

Society of Biology

New Report on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings

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The Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings (the Finch Group) has today published its [report](#). The report recommends that the results of publicly-funded research should be publicly available.

The quality-assurance of research reports is fundamentally important and so peer-reviewed journal articles are central to correct communication. Author payment for open access should be funded and supported wherever possible, and national licensing should be considered to make subscription journals available to the public.

Dr Mark Downs, Chief Executive of the Society of Biology, says:

“We welcome the comprehensive and balanced approach taken in the preparation of this report and recognise the need to make as much publicly funded research available to as many people as possible. This can only be achieved with sustainable business and professional support systems in place.

“The Society of Biology welcomes the recognition given to the publishing portfolios of the UK’s vibrant community of professional science bodies, who invest heavily in the production of high-quality publications, the support of professional researchers, and the development of information systems to help deliver their wider charitable objectives. These activities are crucial to the continued health of the research environment in the UK and ultimately to the economic and social benefits to be gained from the UK’s investment in science and engineering.”

The importance of learned societies was noted in the report, specifically their goal to achieve wide and quality-assured distribution of research reports, and their role in ensuring that the UK sustains a strong international presence in science. The need was recognised for learned societies to maintain many of the services they provide to the research community so the shift to open access journals is made on a sustainable basis. The risks of the transition period to learned societies were highlighted, many of which rely on publishing income and operate on small financial reserves.

We strongly support the principle of maximising access to research information, for the benefit of both scientific progress and public education.