

UKHSA annual statement on research integrity 2025

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) acknowledges that only the highest standards of ethics and integrity will enable the delivery of the high-quality research that is needed to provide high quality public health advice and services. UKHSA has committed to the Concordat on Openness in Animal Research to enhance animal research, and the Concordat to Support Research Integrity to support good research and its governance. UKHSA commitment to these concordats ensures continued adherence to consistently high standards and further strengthening of the integrity and transparency of UKHSA research. This demonstrates to government, business, international partners, and the public that they can have confidence in the research the UKHSA produces and uses.

In accordance with the principles of the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity, UKHSA has published this short annual statement on research integrity which covers the year 2025. This statement has been compiled by the Head of Research Governance and overseen by the UKHSA Science Governance Committee, and uses the template developed by the UK Research Integrity Office.

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	UK Health Security Agency
1B. Type of organisation:	Executive Agency of the Department of Health and Social Care
1C. Date statement approved by governing body	14 th April 2026
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page	https://research.ukhsa.gov.uk/research-integrity/
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Name: Professor Robin May
	Email address: CSOprivateoffice@ukhsa.gov.uk
1F. Named member of staff who is the first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Elizabeth Coates
	Email address: research.support@ukhsa.gov.uk

Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture.

Policies and systems

The UKHSA has a responsibility to ensure that the research it supports is conducted in accordance with the law, is in the public interest and is consistent with best scientific practice. UKHSA policies support the application of research integrity principles and make clear the expectations and standards for research conduct by UKHSA staff, and all students and visitors who are using UKHSA's premises or facilities so that all research is compliant with regulatory requirements and is ethical and well-designed. [The Framework for Scientific Integrity](#) outlines our commitment to ensuring that the conduct, management and communication of UKHSA's science and research activities are undertaken in ways that are trustworthy, ethical and responsible.

Any research delivered by UKHSA staff, including research in collaboration with others, is subject to several approvals prior to initiation. These include approvals to ensure that the research contributes to the priorities of UKHSA's scientific functions and that the study design meets appropriate standards. Adequate management, monitoring and reporting arrangements and sufficient resources and infrastructure must also be in place. The UKHSA ensures that research expenditure is planned and accounted for and demonstrates financial probity and compliance with the law and rules set out by HM Treasury.

All UKHSA led research is subject to an appropriate and independent review by an ethics committee. Research that takes place in the NHS is reviewed by an NHS ethics committee. Research that takes place outside of the NHS is reviewed by the UKHSA Research Ethics and Governance Group which has an independent Chair.

In UKHSA, we are committed to replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in our research at every opportunity, in line with [guidance from NC3Rs](#). Our scientists have made great progress with the 3Rs, including the development of advanced cell models of the human airways that allow us to investigate how our airways respond to inhaled viruses, moulds, and other particles and chemicals without needing to use animals. We are also contributing to a new [government initiative to support the development and evaluation of non-animal test methods and new approach methodologies \(NAMs\)](#). As required under the Home Office Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, the UKHSA Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies review and approve all research proposals involving animal experiments to assure quality maintenance and animal welfare in laboratory studies while conducting research. In October 2024, UKHSA published a corporate [report on research involving animals](#). We continue to meet our commitment to the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research by

publishing our [annual usage figures](#), research and 3Rs spotlights online.

Communications and engagement

The UKHSA is an open and collaborative organisation that is committed to bringing its unique capabilities to partnerships with academia, industry, the NHS, and other Public Sector Research Establishments for health and societal benefits. These successful partnerships are founded on the highest standards of integrity, honesty, transparency, and accountability.

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Health Protection Research Units (HPRUs) are partnerships between UKHSA and Universities, funded to support UKHSA in delivering its health protection functions. Currently, there are fifteen HPRUs that cover thirteen subject areas, across nine leading universities and other collaborators. The research they undertake informs public health policy and practice to address pressing public health priorities. [Thirteen new HPRUs and 2 focus awards have been funded to continue this work from 2025-2030 across 13 topic areas.](#)

The UKHSA also presents its work to non-expert audiences to gain valuable feedback on the usefulness of its work and find out what issues the public would like to see addressed. The UKHSA science outreach programme provides training to UKHSA staff so that they can take part in outreach activities that introduce young students in schools to the possibilities of working in science. The outreach programme aligns with the UKHSA Social Mobility Action Plan which is helping to break down barriers and encourage more young people, regardless of background, to see themselves in a science career.

UKHSA's Science Strategy 2023, stated its commitment to the: *'undertaking of research that meets priorities and is ethical, lawful and quality assured and conducted with integrity, involving patients and the public in its design and conduct.'*

To achieve this commitment UKHSA has produced guidance to help its researchers effectively involve patients, the public and their communities in research, that is relevant, ethical, and impactful. By actively engaging with patients and the public, researchers can tailor their studies to the needs of specific communities, improve recruitment and retention, ultimately leading to better health outcomes for everyone.

Open Science is a movement that is dedicated to ensuring the results of research are available to all. To encourage Open Science, the UKHSA supports Open Access which is the making the results of publicly funded research freely available to all who wish to access them. This benefits public health by providing equity of access to research and supports greater research integrity through transparency and openness. It also helps to aid and advance the development of new and innovative research, through the rapid and wide availability of information and knowledge.

To facilitate open access UKHSA:

- makes agreements with a number of relevant publishers each year.
- provides information, training, and support for open access.

