engaged.
-  **Do the basics brilliantly:** From completing mandatory learning, regular office attendance, health and safety to data handling, from meeting deadlines to supporting your team and ensuring corporate compliance, these brilliant basics are the foundations of trust and performance that we build from.
-  **Take ownership of your Personal Performance goals:** We expect everyone to set and regularly review personal performance goals that align with our shared priorities and ways of working. We will support this through clear expectations, meaningful feedback and the tools and development you need to perform at your best.
-  **Support each other:** Look out for your colleagues, share your knowledge, offer to help wherever you can, and celebrate success together.

 **Be accountable:** Take ownership of your work, your development and the impact that you have. We all play a role in making Natural England a safe, inclusive and effective organisation.

These expectations are not just about compliance; they are about purpose. We are here to make a difference, and that starts with how we bring ourselves to work each day.

"What I love most about working on Natural England's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is establishing a long-term vision that helps to identify ecological priorities and map the exact areas where actions will have the greatest impact. Knowing that this strategy will guide funding and collective effort for years to come, and will help to connect habitats and reverse species decline across the country, is what makes this role truly meaningful to me."

**Rhiannon Pierce,
West Midlands Area Team**

Delivery and accountability – what you can expect from us

We deliver on our commitment to supporting our people through strong leadership, clear action plans and practical tools. From inclusion and wellbeing to career development and safety, we've got strategies and frameworks in place that help you to succeed and feel supported every step of the way:

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan (2024–2027)

We are committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels that they belong. This plan helps us to identify and remove barriers to inclusion, and ensure our diverse voices are heard and valued.

Your employee offer

We commit to recognising and rewarding your contributions. This offer outlines the benefits and supports available to you, and the opportunities we offer, to help you thrive at work.

Strategic Workforce Plan (2025–2030)

We have a clear plan for workforce planning that helps us understand which skills and roles we need now and will need in the future. This plan is supported by senior leaders, who drive workforce planning in their areas and helped shape this strategy.

Learning and Development Plan (2026–2027)

We are committed to refining how we identify learning needs, making sure our offers align with the Natural England Strategy and future challenges. This includes building core capabilities like health and safety, diversity and inclusion, communication, stakeholder engagement, technology, finance, project management and leadership.

Health and Safety Strategy

We have an approach that's built on six key themes to strengthen health and safety across Natural England. We are committed to going beyond preventing harm. Our goal is to create a culture where our employees, volunteers, and contractors can all thrive – integrating safety and wellbeing into everything we do.

Career Development Framework

We have a framework that brings together all the support available across Natural England and the Defra group to help you achieve your career ambitions. We are committed to making Natural England a place where you can reach your potential, take ownership of your development, and access any tools and guidance you need for your career journey.

Natural England National Induction

We will support you to get the best possible start through our national induction - a flexible, modular programme designed to help you understand how we work and build confidence in your role. This induction provides the tools, knowledge and support you need to settle in, connect to our mission, and succeed during your first months and beyond.

"I love my job because being part of the Dive Unit means I get to see up close the habitats and species that we're working to recover, building on my expertise and keeping the passion for what I do."

Trudy Russell, Natural England Dive Unit

