

# First new ventilators to roll off production line this weekend as industry answers call to step up manufacturing

The news comes as some of the biggest names in British manufacturing race to step up ventilator supplies to help protect the NHS and save lives throughout the coronavirus pandemic, as part of the Prime Minister's call to manufacturers.

This weekend, the first batch of the Penlon ventilator device, which has been rapidly adapted from other existing ventilator designs, will be ready for dispatch, following approval from the MHRA that it meets the necessary safety requirements.

The device is being manufactured by a consortium\* including Formula 1 teams McLaren and Mercedes, Ford, Siemens and Meggitt. An initial delivery will be ready this weekend, with potentially hundreds more of that device to follow, alongside thousands more of other new devices in the coming weeks.

Other existing ventilator devices are also being scaled up, in collaboration with British and international industry, including products from Diamedica, Breas Medical and Smiths Group.

A number of other British manufacturers have also started urgent production of new ventilators, designed from scratch, following efforts from the industry and Government to rapidly increase numbers available to the NHS.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

Throughout our history British manufacturing has always stepped up in times of national need.

Ventilators are one of the most complex medical devices and the speed and scale that design and production is ramping up is awe inspiring.

We will do whatever it takes to ensure the NHS and social care sector has the support and equipment it needs to save lives.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We are doing everything we can to support our NHS staff fighting this battle on the frontline, and it's crucial we get even more ventilators there as soon as possible.

We have seen a fantastic response from businesses to our call for a national effort – and I'm delighted these companies accepted the challenge to save lives across the country.

The Government has provided a number of letters of intent to purchase potentially thousands more ventilators with companies who have credible designs, subject to them passing the regulator and strict safety tests.

There are a number of companies involved in these devices including Plexus, Rolls Royce, GKN Aerospace, Team Consulting, Cogent, Dyson, TTP plc, Sagentia, Smith & Nephew, Cambridge Consultants, PA Consulting, Babcock, Oxford University, OES Medical, BMW, Pitlane Consortium and Kings College London.

Separately, a team led by UCL, working with Mercedes Benz, will also produce 10,000 new CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) devices to support affected patients, with a team from Oxford University also developing related technology, which will increase the capacity to provide oxygen to affected patients at an earlier stage in the process of the disease.

Thanks to the work of consortiums that are scaling up production of smaller manufacturers as well as the ingenuity of the biggest names in manufacturing to support the UK's response to this public health emergency, many are coming up with new designs for this high tech medical devices in a matter of weeks, rather than months, further underlining the scale of this coordinated effort.

The Penlon device is based on elements found in their current range of CE marked products and meets the rapidly manufactured ventilator system specification. It is a fully intubated mechanical ventilator designed to provide support to critically ill patients with a range of functions including volume and pressure controlled ventilation.

Further details are set out in the PM's call with manufacturers and suppliers, including other manufacturers involved:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-ventilator-manufacturers-and-suppliers-26-march-2020>

\*The Ventilator ChallengeUK includes the following companies and groups:

- Airbus
- BAE Systems
- Ford Motor Company
- GKN Aerospace
- High Value Manufacturing Catapult
- Inspiration Healthcare Group
- Meggitt
- Penlon
- Renishaw
- Rolls-Royce
- Siemens Healthineers and Siemens UK
- Smiths Group

- Thales
  - Ultra Electronics
  - Unilever
  - UK-based F1 teams: Haas F1,
  - McLaren, Mercedes, Red Bull Racing,
  - Racing Point, Renault Sport Racing,
  - Williams
  - Accenture
  - Arrow Electronics
  - Dell Technologies
  - Microsoft
  - PTC
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## Pregnant prisoners to be temporarily released from custody

Pregnant women in custody who do not pose a high risk of harm to the public will be temporarily released from prison within days to protect them and their unborn children from coronavirus. Prisoners in Mother and Baby Units meeting the same risk assessment will also be released with their children.

Prison governors will be able to grant their release on temporary licence once they pass a risk assessment and suitable accommodation for the women has been identified.

This decision follows intense work across the prison estate to protect prison staff, the public and prisoners during the coronavirus pandemic, and as part of the national effort to protect the NHS and save lives.

The Prison Service last week took steps to ensure prisons are complying with social distancing rules and provided alternative means for prisoners to keep in touch with their families after cancelling family visits.

The Prison Service has already helped isolate pregnant women and new mothers and their babies from the wider population. From today (31 March), transfers within the prison estate will be limited in all but exceptional cases.

All actions have been informed by the advice of experts from Public Health England.

Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary Robert Buckland QC MP said:

We have already taken extraordinary measures to protect prisoners and the public over the last few weeks, but it's clear now that we must temporarily release pregnant woman and those with small babies

with them inside prison.

Governors can now temporarily release pregnant prisoners so that they can stay at home and reduce social contact like all other expectant mothers have been advised to do.

Those who will be released will be assessed before they leave prison to ensure they are a low risk to the public. They will also be subject to licence conditions, including a requirement to stay at home, and wear an electronic tag, where appropriate. They can be immediately recalled to prison for breaching these conditions or committing further offences.

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## [Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster opens the coronavirus press conference: 31 March 2020](#)

Good afternoon and thank you for joining us for our daily briefing in the fight against COVID-19.

I am joined today by Dr Jenny Harries, the deputy chief medical officer, and Professor Stephen Powis, the Medical Director of NHS England.

I would like first to update you all on the facts about the spread of COVID-19 and the steps that we are then taking in the battle against this virus.

143,186 people have now been tested for the virus.

Of those, 25,150 have tested positive.

And sadly, yesterday we recorded the highest single increase in the number of deaths as a result of COVID-19.

381 people died, meaning that of those hospitalised in the UK, the number who have passed away now totals 1,789.

Every death is the loss of a loved one, and our thoughts and prayers are with those who are grieving.

Overall, 10,767 people in England have been admitted to hospital with COVID-19 symptoms.

The largest number of those is in London, with 3,915 people in hospital care.

While in the Midlands, the number of those hospitalised is now 1,918 and

accelerating upwards.

These numbers reinforce the vital importance of following the Government's social distancing guidelines.

The more we restrict contact, the more we slow the spread of the infection, the more that we can help the NHS build the capacity needed to care for those most in need.

And that capacity is increasing.

More NHS staff are returning to the frontline and more testing is taking place to help those self-isolating come back and to protect those working so hard in our hospitals and in social care.

But while the rate of testing is increasing we must go further, faster.

A critical constraint on the ability to rapidly increase testing capacity is the availability of the chemical reagents which are necessary in the testing.

The Prime Minister and the Health Secretary are working with companies worldwide to ensure that we get the material we need to increase tests of all kinds.

And as well as increasing the number of staff on the frontline, and the tests which protect them, we must also increase the capacity to provide oxygen to those worst affected by the disease.

We have just over 8,000 ventilators deployed in NHS hospitals now. This number has increased since the epidemic began, thanks to the hard work of NHS professionals.

But we need more.

That is why we are buying more ventilators from abroad – including from EU nations.

And it's also why we are developing new sources of supply at home.

Before the epidemic struck we had very little domestic manufacture of ventilators.

But now, thanks to the dedication of existing medical supply companies and the ingenuity of our manufacturing base, we have existing models being produced in significantly greater numbers and new models coming on stream.

Orders have been placed with consortia led by Ford, Airbus, the Formula 1 Racing teams including McLaren, GKN Aerospace and Rolls Royce and Dysons.

And I can announce that this weekend, the first of thousands of new ventilator devices will roll off the production line and be delivered to the NHS next week. From there they will be rapidly distributed to the front line.

And as well as increasing the capacity for ventilation – which helps support

those patients worst affected – we are also increasing the capacity to provide oxygen to affected patients at an earlier stage in the process of the disease, helping to avert, we hope, the deterioration of their condition.

A team led by UCL, working with Mercedes Benz, will produce 10,000 new CPAP devices to support affected patients and a team from Oxford University are also developing related technology.

And in our determination to prevent as many patients as possible seeing their condition worsen we are conducting rapid clinical trials on those drugs, including anti-malarials, which may be able to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on those affected.

But even as we seek to explore every avenue to slow the spread of the disease, to reduce its impact and to save lives, I am conscious of the sacrifices that so many are making.

That is why the Chancellor's economic package is in place – to support people through a difficult time.

It is also why we are working so closely with our colleagues in the devolved administrations to coordinate our response across the United Kingdom and I am grateful to them

As I am to the thousands of dedicated public sector workers – cleaners and social workers, prison and police officers, those in the Royal Mail and in our schools – and I want to thank them and also the leaders of the trade unions who represent them.

In this united national effort we also are delivering food and prescription drugs to up to 1.5 million of the most vulnerable who are self-isolating for three months.

And we will do more to help, working with the three quarters of a million people who have volunteered to help at this time. Many are already heavily involved in local community support schemes.

And we want to work with them to ensure that we support not just the 1.5 million most vulnerable to the disease but all those who need our help through this crisis, those without social support, those in tough economic circumstances, those who need the visible hand of friendship at a challenging time.

