



HOUSE OF LORDS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SELECT COMMITTEE

The members of the Committee (appointed 16 May 2013) are Lord Dixon-Smith, Baroness Hilton of Eggardon, Lord O'Neill of Clackmannan, Lord Krebs (Chairman), Baroness Manningham-Buller, Lord Patel, Lord Peston, Baroness Perry of Southwark, Lord Rees of Ludlow, the Earl of Selborne, Baroness Sharp of Guildford, Lord Wade of Chorlton, Lord Willis of Knaresborough and Lord Winston.

International STEM students

In January 2014, the Committee launched a short follow up to its 2012 report on higher education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. This focused specifically on the effect on international STEM students of immigration policy. Forty or so written submissions were received, seven oral evidence sessions were held in February and March, and a report published on 11 March 2014.

Waste and the bioeconomy

The Committee launched an inquiry into waste and the bioeconomy in July 2013. The Call for Evidence closed on 27 September. Evidence was collected on the technology used to exploit bio-waste and waste gases to generate high-value products. The inquiry aimed to assess the potential for this technology to enable bio-waste and waste gas to replace current feedstocks, and the contribution this could make to a bioeconomy. Oral evidence sessions were held across autumn 2013 and early 2014. The Committee published its report on 6 March 2014. A Government response is expected in May.

Scientific infrastructure

The Committee launched an inquiry into scientific infrastructure in May 2013. The call for evidence closed on 22 June. Oral evidence was taken across June and July on the large and medium-sized scientific infrastructure currently available in the UK with a particular focus on: future needs and strategic planning, funding and governance arrangements, international partnerships and partnerships with industry. The Committee published its report on 21 November 2013. The Government responded in February 2014.

Regenerative medicine

The Committee launched an inquiry into regenerative medicine before the 2012 summer recess. A group visited the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine. Oral evidence was taken from October to March 2013. The Committee reported on 1 July 2013 and a Government response was received on 1 October. A debate was held in the Chamber on 13 March 2014.

Nuclear follow-up

In July 2013, the Committee undertook an evidence session with Professor David Mackay, Chief Scientific Advisor at the Department of Energy & Climate Change, to follow up on its November 2011 report, Nuclear research and development capabilities. A further follow-up session was held with the Minister for Energy, Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP, on 10 December 2013.

Science spend

In May 2013, ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Committee held a one-off session on science spend. This resulted in a letter being sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 4 June 2013 calling for an increase in the science budget. In a separate but related development, on 4 December 2013, the Committee wrote to the Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science, to seek clarity on claims in the media suggesting that the ring-fenced science budget may be used to shore up the Department's budget in other areas.

Open access

The Committee undertook a short inquiry into the implementation of the Government's open access policy. It issued a call for evidence to key stakeholders. The Committee took oral evidence in January 2013 and published its report in February. The report was debated on 28 February. It followed this up with a letter to RCUK expressing concern about its revised open access policy in March. A Government response to the report was published in May 2013.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The reports, Government responses, written and oral evidence to the Committee's inquiries mentioned above, as well as the Calls for Evidence and other documents can be found on the Committee's website. Further information about the work of the Committee can be obtained from Chris Clarke, Committee Clerk, clarkechr@parliament.uk or 020 7219 4963. The Committee Office email address is hlsce@parliament.uk.



HOUSE OF COMMONS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Science and Technology Committee is established under Standing Order No 152, and charged with the scrutiny of the expenditure, administration and policy of the Government Office for Science, a semi-autonomous organisation based within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The current members of the Science and Technology Committee are:

Jim Dowd (Labour, Lewisham West and Penge), David Heath (Liberal Democrat, Somerton and Frome), Stephen Metcalfe (Conservative, South Basildon and East Thurrock), Andrew Miller (Labour, Ellesmere Port and Neston), David Morris (Conservative, Morecambe and Lunesdale), Stephen Mosley (Conservative, City of Chester), Pamela Nash (Labour, Airdrie and Shotts), Sarah Newton (Conservative, Truro and Falmouth), Graham Stringer (Labour, Blackley and Broughton), David Tredinnick (Conservative, Bosworth) and Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru, Arfon).

