

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

13 December 2019

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to congratulate you on your success at the general election and to offer you and your Government the expertise of the Institute of Physics as you turn your attention to our future relationship with Europe and the rest of the world, and how to tackle the issues affecting our economy and society.

We warmly welcome your Government's commitment to work towards increasing the UK's R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP. Our membership of 23,000 spans the UK's rich and varied physical sciences sectors in industry and academia and we would be pleased to convene representatives and experts to help you bring forward a roadmap to deliver this commitment as soon as possible.

We also welcome your recognition of the importance of partnership and collaboration with the EU for our science and innovation community. The UK participates in around 13,000 projects in pan-European research programmes, and 18% of research grant funding to UK physics departments comes from EU sources. Our ability to easily collaborate with European colleagues is fundamental to the success of the UK physics community and we urge your government to make every effort to secure full access to European research programmes to ensure the UK's research community is not locked out of vital work being done in Europe.

Your Government now has the opportunity to put in place a dynamic and pro-growth immigration policy, carrying on the work you undertook before the election. However I want to stress the vital importance of talented foreign nationals to the UK's physics community. 45% of academics in UK physics departments come from overseas, and 44% of engineering, science and hi-tech firms report difficulties in finding experienced recruits with the right STEM skills. It is vitally important that immigration reforms enable us to continue to attract the best and the brightest and support industry and research across the UK. An area of significant concern is the minimum salary threshold of £30,000 which we fear could have a damaging impact on businesses and universities, across the UK but particularly outside of London and the South East.

The IOP looks forward to working with you and your Government to help ensure that science and physics play their full role in securing a prosperous and productive future for the United Kingdom.

Paul Hardaker

Professor Paul Hardaker CMet FRMetS FInstP
Chief Executive Officer