

Now is the time to make your voice heard in parliament!

*From Professor Peter Openshaw,
President, British Society for Immunology*

I don't normally write to you as members, but Parliament is about to debate the manner in which we break away from the European Union. It's crucial for British and European science that we do what we can to get this right.

Starting this week, MPs will debate the [EU \(Notification of Withdrawal\) Bill](#) which will then pass to the House of Lords. Many attempts will be made to table amendments and shape the process before Parliament votes on triggering Article 50, which will formally lead to annulment of our EU membership. This probably will happen by the end of March this year. That's not long at all.

Each and every MP needs to know that we are in the midst of a biomedical revolution, witnessing the fruits of fundamental discoveries made over the past few decades. Many new medical therapies are based on insights that BSI members have made. It's heartening to see that science and innovation lie at the centre of the government's new industrial strategy but MPs need to know that they have to harness our strengths in fundamental research as well as incentivising collaboration between business and science.

Through your remarkable efforts, we are beginning to see many new immunology-based treatments that will transform patients' lives. Much of this would have been unimaginable even 5 years ago. We are in an exciting time and at an exciting place for UK biomedical research and we need your help in telling MPs about your work and about just how important immunology is to the UK's future.

I am asking you to do four things:

1. **Make the most of democracy.** MPs will listen to constituents. Email your local MP, explaining why immunology matters. You can find out how to [contact your MP using this link](#) and use our [template email](#) if you like, but do try to make it a bit personal and attach [our briefing](#) setting out our four key 'asks'.
 2. **Speak out for immunology** on social media: get the voice of science heard. It really does matter, and you would be surprised who might read your tweets and posts.
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3. **Encourage others to join the BSI.** We have 3,200 current members, but the more of you there are, the stronger our voice will be.
4. **Don't give up.** We at the BSI have to keep the pressure up on key decision makers for at least the next two years. Tell us how things are affecting you and why. Accounts of experience matter and carry real weight with politicians and journalists.

I know we are asking a lot of you and that it's not going to be an easy time to get grants and to keep up the momentum that EU collaboration, freedom of movement and funding has provided for you and your work.

Please help us to help you, and support science by contacting your MP. I do know that, as a Society of like-minded people that has grown and thrived for 60 years, we can become even more productive and useful to society if we work together.

Thank you!

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