

Public Attitudes to R&D 2025: Trust

This briefing summarises findings on attitudes towards trust in R&D actors 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](#).

Researchers and scientists are seen as trustworthy experts

- Qualitative research identifies a high level of trust in researchers, with participants saying they should talk about R&D because they are the “experts”, even while acknowledging the potential for bias.
- Attitudes to governments or politicians were mixed. Some expected them to communicate about R&D, but others expressed distrust in them or their actions.
- Some participants wanted to hear about R&D from those in their community or who they felt were “more like them”.

“ I mean, a scientist, obviously. Yes they have what's called a producer interest in that it's funding for them, but they also have the knowledge and they know what's needed. I personally trust those authorities.”

Male, 45-54, Sutton/Croydon

Research charities are the most trusted group to talk about R&D

- 84% say they would trust information about R&D from research charities, with just 10% saying they were not very or not at all trustworthy.
- This is followed by researchers (81% say they are trustworthy), universities (77%), patients or patient groups (73%) and friends and family (73%).
- Three groups are widely distrusted: politicians (25% trustworthy compared with 68% not trustworthy), commentators on social media (29%; 62%) and journalists (38%; 54%).

R&D actors are well trusted to talk about investment in R&D

- 80% said research charities would be very or somewhat trustworthy when talking about how much money the Government should invest in R&D, with just 12% saying they were not very or not at all trustworthy.
- This is followed by researchers (74% say they are trustworthy), universities (72%) and patients or patient groups (69%).
- The same groups were distrusted: politicians (26% trustworthy compared with 66% not trustworthy), commentators on social media (28%; 61%) and journalists (35%; 55%).