A thriving UK life sciences research sector to accelerate recovery

The UK is a world leader in the life sciences, generating over £74 billion in annual turnover and supporting nearly a quarter of a million high-skilled jobs. This success is a testament to the UK's diverse and collaborative medical research ecosystem, in which government funders and researchers in universities and the health service work in parallel with industry and research charities to deliver ground-breaking innovations they could not produce alone.

COVID-19 has put all parts of society under significant financial strain and the upcoming Spending Review is an opportunity to invest in the UK's social and economic recovery. Supporting the life sciences will be crucial on both fronts: for improving patient outcomes and helping the NHS rapidly recover; to creating high-paying jobs and levelling up research infrastructure across the UK.

Despite the sector playing a central role in responding to the pandemic, key parts of the life sciences ecosystem are under threat. As a result, the UK risks losing up to £7.8 billion of investment in medical research by 2027. With 40% of charity-funded early career scientists considering leaving research as a result of funding concerns caused by COVID-19, we also risk significant long-term damage to our skills pipeline and life sciences workforce.

COVID-19 has powerfully demonstrated the life sciences sector's vital strategic importance to the UK's health, security and economy. Yet without Government support, the sector will struggle to accelerate our recovery from COVID-19 and deliver ground-breaking innovations in the future. The UK Government should see the Spending Review as an opportunity to support the UK's recovery and lay the foundations for achieving its longer-term ambitions for UK life sciences. We recommend the UK Government:

1. Increases the budgets of the NIHR and of UKRI bodies (including the MRC) in order to realise its commitment to expand public investment in R&D to £22bn per year by 2024/25. This public investment should include support for basic, applied and translational life sciences research in universities, the health service, and industry.
2. Supports the essential role research charities play in the sector by committing to a time-limited Life Sciences-Charity Partnership Fund. This will enable charities to continue de-risking new fields of life sciences research and attracting inward investment into the UK science base.
3. Invests in the infrastructure and workforce needed to make the UK the destination of choice for clinical research. This should include investments that maximise the benefits and opportunities provided by the UK's health data.

Association of British HealthTech Industries	Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry
Association of Medical Research Charities	Academy of Medical Sciences
Alzheimer's Research UK	British Generic Manufacturers Association
British Heart Foundation	Cancer Research UK
Ethical Medicines Industry Group	Merck Sharp & Dohme
Proprietary Association of Great Britain	Pfizer
Roche	Versus Arthritis