

[News story: UK and Texas medical centre agree partnership to drive life sciences innovation](#)

The UK's life sciences industry received a major boost today (Wednesday 12 September) as the Department for International Trade (DIT) agreed a landmark 'BioBridge' collaboration with the world's largest medical complex.

The Texas Medical Center (TMC), home to more than 60 world leading innovators, including the US' leading cancer hospital, will now offer UK companies a unique package which will help boost exports and drive forward scientific innovation.

British life sciences businesses will now be able to locate themselves at the TMC in Houston, where they will have access to a network of advisors, investors and medical experts from both the Center and DIT.

The partnership will allow for a significant research collaboration on a wide range of medical issues, including the development and advancement of Genomics and Cancer treatments.

Additionally, shared priorities will focus on entry into new markets through accelerators – providing legal, business, regulatory, and mentorship to startup companies from both countries.

Speaking at an event to celebrate the launch in London today, Minister of State for the Department for International Trade, Baroness Fairhead, said:

The UK is a world leader in healthcare innovation, and this partnership is clear evidence of the opportunities that exist for our companies in exciting markets such as the US.

Our recently launched Export Strategy will help even more British life sciences companies to reach new markets – bringing together some of the brightest minds in science to advance the availability of innovative healthcare across the globe.

President & CEO of TMC, William McKeon, said:

This truly unique collaboration is a testament to the Texas Medical Center's and the United Kingdom's joint commitment to further fostering the cross-pollination of ideas, people, and innovation in the life sciences.

We believe this new relationship will serve to create a tactical

alliance between TMC and a nation that has been at the forefront of substantial medical innovation for centuries.

The collaboration is also a step forward in harnessing the UK's world-renowned research and development capabilities. Healthcare trusts in Oxford, Cambridge and Manchester are in talks with TMC institutions that are actively looking to formulate partnerships.

Three UK companies have already made use of the BioBridge:

- Paxman Scalp Cooling A company which specialises in cooling therapies to help breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, have set up a subsidiary in Houston gaining traction due the entrepreneurial attitude of CEO, Richard Paxman.
- SurePulse Medical and FirstKind Limited Both companies are in the initial stages of engagement with TMC ahead of major presentations to hundreds of investors, industry leaders and hospitals at 'Demonstration Days' in Texas.

Chief Executive of UK Research and Innovation, Sir Mark Walport, said:

This unique opportunity will prove to be a valuable asset to UK and US healthcare professionals who are working tirelessly on the advancement of medical treatments for people all over the world.

With the recognition of the UK as a leader in research and development, I hope to see further collaboration between the Texas Medical Center and the UK in the near future.

To celebrate the announcement of the partnership in London, representatives from the TMC and UK partners will meet to discuss further opportunities for collaboration, including foreign direct investment.

Further information

The US spent \$3.3tn on healthcare in 2016, which was 18% of GDP. National health expenditure is projected to grow to \$5.7tn in 2026, which would be nearly 20% of GDP. This presents a significant opportunity for UK companies who currently export more than £6bn of pharma and £750m medtech to the US each year.

The government recently launched its Export Strategy which sets out how we will support businesses of all sizes to make the most of the opportunities presented by markets around the world.

A collaboration with business, developed after extensive engagement with a range of UK firms – the Strategy sets a new ambition from government to

increase exports as a proportion of UK GDP to 35%.

The BioBridge agreement is the culmination of over 18 months of preparatory work by the entire government team at the British Consulate General in Houston, including the DIT team and the Science and Innovation Network.

Press release: Savers to earn 50p for every £1 saved thanks to Help to Save

Hardworking people on low incomes are set to benefit from a new government savings account that offers a 50% bonus.

Help to Save will reward savers with an extra 50p for every £1 saved, meaning over 4 years a maximum saving of £2,400 would result in an overall bonus of £1,200.

The launch of the new account follows an 8-month trial, with over 45,000 customers who deposited over £3 million.

Help to Save is easy to use, flexible and secure, will help those on low incomes build up a 'rainy day' fund, and encourages savings behaviours and habits.

How much is saved and when is up to the account holder, and they don't need to pay in every month to get a bonus.

John Glen, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said:

Savings shouldn't be a luxury, they are an essential part of planning for the future. But for some, putting away even a tenner each month can be a tough habit to get into.

Whether you're saving up to take the family on a much-needed holiday, or to take the next step in life, Help to Save is designed to make saving possible for every hardworking person in this country.

Help to Save is available to working people on tax credits and Universal Credit.

Paul Richard Hughes, from Torquay, said:

I wasn't saving before, so it has helped me save and it was easy to use.

It has enabled me to build up a savings pot and the bonus is very good value. It is much better than other savings accounts as the interest on other savings accounts is low in comparison.

Account holders can save between £1 and £50 every calendar month and accounts last for 4 years from the date the account is opened.

After 2 years, savers get a 50% tax-free bonus on savings. If saving continues, there is another 50% tax-free bonus after 4 years.

