

Science, Innovation and Technology Committee

Pre-appointment hearing for the Chair of UK Research and Innovation

Fourth Report of Session 2024–26

HC 1844

Science, Innovation and Technology Committee

The Science, Innovation and Technology Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and its associated public bodies. It also exists to ensure that Government policies and decision-making across departments are based on solid scientific evidence and advice.

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Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

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Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5023; the Committee's email address is commonssitc@parliament.uk. You can follow the Committee on X (formerly Twitter) using [@CommonsSITC](https://twitter.com/CommonsSITC).

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1 Pre-appointment hearing for the chair of UK Research and Innovation

1. In March 2026, the Department for Science, Innovation & Technology (DSIT) informed us that, following an open recruitment campaign, the government's preferred candidate for appointment as chair of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) was Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz.
2. We invited Professor Borysiewicz to a pre-appointment hearing, which took place on Wednesday 22 April. A transcript of the session is available on our website.¹
3. We have also published, as appendices to this report:
 - i. Campaign information provided to us by DSIT, including information on the number of candidates and diversity data;
 - ii. Professor Borysiewicz's CV, as submitted by him; and
 - iii. Professor Borysiewicz's responses to a set of written questions we sent him in advance of the hearing.
4. The hearing and the written questions addressed Professor Borysiewicz's motivation for applying for the role, his background and experience, and his understanding of the work of UKRI. We also questioned Professor Borysiewicz on his priorities for UKRI and the challenges that the organisation was likely to face.

5.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the discussion during the pre-appointment hearing, our consideration of his CV and the answers he provided to our questionnaire, we are satisfied that Professor Borysiewicz has the professional competence and personal independence required for the role of UKRI chair. Professor Borysiewicz is eminently appointable, and UKRI is lucky to have a person with his qualifications as chair. We particularly welcome his commitment to prioritising the role.

¹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/9740/preappointment-hearing-uk-research-and-innovation-chair/>

6.

CONCLUSION

He joins UKRI at a pivotal moment in the history of the organisation, which is currently implementing the most significant transformation in how it supports scientific research since its establishment. Professor Borysiewicz is clearly an outstanding scientist with an impressive track record of leading research organisations. He will need to show that he is equal to the scale of the task, and to tackling challenges in how research priorities are set and distributed across the society and geography of the UK.

7.

CONCLUSION

We look forward to him demonstrating the skills needed for these challenges, particularly in financial management, taking into account what the National Audit Office and others have said in relation to value for money and delivering on the investment of public funds by UKRI.

8.

CONCLUSION

We hope for the sake of UK science that Professor Borysiewicz can deliver, and look forward to holding him to account during his time at UKRI. His first task should be to align his vision for UKRI with those of Lord Vallance and Professor Sir Ian Chapman, determine clear measures of success for the organisation, and ensure that these are shared with us so that we can hold UKRI accountable for the decisions it takes.

Appendix 1: Campaign information

DSIT provided the following information on the recruitment process and the candidates who applied for the role of UKRI chair:

Information on the preferred candidate

Name	Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz
Their current CV	As attached (Appendix 3)
Declaration of relevant interests made by the candidate	Yes
Declaration of relevant political activity made by the candidate required under paragraph 9.2 of the Governance Code on Public Appointments	None
Proposed terms of appointment and remuneration (if any)	Appointment: Up to three years, with the possibility of reappointment. Remuneration: £33,800 per annum Further details enclosed in candidate pack (see below)

Campaign information

Campaign Launch Date	24 November 2025
Campaign Closing Date	11:59 pm on 11 January 2026
Reason for any changes in timetable to that originally published	None

Advertising strategy	Executive Search, Gov.uk , LinkedIn and UKRI's website.
Advisory Assessment Panel	Dame Anne Glover, CEO, Amadeus Capital Partners (Senior Independent Panel Member) Alex Jones, Director General for Growth, Science and International, DSIT. Sir Paul Nurse, President, Royal Society, Additional Independent Panel member
Number of applicants	72
Number of candidates invited to interview	6
Number of candidates found appointable	4

Diversity data

A: Gender

	% male	% female	% identify another way	% not declared
Applicants	65.2%	32.6%	0%	2.2%
Shortlist (applicants invited to interview)	67%	33%	0%	0%

B. Ethnicity

	% white	% ethnic minority	% not declared
Applicants	69.6%	23.9%	6.5%
Shortlist (applicants invited to interview)	100%	0%	0%

C. Disability

	% disabled	% non-disabled	% not declared
Applicants	0%	97.8%	2.2%
Shortlist (applicants invited to interview)	0%	100%	0%

Appendix 2: Job advertisement

The candidate information pack provided to the committee by DSIT describes the appointment and role and is reproduced below.

Introduction from the Minister

Dear Candidate,

I am delighted to invite you to apply for the key role of Chair of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). This is an exceptional opportunity to lead an organisation that is at the forefront of driving innovation and research excellence in the United Kingdom. This is a critical moment as UKRI is essential for knowledge creation, growth and prosperity now and in the future.

As the Chair of UKRI, you will play a pivotal role in leading an effective Board and maintaining good governance and robust assurance processes. You will work closely with the new CEO, Sir Ian Chapman, and support him in delivering on UKRI's aims and objectives. You will also be responsible for overseeing the governance framework of UKRI, ensuring that it operates with transparency, accountability, and integrity. Your leadership will be crucial in fostering a positive corporate culture while also ensuring that UKRI's activities align with its mission and values.

Working with the CEO and other senior executives you will have an important role in managing the relationship between UKRI and Government Ministers. Ensuring UKRI remains responsive to the needs of government, accountable for taxpayers' money, and that the UKRI Board's advice to government is timely, relevant and impactful.

