

Public Attitudes to R&D 2025: Investing in R&D

This briefing summarises findings on attitudes to R&D investment from CaSE's Public Attitudes to R&D 2025 study, which comprised a nationally representative survey of 8,000 UK adults, eight focus groups and 20+ follow-up interviews. Full results can be found on [CaSE's Public Opinion Research pages](#).

The principle of Government investment in R&D is well supported

- 88% said it was at least somewhat important for the Government to invest money into R&D.
- 71% think the Government should either increase or maintain levels of R&D investment.
- Time lags, risk and the trade-offs of investing in R&D are not insurmountable barriers to public support, but they do concern around a quarter of the public.

“ I think it is important for the UK government to invest in R&D because I think it can be a vehicle for innovation and change. I think my hesitation again around the investment will be waste.”

Male, 35-44, Nottingham

Despite some concerns, the role of private sector R&D is appreciated

- 71% agree private sector investment has an important role to play in R&D undertaken in the UK. Agreement is highest among men and those in socioeconomic group AB.
- However, focus groups show a default view of private sector R&D as being limited to large multinational consumer goods, technology or pharmaceutical companies.
- Participants were routinely cautious about the potential for profit-led motivations to compromise the standard of privately funded R&D or introduce bias.

The public support fundamental R&D and research into health and energy

- 50% favour an even mix of fundamental and applied research, after which there was a modest skew towards the latter.
- If there was extra money to invest in R&D, 86% said that new medicines and treatments should be a priority, followed by cleaner energy sources (72%).

“ The NHS is on its knees.. But R&D would help, because if things could be streamlined or procedures could be made quicker or more accessible.”

Male, 25-43, Taunton