

News story: Air ambulance charities invited to bid for share of £10m funding

The £10 million in capital funding will help air ambulance charities to invest in new equipment and upgrade facilities to support them in providing vital services to patients across England.

Air ambulance services are not NHS funded. They are provided by 18 charitable organisations across England, with most of their resources supported by their own fundraising activities.

The 18 air ambulance charities in England will be able to [bid for the additional funding](#) specifically to support capital projects. This could include:

- buying state-of-the-art medical equipment for critical care teams
- modernising helicopters and helipads
- increasing the number of missions flown or extending the hours services are available
- expanding operational facilities to allow them to hire more highly skilled staff

Each charity will be able to bid for up to £2 million of grant funding. Air ambulance charities will also be able to partner with NHS Trusts to make joint bids, for example to modernise helipads that are owned by the hospital trust.

Air ambulance crews are often called out to those with serious conditions, carrying rapid response medical specialists who can provide expert critical care at the scene of an incident. This can involve treatment usually given in a hospital setting, such as blood transfusions and open-chest surgery.

The crews support the wider NHS emergency response on the ground, ensuring patients get specialised care in both urban settings and hard-to-reach rural areas.

The call for bids, developed in collaboration with the Air Ambulance Association, asks air ambulance charities to present proposals to fund projects.

The Department of Health and Social Care will prioritise applications that deliver clear benefits to patients, while ensuring value for money for the taxpayer.

Applications close on 8 March 2019 and funding will be allocated in April this year.

Health Minister Stephen Hammond said:

Air ambulance charities are a vital life-line for people in critical conditions who rely on urgent treatment before they can reach a hospital.

Generous donations from the public help keep air ambulances in the air and this £10 million will help to ensure that they're equipped to provide lifesaving care to patients in need.

The NHS Long Term Plan will improve emergency care for all patients, including those treated by air ambulances charities. Today's funding recognises their unwavering contribution to our health service and, combined with essential public donations, will ensure these charities can have world-class facilities to match their reputation for world-class care.

Paula Martin, Chairman of the Association of Air Ambulances, said:

It's a very exciting time for the air ambulance community and the opportunity to bid for a grant to help enable significant capital projects is very welcome. Whilst public purse funding being made available for the first time is very exciting, the operating cost for every air ambulance charity and the lifesaving work that it does continues to be entirely dependent on public donations and traditional fundraising.

Air ambulance charities in England are poised to submit a diverse range of applications to help fund capital projects which will deliver good value for money and most importantly benefit the patients and communities they serve.

Yellow Label Service moratorium



A moratorium has been put in place on new technical and applied qualifications entering the 16 to 18 performance tables. This will remain

until the post-16 qualifications review at level 3 and below has concluded.

The review may lead to significant changes in the qualifications offered by awarding bodies to students. It may also be the case that some qualifications continue to be offered, but are no longer funded by the Department for Education, in which case it would not be appropriate for them to be covered by the YLS contract.

Given the uncertainty about future changes to the system, a moratorium has been imposed on including new technical and applied qualifications in the YLS until the moratorium ends.

This moratorium does not apply to GCSE, GCE and Functional Skills qualifications, which will still be considered as normal.

Key stage 4 Technical Awards

A list of key stage 4 Technical Award qualifications approved for inclusion in 2024 performance tables is found at [Key stage 4 qualifications, discount codes and point scores](#).

In 2023, the YLS will collect papers for Technical Award qualifications included in 2023 or 2024 performance tables.

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1. 20 September 2022

updated information for 2022/2023

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[Press release: Opioid Expert Working Group meets at MHRA](#)

The EWG will undertake a comprehensive independent scientific review of all available evidence on the use of opioid medicines in the UK, drawing on best practice internationally, to make sure the information for patients and health professionals helps curb the over-prescription and misuse of these medicines.

In light of growing concerns about overuse and misuse, the review will:

- consider the current data on the utilisation of opioid-containing

medicines in the UK, both prescribed and over the counter

- examine whether the risk minimisation measures implemented for over the counter and prescription opioids have been effective or whether further measures are required
- consider the benefit/risk of opioid-containing medicines in particular for non-cancer indications, taking into account alternatives
- make recommendations for regulatory action to better support appropriate use of prescription opioids, such as relevant changes to the Summary of Product Characteristics and Patient Information Leaflet, product labelling and packaging, and any other risk minimisation measures

The EWG is made up of experts in relevant scientific disciplines, including:

- pain management
- general practice
- nursing
- pharmacy
- psychiatry and substance abuse
- anaesthesia
- toxicology and pharmacology
- geriatric medicine
- paediatric medicine
- rheumatology
- epidemiology
- a lay member

The review is anticipated to work promptly in line with the regulatory process.

To support this, we will be engaging with relevant stakeholders from across the health sector, charities and addiction support groups, to advise on how we can improve communications on the use of opioids. We will work together with these stakeholders to raise awareness among both healthcare professionals and the public on the risks of addiction and how these can be managed.

Dr June Raine, Director of MHRA's Vigilance and Risk Management of Medicines Division, said:

Our highest priority is making sure the medicines you and your family take are safe and effective.

In response to the growing concern internationally and in the UK about overuse and increased prescribing of opioid analgesics, we are seeking expert advice on the benefits and risks of opioid medicines, including best practice for risk minimisation.

We will be listening to patients, stakeholders, and relevant experts, and working across the health sector to make sure the warnings on opioid medicines are consistent, clear, relevant and represent the known risks of tolerance and addiction.

