Plan S consultation response from the Royal Society of Chemistry

- The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) is committed to increasing open access to high quality scholarly research. Our Charter directs us to foster and encourage the growth and application of the chemical sciences through the dissemination of chemical knowledge.
- As a Learned Society publisher, we have made significant progress in open access over the last few years.
    - We publish the largest Gold open access journal in the chemical sciences, RSC Advances, which last year published over 4,600 articles.
    - Our flagship journal, Chemical Science, is free to read and free to publish, with the RSC covering the article processing charges of this journal as

3. Revision of the requirements around hybrid journals to reflect the positive role that they can play in supporting the transition to open access.

cOAlition S have stated that “grants can be used for financing APCs for Open Access publication in subscription journals (‘hybrid Open Access’) only under transformative agreements”, which themselves would only be acceptable during a transition period.

Hybrid journals - The potential role of hybrid journals as part of the solution to a full transition to open access has been largely disregarded. Publishers created hybrid journals to enable transition to open access, and hybrid journals are a vehicle for researchers who need and want to publish their research open access in a recognised venue. Hence, the amount of take-up is directly linked to the researcher and their drivers around open access. If more funders mandate open access, and more researchers therefore publish open access, the proportion of paywalled articles will decrease and a tipping point will be reached where a journal can viably flip to open access.

Our experience with hybrid journals - Where mandates and funding for open access exist, take-up is high: in 2018 (to end October) 65% of articles from the RSC’s UK authors were published via the Gold open access route and, of these, 70% were published in hybrid journals. Where take-up has been low, this has been due to lack of mandates (and in some case funding), rather than a failure of hybrids as a concept.

Hybrid journals can route e757rel1d -0.0014.a

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4. Revision of the requirements around transformational agreements to reflect the positive role that they (in conjunction with hybrid journals) can play in accelerating the transition to open access.

A transition to open access can be accelerated and supported via the use of transitional or transformational models, i.e. Read & Publish or Publish & Read. Such agreements, in conjunction with hybrid journals, are a fundamental part of the transition to open access if requirements are realistic.