

DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY RESPONSE TO THE COOKSEY REVIEW OF UK HEALTH RESEARCH

We confirm that we very much welcome this Review, which we believe to be timely and of central importance to the future of health research in the UK. This review offers a real opportunity to provide a framework for the future that will harness strengths and deliver enhanced levels of world leading research and development.

The primary purpose of your review is future improvement and how the best institutional arrangements for a new single fund for health research, funded primarily by the MRC and the NHS R&D Programme, can be realised. We should like to make the following comments:-

The general opinion is that to date the MRC has worked well. Significant benefit has been brought to stakeholders including patients and the UK pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. The governance of the MRC has been shown to be most robust and it has a high level of transparency in its decision making and funding provision. It is difficult to say the same of the NHS Research budget. The ring fencing of the DoH's Research budget is to be welcomed. We realise that much of this budget is embedded deep in the NHS and it will take major effort to extract it such that other parts of the NHS are not undermined.

The new institutional structure established to deliver health research needs to support research, training and infrastructure in order to:

1. promote access for researchers to, and benefits for, the National Health Service
2. build on the UK biomedical research strengths and international standing
3. provide faster development and uptake of new technologies and medicines
4. deliver outcomes that lead to health benefits and economic prosperity

We would expect that appropriate mechanisms are continued to nurture the clinical academic career environment. And that the growing impact of disciplines outside the conventional biomedical arena, such as engineering, physical sciences and social sciences require a need to maintain close interaction with the agencies funding these disciplines.

De Montfort University
24 July 2006