

Public Attitudes to R&D and Healthcare

This briefing covers key findings on healthcare 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](#).

People are concerned about healthcare and see R&D as a solution

- Healthcare and the NHS were consistently ranked in people's top three concerns
- **More than a third** say R&D has an essential role in improving the quality of the NHS
- Medical research is a go-to example of R&D; the public is supportive of it and can readily see the benefits and **many prioritise life-saving research**

[R&D] can save somebody's life, that's the top and bottom of it... If you can save somebody's life, extend their life, find a cure to do that - then that's the most important thing for me."



Hairdresser, Female, 40, Leeds

Relating R&D to healthcare drives up support - but the desire for urgent action to improve healthcare and the NHS poses a risk for R&D advocacy

"[Halving the R&D budget to spend it on hiring more nurses] sounds much better; I feel much happier. And I think the majority of the people would probably be happier."



Pharmacy dispenser, Female, 42, Greater Manchester

- Relating R&D investment to **tangible issues** boosts support; this effect was particularly strong for healthcare
- Net support for increasing the R&D budget rose from 20% with no issue provided to **46%** when linked to healthcare, and **31%** when linked to mental ill-health
- But a proposal to cut the R&D budget and use the money to recruit more doctors and nurses also received net support, of 29%

The coronavirus vaccine is not a straightforward positive for the sector

- Half said the coronavirus vaccine had had a positive impact on their lives over the last 25 years; this rose to **73%** among over 65s, but was just 38% for those aged 18-24
- Many praised the **honesty** of the scientific messengers in Covid TV press conferences
- However, some expressed concerns about the speed of vaccine development or thought it **meant R&D could be ramped up and down when needed**

"Those two guys [at the Covid press conference] who told us how many people had died, all the boring, horrible stuff - what was good about them was that they did what it said on the tin. They're the real deal."



Retired dance studio owner, Female, 66, Wimbledon