

Press release: Industrial Strategy boost for UK medicines with £70 million of funding to help develop new treatments

- Funding through Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) will support projects including new manufacturing centres to speed up the production of medicine and new virtual reality projects to help patient recovery
- Landmark speech also confirms plans to map UK's research infrastructure to ensure UK remains at the cutting edge

New Science Minister Sam Gyimah will announce £70 million of funding to create new manufacturing centres to help speed up the development of new medicines during a visit to Imperial College London today (Monday 22 January).

The money forms part of the government's commitment to build a country fit for the future through a stronger economy and fairer society. It will create innovative new medical solutions, including using virtual reality to aid rehabilitation and investing in digital speech therapy solutions for stroke and brain injuries. The government's investment in high tech medical research will in turn boost jobs, enhance the NHS and ensure better care for people when they are unwell.

During his visit to Imperial College London, the minister is expected to see how new, innovative technology is being developed to help patients.

He will be shown a cartoon-like robot which can improve learning and emotional understanding in children with autism. Because of their programming, robots are precise in displaying the same facial expressions and gestures in every interaction. Researchers believe this consistency may be the key to helping young children with autism to learn the different facial expressions and gestures people use to display their emotions.

The minister is also likely to see some AI facial-recognition research which could be used to help elderly people by detecting the onset of depression, or in security systems to recognise visitors to dementia sufferers' homes as doctors, nurses or relatives.

As part of a day of Industrial Strategy activity, Sam Gyimah will also speak at the Royal Society where he will announce the start of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Research and Innovation Infrastructure Roadmap Programme, which will comprehensively map UK research and innovation infrastructure, showcasing our abilities whilst identifying any gaps in infrastructure that we can address to boost the sector.

The Infrastructure Roadmap will be the first major piece of work that UKRI

will undertake, and is expected to be finished in 2019 and will feature:

- Large scientific facilities and major equipment
- Collections, archives and scientific data
- E-infrastructures such as data and computing systems
- Communications networks

Universities and Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Through our ambitious, modern Industrial Strategy we want to unlock the innovations that will help people live better, longer lives by developing the medicines of the future. This investment will not only support high-value, highly-skilled jobs but will develop lifesaving treatments that could change lives across the UK.

We want to improve the way we make medicines and we are determined to capitalise on our research and innovation infrastructure, which is why today I am launching the start of the UKRI Research and Innovation Infrastructure Roadmap Programme.

From RRS Discovery to the UK Biobank and the Diamond Light Source to the UK Data Archive, this country is world renowned for its research and innovation infrastructure. Now, for the first time, we will map this to enable us to showcase our capabilities around the world and identify future opportunities.

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

One of UK Research and Innovation's key tasks is to make sure that the UK's businesses and researchers are ready and able to seize the opportunity presented by the Industrial Strategy. So I'm very pleased that alongside today's substantial investment in leading edge healthcare manufacturing technology, we are also starting the process to map out the UK's nationally and internationally important research and innovation infrastructure. This will enable us to make sure we are getting the absolute best out the infrastructure we already have, and identify what else we will need to stay competitive in the next 10-15 years.

Through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF), the government is investing £181 million through the Leading Edge Healthcare and the Digital Health Technology Catalyst over 4 years in the areas of advanced therapies, medicines and vaccines development and manufacturing, alongside an estimated £250 million of private funding from industry.

The fund should return a value of £1 billion to the UK economy, support high-value, highly-skilled manufacturing, and increase productivity.

Nearly £50 million of this funding has been allocated to further the manufacture of medicines, ensuring that the right drugs and treatments reach patients.

The funding for the ISCF Leading Edge Healthcare Challenge allocation is made up of:

- £21 million for Advanced Therapies Treatment Centres
- £15 million for Medicines Manufacturing collaborative research and development round 1 competition
- £8 million for Digital Health Catalyst round 1
- £5.6 million for Viral vector production for Cell and Gene Therapy
- £8 million for Digital Health Technology Catalyst round 2 – funding competition opens 15 February 2018
- £10 million for the Medicines Manufacturing challenge round 2 – funding opens 12 March 2018

Commenting on the funding, Health and Social Care Minister Lord O'Shaughnessy said:

NHS patients want to know that they can get the most innovative and effective treatments as quickly as possible, and that's what our investments will make happen.

Whether it is new cancer treatments, digital health technologies, or tools to help diagnose illness earlier, the Government is partnering with industry to deliver the life-changing and life-saving treatments as quickly as anywhere in the world.

The projects announced as part of the ISCF Leading Edge Healthcare Challenge will not only improve accessibility and production of medicines, it will further reaffirm the UK's position as being world-leading in research and development, which is a central to the Industrial Strategy.