We are seeking a leader with strong commitment to maximising the impact of UKRI's investments into our excellent science, research and innovation systems structured around three principal areas: protecting and growing curiosity-driven research; addressing government priorities and tackling societal challenges; and supporting R&D-intensive companies to start up, scale up, and stay in the UK. Leveraging private sector investment will be an important part of this.

This will be essential in ensuring impact from the c.£9bn annual allocation to UKRI (expected to increase over the spending review period).

The ideal candidate will have the ability to inspire, engage and deepen links between stakeholders in academia, industry, and government, and will be committed to promoting excellence and impact in all that UKRI does. This role is crucial in driving economically beneficial outcomes and ensuring that UKRI's research and innovation activities contribute to the UK's economic growth and global competitiveness as highlighted in the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy. The new postholder will therefore need to have experience of focusing and prioritising on effective delivery. If you are passionate about making a difference and have the skills and experience needed to work with the CEO leading UKRI into the future, we encourage you to apply for this exciting and influential role.

We welcome applications from outstanding individuals from a diverse range of sectors and backgrounds. We look forward to receiving your application.

Yours sincerely,

Minister Vallance

The organisation

The candidate information pack describes UKRI as follows:

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. UKRI is the largest public funder of research and innovation in the UK, spanning all disciplines and all sectors, investing £9 billion each year on behalf of the UK Government. UKRI inspires and enables talented people to push the boundaries of discovery, support innovative businesses to grow and scale, and target solutions to national and global priorities.

UKRI links together the seven research councils, Innovate UK, and Research England, and works with the funding agencies in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland to deliver an ambitious agenda, drawing on its great depth and breadth of expertise and the enormous diversity of its portfolio. UKRI maintains and champions the creativity and vibrancy of disciplines and sector-specific priorities and communities.

Its councils shape and deliver both sectoral and domain-specific support and work together to ensure a fully joined-up research and innovation investment portfolio.

Whether through research grants, quality-related block grants from Research England, or grants and wider support for innovative businesses from Innovate UK, UKRI works with its stakeholders and partners to understand the opportunities and requirements of all the different parts of the research and innovation landscape, maintaining the health, breadth, and depth of the system.

We fund people and teams in over 140 universities, 60 institutes and 3,600 companies across the UK, supporting a diverse range of research and innovation environments. Our investments in R&D deliver benefits across the whole of the UK.

The role

The candidate information pack describes the role as follows:

The Chair of UKRI will play a pivotal role in steering UKRI to deliver the strategic objectives set by Government, translating the UK's global leadership in research and innovation, into economic growth and social impact and delivering for citizens. The Chair will provide overarching direction and ensure effective governance and enhanced accountability building confidence within Government, and with UKRI's staff and users.

Key duties and objectives

The candidate information pack sets out the following key duties and objectives:

- Work with government to ensure a coherent strategic approach across the organisation on cross-cutting research and innovation priorities as well as corporate reform of UKRI and its Councils. In particular this will involve aligning UKRI with the government's three overarching investment priorities for R&D:
 - protecting and growing curiosity-driven research;
 - addressing government priorities; and
 - tackling societal challenges; and supporting R&D-intensive companies to start up, scale up, and stay in the UK.

- Support and manage the CEO, ensuring there is effective performance management by setting stretching targets in line with the UKRI objectives and key results, and conducting regular reviews.
- Lead the Board to provide effective challenge to UKRI's executive team, ensuring UKRI operates as an efficient, effective organisation, fully accountable to government, adaptable to change, and embraces a culture of innovation.
- Work with the CEO to advise the Secretary of State on key priorities, including the strategic case for investment into R&I, and the spending review allocations to UKRI and its nine Councils.
- Build vital relationships with various partners aimed at realising the potential of UKRI to drive economically beneficial outcomes.
- Ensuring the UKRI board and staff, take proper account of guidance provided by the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology.
- Working with the Senior Independent Members of each Council to ensure that UKRI's Councils operate effectively and are able to discharge their remits within UKRI.

Specific responsibilities

The candidate information pack identifies the role's key responsibilities as including:

- Chair UKRI board meetings ensuring Board business is conducted efficiently to enable strong stewardship of UKRI with the right level of executive challenge evidenced by effective delivery.
- Ensure the Board is able to have an effective overview and insight into the organisation. Lead the Board and the non-executives ensuring they are effective in their roles and that the skills and experience of members remains relevant through succession planning and recruitment. Ensure the governance of UKRI overall is efficient and effective, progressing reforms as necessary, including the role of Councils' Councils and their SIMs, and ensure the effective operation of the sub committees to the UKRI Board. Ensure the Board is reviewed regularly and act on any recommendations.

- Chair the Nominations and Remuneration Committee, which determines senior executive pay policy and contracts, and corporate bonuses, and appointments to research Council committees, as well as regular attendance at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and other Board subcommittees.
- Provide advice to the Secretary of State on appointments to the UKRI board including the CEO and CFO. Support the CEO in recruitment of UKRI's other senior executive appointments.

Person specification and essential criteria

The candidate information pack sets out the following person specification:

We are looking for an outstanding individual to become Chair of UKRI.

Applications are sought from candidates with demonstrable experience to show they could command the confidence of Government, the academic, business, higher education communities, guide and challenge the development of UKRI's organisational approach, ensure the organisation is delivering effectively and efficiently, is focussed on value for money, able to demonstrate impact, and confident in embracing change and innovation.