Andrew Miller was elected by the House of Commons to be the Chair on 9 June 2010. The remaining Members were formally appointed to the Committee on 12 July 2010. Caroline Dinéage, Gareth Johnson, Sarah Newton and Hywel Williams were formally appointed to the Committee on 27 February 2012 in the place of Gavin Barwell, Gregg McClymont, Stephen McPartland and David Morris. Jim Dowd was appointed on 11 June 2012 in the place of Jonathan Reynolds. David Morris was re-appointed on 3 December 2012 in the place of Gareth Johnson. David Tredinnick was appointed on 4 February in place of Caroline Dinéage. David Heath was appointed on 25 November 2013 in place of Roger Williams.

CURRENT INQUIRIES

The European and UK Space Agencies

On 15 February 2013 the Committee announced an inquiry: The European and UK Space Agencies.

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website. A report was published on 28 October 2013. The Government response was published as a special report on 6 March 2014.

Climate: public understanding and its policy implications

On 28 February 2013 the Committee announced an inquiry: Climate: public understanding and its policy implications.

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website. A Report was agreed and was published on 2 April 2014: *Communicating climate science*, HC 989.

Government Horizon Scanning

On 23 October the Committee took evidence from Alun Huw Williams, Principal, SAMI Consulting, Doug McKay, Vice President, International Organisations, Shell International, and Natalie Day, Head of Policy, Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford; Dr Martyn Thomas, Royal Academy of Engineering, Jonathan Cowie, former Head, Science Policy, Institute of Biology, and Professor Ann Buchanan, Academy of Social Sciences.

On 27 November the Committee took evidence from Fiona Lickorish, Head, Institute for Environment, Health, Risks and Futures, Cranfield University, Jessica Bland, Technology Futures Analyst, Nesta, and Marcus Morrell, Senior Futures Analyst, Arup; Professor Burkhard Schafer, Professor of Computational Legal Theory, Edinburgh School of Law, Professor Paul Newman, Mobile Robotics Group, University of Oxford, Nick Reed, Intelligent Transport Systems UK, and Dr Graeme Smith, Business Manager, Connected Services, Control and Electronics, Ricardo UK Ltd.

On 4 December the Committee took evidence from Sir Mark Walport, Government Chief Scientific Adviser, and Jon Day, Chair, Horizon Scanning Oversight Group, Cabinet Office.

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website. A Report is being prepared.

Women in STEM careers

On 16 October the Committee took evidence from Dr Bryn Jones, Visiting Fellow, School of Physics, University of Bristol, Jenny Marsden, Principal Physicist, Hull and East Yorkshire NHS Trust, and Dr Nicola Patron, Head, Synthetic Biology, Sainsbury Laboratory.

On 30 October the Committee took evidence from Dr June McCombie, former Chair of IOP Project, Juno Panel, Institute of Physics, Sarah Dickinson, Manager, Athena SWAN Charter, Equality Challenge Unit, Professor Dame Julia Higgins, Chair of Diversity Programme, Royal Society, and Dr Pia Ostergaard, Senior Fellowship Advisor, Daphne Jackson Trust; Professor Uta Frith, Emeritus Professor of Cognitive Development, University College London, representing Russell Group, Professor Jane Powell, Deputy Warden, Goldsmith's, University of London, representing 1994 Group, and Clem Herman, Senior Lecturer, Computing and Communications, Open University.

On 4 November the Committee took evidence from Dr Lesley Thompson, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (representing the Research Councils UK), and David Sweeney, Director, Research, Innovation and Skills, Higher Education Funding Council for England.

On 18 November the Committee took evidence from Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Minister of State for Universities and Science, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website. A Report was agreed and was published on 6 February 2014: *Women in scientific careers*, HC 701.

GO Science Review of Science Advisory Councils

On 2 April the Committee took evidence from Professor Sir Mark Walport, Chief Scientific Adviser to HM Government and Head of the Government Office for Science; Professor Les

Iversen, Chair, Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs and Professor Chris Gilligan, Chair, Defra's Science Advisory Council.

The oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website.

