

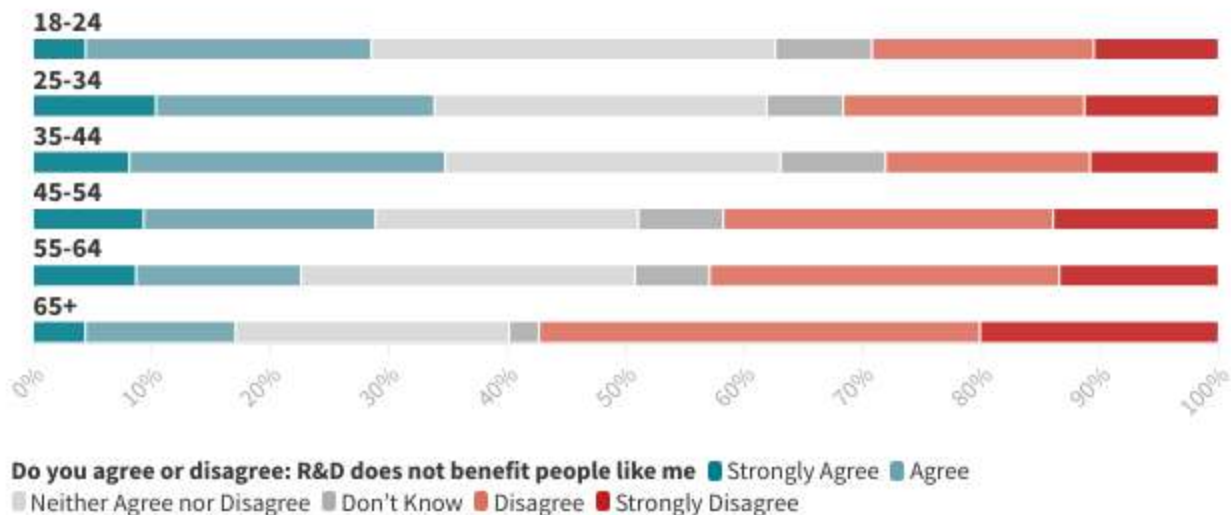
Public Attitudes to R&D: Audience demographics

This briefing considers demographic differences in attitudes to R&D in CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 public attitudes study, comprising four nationally-representative surveys polling a total of 18,000 people and 14 focus groups. Full findings on [CaSE's website](#).

Age was one of the strongest differentiators of opinion, with younger groups less likely to see R&D's benefits or support investment

- **72%** of 35-44s either agreed that "R&D doesn't benefit people like me" or were neutral or unsure, compared with 43% for those aged 65+
- **Almost half** of 25-34s agree that "We currently invest too much in R&D rather than solving issues that matter now" compared with 21% for those aged 65+
- Younger groups are much more likely to support increasing the R&D budget when it is clearly linked to supporting **an issue they care about**
- However, a desire for urgent change means they may also support *cutting* the budget in favour of a non-R&D approach if positioned as an immediate solution

Younger groups are less likely to say R&D benefits people like them



Source: Public First polling for CaSE • May 2022 | n=2,037

There are few notable differences between parents with different age children, or between parents and non-parents

- Age of the respondent seems to be the major driver of differences between parents with children of different ages
- We did not see differences between parents and non-parents even in questions where we may have expected it. For instance, parents are no more likely to select 'education opportunities' as a reason it is important to them that R&D is carried out in their area

