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The Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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Dear Prime Minister

The future of the MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES in the UK

You have received a letter from senior academic scientists working in the chemical sciences about the changes being proposed by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) concerning the future funding for synthetic organic chemistry. We are writing to you to express our particular concerns over the future of the mathematical sciences in the UK as result of the changes to funding being made by EPSRC. I have already written a letter to David Willetts on 10 August asking for a meeting in order to discuss this matter with him.

The new Fellowship scheme has been introduced with no warning and an immediate consequence is a big reduction in post-doctoral opportunities this year and for the foreseeable future. There will be no EPSRC Fellowship support for most of the mathematical sciences portfolio.

UK graduates are at a significant disadvantage in the mathematical science academic job market. The UK benefits greatly from the number of talented mathematical scientists who move here to take up academic positions but (as noted in the recent EPSRC International Review of Mathematical Sciences) the situation is fragile and poses a serious risk to our future national standing, and also to our continued ability to educate the number of under- and post-graduates needed by employers. Fellowships at the postdoctoral level provide a rare opportunity for the future leaders of the discipline to develop independently, and the loss of these fellowships to the general area of mathematical sciences will hit the best young mathematicians disproportionately.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the UK remains a world leader in science and research. The CMS is becoming increasingly concerned that the developments taking place within EPSRC with regard to the mathematics portfolio call the Government's commitment into question.

Yours sincerely

Professor Frank Kelly FRS, Chair, Council for the Mathematical Sciences