

Public Attitudes to R&D 2025: Priorities

This briefing summarises findings on the public's priorities and outlooks 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 top three priorities are the NHS, the cost of living and the economy

- 94% say that each of improving the NHS and reducing the cost of living should be either the highest priority or a priority for the UK, followed by growing the economy (91%) and reducing crime (90%).
- 71% say investing research, science and technology should be a priority for the UK.
- 71% say reducing immigration should be a priority, ranking the issue 10th overall. However, it ranks 4th on highest priority, with 45% selecting this option.

There is an overall sense of pessimism among the public

- 62% agree that the UK is a country in decline and 54% agree that there are not enough opportunities for young people to get ahead in life. Far fewer (39%) are optimistic that things will get better.
- 68% agree that there are too many problems in our own country to worry about problems elsewhere, which is higher than 51% who felt this way in a similar question in CaSE's 2022-23 survey.
- 39% describe their area as either "thriving" or "doing fairly well", compared with a sizeable minority who described it as "doing fairly badly" or "being left behind" (25%).

Local outlooks vary markedly, but tend to be more positive

- 39% describe their area as either "thriving" or "doing fairly well", compared with a sizeable minority who described it as "doing fairly badly" or "being left behind" (25%).
- Those intending to vote Labour or Conservative are more likely to feel their area is doing well than those intending to vote Reform or who say they would not vote.
- Most focus group participants found positives about their area, but there was a prevailing sense of "decline" and "decay" among participants in Middlesbrough, Nottingham, Clacton and Sutton/Croydon.



To be fair we did have that [knife crime] before. But now it's like a phoenix rising out of the ashes. Belfast is really bustling now and it's got lots going for it."

Female, 45-54, Belfast