

The First 100 Days: A Plan for R&D

Investing in R&D creates new jobs and future industries, new educational opportunities, and the economic growth that will pay for our local and public services and strengthen our communities.

People across the UK believe R&D is vital to tackling climate change, the quality of the NHS and the cost of living – and they want to see politicians pay more attention to it.



A majority (70%) think it is important for the Government to invest in R&D



More than half (58%) think funding research generally should be a high or top priority for UK political parties



A majority (65%) said it was clear how investing in R&D would grow the economy



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Here are four actions that the incoming Government can take quickly in the first 100 days to support the R&D sector and unlock its potential for economic growth:

1

Work with the R&D sector to develop plans for ten-year funding

2

Mitigate the impact of financial pressures on universities

3

Attract international talent: take action on high visa costs

4

Collaborate with business to drive investment in R&D



Provide stability and predictability

It was very positive to see the Labour party recognise the importance of a long-term plan for R&D in its manifesto, which has long been a focus of our work, based on feedback from our breadth of members. A stable and predictable plan, supported by sustained investment, is vital to help research and innovation thrive in a way that drives economic growth and prosperity across the UK.

The new Government should work with the R&D sector to develop plans for ten-year funding in the first 100 days as part of a wider strategic framework for R&D.

82% of the public agreed with the statement “Politicians should embrace long-term thinking and solutions”.

46% think committing to a long-term plan to support the R&D system will have a positive impact on the economy in the short term and 63% in the long term.

Mitigate the impact of financial pressures on universities

The financial sustainability of the research system is vital to the future success of research and innovation in the UK. Our universities are a national asset and play a pivotal role in the research and innovation landscape and the wider economy and society through their teaching, research and knowledge exchange activities. To deliver their role in the research system effectively, universities must be supported to achieve a sustainable financial model across both their teaching and research activities.

Take early action, alongside the R&D sector, to protect and sustain university-led R&D.

Attract international talent: Welcome talented researchers to come to the UK and take action on visa costs

Attracting international talent is essential to support a thriving, collaborative UK R&D sector. R&D-intensive businesses and institutions and the public sector rely on a skilled workforce to support their sustained growth and innovation. Therefore, it is critical that the immigration and visa system, and associated costs, do not act as a barrier to attracting the most talented researchers to the UK. Government rhetoric should be welcoming to talented researchers.

[Analysis by the Royal Society](#) has shown that from 2021 to 2024, total upfront immigration costs in the UK increased by up to 58% depending on visa type. Total upfront costs are higher in the UK than all other countries in the analysis. When excluding the UK from the international average, UK upfront costs are up to 17 times higher.

Government rhetoric and policy should be welcoming to talented researchers and immediate action should be taken to reduce upfront visa costs.

A majority of the public (72%) say they want more of the world's best scientists and innovators to work in the UK.

[The People and Culture Strategy](#) estimated that the R&D sector will need at least an additional 150,000 researchers and technicians by 2030 to sustain the UK's ambitions for R&D.

The Government must support and coordinate a more integrated skills system across Government and should set out a clear plan for people and skills that aligns with its priorities for science and technology. This should start with a careers strategy in England to strengthen science and engineering guidance for schools.

46% of the public think supporting skills for a more research-intensive economy will create jobs and 43% think it will grow the economy.

Drive business investment in R&D and strengthen regional investment

Ensuring business R&D investment continues to rise is vital if the UK is to achieve its research intensity ambitions. Labour has outlined its ambition to “use every available lever” to support the environment to increase businesses investment. In our recent report [Backing Business R&D](#), we set out recommendations to incentivise businesses to invest in R&D in the UK and to strengthen local innovation ecosystems to improve R&D investment opportunities across the UK, including on tax credits.

Provide a statement of intent on the purpose and focus of R&D tax credits and stick to it.

Support regions to market their strengths and capabilities in order to attract inward investment.

Give regions the freedom to make decisions about local innovation programmes.

79% of the public would support a proposal for a business to set up research facilities in their local area (this is third, after medical research charities, NHS bodies) - citing local economic boosts and jobs for local people.

71% would support their MP engaging with leaders of local R&D organisations, such as universities and businesses.

67% would like there to be new R&D jobs in their area.

Polling sources:

All statistics are drawn from CaSE’s nationally-representative polling, which can be accessed from: <https://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/what-we-do/public-opinion/case-public-opinion-research/>