

Rt Hon Boris Johnson
Conservative Campaign Headquarters
4 Matthew Parker Street
London
SW1H 9HQ

4 December 2019

Dear Mr Johnson

I am writing on behalf of the Royal Society of Biology regarding your party's policies on UK science.

The UK science base is a national asset. It delivers progress and prosperity, a strong economy, high value jobs and improved health and wellbeing. UK science drives key sectors of the economy, including finance, agriculture and manufacturing.

However, there is a real risk of a decline in UK science. Avoiding this decline will be an urgent task during the next Parliament, which will require a focus on the workforce, funding and organisation of our science sector.

In particular, it is vital that your policies encourage a Government that:

- supports and maintains high quality education and training in science, technology, engineering and maths that is fit for purpose and open to all, underpinned by a stable and coherent curriculum in primary and secondary education;
- recruits and retains more teachers and raises the professional status of teachers at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and supports development of their disciplinary expertise;
- develops a migration system that supports mobility for excellence, skills, education and collaboration in science and engineering;
- maintains and develops UK leadership and collaboration in research and innovation internationally;
- retains the current commitment to increasing investment in research and innovation to 2.4% of GDP by 2027, and 3% in the long-term, recognising that other OECD nations currently invest a greater proportion of GDP in research by a significant margin;
- champions and ensures the use of scientific evidence and advice across all Government departments, and in all areas of policy;
- ensures the regulatory environment protects people and planet, facilitates trade and access to markets, and promotes innovation;

- takes effective action and provides global leadership on climate change, biodiversity loss and other environmental crises;
- develops an evidence-based approach to animal welfare, including support for high quality research for public good, and animal welfare, which go hand-in-hand.

The next Government will need to develop an environment that attracts and retains globally leading science talent. Achieving this will require positioning the UK as a country that welcomes and accommodates an internationally mobile workforce, supports international collaboration and encourages investment in research and development.

An immediate and key concern is to provide certainty and stability for EEA national scientists and engineers working in the UK, and for UK scientists working abroad. We see enormous potential value in minimising barriers to international working for scientists and engineers.

We will be delighted to work with the next Government to inform and develop education, science and engineering policies during the next Parliament. Interest in bioscience brings people together, its appeal crosses boundaries and its outcomes can benefit all.

We would also like to bring it to your attention that the largest pan-science event in the annual parliamentary calendar, Links Day, will be held on 23 June 2020 in the Houses of Parliament. It is organised 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.



Dr Mark Downs CSci FRSB
Chief Executive