Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP
Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
100 Parliament Street
SW1A 2BQ

24 June 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing as British Heart Foundation (BHF)-funded researchers to urge that cardiovascular disease (CVD) be prioritised within the upcoming Life Sciences Plan. As the Government sets out its vision for the sector, prioritising cardiovascular research will be essential to achieving its commitment to tackle the UK's biggest killers, in turn helping to deliver an NHS fit for the future and unlocking economic growth.

Since the 1960s, the annual number of deaths from CVD has fallen by nearly half. This has been one of the UK's major health success stories, and research funded by BHF and others has been a major contributor to this remarkable journey. For example, BHF-funded research has helped to transform heart attack care, shown that statins save lives, and identified the faulty genes that cause inherited conditions, amongst countless other advances, saving and improving lives in the UK and beyond. However, after decades of progress, premature deaths from CVD in this country are rising, putting this incredible legacy at risk. CVD is now the fifth most commonly reported health condition among people who are economically inactive due to poor health in the UK and costs the economy £28 billion annually.

When considering the total UK health R&D expenditure, cardiovascular research is significantly underfunded compared to its devastating impact on people's lives and its significant contribution to the existence of health inequalities. We appreciate that you have many competing priorities to consider as you develop the Life Sciences Plan, and that ongoing economic uncertainty means that public finances are increasingly stretched. However, making CVD a key focus of the Plan will reap significant and lasting benefits. By collaborating with a wide range of funders to direct investment towards cardiovascular research, we can drive further reductions in one of the UK's biggest killers, ensure the UK remains a leading destination for R&D, and boost growth by attracting onward investment.

We are witnessing remarkable advances in our understanding and treatment of CVD, enabled by new technologies like AI, transforming drug discovery for previously untreatable conditions. By harnessing these innovative technologies, we can prevent, treat, and even cure heart diseases in ways we never thought possible. Partnerships will be central to unlocking these potentially revolutionary breakthroughs. One example of this in practice is BHF's partnership with the Medical Research Council**,** which aims to develop the first therapies to stimulate cardiac repair and regeneration in patients following heart attacks. Charities, universities and industry play critical roles in making our research possible, funding our equipment, our staff, and the medicines and devices that are ultimately taken into clinical trial. We need your support to help foster this collaboration and facilitate partnerships so that more investment – public and private – is directed to the biggest challenges in cardiovascular research.

If we are to ensure a healthier population, increase the number of years people live in good health and reduce the number of people unable to work due to illness or caregiving responsibilities, cardiovascular research needs to be at the heart of life sciences policy. We stand on the cusp of significant breakthroughs, and it is imperative that the UK invests in a future where scientific progress against the biggest killers takes centre stage.

We look forward to the announcement with interest.

Yours sincerely,

- **Dr Rasha Al-Lamee**, *Clinical Reader in Cardiovascular Science, National Heart & Lung Institute, Imperial College London*
- **Professor Jane Armitage,** *Emeritus Professor of Clinical Trials & Epidemiology*
- **Professor David Attwell**, *Director, BHF-UK DRI Centre for Vascular Dementia Research; Jodrell Professor of Physiology, University College London*
- **Professor Matthew Bailey**, *Professor of Renal Physiology, University of Edinburgh*
- **Professor Andrew H Baker**, *BHF Professor of Translational Cardiovascular Sciences, BHF Centre of Regenerative Medicine for Cardiovascular Sciences, University of Edinburgh*

