

Public Attitudes to R&D and Government and Politicians


This briefing summarises public attitudes to R&D and government and politicians. It is based on evidence from extensive quantitative and qualitative research carried out by CaSE since 2022. Full results can be found on [CaSE's Public Opinion Research pages](#).

The UK Government is associated with R&D

- 65% associate the UK Government with R&D, ranking top of a list provided (July 2025).
- There are weaker associations with the governments of the devolved nations of Scotland (4%), Wales (2%) and Northern Ireland (1%) (July 2025).
- However, governments are not always front of mind in focus groups. When asked about government-funded research, participants tend to think of studies to improve public services or major transportation projects.

Government investment in R&D is supported and seen as beneficial

- 88% say it is important for the Government to invest in R&D, and 71% think the Government should increase or maintain levels of R&D investment (July 2025).
- 71% say investing research, science and technology should be a priority for the UK, ranking 11th on a list of national priorities topped by improving the NHS (July 2025).
- 67% agree R&D should be used as a tool to solve society's problems, and a majority say R&D has an important role in tackling most societal challenges tested (July 2025).
- When asked to imagine the Government announced plans to increase investment in R&D, a majority say that this would show a commitment to solving real problems (67%) and an interest in helping future generations (71%) (September 2024).
- CaSE research consistently finds that the public think Government investment in R&D can benefit the UK economy, local communities and future generations.

 I think you feel, probably, you would be more invested in the government funding or want to know more about that because you know that... if you're a taxpayer, it's your money that's helping that."
Female, 45-54, Middlesbrough

Politicians tend to be less trusted as messengers

- 25% trust information on R&D from politicians and 26% trust politicians to be honest about how much money the Government should invest in R&D (July 2025). Politicians are consistently the least trusted of all messengers tested in CaSE research.