

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

13 June 2019

News

Top stories

[Delivery plans outline vision for research and innovation in the UK](#)

Ambitious delivery plans published today outline how UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will work with its partners to ensure that world-leading research and innovation continues to flourish in the UK.

Royal Society of Biology news

[RSB Members recognised in Queen’s Birthday Honours List 2019](#)

RSB Members have been recognised in this year’s Queen’s Birthday Honours list, which recognises outstanding achievements of people across the United Kingdom.

Health and biomedicine

[MRI scans to be trialled as test for prostate cancer](#)

Simple scans ‘could revolutionise the way that we diagnose disease’, says professor

[Sex diseases on the rise in England](#)

[New head and neck cancer drug could help patients live longer](#)

Pembrolizumab with platinum chemotherapy less ‘aggressive’ and extended survival rates

[Getting back to nature: how forest bathing can make us feel better](#)

The Japanese have known for years that spending mindful time in the woods is beneficial for body and soul. Now western doctors – and royals – agree

Food and drink

[Junk food may be fuelling rise in food allergies, say experts](#)

Children with food allergies are found to have higher levels of substance in processed foods

[Latest health guidance missing from alcohol labels](#)

[Is it time to treat sugar like smoking?](#)

[Food safety, everyone's business](#)

7 June 2019 is the first World Food Safety Day

Agriculture and fisheries

[Temperature maps from space would 'boost crop production'](#)

[Scotland to allow supersized salmon-farms if they pass pollution tests](#)

New policy expected to see larger farms created in deeper water further off Scottish coast

[Consumers urged to boycott yellowfin tuna from Indian Ocean over unsustainable fishing](#)

Report warns customers do not know tuna stocks are at risk of collapse

Forestry

[Disease-tolerant trees to be planted in UK's 'ash tree archive'](#)

Biosecurity Minister launches Government's new Ash Research Strategy

Environment and ecology

[Gove launches review into strongest protections for English seas](#)

Review into new type of protection for sea life and marine habitats in England launched on World Oceans Day.

[Blue belt zones to protect minke whales](#)

[Invasive 'killer shrimps' in European rivers causing 'fear' among native populations they prey upon, study reveals](#)

Mere presence of 'voracious predator' species enough to demonstrably impact behaviours of local crustaceans

Climate and energy

[Government 'funding fossil fuel-burning plants abroad'](#)

Environment committee says UK is sabotaging its green credentials with overseas aid

Waste

[Plastic pollution: 'Mission to eradicate' plastic in canals](#)

[Average person consumes up to 120,000 particles of microplastics every year](#)

Study looked at plastic particles in fish, shellfish, added sugars, salts, alcohol, water and air

[Wales must lead by example in the battle against plastic pollution](#)

National Assembly for Wales Committee calls for urgent action to reduce plastic use and pollution "Wales cannot waste another day in the battle against plastic pollution. The time to act is now".

Animal Research

[Scientists split as genetics lab scales down animal tests](#)

Mice, rats and zebrafish will no longer be bred for medical research at one of the world's leading genetics institutes

Government and Parliament

['Prejudiced' Home Office refusing visas to African researchers](#)

Academics invited to the UK are refused entry on arbitrary and 'insulting' grounds

Research funding and higher education policy

[Newton Fund fails to boost development, watchdog finds](#)

[Big budget boost planned for Horizon 2020](#)

[Why abolish the foundation year?](#)

David Kernohan is unable to find the evidence that backs up Augar's rationale for recommending the end of the foundation year.

[Growing PhD funding shortfall 'requires national debate'](#)

V-c who chairs financial sustainability group warns that deficit on doctoral training raises major questions

[University regulator unveils £14m mental health scheme to reduce student suicides](#)

Too many young people have experiences 'blighted by mental ill-health', says watchdog boss

[One in four BAME people in Britain want 'name-blind' university applications](#)

Majority say more effort needs to be made to boost diversity in higher education

[Lack of support in universities drives deaf students to consider leaving degrees](#)

Undergraduates feel they are wasting £9,250-a-year tuition fees amid long waits for help

Schools education policy

[Special needs children who attend school nursery less likely to get reception place amid funding cuts](#)

Vulnerable pupils do not benefit from 'smooth transition' with peers they know, report finds

Open access and publication policy

[Plan U: funders urged to mandate immediate preprint publication](#)

Shifting towards open access journals will only achieve so much when review and editing processes take so long, scientists say

[Journal transparency rules to help scholars pick where to publish](#)

Next step of Plan S will require publishers to release acceptance rates and review times

[How will the emerging generation of scholars transform scholarly communication?](#)

[Reproducibility trial publishes two conclusions for one paper](#)

The British Journal of Anaesthesia's unusual experiment is designed to broaden replicability efforts beyond just methods and results.

