

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

15 May 2019

News

Health and biomedicine

[Why researchers are turning to gene therapy to treat heart failure](#)

Single jab could reduce risk of heart attack for some but wider benefit is yet to be proven

[The race to beat antibiotic resistance is on – so where do phages fit in?](#)

The GM virus treatment that saved Isabelle Holdaway is a start, at least, in the fight against drug resistance

[‘Pink drink’ which helps surgeons identify brain tumours rolled out across NHS](#)

‘Groundbreaking’ treatment could prolong patients’ lives, research suggests

Food and drink

[The vegetarian 'meat' aimed at replacing the real thing](#)

[FSA backs mandatory full ingredient labelling for pre-packed direct sale food](#)

The Food Standards Agency advises more extensive food labelling and sets out new priorities to protect food hypersensitive consumers.

Agriculture and fisheries

[The winter weather window that is costing UK rapeseed growers millions](#)

UK rapeseed growers are losing up to a quarter of their crop yield each year because of temperature rises during an early-winter weather window

[Farming for a better climate](#)

Driving forward low carbon farming.

[Understanding the decline of Atlantic salmon catches in Scotland](#)

Annual catches of Atlantic salmon have declined steeply since the highest recorded

level in 2010. We invited an expert in salmon ecology from Marine Scotland Science to explain why this may be happening.

Environment and ecology

[Climate change: How frogs could vanish from ponds](#)

[A new report confirms that life on Earth is in trouble](#)

A million species may be at risk

Water and air

[Only a third of world's great rivers remain free flowing, analysis finds](#)

Dams, levees, hydropower and habitat degradation behind fragmentation on huge scale, finds global assessment

[Bio-manipulation to restore clear waters of Norfolk Broads](#)

Conservationists plan for removal of excess algae in two of the region's lakes

Climate and energy

[EU 'outright dangerous' in its use of natural resources, says WWF](#)

About 2.8 planets would be needed if rest of world followed suit, biocapacity data shows

[Climate change: Scientists test radical ways to fix Earth's climate](#)

[Climate crisis: CO2 levels rise to highest point since evolution of humans](#)

'We don't know a planet like this'

Waste

[Nearly all countries agree to stem flow of plastic waste into poor nations](#)

US reportedly opposed deal, which follows concerns that villages in Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia had 'turned into dumpsites'

[Matt Hancock launches study into 'deadly poison' of air pollution](#)

Review will assess impact of dirty air on health and will support NHS efforts to go green

[Pollutionwatch: are farming emissions killing cows too?](#)

Knowing that air pollution is affecting livestock may prompt farmers to help clean our air

[Food Waste Fund: £4 million awarded to cut food waste](#)

First round of funding awarded to redistribution organisations to substantially reduce food waste from businesses.

Government and Parliament

[Scotland to pay people 20p for every returned bottle and can, as rest of UK urged to adopt recycling model](#)

'We will be urging environment secretary Michael Gove to build on Scotland's ambition,' say green campaigners

Exiting the EU

[Lords EU exit regulations: 13 May](#)

On Monday 13 May the House of Lords will examine eight statutory instruments preparing for Brexit.

[Ministers questioned on future of Scottish agriculture after Brexit](#)

In the final session of the Scottish Affairs Committee's inquiry into the future of Scottish agriculture, Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and UK Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Michael Gove MP give evidence.

Research funding and higher education policy

[EU fees change could cost English universities £7 million a year](#)

But THE analysis also suggests windfall for institutions if fall in student recruitment is modest

[Thinktank wants national survey of university staff well-being](#)

Higher Education Policy Institute says it is 'shocking' that no such dataset exists

[£25 million funding for leading disease prevention projects](#)

NERC is one of 12 funders investing a total of £25 million into understanding and influencing the social, economic and environmental factors that affect our health. The investment marks the first funding round of the UK Prevention Research Partnership (UKPRP).

["The more universities are thinking about value for money, the better the sector looks"](#)

Debbie McVitty sits down with education committee member James Frith MP to discuss how the higher education sector comes across to parliamentarians

[In science, grit counts as well as talent](#)

New research confirms the value of an old proverb

Schools education policy

[Teachers assessing pupils could replace formal exams, study says](#)

Research recommends wider use of teacher assessment, saying it accurately reflects ability

[Walk inside a plant cell or glide over a coral reef: three ways virtual reality is revolutionising teaching](#)

Open access and publication policy

[Springer Nature proposes model for open access transition](#)

Suggested approach could see content from Nature made freely available

[Reviewers change their mind after hearing from 'peers'](#)

Harvard experiment finds nearly half of academics amended their assessment of a research application after seeing randomly generated 'expert scores'

[Open and closed – What do reverse flips tell us about the scholarly publishing landscape?](#)

Business and industry

[Election omens signal need for new R&D alliances](#)

Research organisations are bracing for nationalist gains and preparing to forge new alliances, as the forthcoming European elections look set to bring a wave of inexperienced MEPs.

Diversity and inclusion

[POLAR, MEM and equality: you don't have to choose](#)

It is good to see equality measurement in HE is receiving serious attention again. It is important.