Anyone who has questions about their pain-relieving medicine should speak to their healthcare provider who is best placed to provide advice.

Professor Jamie Coleman, Chair of the Opioid Expert Working Group, said:

In taking forward this important work we will focus on providing clear information to healthcare professionals, patients and carers – no one should be unaware of the potential risks of opioid medicines.

We have set out a clear programme of work to look at regulatory options. We have already planned some initial steps to work with stakeholders to produce consistent and clear label wording that opioid medicines may lead to addiction. We are also going to examine access to opioid medicines.

If you suspect you have experienced a side effect to a medicine, please report this to us through our [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

[Press release: Jeremy Hunt to chair Yemen Quad meeting on next steps in peace process](#)

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, with US Secretary of State Pompeo, will co-host a meeting of the Yemen Quad – Foreign Ministers of the UK, UAE, USA and Saudi Arabia – to discuss the Yemen crisis, in Warsaw later today.

Quad ministers will inject fresh international political momentum and support to the Yemen peace process, and discuss measures to alleviate humanitarian suffering.

Today's Quad meeting was called by the Foreign Secretary and is the latest in a succession of diplomatic initiatives to strengthen international support for peace in Yemen. We can be under no illusions, the crisis is deep; resolving humanitarian suffering, achieving sustainable peace and regional stability are urgent UK priorities. The resolutions proposed by the UK and adopted by the United Nations Security Council in January and December have galvanised international support around a UN-led path out of the crisis. Ministers will today reiterate their full commitment to a comprehensive political solution in Yemen.

On the ground, the careful work of the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths is

supporting the parties to implement commitments made at Stockholm's landmark peace talks: to build confidence in a political process and to unblock the most urgent obstacles to alleviating human suffering. Quad discussions will focus on how international partners can help parties to implement existing agreements and move towards a second round of peace talks. Seized by the scale of the humanitarian crisis, the Quad will discuss how to accelerate steps to: help stabilise Yemen's economy; support the government of Yemen's commitment to pay salaries of civil servants, teachers and health workers; and to keep food and fuel flowing into Yemen.

Ahead of the Quad the Foreign Secretary said:

We now have a shortening window of opportunity to turn the ceasefire into a durable path to peace – and stop the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Real progress has been made to reach a political solution but there are also real issues of trust between the two sides which mean the agreement in Stockholm has not been fully implemented.

So more must be done. Today, I will chair a meeting in Warsaw of my US, UAE and Saudi Arabian counterparts to give UN envoy Martin Griffiths our full backing and undertake to redouble efforts to reach a lasting political resolution.

Yemen's devastating famine is a man-made economic crisis not a natural disaster. Today we can make clear strides to support the government of Yemen, including on practical steps to improve Yemenis' lives, such as resuming the payment of government salaries to civil servants. This significant step could improve access to food for millions.

Further information

[Press release: Additional blood pressure and heart medication recalled from pharmacies](#)

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) today recalled 3 batches of Irbesartan. The affected batches can be viewed [here](#).

The recall is taking place as part of the continued investigation into potential N nitrosodiethylamine (NDEA) contamination of sartan containing medicines, a class of medicine to treat blood pressure and heart attacks and

heart failures.

Currently there is no evidence that the NDEA impurity can cause harm and patients are being advised to continue taking their medication.

MHRA twice recalled Irbesartan containing products in [early](#) and [late](#) January 2019 after testing revealed possible NDEA contamination.

The investigation into possible contamination began in 2018, after another impurity, N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), was identified as part of the manufacturing process in a valsartan active substance manufactured at one facility based in China. NDEA was discovered after further testing.

Last year MHRA recalled batches of valsartan to pharmacy level in [July](#) and [November](#) after due to possible NDMA contamination.

The MHRA continues to monitor the situation in the UK and are comprehensively investigating the issue alongside the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines (EDQM).

Dr Sam Atkinson MHRA's Director of the Inspection, Enforcement and Standards Division said:

Patient safety is our top priority and we will take any necessary steps to protect public health.

Today's Irbesartan recall shows we are continuing to investigate potential contamination of sartan containing medicines.

There is no evidence at present that medicines containing NDMA or NDEA have caused any harm to patients the recall is occurring as a precaution.

Because of the risk associated with suddenly stopping high blood pressure medication, continue to take your medicines as prescribed by your doctor."

Please speak to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any concerns about your medicine.

Notes to editor

1. MHRA is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgments to ensure that the benefits justify any risks. MHRA is a centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency which also includes the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) and the Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD). The Agency is an executive agency of the Department of Health.
2. [In July, MHRA advised pharmacies](#) to recall affected batches of Valsartan containing medicines made by Mylan and Teva as a precautionary measure.

3. [In November, we advised pharmacies](#) to recall batches of valsartan from Dexcel and Actavis as a precautionary measure.
4. Earlier this January, MHRA advised pharmacies to recall all affected batches of Irbesartan containing medicines made by Actavis as a precautionary measure. More information [\[here\]](#). (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/irbesartan-blood-pressure-and-heart-medication-recalled-from-pharmacies-by-mhra>).
5. In late January, MHRA advised pharmacies to recall all affected batches of Irbesartan containing medicines made by Macleods Pharma UK as a precautionary measure. More information [here](#)
6. Find out more about our [Yellow Card Scheme](#).
7. Read the [Drug Alert in full](#) for further information.