3- UK ‘could lose generation of scientists’ with cuts to projects and research facilities

The Guardian, February 6, 2026, By Ian Sample *Science editor*

- Cuts =

Hundreds of early career researchers have warned the UK will lose a generation of scientists after the announcement of significant cuts to physics projects and research facilities.

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At the same time, the UK has shelved plans for four large infrastructure projects to save more than £250m. The projects include an upgrade to a detector on the Large Hadron Collider at Cern near Geneva, and an electron-ion collider under development with researchers in the US.

While the cost overruns are driven by facilities, the cuts are landing on physics grants as the science funding body UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) seeks to **"do fewer things better"** and prioritise applied research over more fundamental science.

In an open letter to Prof Ian Chapman, the chief executive of UKRI, more than 500 researchers write: "The present combination of uncertainty, delay and re-prioritisation in early career pathways risks the loss of a generation from the UK research and industrial ecosystem."

Dr Simon Williams, a 29-year-old postdoc at Durham University, studies quantum computing applications in theoretical physics and is looking for a second postdoc position. "The only options I've realistically had are overseas," he said. "As things stand, it is increasingly likely that I will take up a position in Germany rather than remain in the UK. There are simply far more viable and stable opportunities abroad."

Dr Claire Rigouzzo, a 26-year-old researcher at King's College London, has accepted a post in Europe after finding nothing in the UK. Early career scientists faced one of the harshest job markets in years, she said, but the knock-on effects were broader. Senior academics were worried because they cannot attract the best researchers, she said. "Even students can sense that science is no longer a priority," she added. "Morale is extremely low across the board."

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The STFC needs to make £162m in savings by 2030 after seeing electricity costs spiral at its national facilities and subscriptions to international projects such as Cern and the European Space Agency rise with foreign exchange rates. The funder also committed to projects it can no longer afford.

Another King's researcher, Dr Lucien Heurtier, 37, will come to the end of his contract in September and has started looking for jobs in China. "It is clear that no UK university will want to open lecturer positions in curiosity-driven research if such lecturers would not be able to attract much national funding," he said. "My wife and daughter will have to follow."

The loss of grants means the UK faces a situation where it has spent hefty sums on overseas projects such as the groundbreaking Rubin Observatory in Chile, which will swing into action this year, but could have no UK astronomers to work on it. "The timing of these proposed cuts, just as the telescopes start to deliver, could not be worse," said Prof Catherine Heymans, Scotland's astronomer royal.

Prof Mike Lockwood, the president of the Royal Astronomical Society, urged the government to step in to prevent a "catastrophe" in science. "You lose a whole generation," he said. "The facilities side is overcommitted and it's young researchers that are taking the brunt of that. As a nation, we can't afford for that to happen."

Speaking to reporters, Chapman defended the moves. "When you make choices there will be some things that miss out, but when you don't make choices, everybody misses out because you choke everybody and nothing then can be internationally competitive because it's all underfunded," he said.

