

Update on the Ventilator Challenge

Following a review by an expert panel of clinicians, including NHS clinicians and the regulator, the MHRA, the Government will be ending support for four devices in the Ventilator Challenge. Recognising the Government's need to create effective ventilators at pace, the panel concluded that other designs could better meet the clinical needs of the NHS at this time.

Government efforts to increase ventilator capacity have already seen an additional 2,400 mechanical ventilators made available to the NHS since the start of the pandemic, with over 250 coming from the Ventilator Challenge so far. The number of extra ventilators rises to 6,745 in total, when you include both mechanical and non-invasive ventilators

The UK now has 10,900 mechanical invasive ventilators available to the NHS, as well as 4,300 non-invasive devices.

During the coronavirus pandemic, everyone who has required a ventilator has had access to one, but the Government will continue to increase capacity through its three pillar strategy: procuring more ventilators from overseas, scaling up the production of existing or modified designs and working to design and manufacture new devices.

The Government recently announced that 15,000 Penlon Prima ES02 ventilators have been ordered, the first newly-adapted device to receive regulatory approval in the Ventilator Challenge, with production set to ramp up in the coming weeks. Smiths paraPAC ventilators, an existing device, are also being manufactured at speed and at scale as part of the Ventilator Challenge.

Devices that have been selected to continue as part of the Ventilator Challenge have been selected based upon expert clinical and technical advice. This includes feedback from rigorous testing of the ventilators by clinical experts to ensure that they meet the necessary standards for patient safety and effectiveness of treatment, which is of vital importance for any new ventilator design. This selection criteria also takes into account projections for ventilator demand, the availability of other devices which already have regulatory approval, the performance and clinical usefulness of each device and the progress to date on each device's overall development.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

The innovation, teamwork and commitment shown by manufacturers involved in the Ventilator Challenge has been inspirational.

While the Government will be ending support for four of the devices in the Ventilator Challenge today, I want to put on record my sincere thanks to everyone involved.

They are heroes of our national effort and their contribution to protecting our NHS and saving lives will not be forgotten.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Since we launched the Ventilator Challenge the ingenuity and innovation shown by so many companies has been truly awe-inspiring and has helped us continue to get ventilators to the frontline and keep capacity ahead of demand.

Technology and innovation, operating hand-in-hand with the care and dedication of our fantastic health and social care staff, will help us overcome this virus.

I want to thank every company, and their staff, for their phenomenal achievements in going forward to the next stage.

Following the recommendations of the expert panel, the Government will continue to provide support to four devices, as well the Penlon and paraPAC. We are scaling up production of existing Breas Medical devices, the Nippy 4+ & Vivo65, with the first units expected next month. In addition, two devices are subject to ongoing review to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the NHS:

- Zephyr Plus, made by Babcock
- Gemini, made by OES Medical

Five other devices will continue to be eligible for support before being reassessed by a further clinical panel next week:

- Piran Vent, made by Swagelok
- Veloci-Vent, made by Cambridge Consultants Ltd and MetLase
- Sagentia Ventilator, made by Sagentia
- CoVent, made by TTP and Dyson
- AirCare, made by BAE Systems

From the start of the challenge we have been clear that not all designs would necessarily be taken forward and so today the Cabinet Office is ceasing support for four ventilator designs. These are:

- EVA, made by TEAM and Cogent Technology
- Helix, made by Diamedica and Plexus
- OxVent, made by KCL, Oxford University and Smith+Nephew
- InVicto, made by JFD

[Government confirms allocations of](#)

£1.6 billion funding boost for councils

Individual councils in England have had their [funding allocations](#) confirmed today (Tuesday 28 April) following Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick's announcement of £1.6 billion in additional funding.

The £1.6 billion funding, recently announced, means councils in England will be provided with over £3.2 billion to deal with the immediate impacts of coronavirus.

During the pandemic, councils are playing a crucial role and this extra funding will help them to continue to deliver frontline services and support to those who need it most, as well as meeting new pressures.

Their work includes getting rough sleepers off the streets, supporting clinically vulnerable people and providing assistance for our public health workforce.

The funding will be distributed to councils across England based on their population and the latest assessment on the challenges they are facing.

