

Sir Philip Rutnam  
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Dear Philip,

The availability of high-quality science to underpin proceedings in the courtroom is vital to maintaining public confidence in the justice system. Inspired by discussions with the Lord Chief Justice, your predecessor, Sir Mark Sedwill, tasked me with chairing a new Forum he was establishing to identify key challenges in advancing high-quality science, and to make recommendations to ensure such research is available to the justice system.

This Forum has now concluded its deliberations, and makes the following key recommendation: **Government should establish a mechanism for strategic coordination of scientific research for the justice system. This Forum would convene stakeholders across the justice system, establishing common agreement on research priorities that can meet the needs of multiple groups and co-creating challenges against which government and additional funding can be leveraged. This independently-chaired body – perhaps co-chaired by a recently retired judge and an eminent scientist – would articulate the research needs of the justice system as a whole, working to both advance science and support new applications in the justice system.**

This mechanism would:

- **Support research and innovation**, advancing the full spectrum of research from ‘blue skies’ and discovery research through to tools and techniques that are ready for application;
- **Enable communication and collaboration** across the justice ecosystem, helping users to better articulate their needs and allowing for co-creation of research questions or challenges;
- **Consult widely across key stakeholders** including the criminal, civil, and family courts, both defence and prosecution legal teams, police forces, academia, and private forensics providers, amongst others.
- **Horizon-scan for emerging needs**, and **develop agile, interdisciplinary responses to emerging challenges** and key questions;
- **Increase investment in world-leading research** and strengthen support for innovation, **creating an environment that leverages further investment** from industrial and charitable sources, in addition to that from Government;
- **Influence how research funding is allocated** across areas of need, increasing the overall impact of the available funding.

A short summary of the Forum’s findings is attached to this letter. I look forward to discussing this with you in more detail as proposals to establish this mechanism progress.

Yours,

Julie Maxton