

British Embassy holds virtual healthcare webinar on COVID-19

The British Embassy in Egypt, through the work of the UK Department for International Trade hosted a virtual meeting for 30 leading British and Egyptian healthcare companies to discuss their ongoing efforts to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The webinar brought together key decision makers from the Egyptian and UK public and private sectors. Four representatives from the Egyptian Ministry of Health were joined by Healthcare UK, Ain Shams University Hospitals, Cleopatra Hospital, Vodafone, GSK, Integrated Diagnostics Holdings, the Saudi German Hospital, Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital, Public Health England, Royal Colleges, and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

The attendees shared their expertise in dealing with some the challenges that the COVID-19 crisis has created across the world. Representatives from Healthcare UK discussed how they had managed the surge in Covid-19 cases in the UK, including through the rapid conversion of buildings into Nightingale Hospitals, which had expanded capacity by 4,000 beds in just 10 days. They also presented their experience in setting up 'Lighthouse screening labs', which were ready in a few weeks and enabled around 200,000 swab samples to be analysed each day. They also shared methods to remotely monitor symptoms and offer treatment to COVID-19 patients.

Representatives from the Ministry of Health briefed on Egypt's own COVID19 response, while Egyptian medical organisations explained how they are supporting the government's efforts. The last three months have seen deepened coordination between the two countries to tackle the challenges of the pandemic. Through June and July, the UK will import medical gowns from Egypt, while British company PrimerDesign Ltd, a subsidiary of Novacyt SA, has just delivered another batch of 100,000 PCR tests to Egypt.

British Ambassador to Egypt, Sir Geoffrey Adams, said:

I am delighted that the Egyptian and UK public and private sectors are working hard, on a daily basis, to share their expertise and address the immediate medical needs of both countries. This is a challenging task given the current worldwide pressure on scarce resources, but it is encouraging to see that it is already producing practical results.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): letter to councils on the re-opening of public toilets and tips](#)

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[Four new prisons boost rehabilitation and support economy](#)

- Four new jails at heart of Government's commitment to 10,000 additional prison places.
- Two in the north, two in the south – supporting local economies and the construction industry with thousands of jobs.
- Buildings will use new technology and modern methods of construction.

Four new prisons are to be built across England over the next six years – boosting efforts to cut crime and kickstart the economy.

The first new jail will be built next to HMP Full Sutton, in East Yorkshire, and work is underway to identify locations for a further prison in the North-West of England and two in the South-East.

Thousands of jobs will be created overall in the areas surrounding the prisons during construction and once they have opened. This will provide a major spur to local economies and support the construction industry to invest and innovate following the Coronavirus pandemic.

These prisons are another major step in the Government's £2.5 billion programme to create 10,000 additional prison places. This will deliver modern jails that boost rehabilitation and cut reoffending – providing improved security and additional training facilities to help offenders find employment on release.

Prisons and Probation Minister, Lucy Frazer QC MP, said:

These new jails form a major part of our plans to transform the prison estate, and create environments where offenders can be more effectively rehabilitated and turned away from crime for good.

As well as a boost to our justice system, these prisons will create thousands of new jobs and send a clear signal that the Government can and will continue to invest in the vital infrastructure this country needs.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Barclay MP, said:

We are not only delivering on our commitment to provide 10,000 more prison places, but also signalling a shift in how we build public buildings through a major increase in factory built, modern methods of construction.

Building on lessons from recent school construction, this will be part of a much wider change, to be embedded at the next comprehensive spending review, ensuring public buildings benefit from the quicker assembly times, lower energy use, and stronger green footprint offered by new construction technology.

The new jails will be built more quickly, sustainably and cost effectively than ever before. This is thanks to modern construction methods and new technology that have already been incorporated into the new prison being built at Wellingborough. Components, such as concrete walls, and pipework for water and electricity are built by companies around the country using modern, standardised processes and assembled on site. This in turn will ensure the economic benefits of the investment will reach firms across the country.

The new prisons are designed with enhanced security in mind. Bar-less windows will stop waste being thrown out and prevent prisoners accessing drugs and mobile phones flown in by drones. High speed network cabling will also be incorporated to enable modern security measures such as airport-style security scanning, to prevent the smuggling of the illicit items that fuel violence.

While the operators of the prisons will be announced in due course, the Government is committed to using the innovation, knowledge and expertise of the private and public sectors to deliver the best rehabilitation. It is the Government's intention that at least one prison will be operated by the public sector.

In addition to the four new prisons, construction is well underway at Wellingborough, in Northamptonshire, and early works have started at Glen Parva, Leicestershire, to create two new 1,680-place category C resettlement prisons.

PM call with PM Morawiecki of Poland: 27 June 2020

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Polish Prime Minister Morawiecki.



A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister spoke to Polish Prime Minister Morawiecki today.

Both leaders expressed regret that they could not meet in person for the annual UK-Poland Intergovernmental Consultations. They endorsed the joint Action Plan as a blueprint for UK-Polish cooperation over the coming months on issues including defence and trade.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Morawiecki also reflected on the strength and history of the relationship between the UK and Poland as we look ahead to the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

The leaders discussed the shared fight against coronavirus and agreed on the need to ensure a sustainable global recovery where openness and free trade is prioritised.

On the UK's future relationship with the EU, the Prime Minister welcomed the agreement on both sides to an intensified process of negotiations in July. He said the UK would negotiate constructively but equally would be ready to leave the transition period on Australia terms if agreement could not be reached.

Social housing to be prioritised for veterans

- Housing Minister announces improved access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces and veterans suffering from mental ill health
- Other new measures will ensure former spouses or civil partners of serving personnel are not disadvantaged when applying for social housing
- The government is committed to making the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran and to ensuring serving and former personnel do not face disadvantages when seeking social housing

New measures to ensure access to social housing is improved for members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families have been announced this Armed Forces Day (27 June 2020) by Housing Minister Christopher Pincher.

The government has today set out how councils should ensure members of the Armed Forces and veterans who need support with their mental health, because of conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, are given the priority for social housing they deserve.

New measures also mean former spouses or civil partners of serving personnel will be given extra support when applying for social housing. They will be exempted from rules requiring them to be a local resident before being given social housing in the area to ensure they are not disadvantaged when applying.

[Guidance](#) has been issued to councils to encourage staff-training so they understand the circumstances of the Armed Forces community and consider their housing needs appropriately. This will also promote a consistent approach across councils in how they consider social housing applications.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

The health and wellbeing of our Armed Forces, whether they are Regulars, Reservists or veterans, is a priority for this government.

I want to ensure serving and former members of the Armed Forces who suffer from mental ill health are given the priority for social housing they deserve, together with appropriate care and support.

There can be no better time than this Armed Forces Day, after such a challenging time, to celebrate the skill, tenacity and professionalism of our Armed Forces. Their contribution has been extraordinary and we are all grateful for their efforts.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer MP said:

This new guidance is the Armed Forces Covenant in action – government ensuring that the whole armed forces family can more easily access public services.

The unique circumstances of veterans and service families will now more readily be taken into account when allocating housing and I'm proud that we're announcing these measures on Armed Forces Day.

Armed Forces Day (AFD) is an opportunity for the UK public to celebrate the work of our Armed Forces. Saturday 27 June 2020 will be the 12th annual AFD.

Throughout the COVID-19 response our armed forces have offered immense support, including coordinating the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment and playing a key role in recovery planning

Since 2012, current and former service personnel who have been recently discharged have not had to be "resident" in an area to get access to a social home for their families, as part of our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant. Under the Covenant, veterans with more urgent housing needs are also eligible for additional preferences for social housing.