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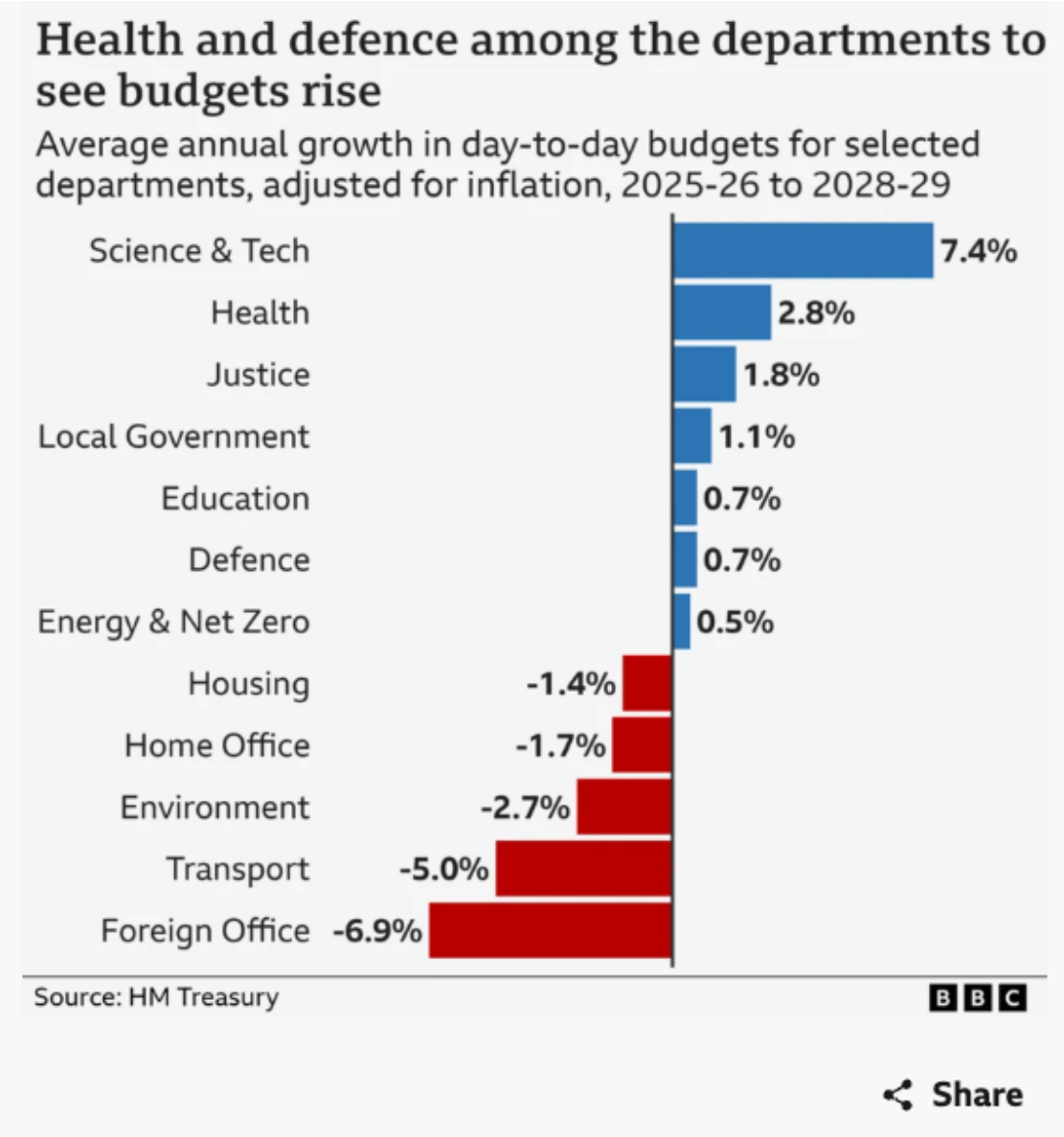
Data from the 2025 Budget delivered by Rachel Reeves, the **Chancellor of the Exchequer.**



bbc.com, June 2025

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Budget allocations for UK Research and Innovation

CaSE analysis of the 2026/27-2029/30 UKRI budget allocations.

18 Dec 2025

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has published its budget explainer which provides a breakdown of its allocations for financial year 2026-27 to financial year 2029-30.

It has been positive to see UKRI proactively engaging the sector over the last few weeks with their plans to reorganise their funding structure, including at the recent UKRI Innovation for Growth Summit. However, whilst it is good to have allocations for UKRI's budget through to 2029-30, the information as published means it is not possible to compare these allocations with previous years.

We would like to see more effort to enable past comparison so we can understand better what these allocations mean for implementation of the new funding structure. Without this transparency, it is difficult to fully understand what the allocations mean for UK R&D in the years ahead, and how the scope and size of public investment in various areas of R&D is changing.

Additionally, UKRI states that it will manage its budgets dynamically over the spending review period to adjust and adapt investment plans to emerging opportunities, meaning that the budgets set out in today's explainer may not reconcile directly with future outturn at the end of each financial year.

