



Meeting: UKRI-BBSRC Bioscience for People and Talent Strategy Advisory Panel

Meeting held in person at the DoubleTree by Hilton City Centre in Bristol

on the

14th and 15th of April 2026

Attendance:

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

Dr Kieran Moulton: Portfolio Manager

Miss Emily Finnegan: Portfolio Manager

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

Mr Adrian Smith: Unilever

Prof Karen Halliday: University of Edinburgh

Prof Fiona Ducotterd: Alzheimer's Research UK Institute

Researcher Subgroup Panel Members

Dr Magda Czubala: University of Cardiff

Research Technical Professional Subgroup Panel Members

Dr Fotis Sgouridis: University of Bristol

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Expert Advisory Group Members

Prof Stephen Montgomery, University of Bristol

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE (PROTECT-POLICY) PATSAP 14th-15th April 2026

Agenda

Timing	Item	Item Ref	Paper Ref	Page
Day 1 From 1:00	Tuesday 14 th April Arrivals			
From 1:30	Convene and light lunch served in the Kiln restaurant	-	-	-
14:30	Declaration of interest check (Chair); Minutes from the previous meeting (November 2025); Chairs business	Prof Jerry Roberts	-	-
14:40	BBSRC/UKRI update	Dr Robert Hardwick and Dr Karen Lewis	-	-
15:10	BBSRC people and talent engagement across UKRI	Dr Robert Hardwick	-	-
15:50	Break and Refreshments Served in the Foyer / Check in			
16:05	BBSRC people and talent engagement across UKRI continued	Dr Robert Hardwick	-	-
17:00	Meeting Close			
18:00 –21:00	Evening Meal Served in Park Suite			
Day 2	Wednesday 15 th April			
From 8:45	Convene and refreshments served in the Foyer	-	-	-
9:00	BBSRC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Expert Advisory Group update	Dr Clare Bhunnoo	PAT_01_26	4-9
9:30	Fellowships update	Dr Aidan Grimsley	PAT_02_26	10-15
10:15	Break and Refreshments Served in the Foyer			
10:45	Studentships data review and workshop	Dr Harriet Day and Dr Kieran Moulton	PAT_03_26	
11:30	BBSRC people and talent engagement across UKRI final reflections	Dr Robert Hardwick	-	-
11:50	Any other business and closing remarks; Actions for skills and careers team/panel to take forward	-	-	-
12:10 – 1:30	Meeting Close and Lunch in Kiln Restaurant			

Session Minutes

Item	Session Name	Summary and Actions
1	Declaration of interest check (Chair); Minutes from the previous meeting (November 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 5th-6th November 2025.
2	BBSRC/UKRI update	<p>PATSAP were presented with the new UKRI theme buckets. The panel raised queries regarding the framing of agri-tech within the industrial strategy sector structure and asked for clarity on UKRI's priority of agriculture and other elements of farming and food systems that are not technology focused.</p> <p>There were additional queries about UKRI's new definition of life sciences, commenting that the current definition is NHS focused and could be broadened to include the breadth of BBSRC's remit. The panel felt that this would support the continuity of research as well as UKRI's resilience to governmental priority changes.</p> <p>As part of this discussion, PATSAP were asked to consider the overall goals of the panel moving forward within these UKRI/governmental changes. Action for BBSRC: To continue to work with PATSAP on the assessment of PATSAP's overall scope and position within the new UKRI buckets.</p>
3	BBSRC people and talent engagement across UKRI/ BBSRC people and talent engagement across UKRI continued	<p>PATSAP were updated on BBSRC's talent objectives and were informed that the talent budget has been confirmed within the spending review. Additionally, as UKRI begins to focus on the IS8 and non-IS8 priority programmes, there will be new opportunities for BBSRC to build a diverse talent pipeline.</p> <p>PATSAP were asked to comment on the launch of the venture doctorate opportunity set to go live in 2026. The panel agreed that careful consideration should be given to how UKRI consider intellectual property agreements, commenting that these should be in place at the time of application. The panel raised a number of queries about the opportunity, but it was agreed that the opportunity would be of interest to RTPs or other individuals in industry who are already quite experienced in commercialisation. Additionally, the opportunity may be appropriate for upskilling apprentices who have on the ground industrial training and are more likely to have an idea ready for commercialisation. Action for BBSRC: To update PATSAP on the progress of the venture doctorates as they develop.</p> <p>The panel discussed the issues of parental and childcare support for doctoral students, to which UKRI are aware of the extended issues for women in science. BBSRC confirmed that these issues are forming part of ongoing conversations across UKRI</p>

