



APPROVED Minutes of the UKRI Board Meeting of 13 May 2020

Board Attendees	
Sir John Kingman (Chair)	Lord Willetts
Professor Sir Mark Walport	Professor Dame Sally Davies
Mike Blackburn	Fiona Driscoll
Lord Browne (left at start of AOB item)	Sir Harpal Kumar
Sir Peter Bazalgette	Professor Max Lu (left at start of AOB item)
Professor Julia Black	Vivienne Parry
Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz	Mustafa Suleyman
Attendees	
Emma Lindsell	Duncan Wingham (for items 1 & 2)
Jo Shanmugalingam, BEIS	Jennifer Rubin (for items 1, 2 & 3)
Andrew Thompson (for items 1 & 2)	Charlotte Deane (for items 1 & 2)
David Sweeney (for items 1 & 2)	Siobhan Peters
Ian Campbell (for items 1 & 2)	
Secretariat	
Chris Chudziak	Hannah Berriman
Amy Smith	
Apologies	
Professor Sir Ian Diamond	Sue Donaldson

Time: 10.00am – 12:00pm

Date: 13 May 2020

Location: By Zoom

1. Welcome & introductions

1.1. John Kingman noted that the incoming CEO, Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser will take up her post on 29th June 2020, noting this would be Mark Walport’s last Board meeting as CEO. John thanked Mark for his time as CEO. John Kingman welcomed Siobhan Peters, who joins UKRI in June as the new Chief Financial Officer. John noted Mike Blackburn would transition to Chief Operating Officer.

2. COVID-19 response

a. COVID-19 response update (SitRep)

2.1. Mark Walport provided an update on UKRI's response to COVID-19, including the finalising of proposals for costed grant extensions and the package for extending PhD students for six months. Mark noted that UKRI have received clarity on the use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for university staff that receive UKRI funding. Mark also updated the Board on the DHSC/UKRI rapid response call and the UKRI COVID-19 open call.

2.2. Mark noted that he sits on SAGE in a personal capacity, providing strong links between UKRI and the overall UK response to COVID-19. Mark also noted he is leading the Phase II clinical trials platform, ACCORD, including setting up a large longitudinal cohort for following up with patients post recovery.

2.3. Mark also updated the Board on progress with NPIF programmes, and discussions with BEIS regarding Horizon Europe.

2.4. Jo Shanmugalingam updated the Board on work with No10 to develop a Government R&D Roadmap which will emphasise the Government's commitment to R&D, as outlined in their manifesto; and on discussions with the Secretary of State regarding scope of the business support package.

2.5. John Kingman thanks UKRI for their hard work in responding to COVID-19. In particular, John thanked Innovate UK for the speed with which it has reacted.

b. CEO Report

2.6. Mark Walport provided an update on senior appointments in UKRI, including the appointment of the new AHRC Executive Chair, which should be announced imminently. Mark noted that Perret Laver have been engaged to support the search for new Council members across all nine research councils for 2020 and 2021.

c. CFO Report

2.7. Mike Blackburn presented his CFO report, which was noted without comment.

d. COVID-19 impact on the research and innovation system

2.8. Emma Lindsell introduced the item, setting out the scale of pressures facing the system and outlined various scenarios and interventions UKRI are putting in place to address these pressures. Emma noted that in order to maintain capacity and capability of UK research and innovation we would likely require a sequenced and targeted package of 'rescue and support' for university research covering the short, medium and longer-term. Jo Shanmugalingam noted that Government are targeting an R&D led recovery.

2.9. The Board discussed the importance of putting forth a UKRI vision for this recovery stage, outlining how it would look different to the status quo ante.

ACTION: Executive Committee to produce a one-page priorities document for Government.

2.10. The Board noted the reputational risk to science associated with the pandemic and the importance of learning lessons from the crisis.

e. COVID-19 impact on 2020/21 finances

2.11. Mike Blackburn set out for the Board the impact of COVID-19 on 2020/21 finances.

3. ESRC, the pandemic and recovery

3.1. Jennifer Rubin updated the Board on ESRC activities and future plans in relation to COVID-19, and actions they are involved in to support the national recovery.

3.2. Jennifer noted the important role leading social scientists have played in advising Government and informing policy to reduce and mitigate the effects of the pandemic. A significant proportion (~36%) of the COVID-19 rolling funding call have ESRC as the lead Council. Jennifer noted ESRC have been working closely with Chief Scientific Advisors and other stakeholders to help them identify unmet research needs.

3.3. The Board noted that CSA priorities emphasise the importance of social science in managing the recovery from the pandemic. The board discussed the importance of data infrastructure; the impact of investing in social science at a scale that can inform significant change; the role of systematic reviews in supporting translation of social research; and the opportunity to strengthen social science research at the business level as well as individual level.

3.4. The Board thanked Jennifer for the paper, noting the importance of social research to managing recovery from the pandemic, and welcoming the opportunity in the statements of priorities from CSAs, to better inform priorities in social research going forward, whilst acknowledging the continuing importance of discovery led science

4. AOB

4.1. John Kingman noted that due to COVID-19 restrictions, the All Board and Council members meeting which had been planned for 24th June will be rescheduled. A shorter meeting with Executive Chairs and Senior Independent Members of Councils will take place instead.

4.2. John Kingman updated the board on future meetings. Currently the next meeting in July is due to be held in London and September's meeting is due to be in Belfast. John noted UKRI will follow Government advice on whether to move the meetings to Zoom only and will be in touch with the board closer to the date.

Papers for discussion by exception

5a) Minutes of 18 March 2020 and minute from MRC asset transfer

5.1. The Board approved the minutes of 18th March 2020 as corrected, and the minute of the Board decision on MRC asset transfers.

5.2. The Board noted the following without comment:

- Board action log
- Future Leaders Fellowship update, incl. Round 3 outcomes
- Q4 performance report
- Board forward look