Antimicrobial resistance

On 18 December the Committee took evidence from Dr Pat Goodwin, Society of Biology, Professor Laura Piddock, British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, Professor John Threlfall, Society for Applied Microbiology, and Professor Sharon Peacock, Cambridge Infectious Diseases Initiative, University of Cambridge.

On 8 January 2014 the Committee took evidence from Professor Anthony Kessel, Public Health England, Dr Michael Moore, Royal College of General Practitioners, Professor Alison Holmes, Imperial College London and Dr Susan Hopkins, Royal College of Physicians; John Hardcastle, Novolytics, Dr David McIntosh, Novartis, Professor George Lewith, University of Southampton Medical School and Doris-Ann Williams, British In Vitro Diagnostics Association.

On 29 January 2014 the Committee took evidence from Phil Sketchley, National Office of Animal Health, John FitzGerald, Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance, Catherine McLaughlin, National Farmers' Union and Cólín Nunan, Alliance to Save our Antibiotics.

On 26 February 2014 the Committee took evidence from Professor Jeremy Farrar, Wellcome Trust, Professor Sir John Savill, Research Councils UK, Kush Naker, Universities Allied for Essential Medicines UK and Professor Sir Anthony Coates, Antibiotic Discovery UK; Dr Louise Leong, Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, James Anderson, GlaxoSmithKline, Dr David Williams, Discuva and Michael McIntyre, European Herbal and Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association.

On 12 March 2014 the Committee took evidence from Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer, Sally Wellsteed, Department of Health, and Nigel Gibbens, Chief Veterinary Officer; George Eustice MP, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Jane Ellison MP, Department of Health, Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer and Professor Peter Borriello, Veterinary Medicines Directorate.

The written and oral evidence received in this inquiry is on the Committee's website. A report is being prepared.

Blood, tissue and organ screening

On 5 February the Committee took evidence from Mark Ward and Joseph Peaty, TaintedBlood, Liz Carroll, Haemophilia Society, Dr Matthew Buckland, UK Primary Immunodeficiency Network and Christine Lord; Professor Marc Turner, Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs Prion Group, Dr Roland Salmon, Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens and Dr Sheila MacLennan, UK Blood Services Joint Professional Advisory Committee.

On 5 March 2014 the Committee took evidence from Dr Steven Burton, ProMetic Biosciences Ltd, Dr Kelly Board, DuPont Chemicals and Fluoroproducts, Dr Alex Raeber, Prionics AG, Nigel Talboys, Terumo BCT and Professor John Collinge, MRC Prion Unit.

On 26 March 2014 the Committee took evidence from Professor

Richard Knight, National CJD Research and Surveillance Unit, Professor Sheila Bird, Medical Research Council Biostatistics Unit, Dr Paula Bolton-Maggs, Serious Hazards of Transfusion (SHOT) Haemovigilance Scheme and Dr Simon Mead, Association of British Neurologists.

REPORTS

In addition to the above, the Committee has also published:

Pre-appointment hearing with the Government's preferred candidate for Chair of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

On 29 January 2014, the Committee published its Seventh Report of Session 2013-14, *Pre-appointment hearing with the Government's preferred candidate for Chair of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)*, HC 989

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about the Science and Technology Committee can be obtained from the Clerk of the Committee, Stephen McGinness, or from the Senior Committee Assistant, Darren Hackett, on 020 7219 2792/2793 respectively; or by writing to: The Clerk of the Committee, Science and Technology Committee, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. Enquiries can also be e-mailed to scitechcom@parliament.uk. Anyone wishing to be included on the Committee's mailing list should contact the staff of the Committee. Anyone wishing to submit evidence to the Committee is strongly recommended to obtain a copy of the guidance note first. Guidance on the submission of evidence can be found at www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/witguide.htm. The Committee has a website, www.parliament.uk/science, where all recent publications, terms of reference for all inquiries and press notices are available.



HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT SECTION

Staff in the Science and Environment Section provide confidential, bespoke briefing to Members and their offices daily. They provide support to Commons Select Committees, and produce longer notes and research papers which can be accessed at <http://www.parliament.uk/topics/topical-issues.htm>

Opposite are summaries of some recently updated published briefings.

