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Dear Prime Minister,

The Government has rightly put science and research at the heart of its plans for the UK's future – pledging to increase R&D spending to £22bn and make the UK a 'science superpower'. The value of science and technology is recognised again in today's integrated review.

However, in recent weeks, questions have been raised over the Government's financial commitment to this ambition. News of shortfalls in UKRI's budget raise serious concerns for researchers across the country. They risk delaying the Government's plans for a swift innovation-fuelled recovery and could have a significant impact on delivering net zero and the wider levelling-up agenda.

A reduced overseas aid budget has translated into £120m of immediate cuts to the Global Challenges Research Fund and other programmes. This means ongoing projects that have been a key vehicle for UK science diplomacy for many years, helping to tackle pressing challenges in developing countries will be stopped. This not only undoes years of hard work, but risks damaging the UK's global reputation and future trade ambitions.

On top of this, we are now increasingly concerned about wider commitments to research and innovation. We were delighted when you secured association to Horizon Europe as part of the trade deal with the EU. However, if that achievement is not followed through with the necessary additional investment it could leave a shortfall of up to £1 billion this year in existing R&D budgets – and potentially much more in subsequent years.

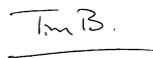
That reduction would not only deal a serious blow to UK science and research, but puts our global reputation as a science superpower at risk. If we are to compete, and to deliver our joint ambitions for prosperity – with high-value jobs and growth and a greener, and healthier, economy and society – UK research and innovation will need access to the best technology and the best people. We need to have both a strong research base in the UK and the best possible opportunities to link-up with research teams in Europe and across the globe.

We have welcomed the Government's commitment to science to date, but we would now like reassurance from you that this ambition is unchanged, that additional investment in Horizon Europe is being prioritised and that core funding for UK research and innovation is supported and secure.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Dame Nancy Rothwell  
Chair, Russell Group



Dr Tim Bradshaw  
Chief Executive, Russell Group

Cc Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer  
Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng, Secretary of State, BEIS

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