It identifies the following as essential criteria:

- The ability to think strategically, set clear direction and communicate effectively in order to lead the Board and chair it efficiently;
- Show a strong understanding of governance and other governing body management issues, including compliance and probity;
- Excellent interpersonal and stakeholder management skills, including the ability to build effective team relationships with board members and to mentor and support the CEO and executive team;
- Substantial experience of organisational management with ability to challenge an executive organisation in an open and constructive manner to enhance corporate health and drive delivery;
- Strong links to and credibility with Government, business and academia, or demonstrable ability to build significant credibility within those communities.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The candidate information pack contains the following equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) statement:

UKRI is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all. Applications from women, those with a disability, and members of minority ethnic groups, who are currently under-represented at senior levels in some sectors of the research and innovation community, are therefore especially encouraged. You can read more about our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion [here](#).

It identifies the following key EDI principles:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion is a critical aspect of a healthy research culture – from how it's designed, how it's carried out and who is involved.
- Research and innovation should be 'for everyone, by everyone' – a dynamic, diverse and inclusive research and innovation system in the UK is an integral part of society and should give everyone the opportunity to participate and to benefit.
- We need to be diverse to accommodate that research and innovation is unpredictable, is often created through new and unanticipated combinations, and can take many forms.
- By recognising and nurturing all people in the system and diversifying interactions, we will enrich our lives by creating knowledge, enabling us to understand the world around us and empowering us to tackle the many challenges we face as individuals and as communities, nationally and globally.
- The whole workforce are key contributors in the research and innovation system – from the lead researcher or innovator to those who keep the lights on or maintain the large infrastructure and equipment in our laboratories, small businesses or on our research vessels.
- By valuing all, we recognise that a diversity of ideas, opinions, knowledge and people enriches our work and enlarges our knowledge economy.

Appendix 3: Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz CV

Professor Borysiewicz submitted a CV as part of the recruitment process, which we have reproduced below. We have also reproduced a table confirming which of his current roles he intends to continue in or resign.

Current roles

Table 1: Current roles

Organisation and notes	Role	Outcome
Cambridge Arts Theatre	Trustee	Will continue
Cambridge CARES programme with Singapore Create	Board member	Will step down
Cambridge University Rugby Club	President	Will continue
The Courtauld Institute of Art	Governor; Director & Trustee	Will step down
Diamond Light Source Ltd.	Chair	Will step down
Evelyn Trust, Cambridge	Trustee	Will step down
Imperial College	Council member	Will step down
Institute for Research in Schools	Patron	Retain
Kamini And Vindi Banga Family Trust	Adviser	Will step down
SAC for Malopolska Centre of Biotechnology, Krakow.	Member	Will step down
Max Planck Gesellschaft	Deputy Chair, Dioscuri Programme	Will step down from December
UK Institute for Motor Neurone Disease	Co-Chair	Will step down
Wolfson Foundation	Trustee and board member, (medicine and universities panel)	Looking to continue
Yidan Prize Foundation (educational focus)	Director	Will step down

Source: Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz

CV

Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz

Appointments

Present appointments

- 2026– Kamini And Vindi Banga Family Trust
- 2025– Trustee Evelyn Trust, Cambridge
- 2025– Co-Chair UK Institute for Motor Neurone Disease
- 2024– Board Member of Cambridge CARES programme with Singapore Create.
- 2024– Member of the SAC for Malopolska Centre of Biotechnology, Krakow.
- 2024– **Chairman Diamond Light Source Ltd, Harwell.**

Diamond Light Source is a not for profit company supported by two shareholders – STFC and Wellcome Trust. It is currently operating under a proposed Framework Agreement between Diamond Light Source, DSIT and HM Treasury, which is close to being finalised. Diamond's 900 staff provide the the National UK Synchrotron Facility at Harwell with 32 beamlines utilising the intense light and X ray source to determine molecular and macro structures in life and physical sciences supporting UK Investigators (both Academic and. Commercial). The facility is being upgraded, supported by STFC funding, to higher energy and increased beamline capacity in the ~£500m Diamond II project (to come on stream in 2028).

- 2023– **Trustee and Board Member, Wolfson Foundation, London.**

The Foundation supports infrastructure awards in a variety of fields including academic infrastructure for Science and Technology in the University and other Academic Institutions. The Board looks after the Endowment and makes awards of ~£100m pa. In addition to being a Board Member I serve on the Health and Science Awards Panel.

- 2021–2026 Chairman, Scientific Advisory Board for the Cancer Science Institute of Singapore, National University of Singapore
- 2021–2027 **Council Member, Imperial College London**
- 2019– **Governor, Director & Charity Trustee, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London**
- 2017– **Deputy Chair, Dioscuri Programme for Central Europe, Max Planck Gesellschaft, Munich**

Recent Appointments

2016–2023 Chairman, Cancer Research UK

This is one of the world's largest fundraising charities and delivers funding for ~55-60% of all UK Cancer Research. £350-450m is distributed annually both through response mode funding as well as core support for Institutes including the Crick Institute, London (~45-50% of that Institute's core funding), Cambridge, Manchester, Glasgow, ICR/Imperial, & UCL, alongside support for 12 distributed clinical research centres. All resources are raised annually and ~80% of all funds raised distributed to the mission. Also Cancer Research Technology is the IP exploitation arm of CRUK which licences and supports startups from grant funding covenanting its 'profits' back to the Charity – in 2020 ~£46m.

2017–2022 Board Member, UK Research & Innovation (completed tenure 2022)

This is the major UK Agency supporting Research, Innovation and Development with a recent budget of £7.9bn. Responsible for all 7 Research Councils funding, Innovate UK and Research England (providing support for the Dual Support of UK Universities), engagement through BEIS on Policy in R&D and engagement with innovation in the private sector. Responsible for major National Research Infrastructure e.g. Harwell Campus, Laboratory for Molecular Biology etc and International collaboration and funding e.g. CERN, Square Kilometre Array etc as well as direct engagement with COPP26.

