



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann  
Royal Irish Academy



THE LEARNED SOCIETY OF WALES  
CYMDEITHAS DDYSGEDIG CYMRU



*The Royal Society  
of Edinburgh*

KNOWLEDGE MADE USEFUL

Rt. Hon. Greg Clark MP  
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP  
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

14 March 2019

Dear Secretaries of State,

The Learned Society of Wales, Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Royal Irish Academy are the national academies for Wales, Scotland and the island of Ireland respectively. We represent, champion and disseminate research, learning and useful knowledge and are writing to you today about particular concerns as the United Kingdom proceeds towards its withdrawal from the European Union.

Membership of the European Union has brought distinct benefits to Higher Education and to research and innovation in the UK. Movement of staff and students between the member states has enhanced the quality and reputation of our institutions. In particular our academic communities have been enriched, their composition has become more diverse, and they are more outward looking. International cooperation and collaboration in teaching and research has been demonstrated to be both synergistic and more impactful. The Erasmus programme has been a signal success. We consider it vital that future policies, including on immigration, and our future relationship with the EU encourage and facilitate these very positive and productive experiences.

Of course, the quality of our research has meant that UK researchers have been very successful at winning research grants from EU programmes. That is another benefit of that participation. The UK Government has recognised the essential importance of research in its commitments for the funding of UK Research and Innovation over the next three years. Higher Education has gained enormously from EU research framework programmes and associated funding whilst expenditure from the Structural Funds in Wales and Northern Ireland has been even more significant for their universities and represents an important income stream for further and higher education sectors across Scotland, particularly the University of the Highlands and Islands supporting research capacity, infrastructure and skills. Replacing the EU sources of funding is critical to the wider development of the nations we represent, and most crucially to our universities.

The UK Government's Industrial Strategy specifically recognises a responsibility to deliver prosperity across the United Kingdom, to all nations and regions. Details of the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund are

emerging. We endorse the recommendation of the All Party Group on Post-Brexit Funding for Nations, Regions and Local Areas, that the UK Government should respect the devolution settlement with strategic guidelines agreed between the UK Government and the devolved administrations and responsibility for the detailed design and delivery transferred to the devolved administrations and their partners. We note the intention of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to *'tackle inequalities between communities by raising productivity, especially in those parts of our country whose economies are furthest behind'* and consider it essential that the Fund should be no less in value than the EU Regional Funding it replaces and that allocation of overall funding initially reflects the present distribution (share and level) of EU expenditure between the four nations of the UK and should evolve according to need.

As national academies we welcome the UK Government's commitment to the target of R&D spending of 2.4% of GDP. We fully support the affirmation of the Haldane principle in the UKRI Strategic Prospectus, that research funding should be awarded on merit. But we also stress the importance of UK-wide bodies taking account of devolution. In particular, we advocate meaningful engagement and communication between the UK Government and devolved administrations on research and innovation including in the identification of UK research needs and priorities.

This is particularly important in respect of UKRI which while having responsibility for research across the UK also includes within it Research England. While we recognise that UKRI is engaged with the funding councils in the devolved nations and the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland we recommend that further consideration is given to what arrangements and structures might be put in place to encourage coherence and support decision making that fully takes account of the needs, priorities and contributions of the devolved nations. As the national academies covering Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, we would be happy to offer our services in support of this work.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet you to discuss the issues raised in this letter.

We are copying this letter to the Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and to key stakeholders within the devolved nations. We will be making the text available publicly.

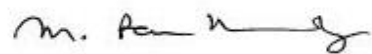
Yours sincerely



Professor Dame Ann Glover  
President, the Royal Society of  
Edinburgh



Sir Emyr Jones Parry  
President, the Learned Society of  
Wales



Professor M. Peter Kennedy  
President, the Royal Irish  
Academy

Cc.

- Secretary of State for Wales, Rt. Hon. Alun Cairns MP
- Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt. Hon. Karen Bradley MP
- Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt. Hon. David Mundell MP
- Sir John Kingman, Chair of UKRI