



Minutes

Meeting: UKRI-BBSRC Bioscience for PEOPLE AND TALENT STRATEGY ADVISORY PANEL

Date: 5th -6th November 2025

Venue: Caxton House, London

Attendance

People and Talent Panel Members:

Prof Jerry Roberts (Chair): University of Plymouth

Prof Jon Lane: University of Bristol

Dr Clare Stevenson: John Innes Centre

Dr James Henstock: Northumbria University

Dr Mary Doherty: Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre

Dr Catherine Jopling: University of Nottingham

Prof Anastasia Callaghan: University of Portsmouth

Mr Adrian Smith: Unilever

Professor Karen Halliday: University of Edinburgh

Mrs Jacqueline Hall: AstraZeneca

Professor Fiona Ducotterd: Alzheimer's Research UK Institute

Researcher Subgroup Panel Members:

Dr Stephen Marshall: University of Oxford

Research Technical Professional Subgroup Panel Members

Dr Richard Collins: University of Manchester

BBSRC Staff

Dr Karen Lewis: Executive Director, Capability and Innovation

Dr Robert Hardwick: Associate Director, People and Talent

Dr Harriet Day: Senior Portfolio Manager

Dr Clare Bhunnoo: Senior Portfolio Manager

Dr Aidan Grimsley: Senior Portfolio Manager

Mr Kieran Moulton: Portfolio Manager

Miss Emily Finnegan: Portfolio Manager

Meeting Agenda

Timing	Item	Item Ref	Paper Ref	Page
Day 1	Wednesday 5 th November			
From 12:00	Arrivals			
From 12:30	Convene and light lunch served	-	-	
13:10	Declaration of interest check (Chair); Minutes from the previous meeting (April 2025); Chairs business	Professor Jerry Roberts	-	
13:30	BBSRC update	Dr Karen Lewis and Dr Robert Hardwick	-	
14:10	Connecting culture fund update	Dr Clare Bhunnoo	-	
14:40	Break and Refreshments			
14:55	PATSAP subgroups update	Emily Finnegan	PAT_01_02_25	4-12
15:20	Apprenticeships panel discussion	Emily Finnegan	PAT_02_02_25	13-21
17:00	Meeting Close			
19:00 – 21:00	Evening Meal Served at Westminster London Hotel/Check In			
Day 2	Thursday 6 th November			
From 9:00	Convene and refreshments served	-		
9:15	EDI action plan update and panel discussion	Dr Clare Bhunnoo and Emily Finnegan	PAT_03_02_25	22-40
10:30	Fellowships review and working group update	Dr Aidan Grimsley	-	
10:40	Break and Refreshments			
10:55	Flexible talent mobility account update	Dr Aidan Grimsley	-	
11:05	Doctoral training update and panel discussion on annual report data collection	Dr Harriet Day and Kieran Moulton	-	
11:50	BBSRC forward look and cross SAP meeting discussion	Dr Robert Hardwick	-	
12:35	PATSAP membership panel discussion	Kieran Moulton	-	
12:50	Any other business and closing remarks; Actions for skills and careers team/panel to take forward	Professor Jerry Roberts	-	
13:00	Meeting Close and Lunch			

Session Minutes

Item	Session Name	Summary and Actions
1	Declaration of interest check (Chair); Minutes from the previous meeting (April 2025); Chairs business	Professor Jerry Roberts welcomed the panel, acknowledged the declarations of interest for the panel, and provided actions of the minutes of the last meeting held on 1 st -2 nd April 2025.
2	BBSRC update	Dr Robert Hardwick and Dr Karen Lewis gave an update on the UKRI spending review, noting that DSIT have announced an increase to the UKRI budget. The spending review cycle is now ending, but we are awaiting an announcement on what portion of the spending review outcome will be allocated to BBSRC, and for talent and skills. More information on this is expected to be announced in December 2025.
3	Connecting culture fund update	<p>An update was given on Professor Sir Ian Chapman joining UKRI as chief executive and the new mission statement to advance knowledge, improve lives and drive growth.</p> <p>Dr Clare Bhunnoo provided an update of the connecting culture fund, with four institutes having received strategic investment from BBSRC, each with unique mechanisms for encouraging best practice and measured success through KPIs. This investment was a relatively small budget of £230K but is expected to have a large impact. BBSRC senior leadership has approved future funding rounds for this opportunity for another two years.</p> <p>Moving forward, the focus will be on demonstrating impact, something which BBSRC wishes to support and showcase in future projects. Plans are currently being developed for another Connecting Culture Conference in 2026, as well as other project ideas. PATSAP suggested that BBSRC consider gathering data on what the potential EDI impacts would be if the aims of the Connecting Culture Fund were not met, to have demonstrable evidence of the importance of EDI.</p>
4	PATSAP subgroups update PAT_01_02_25	<p>Emily Finnegan provided an update on the recent researcher subgroup recruitment round, noting that there was a 361% increase in the number of applications received in comparison to the previous round held in 2022. The panel discussed that this may be because the eligibility criteria has been broadened, giving more applicants scope to apply. BBSRC have performed a shortlisting exercise of the applications received and ~50 applications are currently under assessment. Many of the applications have scored highly and PATSAP were invited to discuss how to prioritise applications. The panel suggested that membership from a wide range of fields was important, particularly from interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary sectors, as well as having actively contributing members. Action for BBSRC: Consider how the high-quality applicants who are not successful could be retained for future consultation.</p>

