Chemicals regulation in the UK is broken.

Problems with the current system include:

- Uncertainty as post-Brexit changes to chemicals policy continue
- Cumulative barriers to UK trade, investment and influence
- Inefficiencies that are poor value for money
- A lack of coordination leading to inconsistent decision-making
- A lack of clarity for business

However, problems with the current system include:

- Risk Research (CCRR). This would provide independent advice to the UK Government and other global organisations, while evaluating chemical safety, conducting research and identifying new approaches.
- Setting up a UK Chemicals Agency - a cross-governmental body to develop ideas and solutions for chemicals regulation.

We have identified three initiatives that would achieve with a net neutral impact on the budget.

- The bronze standard is a cross-governmental chemicals regulation training and networking programme.
  - Establish the bronze standard for a future UK chemicals regime, responsible to Parliament, but independent of any single department. It would:
    - Liaise with national and international bodies to influence chemical regulations and policy.
    - Act as a centre of excellence to attract and develop a skilled workforce.
    - Coordinate and provide advice and support to existing regulators.
    - Consider the life cycle of substances used in society to support improved chemical risk and risk management assessments.
    - Provide a centralised home for chemicals information, evaluation and research.

- The silver standard is to establish a dedicated research institute, the National Centre for Chemicals and Risk Research (CCRR). This would provide independent advice to the UK Government and other global organisations, while evaluating chemical safety, conducting research and identifying new approaches.
  - Establish the silver standard for a future UK chemicals regime, responsible to Parliament, but independent of any single department. It would:
    - Liaise with national and international bodies to influence chemical regulations and policy.
    - Act as a centre of excellence to attract and develop a skilled workforce.
    - Coordinate and provide advice and support to existing regulators.
    - Consider the life cycle of substances used in society to support improved chemical risk and risk management assessments.
    - Provide a centralised home for chemicals information, evaluation and research.

- The gold standard is to establish a Chemicals Agency.
  - Establish the gold standard for a future UK chemicals regime, responsible to Parliament, but independent of any single department. It would:
    - Liaise with national and international bodies to influence chemical regulations and policy.
    - Act as a centre of excellence to attract and develop a skilled workforce.
    - Coordinate and provide advice and support to existing regulators.
    - Consider the life cycle of substances used in society to support improved chemical risk and risk management assessments.
    - Provide a centralised home for chemicals information, evaluation and research.

The gold, silver and bronze standards are structured to deliver a 'one substance, one assessment' approach. Such a body would supercharge our ability to:

- Increase the confidence and trust in the UK regime.
- Maximise innovation and inward trade benefits from increased global confidence and trust in the UK regime.
- Puts the UK at the forefront of regulatory science and policy development.
- Improved recruitment and retention due to the added status.
- Greater clarity and more rapid decision-making.
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Potential for cost neutrality

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Next Steps

Find out more about these actions at rsc.li/agency.

What you can do when elected

✓ Commence negotiations for access to ECHA
✓ Commit to a national Chemicals Research and Risk Research (CCRR)
✓ Commit to a national Chemicals Agency
✓ Provide funding for Civil Service Chemicals courses
✓ Actively promote greater chemical and materials science education
✓ Actively seek to attract international businesses and researchers
✓ Actively support the development of a well-trained, skilled chemical and materials science workforce
✓ Actively work to improve coordination and consistency of decision-making

What the next government can do

✓ Develop a national strategy for chemical and materials science and technology
✓ Ensure a cross-governmental approach to chemicals and materials science
✓ Set up a dedicated chemicals and materials science training and networking programme
✓ Establish a national Centre for Chemicals Risk and Risk Research
✓ Establish a chemicals agency
✓ Implement a chemicals and materials science policy framework

Why is this important?

- Ensure the UK remains competitive in a globalised world
- Strengthen the UK's position as a leader in chemical and materials science
- Improve the health and safety of the UK population
- Enhance the UK's reputation as a leader in chemical and materials science
- Increase the economic benefits of chemical and materials science
- Improve the environmental impact of chemical and materials science