



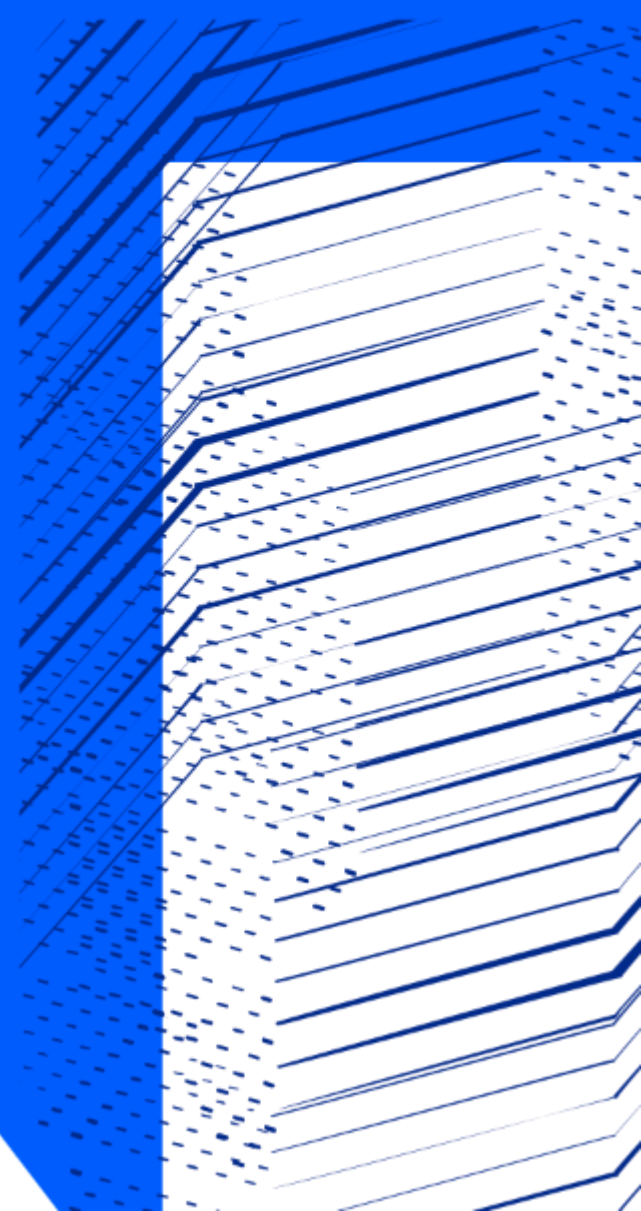
Science and
Technology
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STFC Townhall

IOP Nuclear Physics Conference 2026

14 April 2026

University of Brighton





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STFC update

Michele Dougherty (Executive Chair)