On maximum savings of £2,400 over 4 years, the overall bonus would be £1,200.

[Savers can apply online](#) or use the HMRC app.

[Help to Save explained](#)

Further information

- the scheme, administered by HM Revenue and Customs, will be open to UK residents who are entitled to Working Tax Credit and receiving Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit payments. It is also available to those claiming Universal Credit who have a household or individual income of at least £542.88 for their last monthly assessment period (though note that payments from Universal Credit are not considered to be part of household income).
- people living overseas who meet either of these eligibility conditions can apply for an account if they are: a Crown servant (or their spouse or civil partner); a member of the British armed forces (or their spouse or civil partner).
- Help to Save is an example of digital transformation designed to make it quicker and easier for citizens to interact with government online and on-demand. The #SmarterGov campaign has been launched to drive innovation, savings, and public service improvement across the public sector.

10 things about Help to Save

1. You get a 50% bonus on your savings, so you can earn 50p for every £1 you save.
2. Help to Save is available for working people who receive tax credits or Universal Credit – [check if you're eligible](#).
3. Opening online account takes, on average, less than 5 minutes.
4. Paying in is easy: you can set up a standing order to make regular payments into your Help to Save account on a weekly, fortnightly, or monthly basis to fit the way that you manage your money. You can also make one-off payments by debit card when you are in your online account. Note that any payments, including standing orders, need to arrive in your account before the last working day of the month to ensure they are credited to that month – don't get caught out by weekends and public holidays.
5. You can withdraw money at any time from your account if you need to – although this could affect the size of your bonus.

6. You can continue to receive tax credits or Universal Credit while saving with Help to Save.
 7. If your situation changes and you stop receiving Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit, you can still save and receive any bonus you are entitled to.
 8. Help to Save is backed by the government, which means the money you save is secure.
 9. Help to Save accounts will be available to open from 12 September 2018 and up to September 2023.
 10. If you don't have access to the internet, you can still get an account. Call 0300 322 7093 and our helpline advisers will help you set one up.
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Press release: Traffic officers go back to school for road safety education

Traffic officers have been patrolling the busy holiday route as part of a trial this year, and now they're extending their patrols to visit three primary schools.

The crews are running two highways awareness days, visiting Blackwater Community Primary School and Chacewater Community Primary School near Truro on Wednesday, 19 September, and Goonhavern Primary School, near Perranporth, on Thursday, 20 September.

The children will get a chance to chat to the traffic officers about their jobs and will get to see first hand their patrol vehicle and the equipment used every day as they patrol England's major A roads and motorways. Highways England's trial initiative has seen traffic officers patrol the A30 in Cornwall for the first time during the bank holiday weekends and summer holiday season.

The aim of the initiative is to provide further assistance to motorists on the South West network, and extend the traffic officer service further south into Cornwall to continue an already close working partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police and Cornwall Council.

The traffic officers have been patrolling the A30 between Carland Cross and Liftondown and, based at Bodmin police station and Cornwall Council's Castle Canyke depot during the peak holiday months, they have been much closer at hand to provide assistance along both the A30 and A38.

During the summer holiday period up to its conclusion on Monday (10 September), Highways England crews attended a total of 134 incidents, including live lane breakdowns, road traffic collisions and debris clearance.

And on the last Sunday in July, the traffic officers' 'powers of recovery' averted major disruption on the westbound A30 as they were able to assist police by towing a broken down horsebox and vehicle to safety at Okehampton Services.

Rob Penney, South West Service Delivery Manager for Highways England, said:

"The patrols have been really well received by both holiday makers and local residents.

"Following this initial trial period, the school visits are a great opportunity to meet local children and raise road safety awareness among this young audience."

The highways awareness days will launch a longer-term STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) initiative run by Highways England's A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross project team.

The schools' outreach programme, which will run from October, is designed to engage children from four to 18 in fun, hands-on activities which will teach them more about the interesting work taking place as part of the dualling scheme.

Josh Hodder, project manager of the A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross scheme, said:

"The traffic officers have had a great reception and we look forward to working with local schools to teach them more about the STEAM project and our work on the scheme."

For any schools interested in receiving a STEAM visit, or learning more about Highways England's work in the area, email A30ChivertontoCarlandCross@highwaysengland.co.uk

View more information on [the roles and responsibilities of a Highways England traffic officer.](#)

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Policy paper: Agricultural framework progress update: joint statement](#)

This statement, by the UK Government and the Welsh Government, sets out how we intend to work with all administrations, in the future, on agriculture.

As we leave the EU, the UK Government and the devolved administrations have been considering where we might need common UK frameworks.

[News story: The IAGCI invites tenders to evaluate the UK Home Office Country Information Products](#)

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) is part of the Office of the Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. Its purpose is to review the content of all Country of Origin Information (COI) produced by the UK Home Office. Country of Origin Information is used in procedures that assess claims of individuals for refugee status or other forms of international and humanitarian protection. It is also used in policy formulation.

