

Health and Social Care Secretary sees how North East and Yorkshire is improving lives across the country on visit to region

- Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid visits state of the art facilities at Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies in Teesside
- Also visited Doncaster Royal Infirmary to see upgraded facilities

The Health and Social Care Secretary today visited two key sites in the North East and Yorkshire that are helping to improve the lives of patients and protect the country and the world's health.

On Tuesday February 15, Sajid Javid toured Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies, a biopharmaceutical manufacturing site, following the announcement of £400 million that will see them expand their facilities and which is expected to create up to 350 jobs.

This is part of the company's vision for the Teesside site to be the beating heart of the rapidly expanding North East life sciences ecosystem.

Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies expects to be up and running by late 2023, and will further build on the North-East's reputation as a leader in life science developments – spearheading advancements in medicines, treatments and vaccines to bolster preparations against future domestic and global health threats.

It will be vital in powering the country's response to some of today's most urgent global health challenges and deliver life-changing medicines and vaccines to patients in need.

Later in the day, the Health and Social Care Secretary visited Doncaster Royal Infirmary, part of the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals Trust.

While there, he toured the extension to the women's and children's building which opened in November 2021 and includes two inpatient areas and a theatre unit. He also heard first-hand what the Trust is doing to improve the lives of patients including their consultation on a £17.6 million Urgent and Emergency Care Village at Bassetlaw Hospital in Worksop which would see the return of 24/7 inpatient paediatric care to the site.

They also discussed plans to increase diagnostic capacity to help reduce the COVID-19 backlogs and meet rising demand. In early 2020, a £4.9 million new CT suite opened at Doncaster Royal Infirmary. At the time of its construction, local demand for CT tests had increased by 70% over the previous five years and the new facility will see them deliver an extra 36,000 scans a year across Doncaster and North Nottinghamshire.

The Trust was also chosen to host one of two community diagnostic centres in South Yorkshire, after the region received £3 million of funding. Based in their Montagu hospital, the centre is one of 100 the government and NHS are rolling out across the country to help millions of patients get earlier access to tests, diagnoses and treatment. Phase one of the project is now complete with the installation of a CT scanner and MRI scanner, and it is estimated that by the end of March almost 4,000 patients will have been seen.

Last week the NHS and government published a blueprint to tackle the COVID-19 backlogs with a massive expansion in capacity for tests, checks and treatments, as part of the new elective recovery plan. Alongside this the government published an Integration White Paper setting out a vision for an integrated NHS and adult social care sector which will better serve patients and staff.

This is part of plans to recover and reform health and care services and ensure everyone can get the treatment and care they need, when and where they need it.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

Visiting Teesside and Doncaster, I've seen and heard prime examples of what makes this country one of the best in the world at not only improving the lives of patients, but also developing my innovative medicines and treatments to protect us and our international partners.

The expansion of the Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies site will not only benefit the local economy through the creation of hundreds of jobs – the development of medicines and vaccines means we will be continue to be prepared for potential future health threats.

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals are taking excellent strides to improve the lives of patients in the area – especially through expanding capacity for cancer diagnosis which is a vital part of our national war on cancer, that will be underpinned by a new 10-year-plan.

Seeing the excellent innovations in the North East and Yorkshire, it is no wonder the UK is the envy of the world in treatments and health innovations.

Martin Meeson, Chief Executive, FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies said:

The Secretary of State's visit demonstrates the crucial role of Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies across health, science and innovation in the UK.

It was great to introduce him to our talented team and showcase how we're spearheading many different advances in medicines and

vaccines – not only for Novavax – but also the hundreds of other projects we're working on across our global manufacturing network.

We also talked about the future and how Fujifilm is investing £400 million to develop the Billingham site – this is a really significant investment in British biotechnology, one of the biggest ever, and will create around 350 new jobs.

Richard Parker Chief Executive of Doncaster and Bassetlaw teaching Trusts said:

The past two years have been incredibly challenging, and we have welcomed the opportunity to show the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care around our hospital.

We've been proud to highlight the tireless work of our colleagues, as well as underlining the benefits investment has brought to our site throughout this time, how it will help us in our recovery and how we can further improve in the future.

Like the rest of the NHS, we have a significant amount of work ahead of us to catch-up with the backlog of activity which has accumulated since 2020, whilst also ensuring we have the appropriate capacity available to care for those who are in need of urgent care – however I believe our team at DBTH are more than up to the challenge.