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for Education

Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP  
Chair  
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Dear Norman,

Thank you for your letter of 24 October addressed to my predecessor, enclosing a copy of a letter to the Committee from Stephen Lotinga, Chief Executive of the Publishers Association, regarding UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) forthcoming review of Open Access.

Open Access is central to the Government's and UKRI's ambitions for research and innovation, with openness being key to world class research and delivering the wider aims of the Industrial Strategy. Sharing knowledge openly has benefits not only for researchers, but also businesses and wider society by accelerating new discoveries.

I'm very clear that, as the new Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, I retain the decision-making role over any changes in Government policy. The UKRI Open Access (OA) Review will examine the best way to implement and operationalise Government's ambitions around Open Access. It will report in 2019. UKRI will keep me updated as the OA Review progresses.

The review will be based on evidence and analysis and will involve wide engagement with stakeholders from the research community and the publishing industry. Stakeholder engagement is very important throughout the review, and UKRI will shortly issue invites to a range of stakeholders to take part in initial discussions to inform the review's approach. The discussions will seek views on the effectiveness of the current policy, the key issues which need to be considered, and how stakeholders and UKRI can work together to achieve Open Access. Engagement with stakeholders will be an ongoing process throughout the Review.

The Plan S initiative is in line with current UK Government policy but identifies some common principles that seek to accelerate the implementation of Open Access. For example, it aims to move to a model of full and immediate Open Access by default. The UK's support of Plan S, along with other countries national research funders, aims to help meet the European Competitiveness Council's target – which was set by ministers in 2016 – of making all publicly funded research Open Access by 2020. The OA review will take the Plan S principles into

account; and the review will seek to align the UK approach internationally, where it helps to achieve our Open Access policy objectives. The UK is playing an influential part in the development of Plan S which includes meeting with many UK-based publishers and ensuring that those viewpoints feed into the Plan S discussions. The review will take a holistic approach and look to maximise economic and social impacts from UKRI funded research.

Economic issues are important, and the Review will consider these. The cost of Open Access is important. A recent report from Universities UK showed that article processing charges have increased by 16% between 2013-2016 and subscription expenditure has risen by nearly 20% over that period. At the same time, I recognise the value added by the broad range of publishers, including the wider contributions that many learned societies make to the research community through income from journals, should be borne in mind. The OA review will seek to support an economic model where the fair, transparent and reasonable costs of Open Access publishing are met, while addressing the need for sustainability. The review will consider OA models and innovations which can help enhance OA and assist the sector to more easily comply with UKRI policy.

Since the Publishers Association wrote to you in September, Sir Mark Walport, together with UKRI Executive Chairs, David Sweeney and Duncan Wingham, who are co-leading the Review, met with Stephen Lotinga and the PA Vice President, Peter Phillips, on 25th October and discussed the issues PA raise in their letter to you. Sir Mark Walport and Stephen Lotinga are in correspondence following the meeting.

UKRI have informed me that they would be happy to meet with you to discuss Plan S and the Open Access Review with you further.

Yours sincerely,



**CHRIS SKIDMORE MP**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR UNIVERSITIES, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**