The IAGCI reviews products to provide assurance to the Independent Chief Inspector that the content is as accurate, balanced, impartial and as up to date as possible. COI is contained in:

CPINs are generated on an ongoing basis for the top 20 asylum intake countries, and commonly address a specific type of common asylum claim(s) or provide general information for several claim types. They are compiled from material produced by a range of recognised external information sources (news sources, academic literature, independent research reports, fact finding reports from UK government or from other governments, etc.). These documents also contain Home Office policy on the recommended position to be taken with respect to various types of claims, based on the available and accepted country information.

Information Request (IR) responses are made directly by case workers or others to the Home Office. These relate to information that is not covered in the CPINs. The IAGCI includes in its reviews a consideration of the COI included in a sample of (not more than ten) IR responses. Each IR response is typically a maximum of 2 pages in length.

Tender Details

IAGCI commissions country experts or experienced researchers to evaluate and report upon the country of origin information contained in UK Home Office information products. At its next meeting, the IAGCI requires a country expert to review the use of country information used in the following CPINs (4 separate tenders, 1 for each country):

Tender 1: Burma

[Country policy and information note: Rohingya, Burma, November 2017](#) (50 Pages)

[Country policy and guidance: critics of the government, Burma, March 2017](#) (38 Pages)

Tender 2: Iraq

[Country Policy and Information Note: internal relocation, civil documentation and returns, Iraq, September 2018](#) (58 pages)

[Country Policy and Information Note: Perceived collaborators, Iraq, January 2018](#) (16 pages)

Tender 3: Pakistan

[Country Policy and Information Note: Pakistan: Background information, including actors of protection, and internal relocation, June 2017](#) (40 Pages)

[Country Policy and Information Note: Pakistan: Land Disputes, January 2017](#) (16 pages)

Tender 4: Zimbabwe

[Country Policy and Information Note: Sexual orientation and gender identity, Zimbabwe, May 2018](#) (35 Pages)

[Country Policy and Information Note: Opposition to the Government, Zimbabwe, April 2018](#) (45 pages)

For each tender, the expert is also asked to consider a selection of approximately 10 Information Request Responses, which will be provided by the Chair of IAGCI, and are an average of 2 pages long.

Description of work

Country Policy and Information Notes aim to provide an accurate, balanced and up to date summary of the key available source documents regarding the human rights situation, with respect to the issues selected for coverage, in the country covered. The purpose and scope of the reports are clearly set out in an introductory section of the document. Reviewers should evaluate the reports in this context and seek to identify any areas where they can be improved. Specifically the review should entail:

- assessing the extent to which information from source documents has been appropriately and accurately reflected in the CPIN Reports
- identifying additional sources detailing the current human rights situation in the country with respect to main grounds for asylum claims (which are noted in each CPIN Report)
- noting and correcting any specific errors or omissions of fact
- making recommendations for general improvements regarding, for example, the structure of the report, its coverage or its overall approach

Reviewers should follow these specific guidelines:

- the review should focus exclusively on the country of origin information contained within the document, and not pass judgment on the policy guidance provided
- the CPIN should be reviewed in the context of its purpose as set out above. It should consider the situation in the country up to the stated 'cut off' date for inclusion of information
- when suggesting amendments, rather than 'tracking changes' on the original CPIN, a list of suggested changes should be provided as part of a stand-alone review paper, and each report should be reviewed separately. A reporting template will be provided to reviewers (for reference please refer to most recent reviews on the [IAGCI webpage](#) for examples of the template)
- any suggestions for additional information (or corrections to information in the document) must be referenced to a source document for the Home Office to be able to use it (preferably Open Source). The Home Office may use foreign language source documents, but only if the information is considered essential and is not available in English language source

Previous reviews of COI products can be viewed on the [ICIBI website](#)

The selected reviewers will be requested to attend an IAGCI meeting at the Office of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration in London, when their review will be considered. This meeting is due to take place in November 2018. Alternative arrangements may be made, if attendance is not possible. Representatives from the UK Home Office will also attend the meeting to provide responses to comments and recommendations made in the review.

Reviews commissioned by IAGCI may be used as source documents for future CPIN reports or other Home Office information products.

How to Apply

Researchers interested in conducting any of the reviews should submit:

- a one page letter demonstrating their expertise in human rights and/or asylum issues pertaining to the particular country or countries
- their c.v.

Payment for this work will be set at £2000. Expressions of interest should be

submitted to the IAGCI Chair, Dr Laura Hammond laura.hammond@soas.ac.uk

Unfortunately, we are only able to accept expressions of interest from individuals and not from institutions or consultancy groups.

Successful bids will be notified by 3 October 2018. Final reviews will be due by the close of Wednesday 3 November 2018 and will be discussed at the IAGCI meeting later in November 2018 (precise date to be confirmed).