- **Professor Elijah Behr**, *Consultant Cardiologist, St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust; Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, Director, Cardiovascular and Genomics Research Institute, City St George's, University of London*
- **Dr Andrew Benest**, *Associate Professor in Cancer Sciences, University of Nottingham*
- **Professor Martin Bennett**, *BHF Professor of Cardiovascular Sciences, University of Cambridge*
- **Professor Matthew Bown**, *BHF Professor of Vascular Surgery, University of Leicester*
- **Professor Massimo Caputo**, *BHF Professor of Congenital Heart Surgery and Consultant in Cardiothoracic Surgery, University of Bristol*
- **Professor Barbara Casadei**, *Head, National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College London; BHF Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and Honorary Consultant Cardiologist*
- **Professor Edwin Chilvers**, *Emeritus Professor of Medicine, Imperial College London*
- **Professor Murray Clarke**, *PHSA-Engage Mutual Health Professor of Cardiovascular Disease, University of Cambridge*
- **Professor Sir Rory Collins**, *CEO and Principal Investigator, UK Biobank; BHF Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology, University of Oxford*
- **Dr Richard Cubbon**, *Associate Professor of Cardiology, The University of Leeds*
- **Professor Nicholas Curzen,** *Professor of Interventional Cardiology, University of Southampton*
- **Professor John Danesh**, *BHF Professor of Epidemiology and Medicine; Head, Department of Public Health and Primary Care, University of Cambridge; Professorial Fellow, Jesus College, Cambridge; Faculty Member, Wellcome Sanger Institute; Director, Health Data Research UK-Cambridge*
- **Professor Dana Dawson,** *Chair in Cardiovascular Medicine, University of Aberdeen*
- **Professor Sarah De Val**, *BHF Senior Fellow, University of Oxford*
- **Dr Katharine Dibb**, *Senior Lecturer in Cardiovascular Sciences, University of Manchester*
- **Professor Perry Elliott**, *Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine; Director Institute of Cardiovascular Science, University College London*
- **Professor Costanza Emanueli**, *BHF Chair in Cardiovascular Science, Imperial College London*
- **Dr Timothy Fairbairn**, *Senior Lecturer, University of Liverpool; Clinical Lead for Cardiac Diagnostics and Echocardiography, Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust*
- **Professor Donna Fitzsimons**, *Head of School of Nursing & Midwifery, Queens University Belfast*
- **Professor William Fuller,** *Professor of Molecular Physiology, Director of Research (Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health), University of Glasgow*
- **Professor Christopher Gale**, *Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and Co-Director, Leeds Institute for Data Analytics, University of Leeds*
- **Professor Mathias Gautel**, *BHF Professor of Molecular Cardiology, BHF Centre of Research Excellence, King's College London*
- **Professor Luigi Gnudi***, Professor of Diabetes and Metabolic Medicine, King's College London*
- **Professor Mark Hamer**, *Professor in Sport and Exercise Medicine, University College London*
- **Dr Kathryn Hentges**, *Reader, Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, University of Manchester*
- **Professor Jemma Hopewell**, *Professor of Precision Medicine and Epidemiology, University of Oxford*
- **Dr Aleksandar Ivetic**, *Reader, Cardiovascular Biology, Kings College London*
- **Professor Mark Kearney**, *BHF Professor of Cardiovascular and Diabetes Research, University of Leeds; Consultant Cardiologist*
- **Professor Mika Kivimaki**, *Chair of Social Epidemiology, University College London*
- **Professor Pablo Lamata**, *Director, Centre for Doctoral Training in Digital Twins for Healthcare, King's College London*
- **Professor Pier Lambiase**, *Professor of Cardiology, University College London & Barts Heart Centre*
- **Professor Deborah Lawlor**, *BHF Professor of Cardiovascular Science and Clinical Epidemiology, University of Bristol*
- **Professor Isla S Mackenzie**, *Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, University of Dundee*
- **Professor Ziad Mallat**, *BHF Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, University of Cambridge*
- **Professor Charlotte Manisty**, *Head of Clinical Cardiovascular Science, Institute of Cardiovascular Science, University College London*
- **Professor Jonathan Mant**, *Professor of Primary Care Research, University of Cambridge*
- **Professor Federica Marelli-Berg**, *BHF Professor of Cardiovascular Immunology, Director, Centre for Biochemical Pharmacology, Queen Mary University of London*
- **Professor Manuel Mayr**, *BHF Professor of Cardiovascular Proteomics, Imperial College London*
- **Professor Alex McConnachie,** *Professor of Clinical Trial Biostatistics, University of Glasgow*
- **Professor Barry McDonnell**, *Professor of Cardiovascular Physiology, Cardiff Metropolitan University*

- **Professor Gavin Murphy**, *Professor of Cardiac Surgery, University of Leicester*
- **Professor Vivek Muthurangu**, *Professor of Cardiovascular Imaging and Physics*, *University College London*
- **Professor Khalid Naseem**, *Professor of Cardiovascular Biology, Director, Leeds Institute of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Medicine, University of Leeds*
- **Professor David Newby**, *BHF Duke of Edinburgh Chair of Cardiology, BHF Centre of Research Excellence, University of Edinburgh*
- **Professor Andre Ng**, *President, British Cardiovascular Society; Head of Department, Cardiovascular Sciences; Professor of Cardiac Electrophysiology; Consultant Cardiologist and Electrophysiologist, University of Leicester*
- **Dr Fu Siong Ng**, *Reader in Cardiac Electrophysiology, Imperial College London; Honorary Consultant Cardiologist, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust*
- **Professor Stuart Nicklin**, *Professor of Cardiovascular Molecular Therapy, University of Glasgow*
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- **Professor Gavin Richardson**, *Senior Lecturer and acting lead of the Vascular Medicine and Biology Theme, Biosciences Institute, Newcastle University*
- **Dr Victoria Ridger**, *Senior Lecturer in Vascular Biology, University of Sheffield*
- **Professor Paul Riley**, *BHF Professor of Regenerative Medicine at the BHF Centre of Regenerative Medicine, University of Oxford*
- **Dr Isabelle Salles-Crawley,** *Lecturer in Cardiovascular Science, City St George's, University of London*
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- **Professor Catherine Shanahan**, *Professor of Cellular Signalling, King's College London*
- **Professor Linda D Sharples**, *Professor of Medical Statistics, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine*
- **Professor Iain Squire**, *Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, University of Leicester*
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- **Professor Michelle Williams**, *Professor of Cardiovascular Imaging and Consultant Radiologist, University of Edinburgh*
- **Dr Lorraine Work**, *Reader, Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health, University of Glasgow*

Cc:

Lord Vallance, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation
Wes Streeting MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care