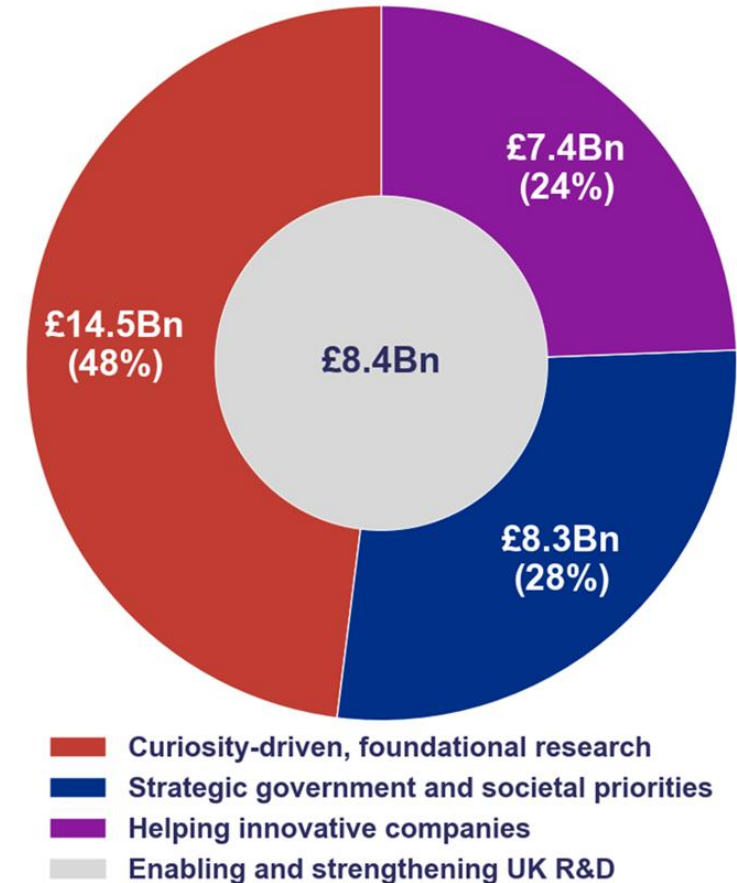
Revised UKRI Mission

“To advance knowledge,
improve lives and drive growth”

UKRI approach to funding allocations

UKRI's Allocation Priorities

- UKRI received a record settlement of £38Bn across the spending review (2026/7-2029/30)
- The UKRI Budget is now aligned to the new mission – 3 “buckets” model
- UKRI are custodians of curiosity driven research and this continues to be the largest fraction of UKRI's budget
- However, UKRI will need to be choiceful about its investments, which will mean prioritising areas where the UK can be world-leading and by working closely with business



Figures cover the whole SR period

UKRI approach to funding allocations

Addressing Government and Societal Priorities

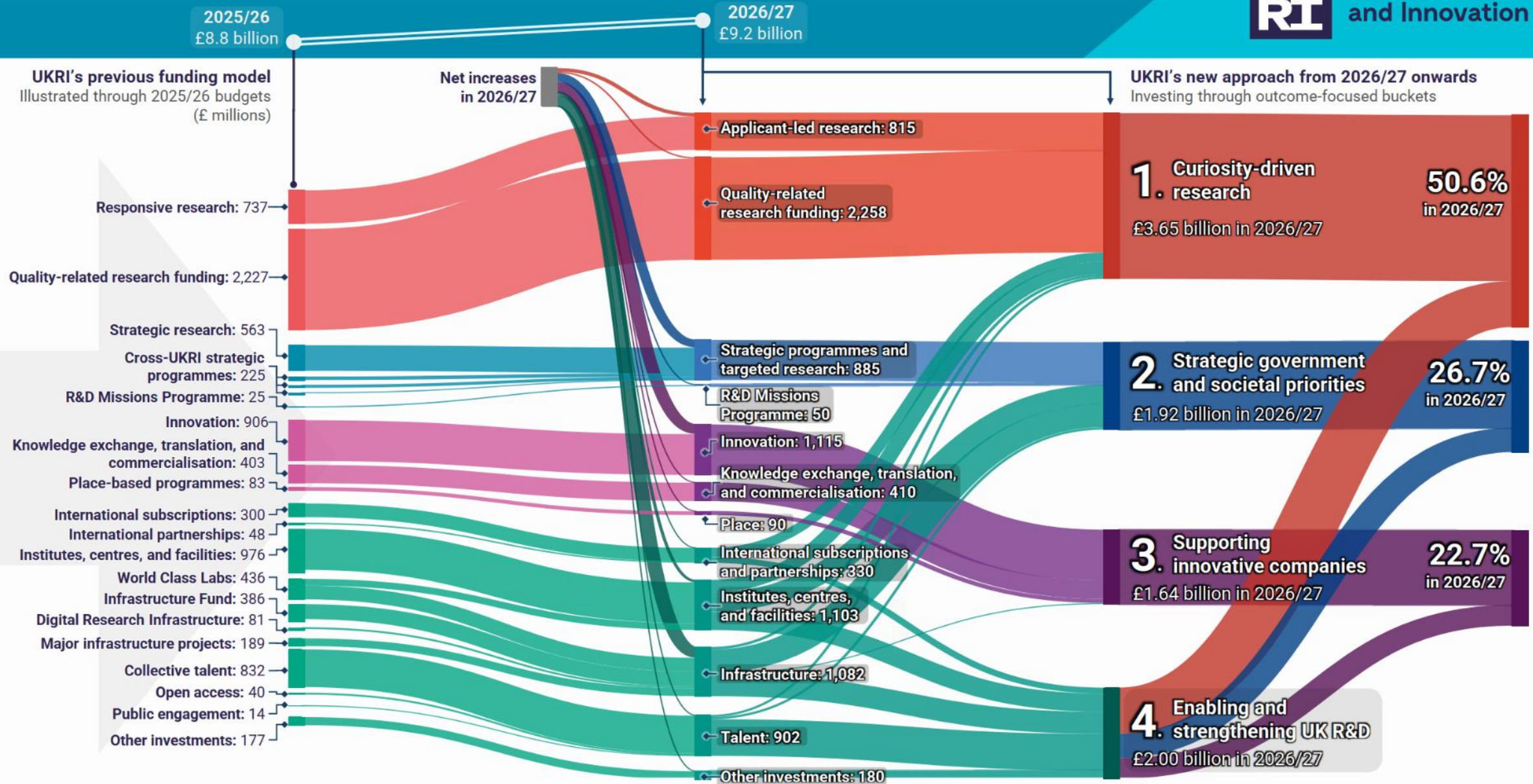
- Programmes will be developed with DSIT and other government departments, universities, researchers, innovators, investors and businesses.
- These programmes provide significant investment in physics
- At portfolio level, investments will target an average leverage ratio of at least £3 of private investment for every £1 of public investment



