

31 May 2017

Rt Hon Theresa May
Leader of the Conservative Party
Conservative Campaign Headquarters
4 Matthew Parker Street
London
SW1H 9HQ

Dear Mrs May,

I am writing on behalf of the Royal Society of Biology – one of the core sciences – about your party's policy towards UK science and that of the biosciences in particular. We would welcome your party's views on the points I would like to raise.

The UK's science base is a national asset and delivers progress and prosperity across the UK generating improvements in health and wellbeing, a strong economy and high value jobs. The next Parliament faces an urgent task to build on these strengths and avoid the real risk that UK science will decline unless attention is paid to its talent base, organisation and funding.

UK science drives core sectors of the economy which are internationally competitive, including finance, agriculture and manufacturing. However, the risk of its serious decline is very real and Government must address how to attract and retain globally leading science talent in the UK. Key to this challenge is an environment that welcomes and accommodates an internationally mobile workforce, supports international collaboration and provides and encourages investment in research and development.

In particular, it is vital that your political work encourages a Government that:

- Ensures high quality science, technology, engineering and maths education and training is fit for purpose, and open to all.
- Ensures the UK has a migration system that supports science and engineering mobility for excellence, skills, education and collaboration.
- Maintains and builds on the UK's leadership and collaboration in research and innovation internationally.
- Invests to enhance the UK's internationally leading research and innovation environment, recognising that OECD comparator nations currently out-invest the UK by a significant margin relative to GDP.


- Champions and ensures the use of evidence and science advice in all Government decisions, documents and messaging, explaining decisions relative to science.
- Ensures the regulatory environment protects people and planet, facilitates trade and access to markets, and promotes innovation.

An immediate and key concern for us is to provide certainty and stability for EEA national scientists and engineers currently working in the UK, and vice versa for UK scientists abroad. We see enormous potential value in ensuring that scientists and engineers face minimal barriers to international working.

We would be delighted to work with the next Government to inform and develop science and engineering policies in the next Parliament.

We would also like to bring to your attention that the first major science event of the next Parliament will be *Parliamentary Links Day* on Tuesday 27 June from 10am which will be held in the House of Commons. It will be held on an entirely All-Party basis and will be supported by a very wide range of the UK's foremost science and engineering organisations.

I hope that we can welcome you to the event and continue fruitful discussions with you over the course of the next Parliament.

Yours,


Dr Mark Downs CSci FRSB
Chief Executive