2017–2026 Board Trustee, Nanyang Technological University

This is a major international University rated variably first or second in Singapore and often top of new Universities in Asia. Its focus and academic success has depended on internationally leading work in Engineering, Computing Science especially in AI and its application but also has a presence in life and physical sciences as well as a business school and Medical School. It also hosts national science infrastructure such as the National Singapore Create Programme involving collaborative programmes with top global universities such as Cambridge and Imperial from the UK alongside, ETH Zurich, Weizmann Institute, CERN etc. In addition the National Institute for Education, which is the only Singaporean centre for education research and teacher training and development. In this it supports Singapore's recognised global leadership for primary and secondary education. During my time I have served in a number of capacities significantly as Chairman of the Academic Advisory Committee supporting the University in senior appointments and strategic direction.

Other current appointments

- 2025– Trustee, Cambridge Arts Theatre, Cambridge
- 2017– Director, Yidan Prize Foundation for Education, Hong Kong
- 2015– Member, The Institute for Research in Schools
(completing tenure 2021)
- 2017– President, Cambridge University Rugby Football Club

Qualifications and Awards

Personal Education and Qualifications

- 2008: FRS
- 2002: FRCPath (London) Honorary Fellow
- 1998: FMed Sci (Founder Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences)
- 1989: FRCP (London)
- 1986: PhD (London)
- 1979: MRCP (UK)
- 1975: MB, BCh with Honours (Distinctions in: Anatomy, Pathology, Pharmacology, Surgery, Social & Occupational Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Medicine); 7 prizes including the “Gold Medal”
- 1972: BSc First Class Hons in Anatomy (1972)
- 1969–1975: Welsh National School of Medicine
- 1962–1969: Cardiff High School for Boys

National and International Awards

- 2025: Knight’s Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire (GBE)
- 2022: Pingat Bakti Masyarakat, Prime Minister Medal for Service to Singapore
- 2019: Wielki Krzyz Zaslugi (Grand Cross of the Order of Merit), Poland
- 2014: INSERM Le Prix International, Paris
- 2014: Bene Merito Medal, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland
- 2015–2026: Deputy Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, UK
- 2011: The Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London – Galen Medal

2010: Founder Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales (FLSW)
2009: Harverian Orator, Royal College of Physicians, London
2008: Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS)
2001: Knighthood for services to medical research and education
2002: Royal College of Physicians Moxon Trust Medal for Clinical Research
1998: Founder Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences (FMedSci)
1998: Foreign Member of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences at Krakow

Academic and other Awards

2019: Doctor Honaris Causa, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland
2018: Honorary LLD, University of Cambridge, UK
2018: Doctor Honaris Causa, University of Bialystok, Poland
2018: Distinguished Professor Jeffrey Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences and Sunway University, Malaysia
2017: Honorary DSc Imperial College London, UK
2017: Honorary Fellow Homerton College, University of Cambridge, UK
2017: Honorary Fellow St Edmund's College, University of Cambridge, UK
2014: Honorary DSc University of Aberdeen
2013: Honorary DSc University of South Wales, UK
2012: Honorary DSc University of Peking
2011: Honorary DSc University of Hong Kong
2011: Honorary Visiting Professor Shanghai Jiao Tong University
2011: Honorary Fellowship UWIC, Cardiff
2011: Honorary DSc University of Glasgow
2010: Honorary MD University of Sheffield
2010: Ker Memorial Lecturer, University of Edinburgh
2009: Sir Arthur Harris Lecture and Medal, University of Sheffield
2009: Honorary DSc University of Exeter

2009: Honorary Fellowship Imperial College London

2009: Honorary DSc Queen Mary University of London

2008: Honorary DSc University of Hull

2008: Honorary DSc University of Southampton

2006: Honorary Fellow of Cardiff University

2005: Fellow of the City and Guilds of London Institute (FCGI)

2005: Member of Cancer Research UK

2002: Honorary Fellow of Royal College of Pathologists (London) (FRCPath)

2002: Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge

1997: Royal College of Surgeons of England, Sir Arthur Sims Commonwealth Travelling Professor

Previous Substantive Appointments/Professional Experience

2017–2022: Member Scientific Advisory Board, National Research Foundation Singapore

2015–2019: **Member, Siemens Technology and Innovation Council, Munich**

2014–2020: Chairman, European Research Council Identification Committee, EU

2010–2017: **Vice Chancellor, University of Cambridge, UK**

The Vice Chancellor (President) of the University of Cambridge is responsible for the organisation, strategic direction and all aspects of teaching and research undertaken by the University. During my tenure the University was always in the top 5 global Universities (including occasionally top) by most rankings. 5 Nobel Prizes were awarded to staff/alumni University during this period. Annual turnover £1.5bn, 18,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students and ~7,000 academic and non-academic staff. During my tenure Philanthropy raised £1.2bn for the University and Colleges, established major international collaborations in USA, India, China etc with major capital developments including the rebuild of the Papworth Hospital (£200m), the Jeffrey Cheah Clinical Research Facility building (£30m), Chemical Engineering (£50m), Chemistry (£25m) Engineering additional builds (£10–20m), Business School (£10m), the Cavendish Laboratory (£200m) and the largest UK University development at NW Cambridge adding 15% to the size of the City (~£1bn). The University is the anchor of the Cambridge Phenomenon which serves to develop and attract companies to Cambridge – recognised as the largest such activity

in Europe returning then ~£13bn/annum and creating 68,000 jobs in the county with 14 companies now valued at over £1bn. These numbers have continued to grow. Large multinational companies invest directly and via the University most notably during my tenure attracting the Global HQ of Astra Zeneca with associated investments. The Vice Chancellor played a major representative role on Russell Group, UUK and other University and Government bodies (not itemised).

