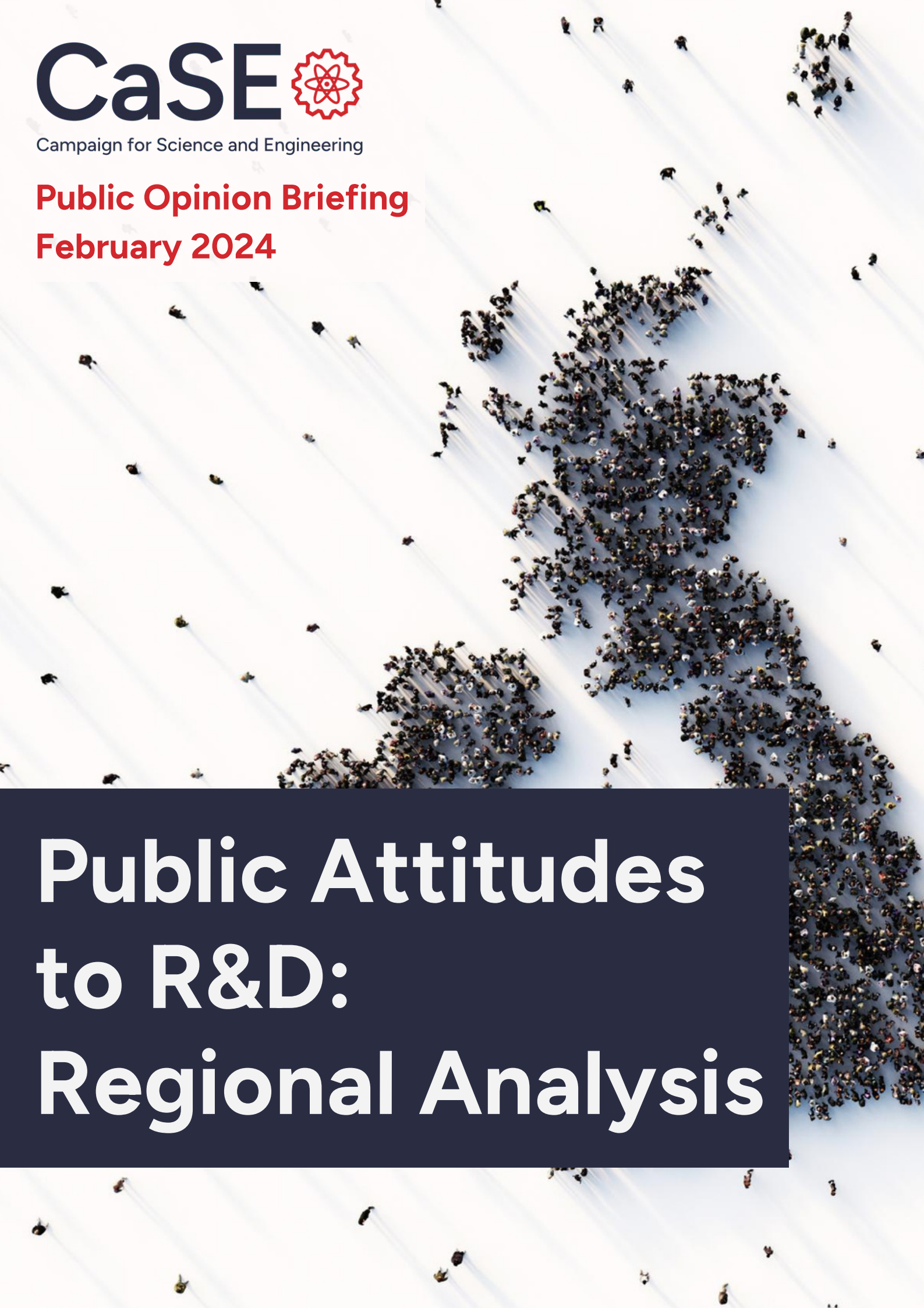




Campaign for Science and Engineering

Public Opinion Briefing
February 2024

An aerial photograph of a large crowd of people gathered on a light-colored, possibly snowy or sandy, ground. The people are arranged to form the geographical shape of the United Kingdom, including Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The crowd is denser in the southern and central parts of the map and sparser in the northern and western regions. Long, soft shadows are cast by the people, suggesting a low sun position. The background is a vast, open, light-colored area with some scattered individuals.

