

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

16 January 2018

News

Top stories

[Priorities for the new science minister](#)

CaSE Executive Director Dr Sarah Main offers her thoughts on the opportunities and challenges facing the new universities and science minister, Sam Gyimah MP, as well as analysing his previous statements and positions on these briefs.

[Minister for Higher Education](#)

Sam Gyimah MP.

[Prime Minister launches 25 Year Environment Plan](#)

Prime Minister Theresa May will pledge to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste within a quarter of a century.

Royal Society of Biology news

[Ministerial representation for life sciences is needed, says RSB chief executive at House of Lords inquiry](#)

Mark Downs, chief executive of the RSB, called for a life sciences ‘champion’ that would act at a Minister of State level, whilst giving evidence today at the House of Lords.

Health and biomedicine

[Every £1 invested in medical research delivers a return equivalent to 25p every year, forever](#)

Agriculture and fishery

[British supermarket chickens show record levels of antibiotic-resistant superbugs](#)

Food Standards Agency reports ‘significant increase’ of harmful pathogen campylobacter in British-farmed chickens.

Environment and ecology

[It's an environmentalist's dream – but will May's green plan ever be reality?](#)

The PM has finally made the environment a priority. But past double-dealing damages confidence in the government's eco plan proposals.

[Protect the high seas from harm](#)

Discussions on a United Nations treaty to safeguard the open ocean offer an opportunity for scientists.

[EU declares war on plastic waste](#)

Brussels targets single-use plastics in an urgent clean-up plan that aims to make all packaging reusable or recyclable by 2030.

Climate and energy

[Global warming set to exceed Paris agreement's 1.5C limit by 2040s, according to draft UN report](#)

Rough paper suggests 'very high risk' target will be surpassed by middle of century.

[Green Finance examined with industry experts and NGOs](#)

The Environmental Audit Committee hears from experts and NGOs on the scale of the challenge facing the UK and possible policy responses. It also questions commercial organisations directly involved in facilitating low-carbon investment in the UK.

Waste

[Environment Agency announces £750,000 to tackle single use plastics](#)

The Environment Agency has today (Friday 12 January) announced £750,000 for new, dedicated team to tackle plastics pollution in the South West of England.

Government and parliament

[Is the Government's definition of Life Sciences broad enough?](#)

The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee continues taking evidence for its inquiry into Life Sciences and the Industrial Strategy. The Committee questions experts at the Royal Society of Biology, the Institute of Food Science and Technology and the Microbiology Society.

[Defra Ministers give evidence on NERC Act 2006](#)

The Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 takes evidence from Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP and Lord Gardiner of Kimble on the effectiveness of the 2006 Act. The session will also consider Defra's capacity to serve the diverse needs of rural communities and promote the rural economy.

[How are algorithms and AI changing the nature of healthcare? - News from Parliament](#)

[Immigration's impact on education, oil and gas, and life sciences discussed](#)

Exiting the EU

[Impact of Brexit on science and research discussed in Cambridge](#)

The Exiting the European Union Committee hears from Cambridge University, Deimos UK, Cancer Research UK and AstraZeneca on Brexit and science.

[Businesses ignore Davis and prepare for no-deal Brexit](#)

[MHRA update to pharmaceutical companies on exit preparations](#)

An update from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to pharmaceutical companies on preparations for exiting the European Union.

Research funding and higher education policy

[What do students want from the Office for Students?](#)

The regulator – brought into the spotlight by Toby Young – has only one student on its board. We asked those it seeks to represent what the priorities should be.

[Ditch the old hierarchies – further and higher education belong together](#)

Ongoing ministerial education reviews risk treating technical and academic education as separate pathways, says Quintin McKellar, and this could be to the detriment of both.

Schools education policy

[Damian Hinds appointed Secretary of State for Education](#)

Damian Hinds "honoured" to be appointed Education Secretary.

Equality and diversity

[When sickness interrupts science](#)

How to balance a long-term illness and a research career.

International news

[East China Sea oil tanker disaster: what it means for the environment](#)

Ship was carrying 136,000 tons of oil that now threatens to pollute some of China's most important fishing waters.

[‘What the hell is going on?’ Polio cases are vanishing in Pakistan, yet the virus won't go away](#)

[Common pesticides threaten salmon, U.S. fisheries agency concludes](#)

Other

[The Research and Innovation Talent Visa](#)

People

[Sir John Kingman announced as Chair of UK Research and Innovation](#)

The current interim chair of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will take up the role of permanent chair in April this year.

Opportunities

[New cut-off for highlight topic ideas - 2018](#)

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

Consultations

[International students: economic and social impacts](#)

Closes 26 January 2018.

[Consultation on the draft Animal Welfare \(Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience\) Bill](#)

Closes 31 January 2018.

[Brexit science and innovation Summit inquiry](#)

Closes 5 February 2018.

[Public consultation on an EU initiative for pollinators](#)

Deadline 5 April 2018.

[Public Consultation on the Establishment of the Innovation Fund](#)

Deadline 10 April 2018.

Events

[Policy Lunchbox: 'Making the most of the Industrial Strategy' with Naomi Weir, Deputy Director at the Campaign for Science and Engineering](#)

8 February 2018.

[New to Teaching Bioscience in Higher Education](#)

A workshop event from the Heads of University Biosciences (HUBS) and the Royal Society of Biology for newcomers and relative newcomers to university teaching.
21 February 2018.

[Celebrate International Women's Day with the BIA](#)

Thursday 8 March 2018.

[Voice of the Future 2018](#)

Young scientists and engineers will descend upon the Houses of Parliament to question to the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser (TBC), Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (TBC), the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee and the Shadow Minister for Industrial Strategy, Science and Innovation (TBC).

And finally...

[How flowering plants conquered the world](#)

Royal Society of Biology
Science Policy Team
Charles Darwin House
12 Roger Street
London
WC1N 2JU
policy@rsb.org.uk

Please note that any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Royal Society of Biology.

Manage your subscription to this and to other RSB publications [here](#)

© Royal Society of Biology 2018. Registered Charity Number: 277981
Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU