

Scottish Universities battle against Covid-19 praised by Scottish Sec

Giving a message of support to the Scottish Universities working in collaboration with others across the UK in recognition of their innovative efforts to tackle the Coronavirus, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

“I’m proud to see our world leading Scottish Universities taking part in this national effort to combat the Covid-19 virus.

“Whether it’s researching vaccines, helping to understand more about how the virus works, training health professionals or donating equipment to hospitals, they are helping to make a real difference.”

The University of Glasgow and the University of Edinburgh are collaborating on a project to understand the impact of the virus on the human body. Using samples and data from 1,300 patients in the UK, the team hope to provide information to help control the outbreak and improve treatments.

One of the keys to tackling the pandemic is the successful mapping of the Covid-19 genome, the University of Glasgow is part of this national effort while Edinburgh Napier University has transferred a ventilator to the intensive care ward at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

A research unit at the University of Dundee has identified 38 separate proteins in the Covid-19 virus. The team will manufacture these proteins to develop antibodies that can fight the virus.

The University of Dundee have undertaken further work such as providing two highly specialised robots to help with the creation of the UK’s first national diagnostic centre in Milton Keynes. The machines have been described as ‘gold dust’ by Downing Street officials.

They have also worked with NHS Tayside to establish a Covid-19 training hub in the Clinical Skills Centre at Ninewells Hospital. The hub has set up a range of training courses to support upskilling healthcare staff.

Commitment from all parties is necessary for sustainable peace in Mali

Many thanks, Mr President and may I begin by joining others in welcoming you

to the Presidency. It is good to see your commitment to transparency already in place with the broadcast this morning of the briefing. I thought that was a very useful innovation.

I'd also like to thank, as others have, the Chinese for their Presidency. It was good to see them also being willing to be innovative and open in such challenging circumstances, so thank you very much.

I also wanted to thank Special Representative Annadif for his excellent briefing and join others in welcoming the Minister of Foreign Affairs Dramé to this discussion. It's good to see the Malian government engaging at this level with our consultations.

Mr President, the United Kingdom continues to give its full support to MINUSMA as it works in challenging and complex circumstances, helping to build the conditions for lasting peace and stability in Mali and so, by extension, the wider region. The extent of those changing circumstances were underlined again on Monday by the attacks in Bamba, in which many Malian soldiers lost their lives. On behalf of the United Kingdom, I offer you, Mr Foreign Minister, and the families of those soldiers our sincere condolences.

Mr President, the last three months have seen some long overdue steps towards implementation of the peace agreement. We join others in welcoming the deployment of the reconstituted armed forces to Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu and Menaka. The completion of the first round of the legislative elections with support from MINUSMA and the revival of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, including, critically, the commitments to increase female participation in the peace process. This is welcome progress, but it does not go far enough. We once again urge the parties to the peace agreement to redouble their efforts, continuing to accelerate its implementation. And we hope that when the Secretary-General next updates the Council, there will be more progress to report.

The United Kingdom is also concerned by a number of worrying trends outlined in the Secretary-General's report, including the spread of terrorist activity in parts of the Mopti and Segou regions, increased violence against and exploitation of women and children, as well as increased asymmetric threats against MINUSMA itself. The stark increase in human rights violations and abuses, including among signatories to the 2015 Peace Agreement, is unacceptable. It is vital that the mission reports in full on such violations and abuses where they occur and that the government investigates these cases, holding perpetrators to account.

Of course, Mr President, in addition to these concerns, the United Kingdom shares the concerns already expressed by Council colleagues about the potentially catastrophic impact of COVID-19 in the Sahel. The peak of the outbreak is likely to hit in the middle of Mali's lean season. This could significantly increase the number of those in the region at risk from food insecurity, which we already estimate to be at 13.8 million for 2020.

The UK is committed to supporting the international COVID-19 response, including through further funding, mobilising partners and providing

technical assistance. Globally, the UK is spending \$665 million to help in the development of vaccines, treatments and testing, as well as to support the IMF in its help to vulnerable economies. In the Sahel, we are working closely with our humanitarian implementation partners to help them continue their work while addressing the extra pressures from COVID-19. In this regard, we welcome yesterday's announcement of a further \$6 million of support, to strengthen the Government of Mali's response by the UN.

We are also concerned of reports of COVID cases amongst MINUSMA and the MINUSMA team. COVID-19 will inevitably have implications for MINUSMA itself, whether through requests for the Governments of Mali for support in its pandemic response or due to public health restrictions impacting day-to-day operation of the mission. We would welcome reassurance from the SRSG that contingency plans are being drawn up for how the mission will mitigate these possible impacts on core mandate delivery.

In conclusion, Mr President, while we cannot ignore potentially disastrous impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we also cannot let it derail or delay progress towards lasting peace in Mali. Intensified political, security and development efforts are required. The United Kingdom remains committed to playing our part in this, including through the deployment of 250 British troops to Mali later this year. A sustainable peace will not be won by MINUSMA alone, however; the commitment of all parties to full implementation of the Peace Agreement and addressing the underlying causes of instability in the region is the only way to assure long-term security.

Many thanks, Mr President.

ACMD advice on COVID-19 emergency legislation to enable supply of controlled drugs

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

Patients informed to exchange Emerade 300 micrograms adrenaline pens for replacement pens of a different brand

Healthcare professionals are being asked to contact patients who use Emerade 300 microgram pens following notification by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) of a recall of these pens.

The recall is due to reports of difficulty in activating the pens, meaning the dose of adrenaline may not be delivered when needed by a patient for a severe, acute allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

This action follows a previous recall of [Emerade 150 microgram auto-injector pens on 4 March 2020](#) from patients.

Patients or carers should obtain a prescription from their doctor for alternative pens and should ensure they have two replacement pens to carry with them, before returning the Emerade 300 mcg pens to the pharmacy.

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, the MHRA in line with NHS guidance, is urging patients who need to return auto-injector pens to minimise additional burden on healthcare professionals and heed the advice on social distancing.

- a patient or carer should make a telephone appointment with their doctor to request a prescription for replacement pens of a different brand. Unless their doctor advises otherwise, they should not visit the GP surgery in person
- request the prescription is sent to a pharmacy to avoid collecting in-person from the surgery
- if a patient and/or their household is self-isolating, ask a friend or relative to collect the replacement pens from the pharmacy. Some pharmacies offer a home delivery service.
- once the patient has the replacement auto-injector pens return Emerade 300 mcg pens to the pharmacy. Some pharmacies have drop-off boxes to facilitate distancing.

The Emerade auto-injector pens – which come in 150, 300 and 500 micrograms – are being recalled in stages when there are enough supplies of the two alternative brands – EpiPen or Jext.

Patients should continue to carry in-date Emerade 500 microgram pens and use

them if needed. Patients should always carry two pens.

The available data show most of the pens will still activate, but more force may need to be applied.

As soon as there are enough replacements for all in-date Emerade 500 microgram pens, patients and prescribers will be informed so they can exchange them for another brand.

A MHRA spokesperson, said:

“Action has been taken to protect patients, following detection of a fault in one component of the Emerade adrenaline auto-injector pens.

“As a result of the fault, some pens may fail to activate and deliver adrenaline. There are now enough supplies of alternate brands to enable a full recall of Emerade 300 microgram pens.

“A patient level recall of Emerade 500 microgram pens will be undertaken as soon as there are enough alternative supplies.

“Patients should return all Emerade 300 microgram pens to their local pharmacy once they have a new prescription and have been supplied with pens of an alternative brand.

“Patients should return Emerade 300 microgram pens as soon as they can, while continuing to follow all social distancing advice.

“It is vital that patients follow existing advice to carry two pens with them at all times and to contact their doctor when a replacement is due.

“When switching to a different brand of adrenaline pen the patient must ensure they are familiar with how to use the pen as each brand is administered differently.”

At present, healthcare professionals are unlikely to be able to help with face to face training but there may be opportunities for remote consultations. Patients must take particular care to read the instructions on how to use the pen which are in the leaflet contained in the box.

The manufacturers’ websites for each brand of pen have information and training videos on how to use a specific pen. Trainer pens can be obtained from the manufacturer and patients are strongly urged to get these so they can practise with the new device.

If an Emerade pen does need to be used, it should be pressed very firmly against the thigh. If this does not result in activation, the patient should immediately use their second pen.

Exposure to high temperature may increase the risk of pen failure. Emerade pens should not be exposed to temperatures above 25°C, such as being placed near to a radiator or fire.

More detailed information for patients is available on the [MHRA website](#).

Information in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19) when a prescription is needed for replacement pens, based on the current UK Government guidelines for social distancing:

- patients should follow the advice of their local GP practice/hospital and only attend when instructed to do so. Telephone appointments should be sought where possible. Further information can be obtained on the [government website](#)
- healthcare professionals dispensing medicines should ensure vulnerable patients can still obtain their replacement auto-injectors, considering the use of delivery services where appropriate
- although pens should be returned to a pharmacy once a replacement is obtained, this should not require someone who is self-isolating to leave their home
- at the present time, patients and carers may be unable to visit a healthcare professional to receive training in use of the new device. They must take particular care to read the instruction leaflet on how to use the pen. Patients and carers should also read the training information for their new pen on the manufacturer's website.

Tourism Minister launches £1.3 million fund to support Destination Management Organisations

- Funding will provide immediate financial support to DMOs who are at severe risk of closure due to the pandemic

Destination Management Organisations at risk of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic will receive financial support thanks to a new £1.3 million scheme launched by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) today.

The funding, which is available to any at-risk DMO in England which usually receives at least 50% of its income from commercial sources, will be used to cover operating costs and the cost of employees that cannot be furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme because they provide crucial

business support services.

Tourism Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

At the moment it is of utmost importance that everyone plays their part and stays at home to protect the NHS and save lives.

However, we also need to act now to help the tourism sector be as strong as possible when we get through this pandemic. Destination Management Organisations will play a vital role in this recovery and this fund will support their essential work.

DMOs provide expert advice and guidance to local businesses and are a crucial part of developing and promoting English tourism. As a result of the coronavirus outbreak, a number of DMOs are currently facing cash flow issues and loss of commercial income. This funding will ensure that DMOs can continue to provide critical business support and start to prepare for recovery.

Under the scheme, DMOs will be able to receive up to £2,500 per month for two members of non-furloughed staff who provide crucial business support services and up to £5,000 to cover operating costs.

VisitEngland Acting CEO Patricia Yates said:

Tourism has been one of the earliest and hardest hit of all economic sectors and this fund will help to ensure DMOs can continue to provide crucial support and expert guidance to the hundreds of thousands of small-to-medium sized businesses that make-up England's tourism sector. Our intention is to get the funds out quickly to DMOs with a light touch application process as we work with them in recovery planning, to ensure that tourism rebounds and once again becomes one of the most successful and vibrant sectors of the economy.

Notes to editors:

The funding will last until 30th June 2020 and is repurposed from the Discover England Fund. DMOs play a vital role in the development and promotion of English tourism. There are an estimated 150 in England, each running marketing campaigns, providing advice to local tourism businesses and conducting research on behalf of their members. Many also manage central Government grant schemes like the Discover England Fund.