From Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP, Chair

Dr Gillian Tully
Forensic Science Regulator
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Dear Dr Tully,

Forensic Science Regulator Bill

Since receiving the Government Response to the Science and Technology Committee’s Report into the “Biometrics strategy and forensic services”, I have corresponded with both the Leader of the House, Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP, and the Minister of State for Countering Extremism, Baroness Williams of Trafford, about the Forensic Science Regulator Bill. Though the Government is clear in its Response to our Report that it “strongly supports the introduction of the Forensic Science Regulator Bill and its aim to put the Regulator on a statutory footing”, I remain concerned that this “strong support” has yet to be translated into making the Bill a legislative priority for the Home Office.

As I am sure you are aware, the Forensic Science Regulator Bill is a Private Members’ Bill that is yet to have its Second Reading and is thus highly unlikely to make any progress in Parliament before the end of the 2017—19 session.

In her response to my letter on this matter, Baroness Williams stated that the “Government remains committed to giving the Forensic Science Regulator statutory powers” and that Home Office officials were “exploring alternatives to the Private Members’ Bill” and were “working closely with the Regulator’s office”, though no further details were provided.

I would be grateful if you could share any information on your discussions with Home Office officials and outline what “alternatives” to the Bill you think would provide you with the statutory powers that my Committee has long-argued are necessary for your Office. If there is anything further that my Committee can do to help you in this, we would be happy to try and assist.

I would be grateful, if possible, if you could provide a response to this letter by Tuesday 29 January.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP
Chair

Happy New Year!