

# Who's looking after British science?

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# Who's looking after British science?

Science and technology play a key role in underpinning economic success and delivering wider benefits to society. But despite the high profile given to science and innovation through the Treasury's ten-year investment framework, science for the national good is under threat.

In recent years, world-leading UK programmes including research into breast cancer, agricultural engineering and animal diseases have been closed. Research on the impacts of climate change, pollution and biodiversity all face substantial cuts.

It is not in the national interest to close down so much work of practical application, peer-reviewed for quality, and providing direct support for the UK's international commitments on climate change and the environment. These cuts put the UK at real risk of being unable to respond when the next major health or environmental crisis occurs.

Today there is no effective central oversight for the health of the nation's science base. Policy management and decision-making have been fragmented and lack strategic coherence. At present nobody in Government can honestly answer the question "Who's looking after British science?"

Public science in Britain needs:

- **recognition** of the crucial role played by science for the public good
- a clear strategic **vision** for UK science
- a Cabinet minister with **authority** and accountability for public sector science and a similar ministerial role in the devolved administrations
- a **halt** to 'cost-driven' lab closures and privatisation
- adequate funds to **invest** in long-term research and infrastructure
- a **stable** work environment, ending the culture of continuous review and reorganisation
- decent pay and **careers** for staff
- action by scientists and government to promote better public **understanding** of scientific issues
- **open** decision making.

For more information  
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