Establishment of JustTech – an Institute for Innovation in Forensic Science.

As part of their ongoing work to support and nurture the forensic science ecosystem in the UK and internationally the University of Dundee has developed the concept of JustTech as an Institute for Innovation in Forensic Science. JustTech will work with private sector providers to enhance the provision of scientific and technological solutions within the justice system and to broaden the impact of forensic science across the economy. This new sister institution to the Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science (LRCFS) at the University of Dundee will meet a critical need in the broader ecosystem.

The JustTech project has now attracted the approval and support of the UK and Scottish Governments and has been backed with significant initial funding of £15m. The funding allocation was made in the Heads of Terms agreement of the Tay Cities Region Deal (TCD) signed by the UK and Scottish Governments on 22nd November 2018. This initial investment in the JustTech vision will now afford the leadership team the opportunity to engage with further supporters in the private and public sectors.

JustTech will build on the collaborative methods pioneered by LRCFS in fostering and supporting broad interdisciplinary conversations with all stakeholders from across the criminal justice ecosystem. This work will deepen the relationships and co-create challenge questions between academic researchers, commercial and corporate partners, industrial entrepreneurs, business developers and start-up companies. These interdisciplinary conversations will explore and develop solutions to the technology needs of the forensic science ecosystem by applying existing, emerging and cutting edge technologies to the practical challenges the ecosystem itself identifies and faces from the crime scene to the court room.

The JustTech concept draws on the analysis of the Government Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of Go Science in his landmark report on Forensic Science (2015), the reflections of the practitioners, academic and user community as collated in a series of strategic conversations convened by LRCFS over the last two years and will seek to respond to much of the evidence given to the House of Lord’s Committee enquiry to date. JustTech will launch formally in 2019, ten years since the NAS report triggered a global debate around the standing of Forensic Science and to which the UK community is responding through the establishment of new research, new standards and with a global vision of better justice for all.

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