The split of funding between county and district councils also reflects the financial pressure being felt by councils as a result of residents doing the right thing and staying at home, rather than using services including car parks and leisure facilities. A clear majority of district councils will now receive more than £1m of additional funding to ensure they are fully supported.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Councils are playing a central role in our national fight against coronavirus and the government continues to back them at this challenging time.

That's why I announced an extra £3.2 billion of support for councils to help them to continue their extraordinary efforts.

Today I'm setting out how the latest £1.6 billion of this will be allocated to councils in the fairest way possible, recognising the latest and best assessment of the pressures they face.

We are backing local district councils and the vast majority will receive at least £1m in additional funding.

The government has confirmed the funding will not be ringfenced, recognising councils are best placed to decide how to meet pressures in their local area.

The split between county and district authorities will be 65:35. Where there are separate fire authorities, a specific tier split for fire of 3% will be used.

This funding is part of comprehensive package of support that has also included allowing councils to defer £2.6 billion in business rates payments to central government and brought forward £850 million in social care grants paid to councils from this month.

The Government has today also confirmed that the Review of Relative Needs and Resource and 75% business rates retention will no longer be implemented in 2021-22. This will allow councils to focus on meeting the immediate public health challenge posed by the pandemic.

The Government will continue to work with councils on the best approach to the next financial year, including how to treat accumulated business rates growth and the approach to the 2021-22 local government finance settlement.

- The allocations of this £1.6 billion have been published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).
- On 19 March we announced an initial £1.6 billion for local councils. These funding allocations were based on a mixture of Adult Social Care Relative Needs Formulas and Settlement Funding Assessment.
- On 18 April we announced a further £1.6 billion funding for local councils. These funding allocations are based on a per capita basis, and there will be a 65:35 split between county and district authorities. Where there are separate fire authorities a specific tier split for fire of 3% will be used.
- In total we have provided over £3.2 billion to local councils to reflect expenditure pressures and potential loss in income.

[Update on COVID-19 in prisons](#)

This follows new modelling by Public Health England (PHE) and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) that indicates jails are successfully limiting deaths and the transmission of the virus within the estate.

The new modelling predicts a drastic reduction in the spread rates of the infection compared to previous forecasts, with each case being passed on to less than one person –and monitoring suggests overall infection rates are falling.

This means that as a result of the strong measures introduced by HMPPS, lives should be saved and the NHS is being protected from the impact of widespread local outbreaks.

HMPPS is containing the spread of COVID-19 within jails using an approach known as 'compartmentalisation'. Through this approach, staff have isolated those with symptoms, and many prisons have been able to shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals.

Separating those with symptoms has been ongoing since early February and coupled with the wider action taken, this has limited the spread of confirmed Coronavirus cases in jails. The majority of those infected have now made a successful recovery.

HMPPS took decisive action in March to minimise movements between jails to avoid thousands of prisoners and staff becoming infected with the virus. Strong further measures were introduced to ease pressure on prisons with the early release of [low-risk offenders](#), [temporary expansion of the estate](#), and work to reduce the number of those held on remand.

The new modelling shows that reducing the prison population by 5,000 could be effective in limiting the spread of the virus. Thanks to wide measures taken, the population has already reduced by almost 3,000 over a seven-week period. Combining a reduction in the prison population, creating additional headroom in the estate, and managing prisoners through 'compartmentalisation', HMPPS can continue to protect life.

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

This Government has taken unprecedented action during this difficult period to save lives and protect the NHS. I cannot express sufficient gratitude to the hard-working prison and healthcare staff, and prisoners, who have allowed this to take place. My thoughts are with all of those affected by this terrible virus.

We know further progress is needed if we are to continue to strike a balance between limiting the spread of COVID-19 and protecting the public. We appreciate that unusual measures will need to remain in place for some time and significant challenges remain.

But there are positive signs that our carefully implemented approach is limiting the impact of this initial phase of the pandemic – actual cases and deaths so far are much lower than originally predicted. We will continue to do everything possible to make sure this remains the case.

Prison staff have continued to ensure the effective running of jails and many hundreds are returning to work after periods of absence to comply with public health guidance.

This is being helped by an increase in staff testing, with over a thousand referred for testing in the past fortnight. Personal protective equipment is also being provided to prison officers and all jails have the soap and cleaning materials they need.

Work to create the additional space in the prison estate will continue at pace, with the installation of hundreds of temporary, single occupancy cells alongside the scheme to release low-risk offenders. Efforts to expedite sentencing hearings for those on remand are ongoing.

