

Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser FRS
Chief Executive Designate
UK Research and Innovation
By email

15 May 2020

Dear Professor Leyser,

On behalf of the Institute of Physics (IOP) many congratulations on your appointment as Chief Executive of UKRI.

I suspect you will know the IOP is the professional body and learned society for physics in the UK and Ireland, and a trusted and valued voice for the physics community. We work with a range of partners to develop the teaching of physics; to encourage research and innovation; to support business growth and productivity; and provide evidence-based advice and support to Government.

Our five-year strategy aims to support both the UK and Irish government strategies for innovation, discovery, research, growth and debate as we face collectively an unprecedented array of challenges both national and as a global community.

As well as its contribution to national research and innovation priorities, Physics also underpins many other research areas in UKRI, including in the immediate challenges of COVID-19. During the current pandemic, the physics sector has been active in developing ventilators, and responding to the shortage of PPE by 3D printing components for medical visors. Large scale physics infrastructure, such as the Diamond Light Source, have also been integral to enabling the work of structural biological research, including in the design of synthetic therapeutic antibodies, which could potentially lead to a vaccine. More broadly, maintaining our Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) capability will help us emerge quickly from this crisis, with a well-trained physics community that are able to support pressing public policy issues, rebuilding our economy, and remaining globally competitive.

We recognise there are challenging decisions which lie ahead. To help with these we have just completed a systematic consultation on the impact of COVID-19 on our community and their programmes of work, whether in schools, universities, business or in the international collaborations as we seek to strengthen these post BREXIT. We would welcome a discussion with you to share the findings from this work, and to provide you with what support we can as you take up your new role.

Once again, many congratulations on your appointment, and we very much look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Professor Paul Hardaker CMet FRMetS FInstP
Chief Executive Officer, Institute of Physics