2008–2022: Member of Singapore Government Biomedical Sciences International Advisory Council (BMS AC)

2007–2010: **Chief Executive, Medical Research Council, UK**

This is the major government funder of biomedical research ranging from fundamental to translational research with a then annual budget of £600m/yr. All modes of response mode funding as well as support for 5 Institutes, including LMB. Key achievements were securing the rebuild of the LMB (~£300m), securing the building of the Crick Institute (~£400m) and the establishment of major collaboration with NIHR to enable and strengthen translational research in the UK. MRC Technology was the commercialisation arm at the time and sitting on their Board was a central aspect of the role and dealing with the Treasury/MRC ownership of major IP was a significant aspect.

2004–Oct 2007: **Deputy Rector, Imperial College London**

The Deputy Rector role was not just Deputy to the Rector but akin to that of Provost. This required managing and developing the resources of the whole Institution by enhanced collaboration especially with the then very recent mergers with London Medical Schools and embedding them within the broader structures of Imperial. It also required pushing wider cross disciplinary agendas, deciding on capital investment, establishing different management models and resource allocation while maintaining the research and teaching agenda. During my time an important aspect was the establishment of Imperial Innovations as a mechanism to bring in external investment to support translation of IP

2006–2007: Governor, Wellcome Trust

2005–2007: Chairman Joint MRC/UK Stem Cell Foundation Scientific Advisory Board

2005–2007: Chairman UKCRC Integrated Academic Training Awards Panel

2002–2007: Trustee, Nuffield Trust, London

2001–Oct 2004: **Principal, Faculty of Medicine and Imperial College School of Medicine**

2003–2004: Non Executive Director, North Thames Regional Health Authority

2001–2003: Non Executive Director, Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust

1995–2001: Honorary Consultant Physician, Cardiff Community Healthcare NHS Trust

1991–2001: **Professor of Medicine, University of Wales College of Medicine, Cardiff.** Honorary Consultant Physician (Infectious Diseases), University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff

Honorary Consultant Physician, Llandough Hospital Trust

Honorary Consultant Physician, Velindre Hospital Trust

1989–1990: Honorary Consultant Physician to Papworth Hospital, Huntingdon

1988–1990: **University Lecturer in Department of Medicine and Honorary Consultant Physician (Infectious Diseases) University of Cambridge,** Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge

1988–1988: Wellcome Trust Senior Lecturer in Infectious Diseases and Honorary Consultant Physician, Department of Medicine, University of Cambridge, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge

1987–1987: **Lister Research Fellow and Honorary Consultant Physician, Department of Medicine, University of Cambridge, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge**

1987–1987: Lister Research Fellow/Honorary Senior Lecturer and Consultant Physician (Infectious Diseases), Department of Medicine, Royal Postgraduate Medical School and Hammersmith Hospital

1986–1987: Senior Registrar to the Renal and Infectious Diseases Unit (Professor DK Peters, Dr J Cohen et al) Hammersmith Hospital and Royal Postgraduate Medical School

1986: Consultant Physician at The Royal Victoria Hospital, Banjul, The Gambia

1982–1986: **Lister Research Fellow, Honorary Senior Registrar and Lecturer in Medicine, Royal Postgraduate Medical School and Hammersmith Hospital**

1980–1982: MRC Training Fellowship Award (until October 1983) Research Fellow and Honorary Registrar to Department of Medicine (Renal) Professor DK Peters and Dr JGP Sissons, Royal Postgraduate Medical School and Hammersmith Hospital

1975–1980: Junior Hospital Appointments in Cardiff and London (Royal Postgraduate Medical School and Hammersmith, Queen's Square and Ealing Hospital)

Previous Chair/Membership of selected Committees/Boards

UK Government and International

2017–2024: Member UK Health Honours Committee, UK Government

2014–2020: **Chairman, European Research Council Identification Committee, EU, Brussels**

2012–2015: Member, UK Health Honours Committee, UK Government (re-appointed 2017)

2010–2016: **Chairman, Scientific Advisory Board, Department for International Development, UK Government**

2007–2010: **Vice President, European Heads of Research Council (EUROHORCs)**

2007–2010: **Chairman, Heads of International (Biomedical) Research Organisations**

2002–2004: Chairman of Scientific Council of International Agency for Research on Cancer (WHO)

2001–2002: Vice Chairman of Scientific Council of International Agency for Research on Cancer (WHO)

2000–2005: Member, then Chairman of the Joint Medical Advisory Committee (NHS and HEFCE)

1996–2002: Chairman of the joint MRC/DH Research Advisory Committee on Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies

1996: Member, EU Advisory group on Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies

1995–2004: Member of SmithKline Beecham Biologicals/Regional Government – Walloon Region, Belgium, Scientific Advisory Committee of the Centre for Inter-University Vaccine Research (CRIV)

1994–1998: Chairman of NHS (Wales) R & D Grants Committee

1994–1996: Acting Director of NHS (Wales) Research & Development

Higher Education

2016: Member of the Stern UK Research Excellence Framework Review Panel setting the criteria for Research Excellence Framework 2021

2005–2009: **Chairman of the HEFCE UK Research Assessment Exercise 2008 Main Panel A (Medicine) Assessment Panel**

