

# Lord Pickles appointed as Advisory Committee on Business Appointments Chair

Lord Pickles appointed as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments, from April 2020

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office Michael Gove has today confirmed that Lord (Eric) Pickles has been appointed as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA). He will take up the role on 1 April 2020.

The Chair is appointed for a five-year non-renewable term and leads the committee which independently advises the government, former ministers, senior civil servants and other Crown servants on the rules around taking employment after leaving their roles.

Lord Pickles was subject to pre-appointment scrutiny by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on 17 March 2020. The Committee concluded that Lord Pickles was a suitable candidate and wished him success in his role.

The appointment follows a fair and open recruitment exercise carried out in line with the principles of the Governance Code of Practice on Public Appointments, published by HM Government and regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

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## Update following announcement on exams and grades

We welcome the further information and clarity the Department for Education has outlined today to award students a calculated grade for their GCSEs, AS and A levels this summer, [and to provide an exam option for those that wish it as soon as is reasonably possible after schools reopen](#).

We are working tirelessly to support students affected by these unprecedented and difficult circumstances and to develop, quickly, a fair and consistent process. We know that schools and colleges urgently need to know what they will need to do, and when.

Work is already underway with exam boards and teachers' representatives to

develop our proposals and we will provide more detail in the coming days.

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## **COVID-19: suspension of 2020 Clinical Excellence Awards competition**

The Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards (ACCEA) is aware of the increasing impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on all NHS staff.

We know that Royal Colleges, employers, ACCEA committee members and applicants are concerned about the time needed to apply for an award and for employers to sign them off, which may be at the expense of clinical priorities.

We have therefore suspended applications for the 2020 national Clinical Excellence Awards competition. There is now no need to complete an application or for employers to sign off those already submitted.

We will implement contingency plans for new applications. We will also ensure that those whose awards expire in April 2021 are not disadvantaged by being unable to submit a renewal application.

Any applications already drafted will be saved. The online form will remain available until 5pm on Tuesday 24 March so that applicants can download their work.

We will provide further details next week after discussions with ministers and ACCEA committees.

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## **PHE plays crucial role in hunt for COVID-19 vaccine**

The team has been awarded \$500,000 by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to bolster the international response to coronavirus vaccine and treatment development.

The funding comes as the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) funds PHE to evaluate vaccines in their pipeline vaccine that are destined for clinical trials as early as April 2020.

The funding recognises PHE's rare combination of highly specialised

facilities and researchers at PHE Porton Down, that enable a rigorous understanding of vaccine and therapeutic safety and efficacy, before new interventions enter human trials. In recent years, this expertise has been successfully used in supporting the development of the Ebola vaccine, licensed in 2019.

PHE Porton Down researchers have collaborated with colleagues at Liverpool and Bristol universities to develop 'synthetic virus' – an exact replica of the actual virus for use in the laboratory. This will enable PHE, working with national and international academic and commercial partners, to carry out rigorous evaluation and testing of vaccines and treatments that enter the clinic.

The government has previously announced £20million of funding for vaccine development, awarded to CEPI, who will award significant further funding to support PHE's work.

PHE Porton Down will start evaluation next week of the Oxford University COVID-19 vaccine that will potentially enter clinical trials in the next month or so.

Prof Miles Carroll, Deputy Director, National Infection Service, Public Health England, said:

Public Health England is uniquely positioned to support and drive the country's hunt for a coronavirus vaccine – using tried and tested methods for the rapid development of interventions for emerging diseases.

We look forward to continuing to work with world-leading academic and pharmaceutical partners to accelerate progress towards safe and effective interventions to limit the impact of this new infection as rapidly as possible.

Lord Bethell, Minister of Innovation, said:

It makes me so proud to see PHE Porton Down demonstrate its world-beating expertise with this US FDA award.

It is a powerful testimony to the expertise and commitment of the remarkable PHE team at this historic site.

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# [COVID-19: CMA open letter to pharmaceutical and food and drink industries.](#)

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