

Science and innovation – key to Britain's future prosperity

In today's knowledge-driven global economy, Britain cannot compete on low wages and low skills. Science holds the key to unlocking Britain's economic future. Only Labour has the vision to make the investment necessary today to unlock wealth creation tomorrow.

In an increasingly competitive global economy, our ability to invent, design and manufacture the goods and services that people want is more vital to our future prosperity than ever before. A strong science base and a steady supply of science, engineering and technology skills at all levels is crucial for the UK's innovation performance and long-term competitiveness.

Our ten-year programme to promote science and innovation will see £2.5 billion invested in science over the next five years. This additional investment will:

- create world-class research and centres of scientific excellence
- create sustainable and financially robust universities and public laboratories
- increase business investment in R&D, and allow greater knowledge transfer between business and universities
- engender skills that are responsive to the needs of the economy and a better understanding throughout education of industry's needs.

While many British small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly those linked to universities, are world leaders at embracing

innovation, far too many still fail to embrace new technologies and new ways of working. We will encourage SMEs to better understand the business potential of the intellectual property regime. We are working through the Small Business Service and Business Links to promote innovation and knowledge transfer.

We have made great strides in the number of people gaining skills to university graduate levels in science. We also need to ensure that we are increasing the number of people with intermediate and high-level skills including technicians, in order to sustain our position as a world leader in science. The quality of our research and our strengthening links between universities, research institutions and industries will help us become the country of choice for talented entrepreneurs and world-class companies.

We will not tolerate the actions of animal extremists. The UK has one of the strictest licensing systems in the world for the use of animals in medical research, with animal experiments only taking place where absolutely necessary. Animal research has helped save hundreds of millions of lives and it is unacceptable that people legitimately working in this field become the target of extremists. We have already strengthened the law to clamp down on people who use unlawful and dangerous means to protest against lawful animal testing. We believe people have the right to campaign lawfully and peacefully against the use of animals in scientific research, but they do not have the right to endanger people's lives, put medical breakthroughs in areas like AIDS,