

Response to Society of Biology's survey of progress one year on from the Finch Report

Put in place arrangements to gather and analyse reliable, high quality and agreed indicators of key features of the changing research communications landscape, and to review those indicators and the lessons to be drawn from them.

3. What actions have your organisation and/or its members taken in response to this recommendation?

BPS is happy to provide figures/data where possible, currently information of interest is uptake of the open access option in British Journal of Pharmacology (BJP) & British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology (BJCP) (e.g. ~3% (14/475) papers open access in BJP and ~3% (8/269) in BJCP in 2012) and we will monitor uptake in our new OA journal, Pharmacology Research & Perspectives (PR&P).

Keep under review the position of learned societies that rely on publishing revenues to fund their core activities, the speed with which they can change their publishing business models, and the impact on the services they provide to the UK research community.

8. What actions have your organisation and/or its members taken in response to this recommendation?

As a society that depends heavily on journal revenue, are looking to diversify our activities and commercialise current projects. We have increased the weighting of 'opportunities for revenue generation' as part of our internal project approval process.

We have reviewed our reserves policy and will be maintaining our current conservative approach of a 2 year reserve fund due to the unknown impact of open access publishing (we anticipate a decline in publishing revenues).

In addition, BJP & BJCP recently moved to online only publication. With our journals being 'online only' we will work to enrich our content to increase utilisation of and traffic to our journals.

Although not directly related to the publication of the Finch Report, BPS is contributing significantly to provision of open access information via our Guide to Pharmacology project (www.guidetopharmacology.org). The site provides a 'one stop shop' source of quantitative information on all drug targets and the

prescription and experimental drugs that act on them. We are working with International Union of Basic & Clinical Pharmacology (IUPHAR) & University of Edinburgh, with a grant from the Wellcome Trust, to develop this open access database.

9. What issues or difficulties have arisen, if any?

It is impossible to accurately predict the impact of a move to open access in terms of the global publishing market. For BPS, our journals are international with institutional subscriptions from outside of the UK at ~90% for BJCP and ~92% for BJP. If we consider our authorship (counted by corresponding author location for citable items in the Impact Factor period) we see that only ~16% of BJCP and ~14% of BJP authors are based in England. Clearly there will be increasing issues for the Society around where to focus investment in view of the differing rates of uptake in other countries of open access publishing.

As a Society we are heavily dependent (~90%) on publishing revenues. Uncertainty about the effects of the move to open access is bringing means that we cannot forecast for the future with confidence, though we anticipate a decline in revenue. Our charity Trustees have a duty of prudence to the Society, and therefore must plan for the worst case scenario, which necessitates an increasingly commercial attitude to running the Society. We anticipate requiring at least 1-2 years in order to set up new ventures, aiming to replace ~30% of our publications income via other means.

10. What further actions do you have in mind?

In the next year or so we will undoubtedly see increased costs for our members. These changes might include increased membership fees, increased registration fees and more restricted access to our educational resources. To expand on this – we appreciate that the Finch Report aims to increase access to publicly funded research, and we have stated our support for this aim, but the current pace and uncertainty may force BPS to move to a more commercially driven model i.e. restricting free access to information and resources. One possible result of this might be that our educational products are moved behind a pay wall. This may affect educational resources such as Prescribe (currently free to all UK medical students) and PharmaCALogy (a suite of teaching modules which is used in many universities).

11. How have the actions or inactions of others affected your organisation and/or its members?

We are concerned by the pace of the change, particularly by funding bodies (accepting RCUK have acknowledged they see the transition taking 5 years), relative to our ability to change our business model. While the Finch Report called for an orderly transition we do not feel this is being achieved.

12. Do you foresee further issues or difficulties that will need to be resolved in the future?

We consider it highly unlikely that we will replace all of our current revenue via alternative means, which will impact our current provision to our members.

Establish effective and flexible mechanisms for efficient arrangements for Article Processing Charge (APC) payment, minimising transaction costs while providing proper accountability.

13. What actions have your organisation and/or its members taken in response to this recommendation?

Our APC costs are in line with competitors i.e. US\$3000, we also offer a member discount. The payment system is handled by our publisher, Wiley Blackwell, who also has arrangements with specific institutions to fully fund the costs.

Extend the range of open access and hybrid journals, with minimal if any restrictions on rights of use and reuse for non-commercial purposes; and ensure that the metadata relating makes clear articles are accessible on open access terms.

18. What actions have your organisation and/or its members taken in response to this recommendation?

We have recently (April 2013) launched a fully open access journal (Pharmacology Research & Perspectives) in conjunction with Wiley-Blackwell and ASPET (American Society for Pharmacology & Experimental Therapeutics). BJP & BJCP have offered a gold open access route (hybrid) for several years. All of our journals are fully compliant with funder mandates around licensing, for those authors not funded by RCUK etc. we offer a choice of CC-BY-NC or CC-BY-NC-ND licences.

The articles are clearly marked as open access on the journal websites.

Provide clear information about the balance between the revenues provided in APCs and in subscriptions.

23. What actions have your organisation and/or its members taken in response to this recommendation?

We will be discussing the process for preventing 'double dipping' with our publisher in the coming months. The current Wiley-Blackwell policy is to adjust the price of subscription in line with the shift to gold open access publishing for all customers.

Continue to develop the infrastructure of repositories and enhance their interoperability so that they provide effective routes to access for research publications including reports, working papers and other grey literature, as well as theses and dissertations; a mechanism for enhancing the links between publications and associated research data; and an effective preservation service.

33. What actions have your organisation and/or its members taken in response to this recommendation?

We are actively involved in discussions with sister Societies and publishers regarding text and data mining, to look at methods of increasing access to research data, and are supportive of the principle of making all background data available to enhance future research capabilities. We are aware of certain key issues that will need to be addressed in order for us to proceed with practical action, notably: clarification on which party will be responsible for hosting and supporting the repository needed to store data from our journals, and; clarification on what level of peer review of raw data will be required, and which party will be responsible for conducting that review

Consider carefully the balance between the aims of, on the one hand, increasing access, and on the other of avoiding undue risks to the sustainability of subscription based journals during what is likely to be a lengthy transition to open access. Particular care should be taken about rules relating to embargo periods. Where an appropriate level of dedicated funding is not provided to meet the costs of open access publishing, we believe that it would be unreasonable to require embargo periods of less than twelve months.

39. What issues or difficulties have arisen, if any?

Continued discussions regarding a 6 month embargo in STEM publishing are a concern. Such a short embargo has the potential to be very damaging to learned societies such as BPS as there is [evidence](#) (ALPSP/PA report) that a 6 month embargo would lead to an increase in cancellations of library subscriptions.

Please add any further suggestions or comments on the following:

44. Actions that should be taken, by your organisation or others, in relation to overall policy or funding for research publications

We consider the upcoming consultation from HEFCE regarding open access requirements in the REF to be critical to our members and the Society. We would be concerned that HEFCE would mandate blanket license requirements to allow work to be REF-returnable. Given current uncertainties (the 2014 RCUK review of their policy may be indicative, but RCUK have also committed to further regular reviews) we would oppose imposition of strict license requirements for the next REF exercise in 2020.

Realistically, many of our members do not have access to funds for open access publishing so may not be able to publish their work via this route. As is well documented universities will suffer from providing APCs as well as paying journal subscriptions in the immediate future. Sourcing this APC funding to make research open access from the point of publication will require funding bodies and government to consider the level of funding currently offered for gold open access (especially if open access is mandated by HEFCE).