



Department  
for Exiting the  
European Union

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Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP  
Chair, Science and Technology Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA  
Cc: Stephen Metcalfe MP

12 October 2017

*Dear Norman,*

Firstly, thank you for inviting me to give evidence to the Science and Technology Committee on Tuesday 17 October.

I regret that on this occasion I will have to decline this invitation as I am attending the EU Life Sciences Steering Group alongside my colleague Lord O'Shaughnessy in the Department of Health to speak with a number of stakeholders in the Life Sciences community. The objective of the Steering Group is to determine how to create a world-leading Life Sciences environment in the UK outside of the EU. It provides a framework for dialogue with industry across six main workstreams: fiscal and trade, intellectual property, manufacturing and supply, people, regulation, and research and development.

I understand that my colleague Jo Johnson, Minister of State for Universities and Science will attend on 17 October and provide evidence to support the Committee's inquiry.

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to the Committee's recommendation that the department should appoint a Chief Scientific Adviser. The role of a CSA within the department has been very carefully considered. We are a unique, time-limited department with a coordinating function covering the full range of government business. We are reliant upon other Government departments to lead on policy development, including incorporating their own specialist scientific advice where necessary.

We recognise that a Chief Scientific Adviser will ensure that the departmental decisions are informed by the best science and engineering advice and to provide a route for us to engage directly with the wider network of CSAs



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where necessary. Therefore, I am delighted to announce that the department has appointed Chris Jones, Director for Justice Security and Migration (JSM) as the Department CSA.

Chris has a strong scientific background, holding a BSc in Physics and an MSc in Environmental Science, Policy and Planning, combined with previous experience in applying science and technology advice and capabilities in the management of a nationally important project. His education in scientific method and research - combined with previous experience in management of a nationally important project - are a sound foundation to fulfil the role of CSA in a coordinating department.

We have considered carefully how to de-conflict Chris Jones' role as Director for JSM with his new role as CSA. Given that, in his role as Director for JSM, Chris has not been directly responsible for drawing together the science and innovation strands of exiting the EU, this means that he will be able to provide independent advice across the department on scientific matters going forward. The role of CSA varies across departments, but in all cases the CSA is a senior official who is in a position to influence departmental decision making. Chris Jones will fulfil this role through offering advice directly to ministers and official colleagues and by oversight of processes for ensuring that departments take account of, and commission where appropriate, relevant scientific and engineering evidence.

I am glad to be able to confirm that in addition to this appointment we will be strengthening our departmental capacity on science. The office of the CSA will not only be drawn from existing support roles, but a specialist civil servant with relevant scientific or engineering background will be recruited. This specialist support will work with colleagues from across the department and with the Government Chief Scientific Adviser's CSA network. Having this support in place will ensure that Chris is able to balance his priorities as both JSM Director and as CSA, providing leadership and oversight to both roles.

I am copying this letter to Stephen Metcalfe MP, in his capacity as former Chair of the Committee.

**ROBIN WALKER MP**  
**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE**  
**FOR EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**