For further information contact:
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Mitochondrial Donation

SN06833

New treatments could provide an option for women with mitochondrial DNA mutations to enable them to give birth to healthy children. These new techniques involve using donor mitochondria in an in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), following scientific and ethical review and a public consultation in 2012, advised the Government that there is support for the introduction of these treatments. However, they have recommended that research is still needed and the treatment should be offered within a strict regulatory framework.

In June 2013, the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies, announced that draft regulations to allow mitochondrial donation would be published later in the year. It is estimated that the introduction of this treatment could save around 10 lives a year. These draft regulations were published on 27 February. There will be a public consultation on these until 21 May 2014.

There is a number of safety and ethical considerations which have been raised in regard to these techniques. The treatments involve changing the embryo's mitochondrial DNA prior to implantation. The nuclear DNA, which makes up over 99% of our total DNA will not be altered by these treatments. There has been opposition to their proposed introduction and the media have reported that the techniques will lead to three parent babies.

This note provides a summary of the role of mitochondria, mitochondrial disease and the proposed new techniques. It outlines the investigations into these techniques that took place prior to the Government announcement; an HFEA scientific review of the safety and efficacy of methods, an ethical review of the techniques for mitochondrial replacement undertaken by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics and an HFEA public consultation. The main safety and ethical considerations associated with the introduction of these techniques into clinical practice will be discussed.

Standardised packaging of tobacco product

SN06175

Standardised packaging (or 'plain packaging') of tobacco products is generally taken to mean the removal of all attractive promotional aspects. Except for the brand name (which would be presented in a standardised way), all other trademarks, logos, colour schemes and promotional graphics would be prohibited. The package itself would be standardised and display only information (such as health warnings) required by law.

During the House of Lords Grand Committee stage of the Children and Families Bill in November 2013, cross-party amendments were introduced to provide regulation-making powers on standardised packaging of tobacco products with the purpose of improving children's health. Following extensive debate the amendments were withdrawn but it was advised they would be returned to at the next stage of the Bill.

On 28 November 2013, Jane Ellison, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, announced an independent review into the public health evidence on standardised tobacco packaging. She confirmed that the Government would table an amendment to the Children and Families Bill to establish regulation-making powers in this area. This was tabled at the Report stage in the House of Lords on 29 January 2014 and was agreed by both Houses.

On 3 April 2014, the report of the public health review undertaken by Sir Cyril Chantler was published. He concluded that it was very likely that the introduction of standardised packaging would lead to a modest but important reduction in the uptake and prevalence of smoking and would have a positive effect on public health. Jane Ellison announced that the Government were minded to introduce regulations to provide for standardised packaging and these would be subject to a short final consultation.

TB Vaccination in Badgers and Cattle

SN06447

The vaccination of badgers against TB is an alternative approach being investigated to address the problem of the disease in cattle. The current vaccine for badgers, which is injectable, reduces the burden of disease in badgers. However administering the vaccine involves baiting and

trapping, and is resource intensive. There is no evidence yet that use of the vaccine in badgers would reduce disease in cattle. There is as yet no date for when an oral badger vaccine, which would be easier to administer, will be available.

TB vaccination of cattle is also being explored as an option, with the Government expecting to commence field trials in 2015. This is expected to take between two and five years. For this to be a useful option the test needs to be effective at distinguishing between infected and vaccinated cattle. TB vaccination of cattle would also have to be approved at EU level, which the Government expects would take up to 2023.

The Welsh Government suspended a badger cull programme in 2011 and replaced it with a five year trapping and vaccination programme. It published its first report in January 2013.

An additional standard note, Badger Culling: TB Control Policy - SN05873, provides information and analysis of the badger cull trial that took place in West Gloucestershire and West Somerset in summer 2013.

Regulation of herbal medicines SN06002

Herbal remedies for human use have for some time been regarded as medicines under UK legislation, subject to the same licensing procedures as pharmaceuticals. Efficacy requirements have been difficult to meet. Most EU Member States developed pragmatic arrangements to tackle this. In the UK herbal remedies have historically been exempted from licensing.

A review of herbal regulation at EU level was prompted by safety concerns and the need for market harmonisation of various national herbal regulatory regimes.