All our actions have been informed by the advice of experts from PHE and will be kept under constant review. The [revised model](#) on transmission of COVID-19 in prisons is available.

[Trade Remedies Authority Chief Executive Designate steps down](#)

News story

The Director of the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate (TRID) and Chief Executive Designate of the Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) has stepped down.



Claire Bassett, Director of the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate (TRID) and Chief Executive Designate of the Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) has announced her resignation from the post and is set to take up a new role at the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

Simon Walker CBE, Chair Designate of the Trade Remedies Authority will continue to head up the organisation while a new Chief Executive Designate is

appointed.

The Reading-based Trade Remedies Authority will be the UK-wide body responsible for investigating claims of harmful and unfair trading practices, such as the dumping of foreign products on the UK market at below fair market rates.

It will come into effect once the Trade Bill is passed. As the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate, it has already begun operations and is carrying out transition reviews into current EU measures to make sure that they are fit for purpose for UK industry.

Published 28 April 2020

[The Governments of Sudan and South Sudan must act constructively](#)

Thank you, Mr President, and thank you to both of our briefers this morning.

I would like to start by expressing the United Kingdom's support for the peoples and the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan in their efforts to respond to COVID-19.

As this Council discussed on Friday in relation to Sudan, the damaging impacts of this pandemic will only add to the already significant humanitarian and socio-economic challenges faced by both countries.

We welcome the quick responses of the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to COVID-19 and their efforts to mitigate its effects. So far, the UK has contributed approximately \$6 million to the UN's COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts in Sudan and over \$4 million to the effort in South Sudan.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic is also taking a toll on peacekeeping missions and the brave personnel serving in them around the world. In this regard, we once again commend the Ethiopian Government for its continued contributions to UNISFA. COVID-19 underlines the importance of ensuring swift medevac provision for UN personnel and the maintenance of supply chains. This is particularly the case for UNISFA, given its remoteness.

Mr President, we recognise that the COVID-19 response will dominate the agendas of the Governments in Khartoum and Juba for some time, as it is for countries around the world. But we continue to urge both governments not to lose sight both of their respective peace processes and of the importance of finding a final settlement on Abyei.

We welcome the progress made in South Sudan on the implementation of the

peace agreement, with the formation of the transitional Unity Government, and in Sudan as the civilian government continues to implement the Constitutional Declaration.

And in Abyei, we welcome the efforts made by UNISFA on a range of activities, including engagement with the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan, the implementation of the Quick Impact Projects, mediation of local community dialogues, raising awareness of gender issues and the removal of explosive hazards.

But despite these efforts, Mr President, we remain very concerned by the fragile security situation in Abyei. Of particular concern is the increase in intercommunal violence and attacks on mission personnel. The recent episodes of heightened tensions, increased criminality and the presence of armed elements in UNISFA's areas of responsibility, have left civilians displaced and highlighted the continued absence of law and order in Abyei. All this underlines the need for progress to be made towards a final settlement. It is a matter of deep regret that this has been lacking so far.

Turning to the Mission itself, Mr President, the United Kingdom supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNISFA for a further six months. The mission continues to have a vital role not only in ensuring stability, but also in facilitating work towards a settlement to the situation in Abyei.

Mr President, this Council has long highlighted the need to boost the civilian and police components of the Mission in order to contribute to this effort. We welcome the update from Under-Secretary-General Lacroix on deployment of police to UNISFA, and like other Council members, hope to see further progress soon. We are disappointed by the delay in issuing visas for police, and urge the Government of Sudan to expedite this process.

In the meantime, Mr President, this Council should ensure that UNISFA remains adequately resourced to deliver on its mandated activities. We look forward to working with members of this Council to ensure that the mission continues to be able to maintain the stability of Abyei, and to assist in the achievement of a final settlement on its status.

Finally, Mr President, regarding the Two Areas, we welcome the commitment of the Government of Sudan and a number of armed movements to engage in peace talks aimed at achieving a comprehensive peace across Sudan. Here, we continue to urge all sides to engage constructively, immediately and without pre-conditions in these negotiations to deliver a peaceful and swift solution to the conflict areas, including the Two Areas. Meanwhile, we also continue to urge all parties to respect International Humanitarian Law and allow humanitarian actors to deliver aid to those most in need, without hindrance.

Thank you, Mr President.