

Science Policy Newsletter – a weekly round-up of policy headlines and stories

17 April 2019

News

Health and biomedicine

[HPV vaccination study finds cervical pre-cancer rates down 88%](#)

The programme is having a ‘profound effect’ on the prevalence of cancer-causing strains of the virus – even on those who have not been inoculated

[Experts warn of fatty liver disease 'epidemic' in young people](#)

Study finds substantial numbers of young people at risk of liver cancer, diabetes and heart attacks

[Caesarean babies have lower level of 'good' gut bacteria, study shows](#)

Research suggests surgical delivery may make babies more prone to respiratory infections

Food and drink

[Scientists sniff out rotten avocados](#)

Agriculture and fisheries

[Record breaking year for Environment Agency's National Coarse Fish Farm](#)

The Environment Agency's National Coarse Fish Farm near Calverton, in Nottinghamshire, produced a record breaking number of fish in 2018.

[New diseases threaten aquaculture](#)

Environment and ecology

[10 years of natural capital dialogue](#)

A time to remember and to act

[Creating bee-healthy diet plan\(t\)s](#)

Ecological Stoichiometry compares the nutritional “demand” of wild bee larvae with the “supply” of nutrients in pollen.

[Twenty-two Scottish People](#)

Observing a Citizen Jury debating how funding for land-use management could be structured to help improve Scotland’s natural environment.

Water and air

[Unique ‘oil-eating’ bacteria found in world’s deepest ocean trench](#)

Mariana Trench believed to be home to greatest concentration of hydrocarbon consuming bacteria of anywhere on Earth

[Lords debates National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure](#)

Peers consider 2018 government plan

[Residents in new London housing development will be told to keep windows shut because of air pollution](#)

‘There’s a failure to understand the real impact of air pollution on health,’ says campaigner

Climate and energy

[How anchoring a ship to an ice floe will help fight climate change](#)

Mosaic, a year-long Arctic mission aims to answer fundamental questions about global warming

[Students bring fresh wave of climate strikes to UK streets](#)

Young people demand action from politicians at synchronised rallies across Britain

[Academics back Extinction Rebellion climate movement](#)

[Climate Change: Turning emergency into opportunity](#)

Speech by Sir James Bevan, Whitehall and Industry Group

Waste

[Early ocean plastic litter traced to 1960s](#)

Exiting the EU

[EU preparations for a no-deal Brexit](#)

Research funding and higher education policy

[Academics need support to increase their policy impact](#)

Improving policymaking is a vital contribution to society, but academics need more time and funds to do so

Schools education policy

[Special-needs children lose out on £1.2bn of support, says union](#)

Teachers say government funding has failed to keep pace with soaring demand

[Putting down roots – the importance of STEM subjects to be explored](#)

Business and industry

[Joint statement on the UK-U.S. marine technology SME best practice exchange](#)

First sectoral-focused SME dialogue hosted in the UK successfully enables shared learnings on innovation and trade for UK and U.S. SMEs in marine technology.

Outreach and engagement

[NERC invests £1.3 million to engage the UK public on big issues in environmental science](#)

[The Forestry Commission is inviting people to join the largest ever survey of England's forest wildlife](#)

Digital technologies

[Could student mental health apps be doing more harm than good?](#)

As universities try to demonstrate actions and developers sense an opportunity, researchers express concern about lack of evidence behind mobile tools

[Can you spot ocean plastic from space?](#)

Measuring impact

[UKRI and international partners launch workshops on impact of AI](#)

International news

[World Health Organization decides against declaring Ebola emergency as outbreak worsens](#)

Officials say inadequate funding and mistrust are hampering efforts to combat the outbreak.

[Flanders stream so polluted 'water could be used as pesticide'](#)

Scientists say stream dubbed 'most polluted in Europe' is reminder of effects of intensive farming

[Indonesian mega-science agency in the balance as election begins](#)

President Joko Widodo wants to create a single agency to control most research and its funding.

[Europe at risk from spread of tropical insect-borne diseases](#)

Scientists warn of danger from dengue fever in hotter, wetter climate in northern latitudes

[Psychedelic renaissance: could MDMA help with PTSD, depression and anxiety?](#)

As Australia's first trial for psychedelic therapy for terminally ill patients gets under way, a growing movement says it could also help other conditions

Opinion

[Outside the box: shaping higher education policy beyond DfE](#)

[The careers of carers – A numerical adjustment cannot level the playing field for researchers who take time off to care for children](#)

People

[George Monbiot Q A – How rejuvenating nature could help fight climate change](#)

[New MRC Health Innovation Champion appointed](#)

Committee vacancies

[Members sought for the RSB Education and Science Policy Committee](#)

Closing date: 26 April 2019

Are you a Member or Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology? Would you like to inform our policy work? Could you commit time to helping to deliver our strategy in these areas?

We are currently seeking 6 new members for our [Education and Science Policy \(ESP\) Committee](#), if your answer was yes to the above questions we would like to hear from you! We take a broad view of biology and welcome applications from those with experience of studying and working in all areas of the science of life, from molecules, through whole organisms, to ecosystems.

[Apply online](#). Please direct any queries to Dr Laura Marshall, Head of Science Policy, at laura.marshall@rsb.org.uk or 020 7685 2567.