UKRI is investing its rising budget through a new, more outcome-focused approach



UK Research and Innovation



Note 1: Total funding levels across the individual lines in the financial year 2025 to 2026 differs from UKRI's total published budget of £8,811 million, as the diagram excludes programmes not directly managed by UKRI, as well as a small proportion of quality-related research funding that has been rephased between financial years (around 3%). This has not been included in order to provide the figure on the same basis as the 2026 to 2027 financial year.

Note 2: 'Other investments' includes administrative support and investment in the transformation of UKRI's systems and processes.

What it means for STFC

Headlines are:

- Our budget will be broadly flat over the current Spending Review period.
- There continues to be significant pressures and calls on STFC's budget:
 - Inflation has been significant over recent years (over 10% p.a. at times), which has not been matched by increased funding for major projects/lab infrastructure
 - Salaries, University overheads and student stipends have all increased
 - Delays (including Covid) and technical challenges have led to increased costs in several major PPAN projects
 - Cost of international infrastructure has risen due to a combination of exchange rate and subscriptions increases
- Without action, our costs are estimated to exceed available funding by £162 million by 2030
 - We will take ~2/3 of these savings internal to STFC

STFC Transformation Programme

To ensure a sustainable future for all of our research communities:

- We need to ensure we are as efficient and effective as possible, ensuring the long-term sustainability of our research communities and the facilities that sustain them
- We cannot continue with everything that we currently fund, but what we do fund must be at a viable level, delivering world class research and technology
- Last year, we launched a major transformation programme with the aim of:
 - Evolving in a leaner, more effective and agile organisation
 - Prioritising our investments
 - Diversify our funding sources
- To support the decision making, we launched a PPAN prioritisation process through Science Board PPAN, which Keith Grainge will cover in his presentation:
 - Recommendations to 9 June Council and 16 June Executive Board

Engaging with the PPAN community

Since my letter to the PPAN community on 28 Jan, engagements include:

- 3 Feb – meeting with Minister Vallance and representatives from the community
- 4 Feb – Particle Physics Advisory Panel community meeting
- 16 Feb – Astronomy Advisory Panel community meeting
- 17 Feb – RAS forum
- 18 Feb – meeting with Heads of Physics (hosted by IoP)
- 3 Mar – meeting with early career researchers (ECRs)
- 4 Mar – Science Innovation & Technology select committee and follow-up letters
- 9 Apr – Astro-particle Physics and high-energy Particle Physics town hall
- 14 Apr – Nuclear Physics Townhall & meeting with ECRs
- Apr (date tbc) – meeting with Chairs of Advisory Panels



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Questions?