Culture, development, and leadership

UKHSA employees work in accordance with the Civil Service Code, which includes standards of behaviour and values of integrity, honesty, objectivity, and impartiality. All UKHSA researchers must undertake their work with honesty, rigour, and transparency, as these values are essential for a healthy research culture, and lead to high quality research with results that can be trusted.

The Science Governance Committee provides leadership and oversight to the production and implementation of the Science Strategy and core research governance systems. It enables UKHSA to deliver the statutory and best practice functions for science and research governance. It monitors achievements and impacts of UKHSA research, advises on policies that promote research integrity and approves the annual statement of compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

UKHSA staff are encouraged to challenge misconduct and bad research practice. Concerns about unsafe working, misuse of resources, suspicions of theft, corruption or scientific fraud and failure to address acts of negligence or poor performance that create a health and safety risk, can be raised in confidence with nominated individuals.

As part of our commitment to integrity in research, UKHSA encourages research active staff members to undertake learning and development activities and provides online training resources for staff members wishing to increase their skills. Online training is offered in Good Clinical Practice, Information Governance, Informed Consent, as well as training in regulations that govern research involving human participants. UKHSA has been a subscriber to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) since 2019 (as Public Health England) and has benefitted from access to the UKRIO training and guidance documents. Details of UKRIO online training events are circulated to UKHSA staff and attendance is encouraged.

The UKHSA PhD scheme funds PhD training for staff who wish to undertake post graduate training and PhD students are supported by the post-graduate training sub-committee which meets regularly to give students a forum for discussion. The committee also arranges an annual meeting which gives students the chance to present their research and network with one another. The UKHSA also supports students with external funding applications and provides a small internal funding stream to support high quality research proposals to external funding bodies.

Monitoring and Reporting

Audits and inspections are undertaken in UKHSA to confirm that research procedures have been correctly followed, that good scientific practices have

been adhered to, and to confirm that the data collected and reported are reliable and recorded in accordance with any relevant overarching Quality Standard in the laboratory, such as Good Clinical Practice or ISO 9001.

The UKHSA monitors internal research projects via progress reports (annual/ interim reports project reports, final project reports) and has clear processes for approvals for research. The UKHSA ensures arrangements are in place to support research and to ensure compliance with research governance guidelines. Externally funded projects are also monitored by the funding organisation.

UKHSA's Central Research Information System (CRIS) is an end-to-end research management tool that aggregates relevant research information across the agency for the purposes of research management, reporting, and to support UKHSA's commitment to research transparency.

To date, the CRIS is accessed by over six hundred research active colleagues in UKHSA with work ongoing to expand the accessibility of information to the wider agency. The public-facing portal allows members of the public to view UKHSA's research activity and is a platform on which UKHSA can share its successes in publication, impact, and national and international collaborations.

The CRIS draws data from publication databases, research funders, internal databases, and user data such as projects, PhDs, and impact case studies to build a research narrative for the agency.

Future developments with the CRIS include the development and rollout of a champions programme and a data submission portal to allow for an easier means of improving data in the CRIS.

[UK Health Security Agency](#)

Changes and developments during the period under review.

Since the publication of the [UKHSA Science Strategy](#) in 2023 we have published two science reviews the [first](#) in January 2025 and the [second](#) in March 2026. These summarise progress with the implementation of the strategy and consider the impact of our science.

UKHSA has been developing the Scientific Workforce Plan, in accordance with the Science Strategy, which will help researchers to develop rewarding careers through training opportunities and mentoring. Patient and public involvement in UKHSA research has also been strengthened this year.

Our Central Research Information System is in the final implementation stages and will manage research projects throughout the entire research pathway and allow UKHSA to demonstrate impact, relevance, and value for money through accurate reporting of activities.

Reflections on progress and plans for future developments.

The UKHSA is a Public Sector Research Establishment that began operations in October 2021, and its immediate priority was to fight the COVID pandemic and support the development of vaccines against new and emerging variants. The agency has had to develop so it can operate as an integral part of the public health system and the national security infrastructure, utilising state-of-the-art technologies and ground-breaking capabilities in data analytics and genomic surveillance to tackle threats locally, nationally, and globally, and to tackle the stark inequalities in our society that were made apparent during the COVID 19 pandemic.

In our Science Review, which was published [March 2026](#), we reflect on our progress during 2025 and outline our future plans.

Our research generates evidence and the translations of research findings will inform health security practises and services to enable UKHSA to prepare for, prevent and respond to major public health challenges and emergencies, as well as providing the highest quality public health advice.

Addressing research misconduct.

Processes that are in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct.

To safeguard the integrity and the work of the UKHSA any actual case of misconduct, or any genuine suspicion of research misconduct is reported to management. The UKHSA Whistleblowing Policy and the UKHSA Disciplinary Policy and Process have been produced to guide staff in cases of suspected misconduct. The falsification of results, and thereby possible fraud, is dealt with in accordance with the UKHSA's Countering Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy and Response plan. Training in counter fraud, bribery and corruption is mandatory for all UKHSA employees, and training sessions for staff members in undertaking unbiased investigations into disciplinary, grievance and whistle-blowing cases were introduced this year. The Anti-Fraud team are also available to offer advice.

UKHSA is currently developing a Policy specifically for Misconduct in Research which will sit alongside existing policies such as the Disciplinary and Whistleblowing Policies.

Investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

The UKHSA did not undertake any formal research misconduct investigations in 2025