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

7 September 2017

News

Top stories

Close research links with EU 'negotiable' post-Brexit

Collaboration on science and innovation: a future partnership paper
This paper outlines the UK’s objectives for an ambitious science and innovation agreement with the EU. It sets out examples of where the UK sees potential mutual benefit in a close working relationship, exploring precedents for each. The paper invites discussion with the EU on how best to shape our future partnership in this area.

Health and biomedicine

UK needs to act urgently to secure NHS data for British public, report warns
Algorithms based on NHS records could seed an ‘entirely new industry’ in AI-based diagnostics and mint billions for tech companies, strategic review reveals

Wellcome joins £52 million global drive on antibiotic resistance

Agriculture and fishery

Call for marine funding certainty
Scottish Government seeks answers on future fisheries and aquaculture investment.

Environment and ecology

Farming groups given £1.7 million to boost the environment
A fund opens on 1 September for groups of farmers and organisations to bid for cash for large scale environmental projects in their area.
Water and air

What does Brexit mean for the UK’s beaches?

Climate and energy

UK leads the world in new agreement to tackle global warming
The UK has become one of the first nations to commit to a landmark agreement to reduce emissions from appliances that play a major role in preventing global warming.

Waste

Minister questioned on food waste
The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee resumes its final evidence session looking at the issue of food waste in England.

Research funding and higher education policy

Students are not an immigration problem
Responding to Home Office announcements on student immigration CaSE says Government must lead the way on use of evidence.

Diversity and inclusion

How can UK science raise the bar for diversity and inclusion?
A new network for equality, diversity and inclusion in research will challenge the UK scientific community to take these priorities more seriously

Public engagement

UK science centres get £13 million for public engagement
Wellcome is giving £13 million in funding to five science centres around the UK to encourage new and different ideas that will help to make science more accessible.

International news

US energy agency asked scientists to scrub references to climate change
Researchers were told to censor descriptions of projects funded by a Department of Energy laboratory.
People

**Appointments to the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food**
The Food Standards Agency Chairman, Heather Hancock has announced the appointment of Dr Gauri Godbole and Mrs Ann Williams to the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF). The ACMSF provides the Agency with independent advice on the microbiological safety of food.

Opportunities

**Research Excellence Framework 2021: applications invited for sub-panel chairs**
The UK’s higher education funding bodies are seeking research experts from diverse backgrounds to serve as sub-panel chairs in the second Research Excellence Framework.

**Focus on a feel-good autumn with the Forestry Commission**
Forestry Commission England is giving a fresh focus to ‘forest bathing’ through a new partnership with mental health charity Mind.

Consultations

**The economics of higher education, further education and vocational training - Lords Committee inquiry**
The House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee inquiry into Life Sciences and the Industrial Strategy is ongoing. The RSB response to this consultation is currently in draft. Comments related to the consultation are welcomed from RSB members- please contact policy@rsb.org.uk. Closes 14 September 2017

**The future of UK Life Sciences - Lords Committee inquiry**
The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee inquiry into Life Sciences and the Industrial Strategy is ongoing. The RSB response to this consultation is currently in draft. Comments related to the consultation are welcomed from RSB members- please contact policy@rsb.org.uk. Closes 15 September 2017

**Open consultation: Call for evidence and briefing note: EEA-workers in the UK labour market**
In response to this consultation, RSB are looking to collate evidence from our members, in the form of career experience case studies. For further information please contact policy@rsb.org.uk. Closes 27 October 2017

**BBSRC: Invitation to comment - strategy for UK biotechnology and biological sciences**
BBSRC is inviting comment on the future strategy for UK biotechnology and biological sciences.
Events

**Genome editing: Where do we draw the line?**
9 October: A Biology Week debate at the Royal Institution on the science and ethics of genome editing by a panel of leading geneticists.

**Science & Stormont 2017: Skills for Science and Innovation**
9 October: Scientific presentations to develop closer links between the scientific community in Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive.

**A meeting of minds: the biology of mental health**
10 October: Free Policy Lates event discussing what biology can tell us about mental health and wellbeing, and how it can inform policy making.

**Early Career Researcher workshop on diagnostics for Antimicrobial Resistance**
20 November: A Learned Society Partnership on Antimicrobial Resistance workshop for early career researchers.

**And finally...**

**Bacterial 'aphrodisiac' sends single-celled organism into mating frenzy**
Researchers surprised to observe bacterial protein triggering a switch from asexual to sexual behaviour.