		<p>and their considerations inform BBSRC's EDI approach.</p> <p>The panel discussed the role of charters and the need to re-evaluate their role as charter rules are not enforced. As part of this discussion, BBSRC was asked to consider the proposed Research Excellence Framework 2029 (REF2029) culture assessment within its strategic thinking, highlighting the potential for BBSRC support to be more aligned with the REF2029 framework.</p>
4	BBSRC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Expert Advisory Group update	<p>The panel discussed career stage interventions, and a suggestion was made for BBSRC to engage with EDI more at pre-doctoral and doctoral stages to get a better representation of students, particularly with regards to ethnicity, where data shows a drop in diversity of PGR students.</p> <p>The panel recognised that the eligibility to lead a research grant restricts BBSRC fellows who are not always considered lecturer level by their host institutions and their contracts of employment may preclude them from applying for some grants. Action for BBSRC: To provide guidance on how to interpret BBSRC fellows as lecturer-level to widen project lead eligibility. As part of this discussion, the panel also raised concerns around the resubmission policy of BBSRC in place in response to the temporary pause to applicant-led mode.</p> <p>Discussion was had around the uses of AI in research and research applications, while PATSAP recognise the benefits of AI, AI is trained on biased data sets, which could further embed biases in decision-making processes. This is a point of note for BBSRC as they adapt to the evolving uses of AI in research.</p> <p>The panel discussed the role of fellows as traditionally there has been an expectation amongst research organisations to keep fellows in post within the institution after the fellowship. This has become more difficult in the current financial climate. This raised concerns that if there is no commitment to keep fellows on after a fellowship, this will make fellowships more precarious and will become seen as more of a stepping-stone to their career, rather than a long-term employment route at a research organisation. Action for BBSRC: To review BBSRC's expectation on what fellowships aim to achieve.</p> <p>The final discussion of this session focused on a need to review gender bias in enterprise/entrepreneurship as BBSRC looks to demonstrate the impact of EDI across its remit.</p>

5	Fellowships update	<p>The panel expressed concern that the time taken from application to award for fellowships can create issues for researchers on short-term contracts and cause tensions unless institutions are able to bridge the time gap between contracts for candidates.</p> <p>The panel was supportive of the fellowships interview framework being shared with applicants ahead of time to allow candidates to structure preparations while maintaining flexibility for the committee to ask questions on the day. This will bridge the gap for applicants at institutions who may not receive the same level of application support as those at institutions who are regularly successful.</p> <p>The panel suggested that the role of observing decision-making on an EDI basis be assigned to at least one committee member. As part of this discussion, the panel suggested that BBSRC potentially look at a theory of change in fellowship application to broaden the aims.</p>
6	Studentships data review and workshop	<p>The panel recognised the importance of needing an economic evaluation of doctoral training. Action for BBSRC: to continue scoping the value of leveraged investments against doctoral training across doctoral portfolios. Further Action: BBSRC to gather evidence of the value that industry and research organisations get from supporting doctoral training, as well as the pressures.</p> <p>The panel felt that longitudinal career tracking of doctoral graduates would be beneficial for BBSRC to assess the movement of talent post PhD. Additionally, this evidence should be separated by home and international students to interpret where talent remains in the UK.</p>
7	BBSRC people and talent engagement across UKRI final reflections	<p>PATSAP considered future recruitment exercises for the panel, noting that more industry/entrepreneurship expertise may be beneficial, particularly as BBSRC aligns with the Industrial Strategy initiatives.</p> <p>The panel advised that BBSRC should consider monitoring undergraduate uptake in the biosciences to address wider-sector issues and assess how BBSRC can influence this space more.</p> <p>Action for BBSRC: To review the mission for PATSAP in light of UKRIs organisational changes in consultation with PATSAP.</p>

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE (PROTECT-POLICY) PATSAP 14th-15th April 2026

		Action for BBSRC: To convene with PATSAP ahead of the next meeting to further review the role of talent across the new UKRI program boards.
8	Any other business and closing remarks; Actions for skills and careers team/panel to take forward	Professor Jerry Roberts thanked PATSAP members and BBSRC staff for attending the meeting and the panel did not raise any other business.