International news

[US lawmakers propose plan to reduce primate research at National Institutes of Health](#)

Spending bill would require the agency to identify alternatives to research with monkeys and other non-human primates.

[Octopus farming is 'unethical and a threat to the food chain'](#)

Mass-breeding of the highly intelligent creatures is ecologically unjustified, a new study says

[California defies Trump to ban pesticide linked to childhood brain damage](#)

The EPA had moved to ban chlorpyrifos under Obama, but the Trump administration reversed that effort

Opinion

['It's a dangerous time': can UK and US universities survive funding cuts?](#)

The president of the University of California and the University of Bristol's leader on how universities are threatened by policy and funding changes

[What we should do to save the world's oceans](#)

Erin Priddle defends the record of the Marine Stewardship Council, Sam Laird attacks fishing subsidies, Keith Snell says we will suffocate if phytoplankton are wiped out, and Fiona Carnie says that we all have a duty to help save the planet

[Stop eating fish. It's the only way to save the life in our seas](#)

Unhindered by regulation, driven by greed, the fishing industry is the greatest threat to our oceans. We must take action

People

[Tim Halliday obituary](#)

Ambassador for amphibians who warned of global decline

[Interview with Rachel Gallery](#)

The University of Arizona ecologist on Colombia's natural diversity, her lucky break, and the challenges facing other aspiring scientists

Opportunities

Microbiology Society call for evidence

The Microbiology Society have launched a call for evidence to inform their "[A Sustainable Future](#)" [policy project](#) on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are seeking views and evidence on challenges to achieving the SDGs, and the ways that microbiology can and does contribute to achieving the SDGs, including knowledge, skills, research, innovation and technology. If you are an individual or organisation with expertise in this area, please complete their [short questionnaire](#).

Closes: 17 May 2019

Vacancy: Events Officer

Royal Society of Biology (RSB)

£25,000-£27,000 (dependent on experience)

Location: Central London

Interviews: Tuesday 4 June

An exciting, varied role working with all teams at Royal Society of Biology. The Events Officer will be responsible for leading and supporting the delivery of key RSB events, including parliamentary receptions, policy debates, award ceremonies and careers days. Along with day-to-day event logistics, they will contribute to the events sponsorship strategy and generate event income. They will enhance the regional reputation of the RSB by supporting local activity delivered by the RSB's 17,500 members. [Click here to apply and for further information.](#)

Closes: 29 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

NC3Rs Board member recruitment 2019

NC3Rs is now recruiting for up to four members to join its Board from 1 January 2020. Applications are sought from accomplished senior scientists based in leading research organisations, and from within the pharmaceutical and chemicals industries. Applications are also welcome from senior managers and veterinarians from laboratory animal facilities.

Further information regarding the level of experience required, and an application form, can be found on the [NC3Rs website](#). Any interested party, with queries regarding the vacancies, is welcome to contact us at recruit@nc3rs.org.uk
Closes: 12 June 2019

[UKRI Circular Economy workshop](#)

5 June 2019, Manchester

21 June 2019, London

EPSRC, on behalf of UKRI, is working with Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Innovate UK, to convene two interdisciplinary meetings which aim to bring together the respective research and innovation communities with an interest in Circular Economy, and to strengthen collaboration to enable greater interdisciplinary working.

The deadline to register for attendance is **16:00 21st May**.

For any event enquires please contact Dr Ruth Nottingham, UKRI BBSRC senior innovation manager at ruth.nottingham@bbsrc.ukri.org

[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

[Royal Society of Biology, Outreach and Engagement Volunteering Opportunities 2019](#)

RSB are looking for local volunteers to help run our hands-on science plant growing activities at [Glasgow Science Festival 2019](#) at Glasgow Botanic Gardens on **8th June 2019**, and [Lambeth Country Show](#) at Brockwell Park, London on: **20th - 21st July 2019**. Please email Dr Amanda Hardy outreach@rsb.org.uk to volunteer.

[Pre-announcement of Opportunity: Understanding and countering bacterial plant disease](#)

Consultations

[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

[Updating the UK marine strategy part one \(2019\)](#)

Closes: 20 June 2019

[Safeguarding the environment in British Overseas Territories: call for evidence](#)

Closes: 19 July 2019

Events

[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.

[Science policy skills workshop and networking reception](#)

30 May 2019

University College London, London

Science Policy Exchange Network ([SciPEN](#)) is hosting a one-day hands-on workshop exploring how to: collaborate with policy institutions as an academic, communicate research effectively to policy makers and transition from academia to a policy career. The workshop will be followed by a networking reception with a keynote from Prof Sir Peter Gluckman. Graduate students and early career researchers from all universities are welcome. [Further details and registration here.](#)

[Quantitative Methods in Gene Regulation](#)

9 - 10 December 2019

Institute of Physics, London

And finally...

[Science of anger: how gender, age and personality shape this emotion](#)

What purpose does anger serve? Are men angrier than women? Can it affect our mental wellbeing? Science is beginning to uncover some of the answers

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