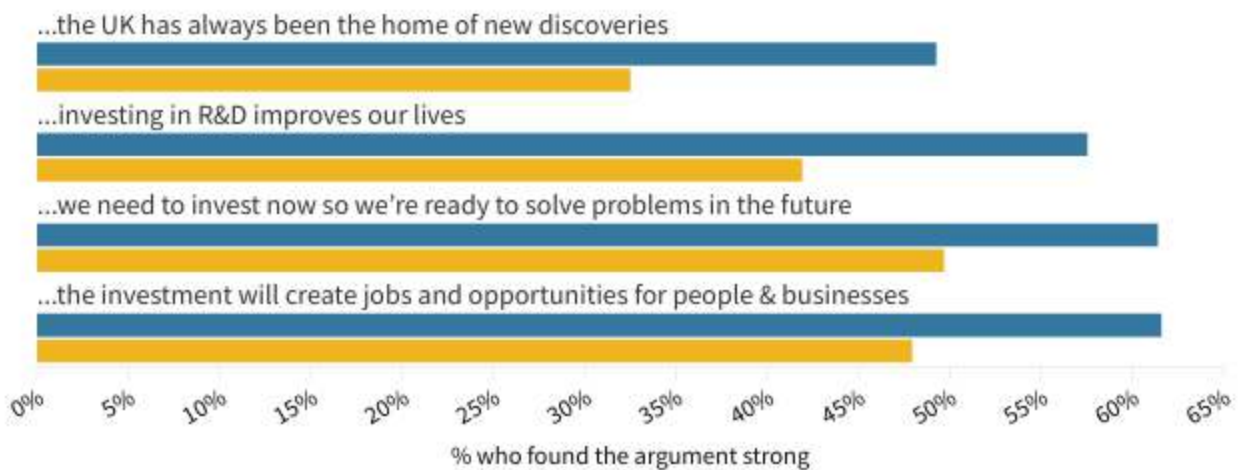
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Our evidence suggests that women are generally less positive towards R&D

- Women find arguments in favour of R&D investment less strong than men, and are more likely to say there are other things more important to invest in now than R&D
- Women are less likely to feel they benefit from R&D: **a third** (33%) disagreed that "R&D doesn't benefit people like me" compared with almost half (46%) of men
- Using international competition as a rationale for increasing R&D investment appealed more to men (39% said it was a strong argument) than women (18%)

Women find pro-R&D arguments less strong than men

Question posed: Some argue the UK should invest more public money in R&D because...



Source: Public First polling for CaSE • July 2022 | Sample split; each statement seen by ~2,000

Those in socioeconomic group DE are less likely to feel R&D's benefits

- People in group AB have greater awareness of and more opportunities to engage with R&D and **tend to be more supportive** of R&D investment
- **46%** of people in group DE agreed R&D had improved their lives; compared with 70% of those in group AB
- Focus group participants in groups C2 and D said R&D made things more expensive, or that its **benefits weren't accessible**
- Those in groups C2 and DE tended to be less supportive of R&D investment, although **linking R&D to issues boosted support** among these groups

"None of the working class people actually get that. You can put all the R&D and money into it you want, but you've got to make it accessible for everybody."
[When discussing R&D that goes into heat pumps]

*Hairdresser, Female, 36, Mansfield
Socioeconomic group C2*

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There is no strong evidence from our dataset that ethnicity is a significant differentiator of opinions towards R&D

- There were few notable differences between white and Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) respondents' attitudes
- Many of the differences reflect the fact that the BAME group in our sample were more likely to be **younger**, which is a strong differentiator of opinion, and live in urban areas
- BAME respondents reported consistently **higher levels of optimism** and appear more engaged with R&D, and on new inventions and discoveries
- However, BAME respondents are **slightly more averse to taxpayer funding of R&D**, and more supportive of proposals to cut investment when this is tied to explicit goals

There are few major differences in attitudes between UK regions or urban and rural locations, but place is a strong connection point for R&D

- London and the South East came top when asked which region carries out a lot of R&D
- Many associate their own region with R&D, driven by **universities, NHS and businesses**
- Those in **urban areas** are more likely to associate R&D with their area, more likely to agree their area is well known for R&D, and less likely to say they know hardly anything about R&D being done in their area
- Overall, a majority want their region to carry out a lot of R&D and **66%** would support a new research lab being built in their area
- **Spillover benefits from R&D such as indirect job creation** are well-received, although not necessarily front of mind when asked about the benefits of R&D without prompting

Among those who associate their region with R&D, **universities** are the biggest driver



You said that you associate R&D with [region]. Why do you say this?

■ Universities
 ■ Businesses
 ■ NHS
 ■ Historic associations

Source: Public First polling for CaSE • July 2022 | n=3,570
Only four most-selected options shown; other examples given