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

This briefing explores attitudes to R&D across the UK's regions, based on evidence from CaSE's Discovery Decade 2022-23 public attitudes study, comprising five nationally-representative surveys polling a total of 20,000 people and 14 focus groups.

Introduction

All the Discovery Decade's polls are nationally representative, and with individual surveys of up to 8,000 people we are able to look at the results of many of the questions posed at a regional - or even city-region - level.

Although we do not see significant differences in attitudes between UK regions, or between urban and rural locations, even small variations can be illuminating and help us challenge any assumptions we might hold about regional audiences.

This briefing first provides an overview of UK-wide attitudes to questions with a local, regional or global focus, including any notable differences. We then offer summaries and key statistics for each of the UK's 12 regions, followed by a selection of focus group quotes that are relevant to place-based discussions.

More significant drivers of differences in attitudes were age, socioeconomic group and gender, which are described in our [Audience Demographics briefing](#).

Summary

Regional connections to R&D exist across the country

- **Many associate the Golden Triangle with R&D but do see connections closer to home:** When asked which regions do the most R&D, 69% selected London and 29% the South East. No other region was selected by more than 18% overall, but there was a familiarity effect where people were more likely to also select their own region.
- **Regional associations are driven by universities, the NHS and businesses:** When asked if they associate their region with R&D, around 40% say they do. This falls to a third in the South West, and is highest in London and Scotland. These associations are driven by universities, NHS and businesses but historical links were more prominent in Scotland and former industrial regions.
- **Medical and industrial research were common links to local R&D:** When asked to describe past or present R&D in their area, 51% cited medical and 23% industrial research, such as steel and car industries. In common with focus group participants, some also named specific businesses, such as GSK, BAE Systems and Dyson.

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

Regional and local R&D activity is supported for its spillover benefits

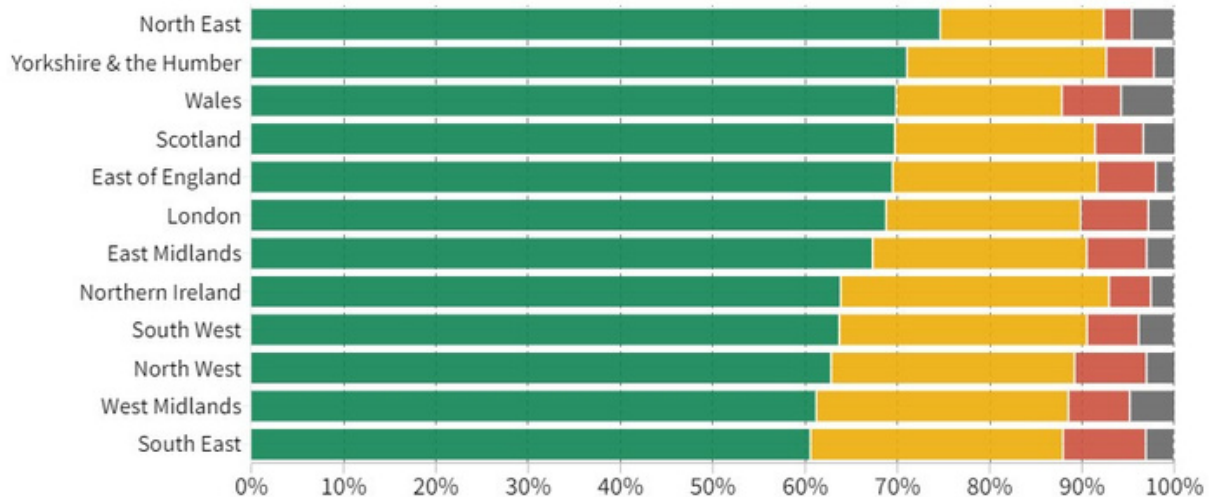
- **Regional R&D is important to most people:** In all regions, a majority said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, reaching 79% in the North East and 76% in Northern Ireland.
- **Most people also support R&D activity in their local area:** Overall, 66% of people would support a new research lab being built in their local area; as many as would support a new school or wind farm. This proportion rises to 75% in the North East.
- **Spillover benefits to local economies and jobs are the main drivers for support:** 71% of those who thought it was important their region did a lot of R&D cited local jobs, and 64% inwards investment. Similarly, 62% of those who expressed support for a new research lab chose local economic benefits and 60% well-paid jobs in the area.