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Nuclear Physics Programme

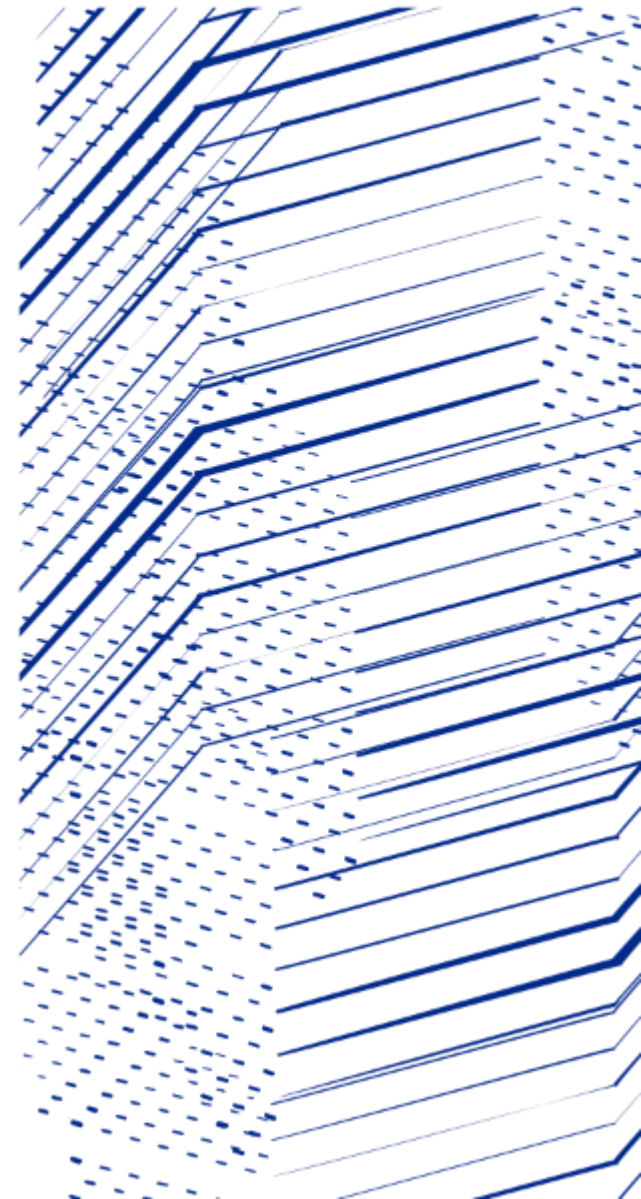
Grahame Blair

Exec. Director, STFC Programmes

14th April 2026, Univ. of Brighton



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STFC Nuclear Physics and Particle Astrophysics Team

Overview of STFC Nuclear Physics and Particle Astrophysics (NPPA) Team:

- Dr Helen Beadman, Associate Director
- Dr Jamie Parkin, Team Head
- Dr Georgina Freeman, Senior Programme Manager
- Thomas Gray, Senior Programme Manager
- Daniela Danaila, Programme Manager
- Lindsay Clarke, Programme Manager

Nuclear Physics Advisory Panel

- New Chair: Bjoern Sietz, University of Glasgow
- Members:
 - Mikhail Bashkanov, University of York
 - James Benstead, AWE
 - Tom Day-Goodacre, University of Manchester
 - Dan Doherty, University of Surrey
 - Liliana Teodorescu, Brunel University London
 - Rachel Montgomery, University of Glasgow
 - Philippos Papadakis, STFC Daresbury
 - Paul Stevenson, University of Surrey

Current STFC Nuclear Physics Portfolio

NP Consolidated Grant

- October 2024 – September 2027,

Projects

- FAUST
 - January 2024 – December 2028
- γ RIBF
 - January 2024 – March 2028
- FAIR R3B Silicon Tracker
 - October 2023 – September 2027

Subscriptions/M&O

- FAIR (NuSTAR and HISPECC/DESPEC)
 - Including funding for NuSTAR Spokesperson
 - March 2024 – February 2027
- ISOLDE@ CERN
- MINIBALL
- EXOGAM
- AGATA
- ALICE
- ECT*

Live Opportunity: Nuclear Physics Consolidated Grant round 2026

- In the immediate term, available funding will be maintained at a level consistent with 2025/6 (i.e. pre 2025 Spending Review) across all PPAN areas
- 48-month award duration
- Award start date: 1 October 2027
- Award end date: 30 September 2031
- Funding opportunity link: [Nuclear physics consolidated grants 2026 – UKRI](#)
- Application deadline: Closed on 12 March 2026
- Panel meetings June and July 2026
- Outcomes anticipated in early 2027.

