

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

24 April 2018

News

Royal Society of Biology news

[RSB and Heads of University Biosciences name HE Biosciences Teacher of the Year 2018](#)

The Royal Society of Biology and its Special Interest Group (SIG) Heads of University Biosciences (HUBS) have named Dr Dominic Henri as HE Biosciences Teacher of the Year for his dedication to pedagogical research and innovative teaching.

Royal Society of Biology blog

[Using citizen science to understand more about house spiders](#)

Citizen science describes projects whereby members of the public work with researchers to provide useful and interesting scientific data. In the last five years or so, the approach has seen a big growth in all sorts of areas of science.

Health and biomedicine

[Multimorbidity: a priority for global health research](#)

[NHS Genomics threatened by ethics, IT and funding](#)

Science and Technology Committee publishes report on Genomics and Genome Editing in the NHS.

[Valproate banned without the pregnancy prevention programme](#)

Valproate must no longer be prescribed to women or girls of childbearing potential unless they are on the pregnancy prevention programme (PPP).

[How can European countries improve vaccination in the wake of the measles outbreak?](#)

Europe's national science and medical academies call for tailor-made interventions, European vaccination card and registry.

Agriculture and fishery

[DAERA in UK simulation exercise to test Foot and Mouth Disease readiness](#)

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has joined its counterpart departments in England, Scotland and Wales and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) in a national Foot and Mouth Disease simulation exercise called Exercise Blackthorn.

Environment and ecology

[Damage to Great Barrier Reef From Global Warming Is Irreversible, Scientists Say](#)

An underwater heat wave that damaged huge sections of Australia's Great Barrier Reef two years ago spurred a die-off of coral so severe that scientists say the natural wonder will never look the same again.

[Secretary of State questioned on Government's 25 Year Plan](#)

The Environmental Audit Committee hears from the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, particularly on questions of oversight, governance, milestones and implementation.

[One in eight bird species is threatened with extinction, global study finds](#)

Report on the state of the world's birds reveals a biodiversity crisis driven by intensive farming, with once-common species such as puffins and snowy owls now at risk.

Water and air

[New Publication: Air Quality](#)

Wales has some of the worst air quality in the UK. Cardiff and Port Talbot both have higher particulate matter levels than Birmingham or Manchester and a road in Caerphilly is the most polluted outside of London.

Government and parliament

[Scottish Environment LINK Parliamentary Reception 2018](#)

The BES were invited by Scottish Environment LINK to be part of their event 'Generation Earth: Celebrating Young Environmental Campaigners' at the Scottish Parliament.

Exiting the EU

[Academics questioned on Brexit and plant and animal biosecurity](#)

The EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee questions leading academics on what Brexit will mean for the UK's biosecurity in terms of plant and animal health, invasive species and food safety.

Research funding and higher education policy

[Government lacks clear plan to meet research investment target](#)

The Public Accounts Committee report also highlights concerns over impact of Brexit, leadership effectiveness and safeguarding of benefits.

[Government must match investment target with ambitious plan](#)

James Tooze discusses how Government can help to meet its R&D investment target.

Open access and publication policy

[Checklists work to improve science](#)

Nature authors say a reproducibility checklist is a step in the right direction, but more needs to be done.

Equality and diversity

[Gender parity in science 'generations away'](#)

Female researchers remain comparatively scarce in publishing, with some fields to remain male-dominated for centuries.

[Science must rise up to support people like me](#)

Institutions could do more to support researchers who have disabilities, says Aaron Schaal.

Public engagement

[How's the Air in London? 'We Should Be Worried'](#)

When I moved back to London in 2017 after more than 10 years living abroad, the first thing that hit me was the smell of diesel and the dusty haze hovering over the city.

International news

[China, India lead rise in global antibiotic consumption](#)

Antibiotic consumption worldwide soared by 65 per cent from 2000 to 2015, a rise driven by higher consumption in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), particularly India and China.

[Ethicists Call for More Scrutiny of 'Human-Challenge' Trials](#)

Members of a government ethics panel have renewed their criticisms of a controversial study in which volunteers are to be deliberately infected with the Zika virus.

[U.S. agencies clash over who should regulate genetically engineered livestock](#)

A disease that kills millions of pigs a year may soon meet its match — if two federal agencies can agree on the idea.