The Directive on Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products (Directive 2004/24/EC) replaces most existing member state regulations and creates a unified licensing system for traditional herbal medicine products (in use for at least 30 years, of which 15 must usually have been in the EU). The Directive came into full effect on 30 April 2011.

The Directive has met with some opposition from suppliers and users of herbal medicines. Objections include perceived disproportionate costs of regulatory compliance and the difficulty some non-European herbal traditions may have in meeting the requirement. There are concerns that this will result in threatening the viability of businesses and a reduction in consumer choice.

In February 2011, a statutory regulation scheme for herbal practitioners was proposed which would allow prescribing of unlicensed preparations by registered herbalists under a clause in the 2001 Medicines Directive. It was planned that this scheme would come into force in 2012. In July this year, the Under Secretary of State for Health, Dr Daniel Poulter highlighted issues which have made the introduction of the scheme difficult. He announced the setting up of a working group to consider options. It will meet early in 2014.

ACTIVITIES

Announcements on planning in the Budget and the publication of new web-based planning practice guidance led to updates of standard notes on planning reform proposals, permitted development rights and the green belt, in addition to a Library blog piece on garden cities.

The section contributed to the House of Commons Research Paper for the Second Reading of the Deregulation Bill providing background and analysis of the clauses on: rights of way, climate change, air quality, noise, household waste, health and safety and other environmental measures.

The note on standardised tobacco packaging was updated to take account of the progress of the Children and Families Bill, which provides powers for later implementation of standardised packaging. The Bill received Royal Assent (and became an Act) on 14 March 2014.

In the first quarter of the year the section has had an increased role in producing debate packs including on international wildlife crime (06/02/14), managing flood risk and Government levies on energy bills (03/03/14), and the Elliot review and food crime (02/04/14).

Staff visited Lancaster University and University College London to deliver presentations on how academia can engage with Parliament. This included highlighting the work of POST, the Library, and committees, and encouraging the building of contact with specialists in parliament and submission of evidence to select committees – all in the name of evidence-based policy making. The blog from the Lancaster trip is available at: <http://commonslibrary.blog.com/2014/03/17/reaching-out-from-westminster/>

Our planning specialist went to Royal Town Planning Institute on 11 February for meetings with their policy and communications team.



PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (POST)

RECENT POST PUBLICATIONS

Electricity Demand Side Response

January 2014

POSTnote 452

Demand-Side Response describes electricity users (the demand side) changing their patterns of use in response to incentives. It is one of several options eligible for Government support introduced

by the 2013 Energy Act. This POSTnote outlines DSR, how it is provided, its role for the UK and its potential future development.

Livestock Emissions

January 2014

POSTnote 453

Livestock farming results in the emission of the greenhouse gases (GHG) methane and nitrous oxide. Such emissions are difficult to accurately quantify and control. This POSTnote examines current policy and prospects for further reductions in emissions.

Risks from Climate Feedbacks

January 2014

POSTnote 454

The Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC concluded that human activities are causing the climate to warm, but there is uncertainty in how the climate will continue to change. Climate feedbacks could both increase and decrease global warming. This POSTnote discusses what climate feedbacks are, as well as the challenges they present for climate change mitigation policies.

Electronic Cigarettes

January 2014

POSTnote 455

Electronic cigarettes produce a vapour typically containing nicotine, which users inhale. There is debate about their potential role in tobacco smoking reduction and cessation. This POSTnote summarises the evidence on the safety and quality of electronic cigarettes, explores some of the social issues raised and reviews current UK and EU regulation.

Telehealth and Telecare

February 2014

POSTnote 456

The UK's elderly population is growing and with it the number of people with long-term health problems. This is putting pressure on the health and social care systems. Increased use of technology such as telehealth and telecare may help to improve quality of care and reduce costs. This note describes current UK telehealth and telecare initiatives and the role they may play in delivering future care.

New Nuclear Power Technologies

February 2014

POSTnote 457

Nuclear power stations provide a low carbon source of electricity, which could help the UK achieve its policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. This POSTnote reviews new and potential future nuclear power technologies. It also outlines the regulatory approach toward new nuclear build and summarises some of the related challenges.

