

# Press release: UK and US further collaboration in science and innovation by deepening ties in medical technology

- Science Minister Sam Gyimah has visited Boston, Houston and Washington DC marking one year on from the signing of the landmark science and technology accord
- following his return, he confirmed a new fact-finding mission to Texas for UK businesses and academics to open up opportunities to the UK Life Sciences sector
- during the visit, the minister met with leading academic institutions, innovative businesses and tech disruptors to learn first-hand how the US supports innovation

Marking one year on from the UK signing a landmark Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement with the US, Science Minister Sam Gyimah has visited Boston, Houston and Washington DC to meet disruptive businesses, hear from innovators and announce a further research partnership in medical technology.

The minister confirmed a winter fact-finding mission with UK experts from the life sciences sector set to visit Texas to seek out opportunities for global innovation. Both the UK and Texas have a stellar reputation in the life sciences and the US state is home to America's leading cancer hospital. During the November visit, businesses and academics will explore new access to US markets for more UK innovators.

A total of 17% of UK research and development investment is financed from abroad, and the modern Industrial Strategy commits to keeping the UK connected to other leading international sources of ideas and learn about advances being made around the world.

Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Science has no borders. By collaborating with our US colleagues, we are pooling our power to find the answers to the biggest science questions of today and making the most of the inventions of tomorrow.

Building on our reputation as a global force in science is at the heart of our modern Industrial Strategy and we will continue to learn with and from international innovators to push new boundaries.

The minister used the opportunity to learn how leading academic and business partnerships between the UK and the US are commercialising technology. One

example being the partnership between the University of Cambridge and Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, which is developing research programmes to generate new ideas and encourage entrepreneurship that improve productivity and competitiveness.

During the trip the minister met:

- LearnLaunch and its member community to learn about the emerging Education Technology in Boston
- aerospace start-ups in Houston and NASA's senior leaders at the Johnson Space Centre and in DC to promote UK investment in aerospace and to highlight our ambitions for the UK space sector
- the Challenger Education Centre about how we can work together to use space to inspire and challenge more young people to take up stem subjects
- National Institutes for Standards and Technology (NIST) where he discussed the vital role that science and technological standards play in supporting US innovation

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## [Press release: FCO statement on international efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolutions on North Korea](#)



An FCO spokesman said:

We welcome the announcement about the coordination of efforts from international partners in enforcing sanctions on North Korea. The UK stands shoulder to shoulder with the United States as well as Australia, Canada, France, Japan, and New Zealand in our commitment to ensuring UN Security Council Resolutions are fully enforced.

Until we see North Korea take tangible steps towards complete,

verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation the UK will remain steadfast in our support of international efforts, particularly those focused on disrupting maritime sanctions evasion. It is incumbent on all UN member states to be vigilant and proactive in their enforcement of sanctions on North Korea.

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## [Press release: Trade Policy Minister in Taiwan to champion stronger trade links](#)

- Trade Policy Minister George Hollingbery is in Taipei for 21st meeting of annual trade talks
- Recent meeting saw Taiwan allow its first imports of quality British pork
- Minister Hollingbery agrees joint commitment to further fintech sectors

While in Taipei, the Minister will meet with President Tsai Ing-Wen, the Minister of Economic Affairs Shen Jong-Chin and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu to discuss UK-Taiwan trade relations and opportunities for growth, including financial services.

The annual UK-Taiwan trade talks, chaired by Minister Hollingbery and Taiwan's Vice Minister of Economic Affairs, Wang Mei-Hua, will focus on building stronger trade and investment links and resolving market access issues, and celebrating the recent introduction of British pork products to the Taiwanese market.

The visit will be marked by further development of the already close co-operation between the UK and Taiwan finance sectors, as Minister Hollingbery witnesses the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the British Office in Taipei and the Taiwan Financial Services Roundtable committing to close co-operation and promotion of our fintech sectors.

The Minister will also meet UK businesses in Taiwan including the offshore wind, financial services and pharmaceutical sectors.

### **Trade Policy Minister, George Hollingbery, said:**

“I am delighted to be in Taipei at the 21st annual trade talks with Taiwan, building ever closer links in the world's fastest growing region. Our trade with Taiwan is worth £5.5 billion, supporting jobs and prosperity in both our

economies, so it is vital that we ease barriers to trade wherever we can, even before we leave the EU.

“It is my pleasure to witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding committing to even closer co-operation in our finance sectors, building on an already productive trading relationship.”

## **Trade with Taiwan**

UK-Taiwan bilateral trade rose to £5.5 billion in 2017, making Taiwan the UK's 8th largest trading partner in the Asia Pacific region. The UK is the most popular destination for Taiwanese investors in Europe accounting for 21% of Taiwan's Foreign Direct Investment in the region in 2017. Around 300 UK firms are present in Taiwan and there are over 180 Taiwanese firms in the UK.

The minister is joined by Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific, Natalie Black, who leads DIT across the region to coordinate the UK government's trade and investment promotion and policy works closely with the wider diplomatic network.

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## **[Press release: FCO statement on the Hong Kong National Party](#)**



FCO spokesman said:

We are concerned by the decision of the Hong Kong SAR Government to prohibit the HKNP. This is the first time a party has been banned under the Societies Ordinance since the handover.

The UK does not support Hong Kong independence, but Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and its rights and freedoms are central to its way of life, and it is important they are fully respected.

## Further information

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# [News story: Improving how we collect and document consent](#)

[The statement](#) confirms that electronic methods may be used for seeking, confirming and documenting informed consent for participation in research and is supported and endorsed by the UK health departments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

It also sets out the legal and ethical requirements for eConsent, and joint expectations regarding the use of electronic signatures in [Clinical Trials of Investigational Medicinal Products \(CTIMPS\)](#).

eConsent enables potential research participants to be provided with the information they need to make an informed decision via a tablet, smartphone or digital multimedia. It also enables their informed consent to be documented using electronic signatures.

This approach can supplement the traditional paper-based approach or, where appropriate, replace it.

Using eConsent offers a number of potential benefits, such as:

- improving understanding
- testing and reinforcing participant comprehension
- providing feedback on how consent materials could be improved
- improving patient recruitment process and reducing dropout rates
- enabling process efficiencies

While the statement focuses primarily on clinical trials, the basic principles can be applied to all research conducted within the UK where consent is sought.

Dr Samantha Atkinson, Director Inspection, Enforcement and Standards Division at MHRA, said:

We are committed to protecting public health, and research and clinical trials form a key part of this commitment.

That's why we are continuing to innovate and improve the methods by which consent and feedback are sought from potential research participants.

This guidance aims to promote best practice where eConsent is used for clinical trials, ensuring continued provision of key information in a clear way to trial participants.

We continue to support the appropriate implementation of new technologies in clinical research, safeguarding vital and safe health research which benefits us all.

Amanda Hunn, Joint Head Policy at [HRA](#), said:

Our joint statement clarifies HRA and MHRA expectations with regards to the use of electronic methods for seeking, confirming and documenting informed consent for participation in research.

The use of eConsent has the potential to improve participants' understanding of what is involved in taking part in research and to make recruitment and consent procedures more efficient.

This clarification forms part of our ongoing work to encourage researchers to take a more proportionate approach to the process of seeking consent from research participants and will support them in implementing eConsent procedures.