[Trends in carbon storage and sequestration across Chinese ecosystems](#)

Climate change is a one of the biggest challenges facing humanity. The Paris Agreement, adopted in December 2015, became the second legally binding climate agreement after the Kyoto Protocol, and coordinates global efforts to combat climate change.

Opinion

[Medical research needs big data – Tessa Jowell gets the ball rolling](#)

We think nothing of sharing personal information with tech giants so why are we so suspicious about our health records?

[Mental health in academia is too often a forgotten footnote. That needs to change](#)

Committee vacancies

[Membership and Professional Affairs Committee members](#)

Following a recent internal restructure and governance review the Trustees agreed to the formation of a new RSB committee, namely Membership and Professional Affairs, and is now seeking individuals to join this important advisory committee. Members of the RSB and our Member Organisations are invited to apply for several committee positions. This is a new committee and as such there are up to 12 vacancies available, we are looking for a range of expertise including: member retention strategies, member engagement strategies, professional development expertise including technical pathways, online training and blended learning models, regional activity and business development expertise.

Deadline to apply: 27 April 2018.

Opportunities

[Plant Health Undergraduate Studentships](#)

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 2018. The studentships are arranged by the UK Plant Sciences Federation (UKPSF) with funding from Defra, BSPP and N8 AgriFood.

Deadline for applications: 9 May 2018.

[Sustainable Development Programme 2018](#)

The British Academy has launched the second round of its Sustainable Development Programme, which is supported by the UK Government's £1.5billion Global Challenges Research Fund.

Closes 30 May 2018.

[Innovation to commercialisation of university research \(ICURe\)](#)

ICURe is a programme of commercialisation support for teams of academic researchers wishing to explore the commercial potential of their research. It aims to improve commercial awareness amongst academic personnel, to develop and enhance the entrepreneurial skills of early career researchers, and to strengthen links between academic and industrial communities. The programme accepts applications from teams based at all UK universities and from all disciplines.

[Launch of UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships scheme](#)

The UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship scheme (FLF) aims to develop, retain, attract and sustain research and innovation talent in the UK. Providing up to seven years of funding, for at least 550 early-career researchers and innovators, the scheme will tackle difficult and novel challenges.

Deadline 3 July 2018.

[The Nancy Rothwell Award 2018](#)

The Nancy Rothwell Award 2018 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.

Closes 10 September 2018

Sustainable Development Programme 2018

Consultations

[Review of Post-18 Education and Funding: call for evidence](#)

Closes 2 May 2018.

[The future for food, farming and the environment](#)

The RSB response to this consultation is currently in draft, please contact consultation@rsb.org.uk for more information and if you would like to contribute.

Closes 8 May 2018.

[Sustainable seas inquiry launched](#)

The Environmental Audit Committee launches a new inquiry on the future of our seas – examining how they be protected from climate change, acidification, overfishing and pollution, and how the Government can create a sustainable blue economy.

Closes 16 May 2018.

[Tackling the plastic problem](#)

Closes 18 May 2018.

[Cost effectiveness methodology for vaccination programmes](#)

Closes 21 May 2018.

[A call for evidence on controlling live exports for slaughter and to improve animal welfare during transport after the UK leaves the EU](#)

Closes 22 May 2018.

[Consultation on the UK Nutrient Profiling Model 2018 review](#)

Closes 15 June 2018.

Events

[Accreditation Conference: Striving for Excellence](#)

25 April 2018, London

The inaugural Accreditation Conference will bring together university representatives and industry employers from around the country to discuss best practice in higher education.

[Policy Lunchbox: School Biology – a Future Curriculum](#)

26 April 2018, London

Join us at the next Policy Lunchbox where we will be joined by Professor Michael Reiss to discuss the future of the school science curriculum. Tickets are free but limited so reserve your place.

[Presidents' Dinner](#)

2 May 2018, London

Celebrate the Royal Society of Biology's incoming and outgoing Presidents at a special drinks reception and seated dinner. This event is an excellent opportunity for members and their guests to meet and socialise with fellow members and RSB Trustees. Sponsored by Porton Biopharma, proceeds from this event will help to raise funds to support our work with schools, public engagement and early-career bioscientists. Tickets range from £15-£85. For further information contact Karen Patel at events@rsb.org.uk or on 020 7685 2569.

And finally...

[Flu virus finally sequenced in its native form](#)

Direct sequencing of RNA molecules such as virus genomes could help to unpick role of mysterious chemical modifications in genetic material.

Royal Society of Biology

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