

**To:** The Right Honourable Dr Greg Clark, MP  
Chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee

**From:** Professor Rachel Oliver, The Inclusion Group for Equity in Research in STEMM (TIGERS) and supporters (If you would like more information about this letter, please contact TIGERS via email to [roar@tigerinstemm.org](mailto:roar@tigerinstemm.org) or via Twitter DM to @TIGERinSTEMM)

Dear Dr Clark,

We are writing to urge you to continue the inquiry begun by the previous House of Commons Science and Technology Committee (STC) into **the impact of science funding policy on equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.**

With government expenditure on research and development totalling more than £34 billion annually<sup>1</sup>, it is imperative that taxpayer's money is spent effectively and fairly. Research in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) has its greatest impact when carried out by a diverse scientific community, yet the policies and processes related to the allocation of research funding dramatically limits this diversity. To ensure that the UK remains a leader in the global scientific arena, we must mobilise the talent and creativity of our diverse population to a much greater extent. We believe a crucial step towards this will be to mandate research funders to regularly collect, publish and analyse detailed diversity data; this will allow us to understand the extent of the inequity within the current system. Rigorous, evidence-based interventions enabled by such data are our best opportunity to improve equity and increase the impact of UK STEMM research.

Recent data<sup>2</sup> requested from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) by the previous STC have already revealed worrying inequities in the current funding system. For example:

1. Success rates for white Principal Investigators (PIs) applying for grants are almost 60% higher than those for non-white PIs (p10 - Ethnicity).
2. The average size of grants awarded to men are consistently larger than those awarded to women - by, on average, ca. 5% (p13 - Gender).
3. Disabled PIs have consistently lower success rates (p8 - Disability) and receive less than half the mean award amount of their non-disabled counterparts (p13 - Disability).

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/researchanddevelopmentexpenditure/bulletins/ukgrossdomesticexpenditureonresearchanddevelopment/2017>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/science-technology/Correspondence/191030-UKRI%20to%20Chair%20re%20Impact%20of%20funding%20on%20equality%20diversity%20inclusion%20and%20accessibility.pdf>

Striking as these data are, the broader research literature shows that other issues which are not currently documented in UKRI data (for example the impact of sexual orientation, gender transition or socio-economic class) also lead to marginalisation of minority scientists.

The UKRI data and broader literature highlight the pressing need for collection and monitoring of data across a wider range of characteristics and for a more in-depth analysis of the source of the inequities. We therefore call upon the Science and Technology Committee to continue the current inquiry and, once it is complete, to provide concrete recommendations for policy changes which will enable us to address and resolve the inequities in our funding landscape.

Yours sincerely,

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