

Public Attitudes to R&D and Charities

This briefing covers key findings for charities from CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 public attitudes study, which comprised four nationally-representative surveys polling a total of 18,000 people, and 14 focus groups. Full findings are available on [CaSE's website](https://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/DiscoveryDecade).

Charities are not seen as large-scale R&D funders but are seen as altruistic

- Just **18%** thought that charities fund large amounts of R&D; substantially lower than governments, businesses and universities
- The role of charities in R&D was rarely mentioned unprompted in focus groups
- When prompted, charities were seen as altruistically driven - but **few people understood their role in the R&D system**

"Today, if you want to create a medication for cancer, it's going to be a company that will have created it, but they are building on the research from universities and charities to build it."



Consultant, Female, 27, Dundee

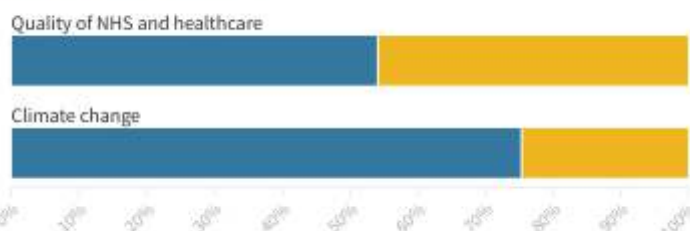
Research charities are trusted messengers on R&D investment and can capitalise on strong brand recognition

- **54%** trusted research charities to be honest about how much Government should invest in R&D. The same proportion trusted researchers, followed by universities; politicians were at the opposite end of the spectrum at 19%
- When named messengers were tested on trust, reliability and agreement with a message, **household names - including a research charity - performed best**

Medical research is a go-to example of R&D and gains widespread support

- When asked to provide examples of R&D, people often cite medical research, and **many would prioritise life-saving R&D**
- Linking R&D to issues drove up support: net support for increasing R&D investment was 46% when tied to healthcare, versus 20% when no issue was provided
- However, there are also risks. When given a binary choice between an R&D and non-R&D solution to tackle an example issue, **healthcare was the most divisive**; 54% chose R&D investment to develop new medicines and vaccines while 46% chose to cut R&D budgets to hire more doctors and nurses

For healthcare, people are divided on whether to invest in R&D to tackle the issue or cut R&D spending in favour of a non-R&D solution



Source: Public First polling for CaSE • July 2022