



Lord Patrick Vallance
Minister of State
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

(By email)

15 April 2025

Dear Lord Vallance

Research funding

I am writing from Prospect trade union on behalf of around 50,000 members working in scientific and technical roles and associated organisations. Prospect is the leading union and one of the largest membership bodies among this vital community. We are keen to work with the government in the best interests of UK research.

The announcement of a below flat cash settlement for UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) for 2025-26 has exacerbated Prospect members' growing concerns for the sustainability of our national capacity in science.

Our union has a broad interest in the health of the science ecosystem, representing members in the public sector, in other UKRI-supported organisations such as the former Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, and Natural Environment Research Council institutes, and in the private sector where we hope to keep R&D operations and jobs here in the UK.

We have been hearing, increasingly, about possible headcount reductions at research institutes, the impacts on research infrastructure of cuts to National Capability funding, and even queries over the future of our international partnerships in a period when core capacity is under strain.

We recognise the pressures and many competing demands on government finances. However, considering the government's own growth mission, based on an industrial strategy with science and innovation at its core, along with the growing urgency to build national resilience, this is not the time to downgrade our capacity or international reputation in science.

I am writing to seek clarity and reassurance on a number of issues:

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- How does the 2025-26 funding allocation measure up according to OECD government R&D statistics, which are comparable year-on-year and against international benchmarks?
- The latest breakdown of the UKRI budget does not distinguish certain elements of cross-UKRI funding that were itemised in previous years' reports: time-limited commitments; centrally managed funding; existing strategic programmes; new strategic programmes; infrastructure. Please could your officials share comparable figures for these classifications for the 2025-26 allocation?
- Prospect members across a number of institutes have already been warned of a 4.5% cut to National Capability (NC) funding. We would like to understand whether the UKRI funding squeeze was already accounted for in the NC budget, or whether there are further cuts planned to NC funding for 2025-26 to accommodate the overall reduction in the UKRI budget.
- Has the department or UKRI undertaken impact assessments for the NC funding cut, and for the UKRI budget allocation? We would welcome an overview of the anticipated consequences, particularly for jobs across the research and innovation landscape, but also for national research infrastructure and services.
- How will the department resource work to support the industrial strategy, and the Cabinet Office review into national resilience and preparedness, in light of this budget settlement.

I would welcome an early opportunity to meet you, to discuss these matters, and how our members working in science can contribute to the government's missions, in particular to deliver economic growth. To this end I enclose two recent Prospect reports addressing the importance of scientific resilience and effective regulation to these missions.

Given our members interest in this subject, I will be sharing a copy of this letter with them.

Yours sincerely



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Senior Deputy General Secretary

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