[How to bring preprints to the charged field of medicine](#)

MedRxiv launches with beefed up screening processes to allay concerns about risks of publishing unvetted clinical research.

Diversity and inclusion

[Inclusive conferences? We can and must do better – here's how.](#)

[NHS report on trust board diversity 'a wake-up call'](#)

International news

[Trump administration halts fetal-tissue research by government scientists](#)

The policy also requires an ethics review for any grant applications to the US National Institutes of Health that involve fetal tissue.

[Thousands could perish annually in US if global heating not curbed, study finds](#)

Every year nearly 5,800 people are expected to die in New York, 2,500 in Los Angeles and more than 2,300 in Miami

[Large Ebola outbreaks new normal, says WHO](#)

[Japan to resume commercial whaling next month after 30 years](#)

Fleet of hunting vessels to target beaked whales and minke whales in Japanese waters

Opinion

[Insecure employment for postdoc researchers is leading to bad science](#)

Postdoc researchers like me aren't considered university employees, even though we're essential to research. This must change

[From Browne to Augar: the lessons to be learned](#)

We have a wildly polarising attitude to our universities in the UK.

[Plan S must respect journal brand values, says Lancet editor](#)

[The gold rush: Why open access will boost publisher profits](#)

['Plant blindness' is obscuring the extinction crisis for non-animal species](#)

[Sleep apps backfire by causing anxiety and insomnia, says expert](#)

Neurologist says 'metricising our lives' is counterproductive when it comes to sleep

People

[Jean Purdy: Woman who helped pioneer IVF left off commemorative plaque despite protest](#)

Archive reveals colleague complained about omission to health authority

[Defra Chief Scientist receives Knighthood](#)

Defra's Chief Scientific Advisor Professor Ian Boyd has today received a Knighthood as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours

[Ecologists recognised in Queen's birthday honours](#)

Former president of the British Ecological Society, Professor Sue Hartley, is one of several ecologists whose work is recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Opportunities

[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 [Lambeth Country Show](#) at Brockwell Park, London on: **20 - 21 July 2019**. RSB are also looking for local volunteers to help run our hands-on science activities at [Cally Festival 2019](#) at Caledonian Road, London, on **23 June 2019**, 12:00-18:00; Basildon, Essex on **13 July 2019**, 10:00 – 16:00; [Abergavenny Food Festival 2019](#) at Abergavenny, Wales, on **21 - 22 September 2019**. If you live nearby and are interested in volunteering to help the RSB outreach team deliver our hands-on science activities please email Dr Amanda Hardy via outreach@rsb.org.uk

Consultations

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

Closes: 20 June 2019

[BBSRC asks for community input on data intensive bioscience](#)

BBSRC is conducting a review of data-intensive bioscience research in 2019.

Closes: 1 July 2019

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

Closes: 19 July 2019

[Non-elephant ivory trade: call for evidence](#)

Closes: 22 August 2019

Events

[Report Launch, Technicians: Vital front-line support for student wellbeing & mental health](#)

20 June 2019

Burlington House, London

A collaborative team from the Technician Commitment, Science Council, Royal Society of Biology, Institute of Physics, Royal Society of Chemistry, University of Liverpool and University of Nottingham recently undertook a national survey in order to shed light on the important roles technicians play in student mental health and well-being. The resultant report offers an unprecedented insight into the ways in which technical staff in higher education support student mental health and well-being.

[Quantitative Methods in Gene Regulation](#)

9 - 10 December 2019

Institute of Physics, London

And finally...

['They broke my mental shackles': could magic mushrooms be the answer to depression?](#)

New trials have shown the drug psilocybin to be highly effective in treating depression, with Oakland the latest US city to in effect decriminalise it last week. Some researchers say it could become 'indefensible' to ignore the evidence – but how would it work as a reliable treatment?

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