Opportunities

[Survey of Academic Staff in STEM](#)

The Institute of Physics, Physiological Society, Royal Society of Chemistry and the Royal Society of Biology are inviting all academic staff actively involved in teaching to take part in a [survey](#). Please take the time to fill in the survey, share with colleagues at all levels at any University in the UK, and share via your own networks to help inform a broad picture of the teaching landscape across STEM.

Closes: 19 April 2019

[Innovate UK Smart funding launches with £20 million grant competition](#)

Closes: 24 April 2019

[The RSB's Biology Week Outreach and Engagement grants information and application process is now open online.](#)

RSB members can apply for funding to run outreach and engagement activities and events during Biology Week (5th-13th October) 2019.

Closes: 29 April 2019

[British Ecological Society Post fellowship application](#)

Closes: 29 April 2019

[Announcement of Opportunity: Climate, environment and health](#)

Applications are invited for multilateral, inter- and transdisciplinary research projects which seek to improve understanding of the pathways between climate, environment and health as outlined in the call document.

Closes: 6 May 2019

[Plant Health Undergraduate Studentships 2019](#)

Nine summer studentship projects on plant health are available for bioscience undergraduates. The selected students will work with leading plant health researchers, gaining great experience as well as receiving a bursary. The projects will run for 10 weeks over summer 2019. The studentships are arranged by the UK Plant Sciences Federation (UKPSF) with funding from Defra, BSPP, N8 AgriFood and the David Colegrave Foundation.

Closes: 8 May 2019

[New cut-off for highlight topic ideas](#)

NERC invites the environmental science community to submit new ideas for highlight topics.

Closes: 15 May 2019

[Future Leaders Fellowships](#)

The UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowships (FLF) will grow the strong supply of talented individuals needed to ensure that UK research and innovation continues to be world class.

Closes: 30 May 2019

[Next Generation Networks for Neuroscience \(NeuroNex\)](#)

The MRC in collaboration with the National Science Foundation of the United States, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) of Canada, Fonds de Recherche du Quebec (FRQ) of Quebec, and Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) of Germany are pleased to invite proposals for the NeuroNex Phase 2 call 2019. This initiative will provide funding for high-quality UK-based research projects focused on addressing grand challenges in neuroscience as part of larger networks with international groups.

Closes: 14 June 2019

[RSB Outreach and Engagement Award 2019](#)

Are you a bioscience researcher involved in science communication? If you work in any sector of UK biosciences, apply for the Royal Society of Biology Outreach and Engagement Award 2019 and win up to £1500.

Closes: 28 June 2019

[The Nancy Rothwell Award 2019](#)

The Nancy Rothwell Award 2019 specimen drawing competition for 7 – 18 year olds is

now open for submissions. Prizes include an experience day at the [Royal Veterinary College](#) for students, and their school can also win £100. Visit the Royal Society of Biology [website](#) for more information.

Closes: 30 July 2019

Invitation to Peer Review Understanding Animal Research

Understanding Animal Research is looking for volunteers experienced in leading public engagement activities to evaluate applications for the first annual **Leadership In Openness Awards**. While the annual [Concordat on Openness in Animal Research](#) Awards recognise innovation and courage shown by organisations working to further Openness around the use of animals in research, **Leaders in Openness** will be those organisations who commit considerable resources and energy to following best practice, embedding openness within their organisations, and making the aims of the Concordat a reality. If you would like to volunteer yourself for the peer review process please fill in [this form](#). For more information on the Concordat, please get in touch with Hannah Hobson, Communications Manager, hhobson@uar.org.uk.

Pre-announcement of Opportunity: Understanding and countering bacterial plant disease

Consultations

The Scottish Government has opened a consultation introducing amendments to the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006

Closes: 26 April 2019

Commercial genomics inquiry

The Science and Technology Committee launches an inquiry into commercial genomic testing to establish what safeguards need to be put in place to protect those who get tested.

Closes: 26 April 2019

Plastic food and drink packaging inquiry launched

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee is launching an inquiry into plastic food and drink packaging.

Closes: 2 May 2019

Call for climate change evidence launches today

Closes: 10 May 2019

Consultation on Environmental Principles and Governance in Scotland

Closes: 11 May 2019

Future frameworks for international collaboration on research and innovation: call for evidence

Closes: 24 May 2019

UK-Malaysia Joint Partnership on Non-Communicable Diseases

Closes: 29 May 2019

[BBSRC asks for community input on data intensive bioscience](#)

BBSRC is conducting a review of data-intensive bioscience research in 2019.

Closes: 10 June 2019

Events

[Valuing our Life Support Systems 2019 – Book your place now!](#)

21-22 May 2019

The Crystal, London

[The programme for this event is now online.](#) Book your place now for the Natural Capital Initiative's 10th anniversary summit. The summit offers an independent platform for people in science, policy, NGOs, businesses and local communities to discuss and debate innovative natural capital solutions that enhance the environment and strengthen society.

[Inside our world; Inside EI](#)

21 May 2019

Earlham Institute (EI), Norwich

Ever wonder what goes on behind science institute doors? Come and find out about EI's unique and fascinating bioscience at the Open Day: 'Inside EI' on Tuesday 21 May 2019.

[Quantitative Methods in Gene Regulation](#)

9–10 December 2019

Institute of Physics, London

And finally...

['Body eruption': the aphids that sacrifice themselves for colony](#)

Scientists study species that releases huge quantities of bodily fluids to plug nest holes

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