2002–2007: Member of Gates Schistosomiasis Control Initiative (SCI) at Imperial College, Board of Directors

2001–2002: Member of the HEFCE UK Research Assessment Exercise Review Steering Group (Chaired by Gareth Roberts) (2001–2002)

2001–2004: **Principal, Faculty of Medicine and Imperial College School of Medicine.**

The appointment as Principal required me to Chair all Faculty Advisory Committees and to represent the Faculty at most College Committees, Senate, Court and Council, including the Executive Committee

2002–2004: Observer, West London Development Workforce Confederation HEI Group

2001: **Chairman of the Unit of Assessment Panel for Hospital Based Subjects in UK Research Assessment Exercise**

1993–2001: Member of Board of Advisors – Standing Panel of Experts in Medicine, University of London

Research and Grant awarding organisations

2010–2016: Chairman, Tres Cantos Foundation for University/GSK interaction in Neglected Diseases

1995–2000: Member of Council of the Medical Research Council

1996–2000: Chairman of the MRC Molecular and Cell Medicine Board

These duties included not only chairing MCMB Meetings but being Board representative to Council, SDG, AAG etc. I have chaired ~16 Unit Scientific Reviews and Site Visits, ~10 Appointment Committees, 5 reviews linked to establishing new Units and participated in ~15 sub-committees dealing with specific MCMB related matters

2001–2002: Member of MRC Cardiovascular Advisory Group

1995–1996: Member of the Physiological Medicine Board, MRC

1995–2002: Board Member of the Kidney Research Unit Fund for Wales

1995–2002: Board Member of the Foundation for Nephrology

1991–1996: Member of Council of National Kidney Research Fund

1990–1995: Member Wellcome Trust Grant Funding Panel on Infection and Immunity

Charities and other organisations

2017–2020: Elected Member of Council of the Royal Society

2002–2007: Trustee, Nuffield Hospitals Trust, London

2003–2004: Trustee of St Mark's Hospital Foundation

2002–2004: Chairman Science Committee, Cancer Research UK

2002–2005: Member of Council and Trustee, Cancer Research UK

2004–2005: Member of General Purposes Committee, Cancer Research UK

2001–2002: Chairman of the British Heart Foundation Cardiovascular Research Review

1997–2002: Member of Council – Academy of Medical Sciences
[elected by the Fellowship]

1998–2005: Member of the Policy Evaluation Advisory Group,
The Nuffield Trust

1998–2000: Member of Wellcome Trust Monitoring Committee for
clinical research facilities

1996–2002: Member of Lister Institute of Preventative Medicine Scientific
Advisory Committee

1995–2001: Member of Medical Advisory Committee of the British Council

1994–: Member of the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine

1992–1996: Chairman of Linbury Trust Scientific Advisory Committee

1991–1994: Member Wellcome Trust Clinical Interest Group

1997: Member of the MRC Chief Executive's Advisory Committee on Research
Relevant to Health in Developing Societies

1990–1992: Member, Scientific Advisory Panel to Linbury Trust

Clinical and other advisory organisations

2007–2010: Chairman, UK Stem Cell Funder's Forum

2008–2010: Member of Health Innovation Council

2005–2007: **Member, Expert Scientific Group – Clinical Trial TGN 1412, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency**

2005–2007: **Chairman UKCRC Integrated Academic Training**

2000–2004: Member then **Chairman of the Joint Medical Advisory Committee (NHS and HEFCE)**

2000: Member of Royal College of Physicians' Advisory Committee on Higher Awards

2001–2004: Observer of Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust Board

2001–2005: Member of North West London Acute Chief Executive Forum

2001–2004: Member of West London Pathology Consortium

1991–2001: Member of the Specialist Advisory Committee in Genitourinary Medicine, Royal College of Physicians

1998–2000: Member of the Royal Colleges Joint Committee on Infection

1996: Member of panel advising Ministry of Defence on health consequences of service during Gulf War

1995–1996: Member of the Joint Working Party (Royal Colleges of Psychiatrists and Physicians) on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

1995–1997: Member of Research Committee of the Royal College of Physicians

1994–2001: Chairman Specialist Advisory Committee on Infection and Tropical Medicine

1994–2001: Member Royal College of Physicians' Joint Committee on Higher Medical Training

1993–1997: Member of Department of Health Expert Advisory Group on AIDS

1993: Member of Department of Health Expert Group for Hammersmith & Queen Charlotte's SHA

1998–2001: Member of the NHS R & D Consortium Committee of the Vale and UHW Trust

Interactions with Business and Industry

2022–2024: Director, 52 North Health PLC, Cambridge

2015–2017: Board Member Precision Medicine Catapult at Cambridge – Innovate UK

2007–2010: Member of Medical Research Council Technology Board

2002–2004: Member of Oxxon Pharmaccines Limited Scientific Advisory Board

2000–2002: Member of Scientific Advisory Board for Cancer Research Ventures Limited

1991–2000: Consultant to Cantab Pharmaceuticals PLC

1998: Consultant to Smith Kline Beecham RIT (Belgium) in cell mediated anti-viral immune responses and vaccine development

Editorial

2000: Member of the Editorial Board of Viral Immunology

1998: Member of the Editorial Board – Microbes and Infection, Pasteur Institute, Paris

1997: Specialist Advisor to the Journal of Infection

1997–2001: Series Editor, British Medical Board

1995–2007: Member of Editorial Board of British Medical Bulletin (becoming Series Editor)

1994–2000: Member Editorial Board Infectious Diseases, Baillière Tindall

1992–1997: Member Editorial Board, Quarterly Journal of Medicine

1981–2001: Member of Editorial Board – Journal of Immunological Methods

1987–2000: Member of the Editorial Board—Autoimmunity: Harwood Academic Publishers—London, Paris, New York

