How to secure the best for life sciences after Brexit: five key areas

The UK has a uniquely vibrant life science sector, creating high-quality jobs and valuable export opportunities which contribute to the UK's international standing and competitiveness. This success is built on a readiness to collaborate across the world, and as the UK considers its future outside the EU it must strengthen these international connections in order to remain a leading destination for life sciences research.

The Prime Minister has made science and innovation a priority for Brexit negotiations. We share her vision of an innovative and outward-facing UK life sciences community, and believe it represents the best pathway to improved health for those across the UK and the world.

This joint APPG event unites organisations from across the spectrum of life sciences, and together we urge Government to consider these five negotiation priorities for science:

1. **Funding programmes and collaboration** – We welcome the Chancellor's commitment to increasing funding for research and innovation by £2 billion per year by 2020, and the strategic coordination offered by the Industrial Strategy. However, the UK receives substantial EU funds to support research, and progress will be undermined if UK researchers lose access to EU funding streams and the important collaborative opportunities they offer.

   Building the best destination in the world for science and innovation requires a diversity of complementary funding sources. **We believe this can be achieved most effectively through continued UK participation in EU research programmes and venture capital schemes, alongside active engagement in shaping their strategies.**

2. **Movement of people** – The UK's thriving research and innovation base is intrinsically international and collaborative. **We need a simple immigration framework for researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, legal and regulatory experts, skilled technicians and students that attracts and retains these valued individuals within the UK life sciences community.** The system must be fair, transparent and efficient, and sufficiently flexible to allow for the UK's changing skills needs and research priorities in the years ahead.

3. **Regulation of research** – EU regulatory frameworks, spanning from clinical trials to data protection, help build consistent research standards between countries – facilitating the exchange of ideas, research samples and data. This is particularly important for research into rare disease populations where multi-nation, multi-centre studies are the only way to access the number of patients needed for robust research. **We urge Government to take into consideration how the future regulatory framework can continue to foster innovation and support cooperation in a collaborative research ecosystem, allowing the UK to lead international research projects such as clinical trials.**

#BrexitLifeSciences

Cancer Research UK: funding international clinical trials
Cancer Research UK directly funds over 200 clinical trials. ***More than a quarter (28%) of these trials involve at least one other EU country****. Cancer Research UK also co-funds the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer (EPIC) trial that involves 521,000 study participants enrolled from 23 centres in 10 western European countries. Such* ***pan-EU trials may be at risk*** *if the UK does not have regulation in place for clinical trials that is compatible with the EU.*

4. **Regulation of medicines and technologies** – Regulatory cooperation on medicines and medical technology provides stability and certainty for the life sciences sector. In the global pharmaceutical market, national systems of medicines regulation can result in slower access to treatments for patients – drugs in Australia and Canada come to market 6-12 months later on average than those in the EU and USA.

   Involvement in the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and wider European regulatory networks- including the in vitro diagnostics CE marking model- would be mutually beneficial for the UK and remaining EU Member States. It is worth noting that the EU represents 25% of the global pharmaceutical sales market, compared to the UK's 3% share in isolation. **In an increasingly cooperative regulatory environment, we urge Government to consider the public health benefits of a harmonised regulatory system with the EU framework, which is well established and globally recognised.** The UK's participation in EU regulatory processes and access to key databases focusing on medicines and medical technologies benefits innovation, public health and patients in the UK and beyond. In areas of emerging technologies, there may be opportunities for a more adaptable regulatory approach, while protecting patient safety.

Muscular Dystrophy UK: accelerate patient access to emerging treatments
Duchenne muscular dystrophy is a severe type of muscular dystrophy and is a life-limiting muscle-wasting condition; there is no cure and there are currently limited treatment options available. However there are several promising treatments progressing through the clinical trials process, and a number of these are awaiting authorisation by the EMA. If successful, these drugs could effectively slow down the progression of the condition and result in significant benefits to those affected. If the EMA licensing were to no longer to apply to the UK this could cause major disruption to treatments currently in the pipeline and could potentially result in individuals affected by Duchenne muscular dystrophy in the UK having slower access to innovative treatment options.

5. **EU-facilitated networks** – The EU catalyses networks and collaborations across Member States, Europe and the globe. These connections are particularly vital for small and dispersed research communities, and many disease areas have specific European networks. **Working through networks magnifies influence and pools resources, and we believe UK researchers should retain access to these valuable connections.**

The Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association: engagement with EU networks
The MND Association estimate that the total value of the EU programmes that they are involved in is at least €10 million. One crucial programme is the JPND, an EU Joint Programme on Neurodegenerative Disease Research and the largest global research initiative aimed at tackling the challenge of neurodegenerative diseases. This network has created an extensive collaborative framework that combines key expertise across Europe working to common standard operating protocols. The MND Association view that, outside of the JPND, very little funding exists for international collaborative research into MND.