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Today's science, tomorrow's medicines

Joint statement on the UK pharmaceutical industry

Whatever the outcome of Pfizer's declared interest in taking over AstraZeneca, it is another sign of the global trend for pharmaceuticals. The UK has been a world-leader in medicines research and development, but recent closures and restructuring put this position under threat. Drug discovery is changing everywhere: large pharma businesses are consolidating and downsizing, with much of early-stage research coming from an innovation ecosystem of academia and SMEs.

The UK can stay at the cutting edge and reap the economic rewards if we act now, while the sector remains strong, to support the transition to the new drug discovery model. When the automotive industry faced similar challenges, a Government-sponsored Automotive Council played a key role in re-invigorating the sector – and now a new vehicle rolls off a UK production line every 20 seconds. The Government must again lead the way, by establishing a Pharmaceutical Council to bring together medical charities, funding bodies, businesses, academics, the NHS and learned societies to ensure the UK is the best place in the world to do drug discovery.

Dr Robert Parker, chief executive, Royal Society of Chemistry
Mr Jonathan Bruun, chief executive, British Pharmacological Society
Dr Mark Downs, chief executive, Society of Biology
Ms Kate Baillie, chief executive, Biochemical Society