

The Rt Hon Sir Stephen Sedley
Sense About Science
14a Clerkenwell Green
London
EC1R 0DP

From the President Venki Ramakrishnan PRS

28 January 2016
Our ref: RP/JKM/VR

Dear Sir Stephen,

RE: Sense about Science inquiry into the delayed publication or withholding of government research

I am writing to welcome the inquiry that you are leading on behalf of Sense About Science into the delayed publication or withholding of government research. It will be helpful to better understand the extent to which delayed publication or withholding of government research is an issue and we welcome your focus on identifying good practice in this area.

The Society believes that policy can be strengthened by embedding expert advice across Government. High-quality expert advice should be based on an assessment of the overall strength of the available evidence and should reflect uncertainties. The ability for Government to commission research is a key part of this. It is also important that Government is transparent about how policy decisions have been made. In addition to scientific evidence, other factors play a legitimate role in shaping policy, including accepted social norms, tradition and moral values. To enable policy making to be properly scrutinised, the evidence on which it is made should be available. This includes data held by Government and the findings of commissioned research.

I have shared information about your inquiry with the Society's Fellowship, many of whom may have personal experiences that they can share with you.

Please do get in contact if the Society can support your inquiry further.

Yours sincerely,

Venki Ramakrishnan

+44 20 7451 2507
president@royalsociety.org



President Sir Venki Ramakrishnan
Executive Director Dr Julie Maxton

Founded in 1660, the Royal Society is the independent scientific academy of the UK, dedicated to promoting excellence in science.

Registered Charity No 207043