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The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
House of Commons
London
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4th August 2022

Dear Mr Sunak,

We are writing to you as experts in the field of New Approach Methodologies (NAMs). These cutting-edge biomedical research techniques produce results that have much greater relevance to patients and include approaches such as artificial intelligence, organ-on-a-chip technology and the use of advanced cultures of human cells and tissues.

In your capacity as a candidate in the Conservative Party leadership contest, we are asking you to commit to supporting human relevant scientific research. We believe that this would generate significant health and economic benefits and would receive strong public support.

There is an urgent need for faster medical progress. Of the several thousand diseases that affect people, only around 500 of them have treatments available.ⁱ The current reliance on outdated, animal-based research methods is one of the factors that plays a significant role in this slow rate of progress. Greater than 92 per cent of drugs that show promise in animal tests and that proceed into human trials fail to get to clinic, mostly for reasons of poor efficacy and safety that were not predicted by animal testing.ⁱⁱ

Unlike traditional animal-based research, NAMs are not hampered by fundamental problems in translating results from one species to another. For example, researchers at Animal Free Research UK's Animal Replacement Centre of Excellence at the University of Exeter recently made a ground-breaking discovery in the treatment and prevention of diabetes. They used human cells to do this and the breakthrough could not have been achieved using animals due to genetic differences that complicate, rather than facilitate, our understanding of human diseases like diabetes. You will of course be aware of the economic impact of such major public health challenges. Diabetes UK estimates that the NHS spends at least £10 billion a year on diabetes, which is about 10% of its entire budget.ⁱⁱⁱ

Investment in NAMs offers a major opportunity for supporting the UK's economic growth. A report by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr), which was commissioned by Animal Free Research UK, found that NAMs are already making a significant contribution to the British economy. In 2019, it is estimated that the UK NAMs industry contributed £2.3 billion in turnover and £592 million in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the British economy. By 2026, the UK NAMs industry's contribution to UK GDP is predicted to reach a GVA of £2.5 billion.^{iv}

There is significant public support for supporting a transition to NAMs. For example, a YouGov poll commissioned in 2021 by Animal Free Research UK found that 68% of respondents would support a policy ending animal experiments in medical research in the UK and replacing them with non-animal alternatives (e.g. artificial intelligence and using human cells or tissue).^v

Animal Free Research UK recently published a policy document titled '[Eight Steps to Accelerate Human Relevant Innovation](#)'. This suggests key policies that could accelerate the transition to cutting-edge NAMs, such as providing funding and practical support for scientists and appointing a Minister for Human Relevant Science. We urge you to support these measures, given the benefits they offer for both public health and the economy.

We would be delighted to discuss these matters with you or arrange for you to visit the research facilities where we are using and developing these cutting-edge techniques. We look forward to hearing from you about whether you feel able to support British scientists in becoming world leaders in these innovative, future-focused technologies.

Signed by:

**Please note that the letter illustrates the view and opinion of the signatories but not necessarily of their associated organisations*

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Dr Jarrod Bailey, Science Director, Animal Free Research UK

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Professor Matthew Dalby, Director of the lifETIME Centre for Doctoral Training in Engineered Tissues

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Professor Amanda Ellison, Professor of Neuroscience, Durham University

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ⁱ <https://ncats.nih.gov/files/NCATS-factsheet.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://pharmaintelligence.informa.com/resources/product-content/2021-clinical-development-success-rates>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/professionals/position-statements-reports/statistics>

^{iv} https://www.animalfreeresearchuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Animal-Free-Research-UK_Economic-Report-2.pdf

^v <https://www.animalfreeresearchuk.org/poll-clear-majority-of-britons-want-end-to-animal-testing-in-uk-labs/>