Support for local building projects by regions

There is majority support for a new research lab being built in all regions

Would you support or oppose the building of a new research laboratory in your local area?

■ Total support ■ Neither Support nor Oppose ■ Total oppose ■ Don't Know



Source: Public First polling for CaSE • February 2023 | n=4,053

There is appetite for more information and trust in local messengers

- **Knowledge of local R&D is low but there is appetite for more:** Overall, 66% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area, but 65% would like to hear more.
- **Open days sparked interest among the public:** When given a list of ways in which they could hear more about local R&D, around a third of people selected open days at a local research institution (32%) or university (29%).
- **The public trusts local messengers:** 56% said they would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk honestly about its benefits.

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

Regional breakdowns

*Click on the map to
explore attitudes to
R&D in that region*



Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

1 Scotland

Self-reported awareness of R&D is slightly higher in Scotland than the rest of the UK, and many see R&D as essential to tackling society's problems.

Regional associations with R&D are among the highest in the UK, with 55% saying they at least somewhat associate their region with R&D. Of these people, some 69% said this was due to universities. In contrast to other regions, historic associations are the second-most cited reason.

People in the region are supportive of R&D and investment, with the region having the lowest level of agreement with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers", along with among the highest levels of support for R&D activities at both a regional and local level.

There is also stronger appetite for more information about local R&D versus other regions, with local news articles and events or open days at local institutions ranking highly. Just over a third (36%) said they would like to hear talks from local people who work in research, which is higher than other UK regions.

Similar to the rest of the UK, more than half of people in Scotland trust researchers, universities and research charities to be honest about how much money the Government should invest in R&D, while trust in businesses and politicians is lower.

Key statistics

- 47% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)
- 42% see research as being essential to tackle problems with energy supplies, and 39% for climate change
- 56% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)
- 32% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)
- Just 18% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)
- 58% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)
- 80% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local jobs (72%) and local investment (67%)
- 70% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)
- 63% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 69% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)
- 60% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

2 North East

Self-reported awareness of 'R&D' is slightly lower in the North East than elsewhere in the UK, but knowledge about research happening in their local area is slightly higher. Many people also see research as essential to solving today's problems.

Regional associations with R&D are fairly high in the North East, with 43% saying they associate the region with R&D. The main drivers are universities, businesses and NHS institutions. Men are more likely to strongly associate the region with R&D, and to cite businesses or historic associations.

People in the North East are more supportive of regional and local R&D than any other region: more say it's important that their region carries out a lot of R&D (79%) and more would support a new research lab being built in their area (75%).

Appetite for information about local R&D is similar to other regions, and when provided with a list of ways in which they could hear more about R&D, local news articles, events and open days received most interest. It is notable that people in the North East tended to show more interest in each option than respondents in other regions.

Trust in people who work in R&D in the area to talk about its benefits is 8 percentage points higher than nationally. More than half trust researchers, research charities and universities to be honest about how much money should be invested in R&D.