Ambient Air Quality

February 2014

POSTnote 458

National and European regulations have improved UK ambient air quality. However, current air pollution levels continue to harm human health and the environment. This POSTnote summarises the evidence for effects of air pollutants and policies to address them.

Stroke

February 2014

POSTnote 459

Stroke is the third largest cause of mortality in the UK, and the largest cause of adult disability. It has a high clinical and societal burden, and can have a profound effect on people's lives. This POSTnote summarises the different types of stroke, and examines treatment, prevention strategies and recent service re-organisation.

Social Media and Big Data

March 2014

POSTnote 460

Analysing large quantities of readily available data from social media has created new opportunities to understand and influence how people think and act. This POSTnote examines the application of 'big data' approaches to social media in three key areas: elections and polling, commercial applications and security. It also covers the regulation of social media data and public concerns around privacy.

Transparency of Clinical Trial Data

March 2014

POSTnote 461

Results from many clinical trials are not published or made available. Recently there have been calls for clinical trials data to be

made more accessible. This briefing examines ways of achieving greater transparency and the issues that they raise.

Surveillance of Infectious Disease

March 2014

POSTnote 462

Microbes such as bacteria and viruses cause a wide range of infectious diseases. They can be highly adaptable and evolve rapidly to changing environments. This can change their ability to spread and their susceptibility to antimicrobial drugs. Surveillance is key for detecting and responding to novel and re-emerging microbes. This briefing describes current surveillance efforts and examines new technological developments and their likely impacts on UK and international public health.

HIV Prevention in the UK

April 2014

POSTnote 463

Preventing HIV is a priority for research and public health. Research developments and the trends in the nature of the epidemic mean that policy is continually revised in order to educate the public, reduce transmission of the virus and treat those affected. This note describes patterns of infection and policies to increase HIV testing. It also summarises evidence for using antiretrovirals as a preventive measure.

Intermittent Electricity Generation

April 2014

POSTnote 464

Sources of electricity that exhibit uncontrolled increases or decreases in output are often referred to as intermittent. This POSTnote examines the effect of wind, solar, wave and tidal intermittency on the provision of electricity to meet demand, electricity prices and carbon dioxide emissions. The note also describes measures to manage intermittency.

CURRENT WORK

Biological Sciences – Minimum Age of Responsibility, Childhood Allergy, Population Health Management, GM Crops

Environment and Energy – Short Lived Climate Pollutants, Ancient Woodlands, Reducing Diffuse Water Pollution from Agriculture, REDD+, Smart Metering of Electricity, Gas and Water, Energy Storage, Phosphate Resources

Physical sciences and IT – Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Big Data Overview and Big Data in Business

Social Sciences – Alternative Currencies, Big Data, Crime and Security, Big Data and Transport, End-of-Life Care

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

Could the Lights Go Out?

On January 7th, POST hosted a roundtable briefing entitled 'Could the Lights Go Out in 2015/16?' supported by the Royal Academy of Engineering. The event followed recent estimates from National Grid Plc and the electricity market regulator Ofgem that show levels of spare electricity generating capacity falling to low levels in winter 2015/16. The briefing gave MPs and Peers the opportunity to discuss with external experts the risk to the security of electricity supply over the period 2014-18 and approaches to mitigate the risk. The briefing was attended by 4 MPs, 6 peers as well as committee and members' staff. The event was chaired by Lord Oxburgh, with external experts from the Department of Energy and Climate Change, National Grid, Ofgem, the Royal Academy of Engineering, UK Energy Research Centre, industry body Energy UK and energy company NPower.

Risks from Climate Feedbacks

On 28th January, POST hosted a breakfast briefing to launch the

POSTnote on Risks from Climate Feedbacks and for parliamentarians to discuss the uncertainties and evidence of their role in the climate system and their likely implications for adaptation with representatives from academia, the insurance industry, NGOs and policy. It was chaired by Andrew Miller MP and presentations were made by: Professor Colin Prentice, AXA Chair in Climate Impacts, Imperial College London, Professor Pierre Friedlingstein, Chair in Climate Modelling, University of Exeter, Chris Jones, Head of Earth System Research, Met Office Hadley Centre, Professor Tim Lenton, Chair in Climate Change, University of Exeter, Trevor Maynard, Head of Exposure Management, Lloyds, Professor Bill Sutherland, Chair in Conservation Biology, University of Cambridge & British Ecological Society President and Leo Hickman, Climate Change Chief Advisor, WWF UK.