That is why my cabinet colleague George Eustice and the Food and Farming Minister Victoria Prentis will be leading work, with food suppliers, retailers, local authorities and voluntary groups to support our neighbours in need.

I also want to thank the men and women of the military who have stepped up their work as part of the ongoing response to coronavirus.

three RAF Puma helicopters are now stationed at Kinloss Barracks in Moray. These Pumas are working closely with a Chinook and a Wildcat helicopter based

at RAF Leeming, North Yorkshire, to meet any requests for assistance from NHS boards and trusts across Scotland and Northern England.

A second helicopter facility covers the Midlands and Southern England working out of The Aviation Task Force Headquarters at RAF Benson in Oxfordshire. Chinook and Wildcat helicopters normally based at RAF Odiham and RNAS Yeovilton respectively support the Southern areas.

And these helicopter facilities have been set up to support medical transports across Scotland and the rest of the UK. The task force is also available for general support such as moving equipment and personnel to where they are needed across the UK.

The Kinloss-based support follows last weekend's use of an RAF A400M transport aircraft, working with the Scottish Ambulance Service, to evacuate a critically ill patient from the Shetland Islands to Aberdeen to receive intensive care treatment.

I am deeply grateful for everyone in our armed forces and in the public sector who are doing so much to help in the fight against coronavirus

And, of course, all of us can continue to play our part in supporting them and the health service by

STAYING AT HOME

SUPPORTING THE NHS

AND SAVING LIVES.

Now I want to ask Stephen to run through the latest data from our Cabinet Office Coronavirus fact-file.

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## [Biometrics Commissioner 2019 annual report: update](#)

- 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.

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# Chancellor waives duties and VAT on vital medical imports

- goods arriving from outside the EU will not be subject to customs duty or import VAT
- move will reduce red tape to ensure frontline health workers get vital equipment quickly and removes barriers to those who want to donate supplies to the NHS

The Chancellor has waived import taxes on medical equipment crucial to the fight against coronavirus – reducing red tape to ensure equipment gets to frontline health workers faster.

NHS suppliers will no longer have to pay customs duty and import VAT on specific medical goods coming from outside the EU, including ventilators, coronavirus testing kits and protective clothing.

The removal of the tariffs, which can be up to 12 per cent on the price of these goods, will mean more vital supplies are flowing into the UK to help the brave frontline workers treating patients with coronavirus.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak said:

We are taking decisive action to ensure our NHS has everything it needs to fight this outbreak.

Waiving import taxes on vital medical equipment such as ventilators will speed up and increase the supply of critical items going to our frontline health workers.

Dealing with coronavirus is a collective national effort and I will do everything I can to help us win this battle.

The changes, which were introduced last Friday, will also make the UK more attractive to companies who want to produce or donate supplies to fight coronavirus.

The move helps deliver on the Chancellor's promise to do whatever extra resources the NHS needs to cope with the outbreak

The list of goods exempt from import taxes includes ventilators, COVID-19 testing kits, face masks, protective garments and eye protectors, amongst hundreds of other vital products to tackle the outbreak of coronavirus. The types of goods covered by the UK's new duty-free rules was created by the Department of Health.



Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We are working around the clock to ensure that our heroic frontline NHS and social care staff have all they need to tackle coronavirus.

The removal of import taxes for these goods will help clear the way for even more equipment to reach the frontline.

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss said:

We are removing tariffs and barriers on essential medical supplies imported into the UK to ensure our front line workers have everything they need to treat people suffering from Covid-19.

As I agreed with my G20 trade minister counterparts this Monday, we will work together to keep trade flowing and ensure the supply of essential goods and services.

## Notes

- Under the current rules, importers require a duty deferment account with HMRC backed by a guarantee. Importers of these critical goods would need to increase the level of their guarantee to cover any additional duty due.
- This new approach, in place until 31 July 2020, will allow companies to import goods critical for our fight against coronavirus at a faster rate and reduce costs significantly.
- The relief can be claimed from HMRC immediately by state organisations, including state bodies, public bodies and other bodies governed by public law who are supplying the NHS. Other approved organisations wanting to supply the NHS can also apply to HMRC
- [HMRC has published new guidance about the import relief on GOV.UK](#). Only organisations supplying the NHS can utilise this relief.
- All imports will continue to arrive through the same channels and face the same checks as before, so there is minimal chance of fraud. Companies benefiting from the relief also need to first be approved by HMRC.
- The EU's disaster relief regulation can be used in relation to COVID-19. This allows certain items that are needed to deal with C-19 to be imported free of VAT and customs duties.