Key statistics

- **59% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)**
- **41% see research as essential to tackle problems with energy supply**
- **59% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)**
- **42% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)**
- **22% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)**
- **51% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)**
- **79% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local jobs (75%) and local investment (73%)**
- **75% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)**
- **55% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 66% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)**
- **64% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)**

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

3 Yorkshire and the Humber

Self-reported awareness of R&D is similar to the wider UK, as are attitudes towards needing research to solve major problems.

People in Yorkshire and the Humber are among the most supportive when it comes to having a research lab built in their area - 71%, the second highest of all regions - with most support due to the prospect of more well-paid jobs and benefits to the local economy. The same proportion say it is important for their region to carry out a lot of R&D, for similar reasons.

However, people in the region are among the least likely to associate their region with R&D, with 38% saying this. In line with most other regions, the main drivers for associations with R&D are universities, businesses and the NHS.

There appears to be lower levels of awareness of local R&D among people in Yorkshire and the Humber than the UK average, but this is balanced with higher levels of interest in hearing more. In common with other regions, people in this region were keen to hear more about local R&D via local news articles, participating in local research studies and open days.

There are similar levels of trust in researchers, research charities, universities and businesses to be honest about how much money the Government should invest in R&D. There are also slightly higher levels of trust in politicians to do the same.

Key statistics

- **55% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)**
- **42% see research as being essential to tackle problems with energy supplies, and 42% for climate change**
- **58% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)**
- **37% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)**
- **23% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)**
- **55% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)**
- **71% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local jobs (75%) and local investment (69%)**
- **71% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)**
- **71% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 67% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)**
- **60% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)**

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

4 North West

Self-reported awareness of R&D is similar in the North West to the rest of the UK regions. As a region, it is among the most supportive of more political attention being paid to science and innovation, and people are more likely to say that Government investing in R&D will get the economy growing and make the UK better prepared for the future.

Just over a third of people in the North West associate the region with R&D, with this association being higher for men, older people and those in group ABC1. The strongest driver for this is universities.

People in the region think R&D is important for local jobs and investment; similar to other regions 71% said it was important for the North West to carry out a lot of R&D, citing local jobs and investment to the area.

Awareness of local R&D and appetite for more information is similar to national levels, with 68% wanting to hear more. People were keen to hear more via local news articles (48%), participating in a local research study (33%) and open days or events at research institutions (33%) or universities (32%).

Similar to other regions, more than half of people in the North West trust researchers, universities and research charities to be honest about how much money the Government should invest in R&D. More than half trust local people who work in R&D to talk about its benefits.

Key statistics

- **52% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)**
- **59% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)**
- **22% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)**
- **40% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)**
- **61% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)**
- **71% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local jobs (76%) and local investment (74%)**
- **63% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)**
- **56% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)**

Spotlight: Greater Manchester Stats

61% said they know hardly anything about research in their area and 65% would like to hear more

54% trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

5 East Midlands

Self-reported awareness of, and attitudes towards, R&D in the East Midlands are very similar to the UK average.

Some 60% of people in the East Midlands want politicians to pay more attention to science and innovation, which is four percentage points above the UK average and one of the highest regional results.

Regional associations with R&D (which are held by 37%) are driven by universities and businesses, with the proportion of those citing the latter group higher than in many other regions.

Most people in the East Midlands would support a new research lab being built in their area, with levels of support similar to the UK average. When asked why, 64% said they just supported more research being carried out in general, which is the highest proportion selecting this motivation across all regions.

Knowledge of local R&D and appetite for more information are similar to the UK average, and people in the East Midlands would like to hear more through local news, open days or events.

About half of people trust researchers, universities and research charities to be honest about how much money should be invested in R&D, which is similar to the UK average.

Key statistics

- **54% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)**
- **47% see research as being essential to tackle problems with energy supplies, and 45% for climate change**
- **60% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)**
- **39% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)**
- **24% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)**
- **60% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)**
- **68% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local jobs (74%) and local investment (68%)**
- **67% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)**
- **66% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 63% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)**
- **55% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)**

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

6 West Midlands

Self-reported awareness of R&D appears lower in the West Midlands, with 61% saying they either haven't heard of 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means. This is lower than the UK average (52%).