Other Activities

2025–: Trustee, Cambridge Arts Theatre, Cambridge

2017–: President, Cambridge University Rugby Football Club

2014–2023: Member of Council, St George's House, Windsor

2015–2018: Member of Jury, Berggruen Institute for 'Transformative Ideas', California

2010: Member of the Ministry of Justice Working Group on Libel Law

2010–2017: Tanner Lectures on Human Values – Tanner Trustee, Utah

Membership of Societies

- Association of Clinical Professors of Medicine
- British Society for Immunology
- Society for General Microbiology
- Infectious Disease Society (now merged British Society for Infection – Treasurer 1992–4)
- Medical Research Club
- Association of Physicians (UK) – Executive Committee Member (1995–98)
- Society of Physicians in Wales

Publications, Grants/Awards, Students

Until 2002, I published >140 Papers, Reviews, Books and Reports based largely on my research in Human Viral Immunology against herpesviruses and human papillomavirus, the latter focussed on developing a therapeutic anti-HPV vaccine. I have secured competitive peer-reviewed grant income to support this work (>£20m) and supervised 19 PhD/MD students as well as providing a clinical service in Infectious Diseases. Full details available on request.

Appendix 4: Candidate questionnaire

Motivation

What motivated you to apply for this role, and what specific experiences would you bring to it?

The role of Chair of UKRI is the most exciting and important opportunity in UK Research and Innovation and to be considered for this, the motivation is for me to help deliver excellence in UK research, economic growth as well as enhancing individual and societal benefit. UKRI has a crucial role in ensuring appropriate co-ordination of research funding and investment for the UK across individual research disciplines and translation of discovery into benefit for the UK. From my background this is an unparalleled opportunity to directly contribute to this goal.

My experience as CEO of the Medical Research Council and subsequently serving on the Board of UKRI for 6 years highlighted the limitations of a siloed approach to research funding. The issues that society faces are complex and increasingly require large-scale data-driven studies with a cross- and inter-disciplinary approach. This requires co-ordination and investment decisions that span all disciplines, and UKRI is essential for this. Secondly, to deliver the goals of successful economic growth, improved lives and enhancing the UK's global position at the forefront of research UKRI must be prepared to evolve and change.

My background and experience are set out in my CV, which I believe has been made available. Briefly, I was born in Cardiff to Polish parents and was educated at the Welsh National School of Medicine. My clinical training was in Wales and at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School including a short time overseas in The Gambia. At Hammersmith I undertook research training studying the immune response to persistent human virus infections especially with human cytomegalovirus and human papillomavirus. This continued as Professor of Medicine to the University of Wales College of Medicine (1991–2001) and led to Europe's first trial of a vaccine for human papillomavirus to treat cervical cancer. In 2001 I returned to London as Head of the Medical Faculty (2001–04) and later Deputy Rector (2004–07) at Imperial College. In 2007 I was appointed Chief Executive of the Medical

Research Council and then was elected the 345th Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge (2010–17). On completing my term of office, I was appointed Chairman of Cancer Research UK (2016–23), the UK's largest cancer charity. I am now Chairman of the UK Synchrotron at Diamond Light Source (2024–), alongside Council membership at Imperial College and The Courtauld Institute. Each of these roles has required direct interaction with industry as well as many UK and international bodies including the WHO, Siemens, GSK, European Research Council, Max Plank Society and Singapore.

I believe that I bring to the role experience across the whole spectrum of UKRI activity in academia, supporting translation as well as working alongside large scale industry. The size and scale of the organisations I have led helps me in developing and delivering strategic directions, long-term sustainability and good governance alongside the experience of the complexity of change at scale, which will be important at UKRI.

If appointed, are there specific areas within your new responsibilities where you will need to acquire new skills or knowledge?

At UKRI there will always be new aspects which require acquisition of new knowledge. Clearly, it is essential to get up to speed quickly, with the details of current developments, proposed strategic direction and plans for implementation with the CEO and other Executive and Non-executive Board members. Developing strong interactions and building trust with Board members, and executive staff is essential, especially the CEO. Engaging directly to provide appropriate and timely guidance to ministers in the context of UKRI will be new and important.

In terms of specific skills, I can rely on the support of DSIT and UKRI staff to guide me with UKRI-specific aspects of accountability and governance, as I am confident that this is already in place.

How were you recruited? Were you encouraged to apply, and if so, by whom?

Throughout the recruitment process my primary contact has been with the recruiting agency appointed to identify suitable individuals and they provided encouragement leading to a full application.

Personal background

Do you currently or potentially have any business, financial or other non-pecuniary interests or commitments, that might give rise to the perception of a conflict of interest if you are appointed? How do you intend to resolve any potential conflicts of interests if you are appointed?

My CV indicates a substantial number of roles. In applying for this position, I understood that, conflicts notwithstanding, I must demit most of my current appointments because I want to ensure that I have the time to focus on this role.

If appointed, what professional or voluntary work commitments will you continue to undertake, or do you intend to take on, alongside your new role? How will you reconcile these with your new role?

I would like to continue:

- Trustee of the Wolfson Foundation – a charity that allocates resources to support capital programmes in higher education as well as schools, museums and the arts (Time commitment is 4 days/year). I will seek advice as to whether this would be a substantial conflict and will act on that advice.
- I serve on a small number of local boards such as The Cambridge Arts Theatre and as President of Cambridge University Rugby Club – these do not represent a conflict and are not a significant time commitment (<10 2–3h sessions/year).