Recent UKRI Awards: Nuclear Skills Doctoral Focal Awards

As a part of the UK government's National Nuclear Strategic Plan for Skills, and delivered by EPSRC with input from STFC, £65.6m has recently been invested by the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero into UK Nuclear Skills.

This has funded seven Doctoral Focal Awards, two of which are led by members of the STFC Nuclear Physics community:

- **RAPTOR (Radiation Protection, Nuclear Safety and Environmental Sustainability)** - University of Liverpool lead
 - Research Focus Radiation protection; environmental impact assessment and radioactive waste management; nuclear safety and security; social value and societal impact.
- **PLANET (Physics-led applications for nuclear technology)** – University of York lead
 - Research Focus: Nuclear physics including fuel performance, safety, reactor challenges, waste, storage and disposal, and AI in applied nuclear physics.

Others DFA's are led by University of Strathclyde, University of Manchester, Imperial College London, Prifysgol Bangor University and University of Glasgow.

The first cohorts will start in the 2026/27 academic year. More details can be found via the Nuclear Skills Plan:



[£65.6 million Doctoral Focal Award to strengthen UK nuclear skills, energy security and sovereign defence capability - Nuclear Skills Plan](#)

Digital Research Infrastructure

Future Compute Ecosystem - The UK Compute Roadmap was published in July 2025. Sets out the requirement for the future compute ecosystem:

- **AIRR** - £250m AI Compute infrastructure – systems at Bristol and Cambridge are now running and processes are bedding in.
 - **The Next National Supercomputing Service (NNS)** – up to £750m for a new national service at Edinburgh. Will focus on ambitious 'grand challenges' and is a change from previous services. Procurement expected in 2026
 - **National Compute Resources (NCRs)** - The UKRI DRI Programme is supporting six new NCRs. The NCRs are expected to launch a full service for users in 2026/27. They are smaller scale, diverse, user-centred, coherent and serving the needs of the UK's research and innovation communities.
 - **Centres of Excellence (CCEs)** - Proposed communities that would act as a structured access and coordination layer for the national compute landscape. They would secure and distribute compute allocations, provide user support, and offer training.
 - **EuroHPC** - UK is a full member of the EuroHPC. UK-based applicants can access all existing and planned EuroHPC systems, including the JUPITER exascale system. **We encourage the community to apply** https://eurohpc-ju.europa.eu/access-our-supercomputers/eurohpc-access-calls_en
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Fellowships and studentships

Ernest Rutherford Fellowship

- Interviews for the **2025 Ernest Rutherford Fellowship Call** are scheduled for the end of April
- 186 high calibre applications submitted to the call
- Sift meetings took place w/c 16 March to identify 28 candidates for interview
- Anticipate to award 7 fellowships
- 2026 ERF call will go live in June

Future Leaders Fellowship

- Interviews for **Round 10 Future Leaders Fellowship Call** scheduled for early May
- 410 high calibre applications submitted (academic call)
- Round 9 FLF awarded 4 fellowships within STFC's remit – reflects a high success rate compared to other councils
- Round 11 FLF closes on 16 June

Studentships

- The 2026 Studentship Allocations have been announced.
- Award of 220 studentships starting in October 2026.
- Follows extensive work to refresh the algorithm following changes to UKRI's grant funding service

Call for nominations

2026 Call for Applications to STFC Advisory Bodies and Peer Review panels is now OPEN

- Do you want to play a role in the development of our strategic priorities?
- A role in developing and delivering national and international science programmes?
- An opportunity to broaden professional networks and experience?
- Influence research culture in the UK and abroad?
- The details of the Call are published on our webpage: [Call for applications to STFC advisory bodies and peer review panels – UKRI](#)
- Deadline for applications 27 April 2026.
- STFC and UKRI are committed to promoting EDI and the diversity of its panels is a key focus. Please think widely about potential nominees.
- Ask a question about applying to an STFC panel or advisory board, email psg@stfc.ukri.org

Questions?

