

# Press release: Minister hails life sciences sector as one of Britain's great assets

Baroness Fairhead, Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion, today (Thursday 26 April) highlighted the importance of the UK's life sciences sector to future trade at a major pharmaceutical event.

The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry's (ABPI) annual conference was attended by Britain's leading pharma businesses, and showcased the UK's world leading capability to develop solutions to ever changing health risks around the world.

Speaking in London, Baroness Fairhead set out how the forthcoming Export Strategy will work closely with the Department for International Trade's Life Sciences Organisation to deliver practical support to both domestic and global businesses who use the UK as a manufacturing and export base.

The minister also detailed how a combination of top universities, research institutions and increasing government support means that the UK is a fantastic place for the sector to invest.

The UK is now one of the top 3 life sciences hubs globally, with businesses based across the country exporting more than £30 billion of goods and services last year.

Speaking at the ABPI conference today, Baroness Fairhead said:

When it comes to world trade, I know that the life sciences sector is one of Britain's great assets – so let me promise you, the government understands how important it is to our prosperity and public health.

Our shores are the place to develop, manufacture and commercialise medicines. Our open and innovative environment has supported our world-leading research capability, established secure platforms for clinical trials, and ensures efficient access to supply chain and service partners. We are home to flying start-ups and world-beating multinationals and our regulatory standards are hailed the world over.

The government knows this and we, as a nation, are proud of our past, present and potential in this sector – and we have every intention of nurturing our industry for continued success.

UK exports of goods and services as a whole increased by 12.1% to £622 billion last year, and with the UK gearing up to leave the European Union,

the Department will shortly deliver a new Export Strategy. This will set out the government's ambition to get businesses of all sizes exporting their products.

Top 5 ways DIT supports businesses to export:

1. [great.gov.uk](https://www.great.gov.uk) – export platform which lists thousands of export opportunities worth millions of pounds. It also puts firms in touch with global buyers at the click of a mouse.
2. [UK Export Finance](#) – the UK's export credit agency provides financial support like capital loans, to ensure no viable export deal fails due to lack of finance and insurance. UKEF has recently partnered with 5 of the UK's biggest banks, to help small businesses easily access government-backed financial support.
3. Face-to-face support for exporters in England – delivered via a [network of around 250 International Trade Advisers](#) (ITAs). ITAs are managed by 9 delivery partners who operate in each of the 9 English regions.
4. Trade shows – DIT supports trade shows across the world to showcase the best of UK companies from sectors including life sciences, automotive and food and drink.
5. Board of Trade – with representatives from the business community to be the 'eyes and ears' of modern businesses. It meets 4 times a year rotated around the UK guaranteeing all parts of the Union have a chance to raise the issues most important to them.