As was previously announced, over the spending review period, UKRI plans to invest:

- £14.5 billion in curiosity-driven, foundational research ('bucket 1')
- £8.3 billion in targeted R&D addressing strategic government and societal priorities ('bucket 2')
- £7.4 billion to support innovative companies' growth, helping businesses to start, scale and remain in the UK ('bucket 3')

£8.4 billion will be invested in priorities that cut across all 3 buckets, including talent, infrastructure, institutes and facilities.

IDIOMS

- To rob Peter to pay Paul.

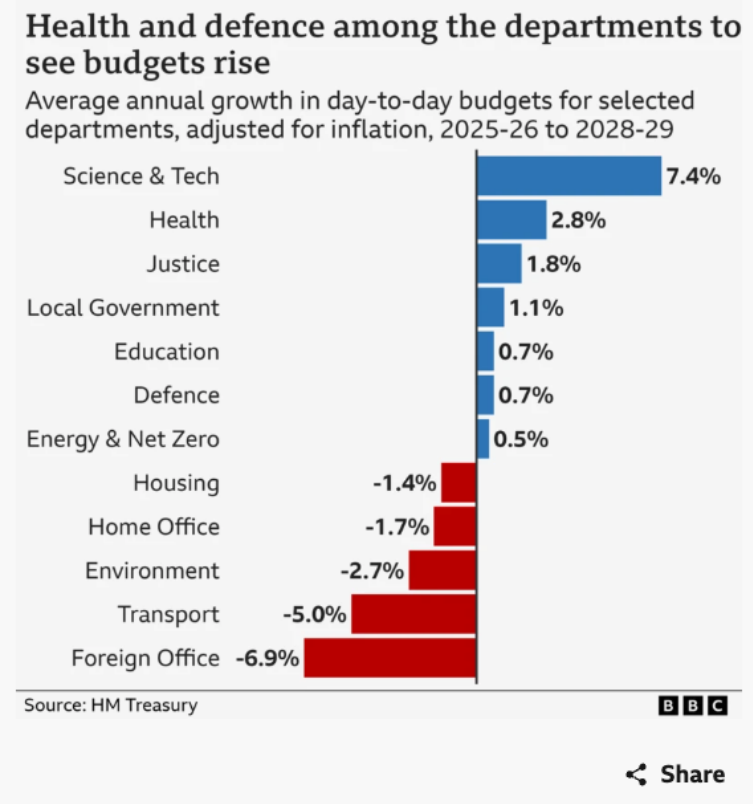
- You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs.

- You can't have your cake and eat it too.

Find **an effective title** and **write an introduction** for a synthesis of the four documents provided.

Reminder : your introduction must include a hook, a concise presentation of the sources, and a problem statement or key question.