Food Aid Provision

On 9th April, POST hosted a seminar on Food Banks in collaboration with the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Hunger and Food Poverty. This event was an opportunity for parliamentarians to hear from leading researchers about the latest findings of research on food poverty and food aid provision across the UK. It was chaired by Sarah Newton MP and presentations were made by Professor Elizabeth Dowler, Professor of Food and Social Policy, University of Warwick, Ms Hannah Lambie-Mumford, Researcher, University of Sheffield, Dr Filip Sosenko, Research Associate, Dr Nicola Livingstone, Researcher, Heriot-Watt University and Dr Matt Barnes, Research Director, National Centre for Social Research.

STAFF, FELLOWS AND INTERNS AT POST

Fellows

Adriana De Palma, Natural History Museum, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
 Oscar Branson, University of Cambridge, Natural Environment Research Council
 Mark Richardson, University of Reading, Natural Environment Research Council
 Rosalind Davies, University of Birmingham, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
 Daniel Rathbone, Imperial College London, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
 Maria Thorpe, University of Manchester, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
 Elizabeth Duxbury, University of East Anglia, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
 Helen Brewer, Rothamsted Research, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
 Clare Wenham, University of Aberystwyth, Nuffield Council on Bioethics
 Rachel Stocker, University of Durham, British Psychological Society
 Paul Gilbert, University of Sussex, Economic and Social Research Council
 Stephen Hanley, University of Leeds, Economic and Social Research Council



Listed opposite (grouped by subject area) is a selection of Debates on matters of scientific interest which took place in the House of Commons, House of Lords or Westminster Hall between 21st January and 10th April 2014.

A full digest of debates and PQs on scientific issues during the 2013/14 session of Parliament can be found at <http://www.scienceinparliament.org.uk/publications/uk-digests/>

SELECTED DEBATES

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

Badger Cull	13.3.14	HoC 456	Mrs Anne Main
Deep Sea Mining Bill	7.2.14	HoL 391	Baroness Wilcox
Forestry: Independent Panel Report	12.2.14	HoL 675	Baroness Royall of Blaisdon

EDUCATION & SKILLS

Apprenticeship	26.3.14	HoL 560	Lord Young of Norwood Green
Higher Education	9.4.14	HoL 1303	Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

ENERGY

Carbon Capture and Use	21.1.14	HoC 65WH	Laura Sandys
Fracking	17.3.14	HoL GC42	Lord Borwick

FOOD AND HEALTH

Dementia	22.1.14	HoL 722	Baroness Gardner of Parkes
Elliott Review and Food Crime	2.4.14	HoC 233WH	Laura Sandys
Innovative Medicine	1.4.14	HoL 909	Baroness Thomas of Winchester
Medical Records (Confidentiality)	11.2.14	HoC 215WH	George Mudie, George Freeman
Mitochondrial Transfer (Three-Parent Children)	12.3.14	HoC 164WH	Jacob Rees-Mogg
Neglected Tropical Diseases	6.2.14	HoL GC127	Baroness Hayman
NHS Patient Data	25.3.14	HoC 49WH	Barbara Keeley
NHS Patient Data	27.2.14	HoC 173WH	George Freeman
NHS: Competition	10.2.14	HoL GC214	Lord Turnbull
Patient Medical Records	4.3.14	HoC 240WH	Roger Godsiff
Regenerative Medicine: S&T Committee Report	13.3.14	HoL 1936	Lord Patel

MISCELLANEOUS

Bletchley Park	12.3.14	HoL 1819	Baroness Trumpington
Defence & Cyber Security (Sel Co report)	4.3.14	HoC 787	James Arbuthnot
Development: Post-2015 Agenda	2.4.14	HoL 1005	Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead
World Water Day	11.3.14	HoC 291	Naomi Long