However, knowledge of local research is similar to national levels, and there is appetite for more information. Some 45% said they would like to hear more about local research through local news articles, and 33% through participating in a research study run locally.

Some 39% associate the West Midlands with R&D, with the top three drivers of association being universities (selected by 60%), businesses (52%) and historic associations with R&D (41%). The latter contrasts to most other regions, where the NHS is usually among the top three.

More than half (55%) would support a new research lab being built in their area, however this is one of the lowest levels of support across all regions. Those in support most often cited general support for research, while opposition was on the grounds of increased traffic, that it wouldn't benefit the local economy and opposition to more development in general.

More than half of people say they trust researchers and research charities to be honest about how much money the Government should invest in R&D, which is comparable to the rest of the UK.

Key statistics

- 61% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)
- 38% see research as being essential to tackle problems with energy supplies, and 41% for climate change
- 59% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)
- 41% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)
- 24% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)
- 52% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)
- 68% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local jobs (72%) and local investment (65%)
- 55% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)
- 66% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 64% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)
- 55% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

7 East of England

Self-reported awareness of, and attitudes towards, R&D are similar in the East of England compared to the UK average.

Some 39% of people in the East of England associate the region with R&D, comparable to many other regions. Universities were the main driver for this, being selected by 72%, which is higher than all other regions.

Most people in the East of England think it is important for their region to carry out a lot of R&D, and would support a new research lab being built in their area. For both points, the top reasons cited were benefits to the local economy and local well-paid jobs.

Knowledge of local R&D is slightly higher than the UK average, but appetite for more information - while still strong - is the lowest of all UK regions.

Almost half of people in the region want to hear more about local research through local news articles, and 29% through events or open days at research institutions. However, people in the East of England are among the least likely of all regions to select any of the options for how they would like to hear more about local R&D.

Compared to the rest of the UK, there are similar levels of trust in researchers, research charities, universities and businesses to be honest about how much money Government should invest in R&D.

Key statistics

- **51% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)**
- **46% see research as being essential to tackle problems with energy supplies, and 40% for climate change**
- **61% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)**
- **39% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)**
- **22% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)**
- **57% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)**
- **65% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local jobs (70%) and UK-wide benefits (66%)**
- **69% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)**
- **63% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 59% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)**
- **55% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)**

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

8 Wales

Self-reported awareness of, and attitudes towards, R&D in Wales are broadly similar to the UK average, although people in Wales were less likely to say they could think of very few or no ways R&D investment benefits their lives.

However, people in Wales are among the most keen of all regions to see politicians pay more attention to science and innovation, with 61% feeling this way.

Around a third of people in Wales said they associate their region with R&D, with the main drivers universities and the NHS.

Awareness of local R&D is lower among people in Wales than elsewhere in the UK, with 72% saying they know hardly anything about the research being done in their area. But there is demand for more: 68% would like to hear more, including through local news articles and events or open days.

Most people (71%) think it is important for Wales to carry out a lot of R&D, and most (70%) would support a new research lab in their area. For each, the most-selected reason for this was that it would generate local jobs.

Some 51% trust each of researchers and research charities to be honest about how much money the Government should invest in R&D. This figure is 46% for universities, which is five percentage points lower than the UK average.

Key statistics

- **54% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)**
- **47% see research as being essential to tackle problems with energy supplies, and 41% for climate change**
- **59% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)**
- **29% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)**
- **23% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)**
- **61% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)**
- **71% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local jobs (73%) and local investment (65%)**
- **70% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)**
- **72% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 68% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)**
- **52% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)**

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

9 South West

Self-reported awareness of R&D in the South West mirrors the UK average, and more than two in five people think research is essential for solving problems with energy supplies and climate change.

More than 60% of people in the South West think that R&D benefits some people more than others; the highest of the UK regions.