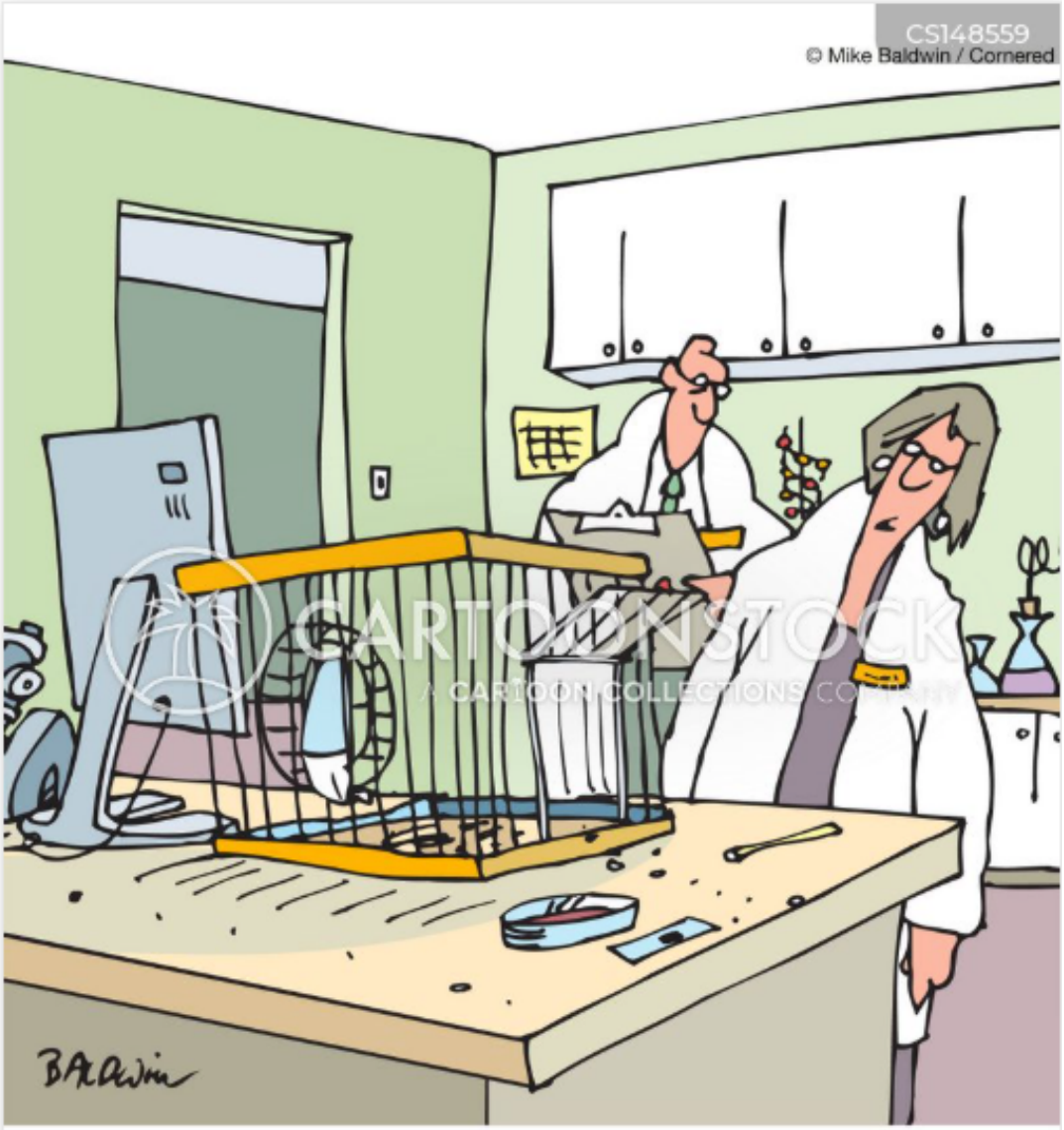
- **Doc1 - UK recovers position in EU's Horizon Europe science research programme** *The Guardian*, Tue 12 Aug 2025
- **Doc2 - UK space start-up Orbex collapses as takeover talks break down** Peggy Hollinger *Financial Times,* FEBRUARY 11 2026
- **Doc3 - UK 'could lose generation of scientists' with cuts to projects and research facilities** *The Guardian*, February 6, 2026,
- **Doc4 - Health and Defence among the departments to see budgets rise** – bbc.com, June 2025



KEY QUESTION :

Given the complex economic and political context in the United Kingdom, what does the future hold for science and research in the country?


YOUR PROJECT HAD TO BE AXED IN ORDER TO PAY FOR OUR PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROJECT LOOKING AT THE EFFECTS OF AXING YOUR PROJECT
OBSERVATORY
CLOSED
RESEARCH INTO DEPRESSION
P45
CHRIS MADDEN



"Great. First our funding ran out, now the rat."

PRACTICE

- "£250m" = write the amount in words

- Translate into English :

Des centaines de chercheurs s'inquiètent pour leur avenir.

Ce chercheur de 35 ans va peut-être devoir partir à l'étranger.

Le budget a été réduit d'un tiers.

Ils doivent économiser 160 millions de livres d'ici 2030.