Ensuring secure digital innovation
You may be aware that the Science and Technology Committee ran its "My Science Inquiry" initiative in January. This was an open opportunity for the science community, and the wider public, to suggest science and technology areas for scrutiny. We received 86 submissions of which 10 were shortlisted and invited to pitch their idea to us, in person, in Westminster.

One of the people we heard from was Dr Emma Williams from the University of Bristol. You can view her full pitch to us at Q43–48 of the transcript (goo.gl/ioSJdEe). In her pitch, she highlighted the cyber security of consumer smart devices and the regulations they were subject to, as well as concerns that the security and privacy of consumers were compromised by data breaches and ineffective regulation. She also addressed the role of GDPR in data protection, but stated that, at present, these regulations do not extend specifically to consumer product environments.

The 2018 Secure by Design Government Review identified that a number of products lacked basic cyber-security, which can lead to threats not only to individual consumers but the wider economy if such devices are used collectively to launch large-scale cyberattacks. The Review suggested that the burden of responsibility for security should be removed from consumers and proposed a draft code of practice for manufacturers, with clear guidelines. This code of practice remains voluntary.

Following the pitch from Dr Williams, I would be grateful if you could set out the steps that BEIS is taking to ensure that smart devices remain secure, and specifically:

- Whether the Government is considering implementing a statutory framework of regulation for businesses and manufacturers of smart devices;
- To what extent BEIS is engaging with various consumer groups and different academic disciplines in considering its approach to smart devices; and
- What steps BEIS is taking to ensure the cyber security of smart devices.
I understand that you may need to consult Government colleagues on these issues to inform your response. If possible, I would be grateful if you could reply by Friday 15 March.

Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP
Chair