

Government's Vaccines Taskforce has worked "decisively" and at "great pace" to improve UK's pandemic preparedness

- Report on Taskforce's vaccines strategy, goals and achievements published, highlighting foundations for future pandemic preparedness
- rapid access to 357 million doses of most promising vaccines and UK's vaccine manufacturing capability transformed
- more than 360,000 volunteers joined NHS Vaccines Research Registry to take part in clinical trials supporting the search for a vaccine

The government has today (Tuesday 8 December) published a [report highlighting the work and achievements of its Vaccines Taskforce \(VTF\)](#), 6 months after it was set up to help in the fight against COVID-19.

The independent review by Sir Richard Sykes, chair of the Royal Institution and former chair Imperial College Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, found the VTF acted decisively and at great pace in the face of the pandemic, to secure access to 357 million doses of the most promising COVID-19 vaccines for the UK.

The report found the successes of the VTF have been achieved through the expertise of its members, who operated with agility to put the UK ahead at the forefront of global efforts to tackle COVID-19. Key successes include the creation of the world's first citizen registry of over 360,000 volunteers able to rapidly join vaccine trials, the pioneering of human challenge studies to accelerate future vaccine development and strategic investment to enhance the UK's vaccine research and manufacturing infrastructure, including flexible manufacturing capability at sites at Harwell, Braintree and Livingston.

Marking the publication of a report into work of the Vaccines Taskforce in the 6 months since it was set up, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for use in the UK marks a momentous step in our fight against COVID-19.

I am hugely grateful for the hard work and dedication of the Vaccine Taskforce, under Kate Bingham's leadership, which has brought us to this point in challenging circumstances, representing the best the government and civil service can do – working with businesses, experts and the public to tackle a common problem at incredible pace. The country owes them a debt of gratitude.

But we still have some way to go and everyone needs to keep

following the rules to keep the virus under control.

The VTF was established in April 2020 by the government's Chief Scientific Advisor, Sir Patrick Vallance, to drive forward, expedite and co-ordinate efforts to ensure the UK population would have access to a clinically safe and effective vaccine against COVID-19. Kate Bingham was appointed in May 2020 as Chair of the VTF, reporting directly to the Prime Minister and working under the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

In addition to securing access to vaccines, the VTF set out to establish a long-term vaccine strategy to prepare the UK for future pandemics and work with partners to support equitable access to vaccines for people worldwide, whether rich or poor.

Business Secretary, Alok Sharma said:

Our Vaccine Taskforce has undoubtedly risen to the challenge to build a diverse portfolio of promising vaccine candidates to give the UK the greatest chance of finding one that works.

Thanks to Kate Bingham and her team, we were the first country to sign a deal with Pfizer/BioNTech, have secured more doses per head of population than almost any other country, and built a vaccine manufacturing base from scratch to strengthen our resilience to respond to COVID-19 and to future pandemics.

The Taskforce's impressive record has only been possible by bringing together business, science, industry expertise and the civil service to ensure the British public get access to a safe and effective vaccine as soon as possible. Our country owes every single person involved in this national effort a huge debt of gratitude.

The outgoing chair of the Vaccines Taskforce, Kate Bingham said:

Thanks to the mandate we were given by the Prime Minister, the Taskforce was able to rapidly strike deals for promising vaccines. Our aim was to ensure that the search for COVID-19 vaccines yielded positive results for the UK and the world. In doing so, we have cemented the UK's global leadership in vaccine research, established much stronger manufacturing capability and clinical development capacity, ensuring we are much better prepared if, and when future pandemics arise.

I am delighted that the skill and nimbleness of the Taskforce has enabled us to secure millions of doses of the first vaccine conditionally approved by the MHRA and that the British public are now starting to be protected with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

Kate Bingham's tenure as chair of the Vaccines Taskforce is due to conclude this month, as agreed when she was appointed earlier this year. Clive Dix, current deputy chair, will step into the role of interim chair of the VTF following her departure.

The interim chair of the Vaccines Taskforce, Clive Dix said:

The UK is now prepared to start dealing with COVID-19 with the first vaccines to prevent the disease. Although this is a huge success, there is more for us to do. We must continue to develop our research and response capabilities in the UK and finish the task of building an infrastructure to enable us to manufacture vaccines at scale.

In less than 6 months, the VTF has built a portfolio of 7 different vaccines from more than 240 vaccines in development across 4 different formats: adenoviral vectors, mRNA, adjuvanted proteins, and whole inactivated viral vaccines. This includes 40 million doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, 100 million doses of the Oxford-Astrazeneca vaccine and 7 million doses of the Moderna vaccine.

Internationally, the UK has committed to ensuring that everyone at risk of coronavirus, anywhere in the world, has access to a safe and effective vaccine. To do this, the UK has committed up to £548 million to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (Covax). It will deliver vaccines for the UK population and provide access to vaccines for lower income countries.

Read the [independent interim report](#).

About the Vaccines Taskforce

The [Vaccines Taskforce \(VTF\)](#) was set up under the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in May 2020, to ensure that the UK population has access to clinically effective and safe vaccines as soon as possible, while working with partners to support international access to successful vaccines. This is to place the UK at the forefront of global vaccine research, development, manufacture and distribution.

The Vaccines Taskforce comprises a dedicated team of private sector industry professionals and officials from across government who are working at speed to build a portfolio of promising vaccine candidates that can end the global pandemic. It is chaired by biotech and life sciences expert Kate Bingham, who was appointed by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The Vaccines Taskforce's approach to securing access to vaccines is through:

- procuring the rights to a diverse range of promising vaccine candidates to spread risk and optimise chances for success
- providing funding for clinical studies, diagnostic monitoring and regulatory support to rapidly evaluate vaccines for safety and efficacy
- providing funding and support for manufacturing scale-up and fill and

finish at risk so that the UK has vaccines produced at scale and ready for administration should any of these prove successful

The 4 different vaccine classes that the government has secured to date for the UK are:

- adenoviral vaccines (Oxford/AstraZeneca, Janssen)
- mRNA vaccines (BioNTech/Pfizer, Moderna)
- inactivated whole virus vaccines (Valneva)
- protein adjuvant vaccines (GSK/Sanofi, Novavax)

Once approved by regulators, vaccines would first be given to priority groups such as frontline health and social care workers, the elderly and adults with underlying health conditions.