

Rt Hon Boris Johnson
Prime Minister
10, Downing Street
London, SW1A 2AA

22 March 2021

Dear Prime Minister

Cc: Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng, Secretary of State, BEIS

We are writing to voice our concerns regarding the disparity between your commitment to make the UK a science superpower, stated in the Integrated Review of Defence and Foreign Policy last week, and recent news of cuts to the UKRI ODA allocation and questions over how the UK's association with Horizon Europe will be funded.

Globally connected and locally rooted, Alliance universities transform lives and economies, playing a major role in producing highly skilled graduates, undertaking world-leading research and galvanising the economy. All members are innovative and agile, committed to increasing the quality and quantity of their research and will significantly help contribute towards the UK developing further as a science superpower and achieving the 2.4% share of GDP on R&D expenditure by 2027. To do this, our universities need funding for their research.

Alliance universities will be at the heart of the UK's recovery from COVID-19. They work with industry and local partners to maximise impact to support local, regional, and national priorities. Our members' industry partnerships, particularly with SMEs, mean their research has a direct impact in driving innovation in the UK economy and their close connections to the public services help deliver new innovations in services and care. This would all be at risk if research funding is cut.

Our members contribute significantly to the levelling-up agenda and regional regeneration – aligning our research to local sector strengths and growth areas, whilst leveraging inward investment globally to fix local challenges. The proposed cuts will also have a considerable

impact on our ability to carry out our vital research focused on real-world issues aimed at making concrete changes in local communities and improving the quality of life in local areas.

Alliance universities, due to the more applied nature of their research, have traditionally benefited from the UK being part of the Horizon programme and we welcome the UK's continued association. European funding, alongside funding from UKRI's ODA budget through the Global Challenges Research Fund has aided Alliance Universities' ability to work on the global stage - forming partnerships with global businesses, charities and Governments. Much of our research offers a significant contribution to solving global challenges and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This research is already being detrimentally affected by the cuts to the ODA budget with the proposed reduction in GCRF QA funding affecting plans for upcoming research studentships and funding bids currently in process being postponed. Continued association with the Horizon Programme is essential to maintain our vital research programmes.

We believe the UK can develop further as a science superpower and we are committed to helping to achieve this. It does, however, need the financial support and infrastructure to facilitate this transformation. We urge you to step in and ensure that the required support is in place to make this happen.

Yours sincerely



Vanessa Wilson
Chief Executive University Alliance



Professor Debra Humphris FRCP
Chair University Alliance
Vice-Chancellor University of Brighton