Just a third of people in the South West associate their region with R&D; among the lowest across all regions and substantially lower than London (60%). For those who do associate the South West with R&D, the drivers are universities and businesses.

Almost two-thirds think it is important their region carries out a lot of R&D and a similar proportion would support a new research lab being built in their area. Among those who would oppose a new lab, 30% said this was because it would make it more expensive to live in the area, which is the highest proportion of all regions.

More than half of people would like to hear more about nearby R&D in the local news, with around a third saying they would be interested in open days or events at research institutions.

Some 56% trust research charities to be honest about how much money Government should invest in R&D; this figure is 53% for researchers and 29% for businesses.

Key statistics

- **52% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)**
- **42% see research as being essential to tackle problems with energy supplies, and 44% for climate change**
- **62% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)**
- **42% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)**
- **23% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)**
- **52% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)**
- **65% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local job creation (73%)**
- **64% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)**
- **65% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 62% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)**
- **57% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)**

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

10 South East

Self-reported awareness of, and attitudes towards, R&D in the South East are similar to the UK average, and many see research as essential for tackling society's problems.

Some 39% of people in the South East associate the region with R&D, similar to many others. Universities and businesses were the main drivers, each being selected by around half of respondents.

Regional and local R&D gains support from people in the South East, with 61% saying it is important their region carries out a lot of R&D and the same proportion saying they would support a new research lab in their area. Local jobs were a key reason for both.

Around two-thirds say they know hardly anything about research in their area but 60% would like to hear more. Some 46% selected local news articles as a way to learn more about nearby R&D, and 33% selected participating in a local research study. However, people in the South East were among the most likely to say they were not interested in any of the options offered.

Around half of people in the South East trust researchers, research charities, universities and businesses to be honest about how much money the Government should invest in R&D as in the rest of the UK. For politicians this figure is 16%, the lowest of all regions.

Key statistics

- 49% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)
- 44% see research as being essential to tackle problems with energy supplies, and 44% for climate change
- 57% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)
- 35% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)
- 24% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)
- 57% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)
- 61% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local job creation (68%)
- 61% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)
- 67% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 60% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)
- 53% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

11 London

Self-reported awareness of 'R&D' is higher in London than all other regions, and the region has the most people saying they associate their region with R&D. The drivers for this are universities (selected by 55%), followed by businesses and the NHS.

Many people see research as essential for solving problems with energy supplies or climate change. However, London is one of the regions where people are most likely to agree that R&D shouldn't be funded by taxpayers, with 29% feeling this way.

Almost three-quarters think it is important London carries out a lot of R&D. The most-selected reason is UK-wide benefits (63%); this is in contrast to other regions where it is at most a second choice.

Similarly, among the 69% of people who would support a new research lab being built in their area, the most-selected reason was that they supported more research being done in general.

There are similar levels of both appetite for more information on research being done in their area, and interest in local news articles, open days or events to learn more.

Some 58% trust researchers to be honest about how much money should be invested in R&D; 32% businesses and 26% politicians. Each of these is either the highest or joint highest level of trust in each of the respective actors across the regions.

Key statistics

- 45% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)
- 43% see research as being essential to tackle problems with energy supplies, and 45% for climate change
- 58% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)
- 32% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)
- 29% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)
- 57% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)
- 73% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, citing UK-wide benefits (63%) and local jobs (57%)
- 69% say they would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)
- 64% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 66% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)
- 57% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

12 Northern Ireland

Self-reported awareness of R&D in Northern Ireland is similar to the UK average, but attitudes towards R&D and investment appear less positive than elsewhere.

Less than half (44%) of those in Northern Ireland want to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation; the lowest across the UK and 12 percentage points lower than the UK average.

At the same time, 34% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers", 10 percentage points higher than the UK average. In common with the overall sample, agreement was higher among those aged 18-34. In addition, 43% could think of very few or no ways R&D investment benefits them, which is the highest in the UK.