Have you ever held any post or undertaken any activity that might cast doubt on your political impartiality? If so, how will you demonstrate your political impartiality in the role if appointed?

No.

Do you intend to serve your full term of office? Do you intend to seek re-appointment?

Yes, I intend to serve the full term of my appointment. Re-appointment would be considered based on my performance and I would consider this in plenty of time to ensure that appropriate succession planning could be undertaken.

UK Research and Innovation

If appointed, what will be your main priorities on taking up the role?

As the UK's largest public funder of research and innovation UKRI must use this resource effectively to deliver against three main directions, recently defined as – advancing knowledge, improving lives and driving growth. It is also an organisation in the throes of considerable change in how it delivers against these ambitious goals. However, as a public body it must manage and utilise the public funds it has been given, with good governance and transparency. Therefore, my initial priority, which I will undertake as soon as possible, is to get up to speed with the changes in funding structure alongside the developing strategy for UKRI working with the CEO and his executive team. These changes must have clear and timely objective indicators to help management but also ensure accountability for the use of public funds. Similarly getting to know the Board members and key stakeholders will be a priority to hear their views. Achieving its goals will require UKRI to establish partnerships (with industry, the charity sector, research communities across the four nations and regions of the UK, and research institutions, including Universities) and supporting the CEO in this will be crucial. Equally, ensuring that UKRI provides ministers with independent, timely advice when required is for me an important priority.

What criteria should the Committee use to judge your performance, and that of UKRI, over your term of office?

UKRI's challenge is to deliver against the three directions of growth, improving lives and advancing knowledge and my performance, alongside UKRI will be judged against these goals. Also I must win the confidence of ministers, Board members, executive staff and key stakeholders as part of this. A further aspect will be to support (and challenge) the CEO and his team during a period of considerable change at UKRI and ensuring that transitions are carefully considered alongside stakeholders to minimise disruption. Similarly, the establishment and engagement with partners for the benefit of UK Science and Innovation will be important. Advancing knowledge and keeping the UK at the international forefront will be difficult to assess as, while short term metrics are available, the very nature of fundamental research is on a far longer time frame. Likewise, I have a particular interest in creating and maintaining the environment to develop the next generation of research leaders from diverse backgrounds, so important for long term UK success.

How will you protect and enhance your personal independence and the institutional independence of UKRI?

UKRI, as a public body receives its funding as well as its broad direction from government. However, fundamental to the concept of UKRI is its independence to utilise those resources to achieve those goals. If appointed I would support that principle but also recognise the importance of accountability and good governance and working with those charged with ensuring this. Stakeholders in business and academia who rely on UKRI support must have trust in that independent decision making if we are to maintain and improve the enviable UK research ecosystem and alongside the Board I would have to play a part in delivering this. Personally, my independence as Chair would be important as it sets the tone for any organisation, let alone a public body such as UKRI, and this has to be carefully considered and transparent at all times.

How do you assess the public profile and reputation of UKRI?

As I have outlined in other answers, I consider UKRI is vital for the effective use of resources to support research in individual disciplines but also in those vital areas of interdisciplinary work ensuring UK's pre-eminence, enabling translation and ultimately economic growth. I believe it to have a strong reputation that is historically based on the success of research councils, but it is gaining recognition and trust as a relatively new body that is grappling with difficult issues. There will always be debate about its decisions because the stakeholders are so committed to their work and there is never going to be enough resource to satisfy all possible calls on funding. But I believe that openness, transparency and good communication are going to be vital for UKRI to grow its reputation and public profile.

**What risks do you think UKRI will face over your term of office?
How do you intend to manage them?**

There are many risks that UKRI will face during the next three years. Geopolitical uncertainty and economic challenges will impact on UKRI as well as partners that are essential to the UK effort in R&D. Many of them are external to the organisation and UKRI needs to proactively consider them and mitigate where possible but cannot be expected to be immune to these influences. Internally, the biggest challenge will be the change. Change is seldom welcomed as it impacts on so many of UKRI's stakeholders and I, alongside the Board, look forward to learning and discussing the detail of changes and strategic direction envisaged by the CEO. This is a major challenge that I, if appointed, look forward to working on with the Board and Sir Ian Chapman, to ensure the continuing success of UKRI in delivering for public benefit.

Formal minutes

Tuesday 22 April 2026

Members present

Dame Chi Onwurah, in the Chair

Emily Darlington

George Freeman

Dr Allison Gardner

Kit Malthouse

Dr Lauren Sullivan

Freddie van Mierlo

Martin Wrigley

Daniel Zeichner

Declaration of interests

The following declarations of interest relating to the inquiry were made:

George Freeman declared that he had previously worked with Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz in various roles.

Daniel Zeichner declared that he had previously worked with Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz in relation to the Professor's role of Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge.

Pre-appointment hearing - chair of UK Research and Innovation

Draft Report (*Pre-appointment hearing - chair of UK Research and Innovation*) proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 8 read and agreed to.

Papers were appended to the Report as Appendices 1–4.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fourth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

Adjournment

Adjourned till Wednesday 29 April at 9am

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Wednesday 22 April 2026

Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Government's preferred candidate for the role of chair, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2024–26

Number	Title	Reference
3rd	Flying Blind: Innovation, Growth and the Regions	HC 538
2nd	Social media, misinformation and harmful algorithms	HC 441
1st	Pre-appointment hearing for the Executive Chair of Innovate UK	HC 834
3rd Special	Social media, misinformation and harmful algorithms: Government and Ofcom responses	HC 1397
2nd Special	Insect decline and UK food security: Government Response	HC 717
1st Special	Governance of artificial intelligence (AI): Government Response	HC 591