

£10 million boost to improve patient care with new technologies

- Government backs researchers with £10 million to develop innovations that will transform patients' lives and significantly boost UK life sciences sector
- investment to support and speed up new treatments and cures for life-threatening diseases, from cancer to strokes
- funding comes as new visa route for overseas scientists and researchers becomes law

A new £10 million scheme will give leading researchers and businesses, based in the UK, the chance to work together to develop treatments and cures for those facing life-threatening conditions like cancer and dementia.

The UK is home to one of the strongest, most productive health and life sciences industries globally. The sector is worth £75 billion a year and employs 250,000 people across the UK.

Launched Today (20 February) by the Life Sciences Minister Nadhim Zahawi, the new Innovation Scholars Scheme, will support secondments for academics to develop new technologies and techniques to help NHS patients as soon as possible.

The scheme offers investment to support collaboration in life sciences between researchers and industry.

It will include developing new healthcare wearable technologies such as smartwatches and monitors, diagnostic devices like mobile health units, and new personalised medicines based on patients' genetic information.

Today, the government also announced 6 new locations that have been awarded the prestigious designation of Life Science Opportunity Zone (LSOZ). These zones will be able to attract investment from national and international businesses linking research expertise with business skills.

Life Sciences Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

The UK is home to one of the strongest, most vibrant health and life science industries globally, with discoveries and improvements in health diagnosis transforming people's lives.

Collaboration is vital to growing this sector and this new £10 million scheme will support the exchanging of ideas, knowledge and skills between researchers and businesses while encouraging strong collaboration with them, the NHS and the government.

This comes as the Home Secretary hosts a reception at No. 10 for the science

community today alongside the Immigration and Sciences Ministers, marking the opening of the new [Global Talent route](#) which will incorporate a brand new fast-track scheme for top scientists and researchers. Those in attendance include leading universities, students and the British Mathematical Olympiad team, royal societies, public sector and independent research organisations, and endorsing bodies.

Through the new immigration route, top scientists, mathematicians and researchers from around the world will be given fast-tracked entry into the UK. Investing in talent and cutting edge research will enable Britain to remain at the forefront of scientific discovery, from life sciences to climate change.

Life Science Opportunity Zones

Today, the government also announced 6 new locations that have been awarded the prestigious status of Life Science Opportunity Zone (LSOZ), helping raise their profile at a national and international level. These zones will be able to attract investment from national and international businesses linking research and business expertise.

These zones highlight the opportunities of the such as vacant lab space, land to build new facilities, or links with higher education. Their special designation will help them attract investment and deliver jobs, drive economic growth and deliver improved health based on the UK's expertise in life sciences.

The new LSOZs are:

- Stevenage Advanced Therapies Campus, Hertfordshire
- Birmingham Life Sciences Park, West Midlands
- Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Oxfordshire
- Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Cambridgeshire
- Porton Science Park, Wiltshire
- Discovery Park, Sandwich, Kent

Experts working in the 6 new Life Science Opportunity Zones will have government support to promote their life sciences parks, through government officials working with the zones to attract investment from national and international businesses.

Researchers in the industry have already made huge advances in areas including early diagnosis, genomics, data, digital pathology and radiology, clinical research and manufacturing. These new zones will play a vital role in driving progress, economic growth and jobs and further supporting improving health outcomes.

Notes to editors

UK Research and Innovation will fund post-doctoral secondments at biomedical firms of up to 3 years to boost collaborations between academia, industry and the NHS among other organisations.

Life Sciences Opportunity Zones were originally launched in November 2016 with Charnwood Campus. The LSOZ designation lasts for 10 years.

The Life Sciences sector has a history of high performance, with turnover and employment growing by 3% and 8% respectively between 2009 and 2018 and turnover growing by almost £1 billion (£0.8 billion) in the last year alone.

The [Life Sciences Industrial Strategy](#) was published 3 years ago. The government's Sector Deals in 2019 set out a strong commitment to the sector. The government has invested around £1 billion in attracting and delivering a host of ambitious life sciences initiatives, with around a further £3 billion leveraged from industry, including as part of the [2 Life Sciences Sector Deals](#).

Applications to the first round of the Innovations Scholars scheme close on 15 April. [Find out how to apply](#).

The Global Talent route replaces the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route and for the first time UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will endorse applicants from the scientific and research community.

The route will:

- provide for a brand new fast-track scheme, managed by UKRI which will enable UK-based research projects that have received recognised prestigious grants and awards, including from the European Space Agency and the Japan Science and Technology Agency, to recruit top global talent, benefiting higher education institutions, research institutes and eligible public sector research establishments – this will enable an individual to be fast-tracked to the visa application stage
- double the number of eligible fellowships, such as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, the European Research Council and Human Frontier Science, which also enable individuals to be fast-tracked
- continue to ensure dependants have full access to the labour market
- preserve the route's flexibility by not requiring an individual to hold an offer of employment before arriving or tying them to one specific job
- provide an accelerated path to settlement for all scientists and researchers who are endorsed on the route
- provide for an exemption from our absences rules for researchers, and their dependants, where they are required overseas for work-related purposes, ensuring they are not penalised when they apply for settlement

The funding comes after the government announced a £300 million major boost for mathematics funding in the UK.