However, more than three-quarters think it's important for the region to carry out a lot of R&D and 64% would support a research lab being built in their area. For both, the most-selected reasons are local jobs and benefits to the local economy.

Businesses are a potential connection point in Northern Ireland: half of those who associate their region with R&D say this is because of businesses; there is more interest in open days at local businesses than in other regions; and there is slightly higher trust in businesses to be honest about how much should be invested in R&D than in other regions.

Key statistics

- **54% either haven't heard the acronym 'R&D' or have but don't know what it means (UK average: 52%)**
- **33% see research as being essential to tackle problems with energy supplies, and 38% for climate change**
- **58% agreed that R&D in the UK benefits some people more than others (UK average: 59%)**
- **43% could think of very few or no ways in which R&D investment benefits their lives (UK average: 37%)**
- **34% agreed with the statement "R&D should not be funded by taxpayers" (UK average: 24%)**
- **44% would like to see UK politicians pay more attention to science and innovation (UK average: 56%)**
- **76% said it was important their region carries out a lot of R&D, driven by local jobs (79%) and local investment (73%)**
- **64% would support a new research lab being built in their area (UK average: 66%)**
- **68% said they knew hardly anything about research in their area and 67% would like to hear more (UK averages: 66% and 65%, respectively)**
- **59% would trust people who work in R&D in their area to talk about its benefits (UK average: 56%)**

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

Reflections from Focus Groups

Views from our 14 focus groups across the UK can be found throughout our results write ups. Below is a selection that offer an insight into the local aspects of views on R&D.

"I think it's more important to have an impact with the wider world, but I think it's hard, because we're all selfish as humans. We all want to help our immediate area."

Female, 28, Support worker, C2, Dundee

"I don't think it really matters [where projects happen]. We get a lot of help from researchers from all around the world... If something helps in Australia, then it can be rolled out here as well, to improve our marine life."

Female, 37, Nail technician, C2, Dundee

"I think local [jobs would be a priority] only because we live in Middlesbrough. I mean, if you live in an affluent place, you probably wouldn't be as bothered. But I think obviously you want more jobs to be local."

Female, 43, Accountant, B, Teesside

"Jobs aren't worth people's lives and the environment. It's a very narrow minded way of looking at it if you're just looking local instead of the whole picture. No, [if it created local jobs], it wouldn't change my mind."

Male, 43, Driving instructor, C2, Blackpool

"I would appreciate R&D [being done in Leeds] because it would mean jobs and funding going into Leeds institutions. But I think in terms of where the funding actually goes, I'd be happy that it went to the best places to get the best results."

Male, 41, Solicitor, B, Leeds

Public Attitudes to R&D: Regional Analysis

Reflections from Focus Groups

"I had never heard of [graphene being discovered in Manchester]. Is that because we're supposed to take the time to find out? I think that's the type of thing I'd like to see put on social media or something, let's be proud!"

Female, 34, Buyer for a hotel chain, C2, Greater Manchester

"With car plants, like in Coventry when Jaguar were there, when they go away, all those jobs disappear. Those people are now unemployed, and it affects an area because there's no income."

Male, 42, Builder, C2, Mansfield

"I think it's really vital that Wales get some influx of research... [Cities] have other means of making money, but in Wales, it's a bit more difficult to generate jobs."

Male, 50, Tree surgeon, C2, North Wales

"R&D is always going to be a thing, we're always going to need it. I'm happy to fund R&D, I'm happy the country funds R&D for the reefs and the forests."

Male, 56, Railway engineer, C2, Derby

"I know it seems we do need to focus on medical research, but [energy] is such an important topic, it just stuck out to me... I live very rurally and we only have mains electricity. I suppose selfishly I'd be interested in different ways of getting energy supplies."

Female, 37, Housewife, D, North Wales

"Spending money on R&D now is not only enabling us to have a better future for our children, grandchildren, it's also providing jobs for people."

Female, 53, Account manager, B, Wimbledon