

Funding and manufacturing boost for UK vaccine programme

- Global licensing agreement signed between Oxford University and AstraZeneca
- AstraZeneca will work to make up to 30 million doses available by September for the UK, as part of an agreement to deliver 100 million doses in total
- government backs top scientists at the University of Oxford and Imperial College London with new funding of £84 million
- funding includes £65.5 million for the vaccine being developed at the University of Oxford and £18.5 million for Imperial College London, as coronavirus vaccine trials accelerate

UK's top researchers rapidly working to find a coronavirus vaccine will benefit from £84 million of new government funding, Business Secretary Alok Sharma has announced today (Sunday 17 May).

The funding comes as Oxford University today agrees a global licensing agreement with AstraZeneca, the UK-based pharmaceutical company, for the commercialisation and manufacturing of their potential vaccine.

This means that, if the Oxford vaccine is successful, AstraZeneca will work to make up to 30 million doses available by September for people in the UK, as part of an agreement to deliver 100 million doses in total.

This will mean the UK will be the first country to get access to the vaccine, should it be successful.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Our scientists are at the forefront of vaccine development. This deal with AstraZeneca means that if the Oxford University vaccine works, people in the UK will get the first access to it, helping to protect thousands of lives.

The agreement will deliver 100 million doses in total, ensuring that in addition to supporting our own people, we are able to make the vaccines available to developing countries at the lowest possible cost.

The UK continues to lead the global response to find a vaccine, and the government is backing our scientists to do this as quickly as possible.

Pascal Soriot, Chief Executive Officer, AstraZeneca, said:

AstraZeneca is at the forefront of the response to COVID-19, and we are proud to be working with Oxford University to help make this vaccine available as quickly as possible. I would like to thank HM Government for its commitment to the vaccine and welcome its leadership and generosity for its help in expanding access beyond the UK. Our company is working hard to establish parallel supply agreements with other nations and multilateral organisations to ensure fair and equitable access around the world.

Professor Sir John Bell, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University, said:

The University of Oxford is immensely proud of the scientists at the Jenner Institute and the Oxford Vaccine Group who have worked tirelessly to discover and develop this vaccine in record time. We now have a partner in AstraZeneca who are ideally positioned to help us evaluate the vaccine, manufacture it and distribute it to UK citizens as well as to the rest of the world. They share our commitment to true global access to end this pandemic.

Professor Robin Shattock of Imperial College London said:

This funding will greatly accelerate our efforts to demonstrate the effectiveness of our vaccine and make it available to at risk populations as rapidly as possible. Access to such support allows us to move at unprecedented speed.

The UK is at the forefront of international efforts to research and develop a vaccine. The government has already pledged £250 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the highest contribution of any country. This is part of the UK committing £388 million to the international drive to develop vaccines, tests and treatments. In June, the UK will also host the upcoming global pledging conference for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Expert Advisory Board members

The expert advisory group advises, challenges and support the Vaccine Task Force in their goal to ensure that the UK population has access to clinically effective and safe vaccines as soon as possible.

Chair: Patrick Vallance – GCSA, Government Office for Science

- Jonathan Van Tam – Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England
- Charlotte Deane – Deputy Executive Chair of the EPSRC
- Robin Shattock – Head of Mucosal Infection and Immunity, Department of Medicine at Imperial College
- Sarah Gilbert – Professor of Vaccinology, Jenner Institute & Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine

- Janet Downie – CEO at RoslinCT
- Kate Bingham – Managing Partner at SV Health Investors
- John Bell – Government Life Science’s Champion and Regius Chair of Medicine at the University of Oxford
- Jeremy Farrar – Director at Wellcome Trust
- Menelas Pangalos – Executive Vice-President, BioPharmaceuticals R&D at AstraZeneca
- Ian McCubbin – Independent Pharma Specialist and Chair of Manufacturing Advisory Group
- Andrew Pollard – Professor of Paediatric Infection and Immunity at the University of Oxford
- Richard Hatchett – CEO, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)
- June Raine – Chief Executive at the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency
- Andrew Witty – WHO Vaccine Special Envoy
- Jeff Almond – former Vice President and Head of Discovery Research and External R&D at Sanofi Pasteur