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| 5 | <p>Apprenticeships panel discussion</p> <p>PAT_02_02_25</p> | <p>Emily Finnegan presented on BBSRCs internal work exploring our role in apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are one of several pathways into the biosciences sector and BBSRC wishes to understand what its role could be in this area. This built on discussions at the previous PATSAP meeting in April and subsequent apprenticeship focused meetings that have taken place as a result. The panel felt that the apprenticeship route supports workplace diversity and there is concern about the government de-funding of level seven apprenticeships. The concern is that many businesses rely on these models for training, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find training providers for these levels. While BBSRC are unable to fill this training gap, they should continue to work with PATSAP and external bodies to assess where support can be provided.</p> |
| 6 | <p>EDI action plan update and panel discussion</p> <p>PAT_03_02_25</p> | <p>Dr Clare Bhunnoo and Emily Finnegan presented an update on BBSRCs EDI action plan, giving explanation to how the plan has evolved since the previous PATSAP meeting. A revised EDI Action Plan for 2026 to 2028 was presented, which builds on the 2022-25 action plan and incorporates a broad EDI evidence base. BBSRC has considered how the action plan is currently being used in the biosciences and internal consultations have taken place across BBSRC to evaluate the plans implementation and understanding. Particularly, the logic model, focusing on the wider benefits and impacts of the action plan in long term outcomes. As part of these assessments, BBSRC seeks to increase EDI knowledge and implement policy changes where necessary. PATSAP suggested some wording changes in the action plans mission statement. This is an action for BBSRC to take forward.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Fellowships review and working group update</p> | <p>Dr Aidan Grimsley gave an update on the BBSRC fellowships review, that aims to make actionable recommendations to optimise BBSRC's support for fellows. As a result of the previous April PATSAP meeting, a task and finish group was put in place to lead this review, with membership including Professor Jerry Roberts and Dr James Henstock of PAT SAP. PATSAP noted that more industrial and research technical professional representation in this group is needed moving forward. The first meeting of this group was held week commencing 27th October 2025 where a high-level consideration of the aims of BBSRC fellowships was discussed. Moving forward, the group aims to hold dedicated workshops on specific topics with our broader advisory groups or invited experts (for example, considering RTP support with the PAT SAP RTP Subgroup, or support for industrial research fellows with industry experts).</p> |
| 8 | <p>Flexible talent mobility account update</p> | <p>Dr Aidan Grimsley provided an update on the current flexible talent mobility account awards, which enable cross-sector and interdisciplinary staff mobility and knowledge exchange within the biosciences. Their progress was generally considered satisfactory. Some shared challenges across award holders were identified which will inform BBSRC's future strategy in this space.</p> |

- 9 Doctoral training update and panel discussion on annual report data collection
- Dr Harriet Day and Kieran Moulton gave an update on the recent industrial doctoral landscape and doctoral focal funding opportunities, highlighting the competitiveness of the opportunities and the quality of applications received. PATSAP were invited to discuss the upcoming training grant award holders' conferences taking place in 2026 and how BBSRC can best use these events to support award holders, particularly new partnerships. PATSAP also discussed the annual reporting mechanisms for BBSRC training grants and gave consideration to the type of data collected and how this can be best utilised.
- Actions for BBSRC: To consider ways in which PATSAP can input into the training grant award holders' event and collection of annual reporting data. Analyse existing training grant award data and conduct an outreach exercise on PhD alumni career destinations.
- 10 BBSRC forward look and cross SAP meeting discussion
- Dr Robert Hardwick presented on BBSRC's core skills focus and a potential collaboration with the Royal Society of Biology. PATSAP was invited to lead a discussion on training needs and increasing accessibility across the biosciences at different career levels. The Panel discussed opportunities for CPD for researchers, including chartership and other forms of professional registration. Members noted the need for more information on the benefits of professional registration and its role in supporting career development. These routes were discussed as mechanisms to help diversify pathways into the bioscience workforce. Action for BBSRC: To continue exploring collaboration opportunities with the Royal Society for Biology and draw on PATSAP expertise within this process.
- 11 PATSAP membership panel discussion
- Kieran Moulton led a discussion on proposed BBSRC changes to SAP membership which could potentially result in a small reduction of PAT SAP members. PATSAP considered this and agreed to maintain the current membership level, focusing on the importance of expertise diversity over strict membership sizes. It was agreed that PATSAP will recruit up to 2 new members in 2026, focusing on individuals with an industry background, particularly SME experience.
- Professor Roberts and BBSRC staff thanked Professor Anastasia Callaghan and Jacqueline Hall for their time and expertise on PATSAP as their term is now coming to an end.
- 12 Any other business and closing remarks; Actions for skills and careers team/panel to take forward
- Professor Jerry Roberts thanked PATSAP for attending the meeting and the panel did not raise any other business.

Link to Papers:



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