

Millions for Scotland's scientists

The UK Government is backing Scotland's most promising scientists with funding of £12 million.

This finance is intended to take innovation and help turn it into reality with transformational products and services and is part of an overall UK fund of £109 million. The challenges to be tackled include climate change and terminal disease, and the funding will be ploughed into equipment and salaries.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said: "We are committed to building back better through research and innovation, supporting our science superstars in every corner of the UK.

"Scotland has given the world revolutionary discoveries – from Helensburgh's own John Logie Baird demonstrating the first working television to Alexander Graham Bell inventing the first telephone. By backing these inspirational Future Leaders Fellows, we are ensuring that Scotland remains an innovation hub, helping our next generation of science leaders turn their brilliant ideas into vital products and services that will change all our lives for the better."

Other projects in Scotland announced today include:

- Dr Jennifer Garden, at the University of Edinburgh, aims to develop new chemical 'zips' that can effectively recycle plastic waste such as disposable cups, films and food packaging so they can be repurposed for other uses. This will help to change the way we deal with plastic

waste, a shift which could deliver benefits to the environment and economy, through the creation of new industries and jobs.

- Dr Megan Bergkessel, at the University of Dundee, aims to determine how bacteria can survive and grow in inhospitable environments with little food. This will inform new treatments for chronic bacterial infections, which are difficult to treat and can be fatal, and bacteria which have developed resistance to antibiotics.
- Dr Carolyn Atkins, at the Science and Technology Facilities Council's UK Astronomy Technology Centre, aims to improve the space telescopes that are vital for mapping the effects of climate change and understanding the origins and evolution of the Universe by 3D printing advanced new materials for the mirrors that are crucial to their operation.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said: "The UK Government is celebrating the work of Scotland's most promising scientists with £12 million of funding as part of a larger cash boost to act as a catalyst for British led research and development.

"From developing new treatments to environmental innovation, this is a fantastic example of the Government's ambition to level up all parts of the country through science and research and an opportunity to showcase the best of Scottish innovation."

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser, said:"Future Leaders Fellowships provide researchers and innovators with freedom and support to drive forward transformative new ideas and the opportunity to learn from peers right across the country.

"The fellows announced today illustrate how the UK continues to support and attract talented researchers and innovators across every discipline to our universities and businesses,

with the potential to deliver change that can be felt across society and the economy.”

The government has committed over £900 million to its Future Leader Fellowship initiative over three years, which is being delivered through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

The work of the fellows will be central to the government’s ambition for the UK to become a world leading science superpower, set out in its ambitious R&D Roadmap in July this year.

The funding committed to the fellows forms part of the government’s commitment to increase public spending in research and development (R&D) by £22 billion by 2024/25, putting the UK on track to reach 2.4% of GDP being spent on R&D across the UK economy by 2027.



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