

News story: £17 million boost to the UK's leading life sciences sector

£17 million of new funding has been announced by the Chancellor today, helping to unlock real benefits for the NHS and patients. This money, as part of our ambitious [industrial strategy](#), will help new drug discovery and support mental health treatment, translating the UK's scientific expertise into real life treatments.

The life sciences industry provides medical treatments which the NHS and its 60 million patients rely on every year. The industry is also critical to the UK economy – with over 5,000 companies employing nearly 235,000 workers and generating £63.5 billion turnover.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

We have a successful and resilient economy which is supporting a record number of people into employment. My focus now, and going into the Budget, is on boosting productivity so that we can deliver higher-wage jobs and a better standard of living for people across the country.

That is why I am visiting the Francis Crick Institute, where they are using cutting-edge research to generate real-life health improvements. The UK has world-leading expertise in life sciences – an industry that employs hundreds of thousands of people – and it is through supporting growth in these cutting edge industries that we will build a competitive economy that works for everyone.

Science minister, Jo Johnson said:

The UK is home to world-leading expertise in life sciences with over 5,000 companies and turnover of £64 billion and the government is committed to continuing to help this sector go from strength to strength.

Through the recently published Life Sciences Industrial Strategy and our progress towards a Life Sciences Sector Deal, we are determined to cement the UK's position as a global leader and capitalise on its strengths to encourage both economic growth and improve health outcomes for patients.

The Chancellor is visiting the Francis Crick Institute, the largest biomedical research laboratory in Europe, which was created with £350 million of government investment. The 'Crick' houses 1,250 scientists and 250 other staff conducting cutting-edge biomedical research to enable the discovery of

drugs and treatments of the future.

The Chancellor announces funding for three new areas:

1. Cryo-electron microscope – £5 million for a state of the art microscope to build 3D models of biological components. This can help drug discovery become faster and cheaper
2. Innovation hub – £7 million to set up a new lab with state of the art equipment and research scientists. This lab will establish the UK Centre for Engineering Biology, Metrology and Standards
3. Business catalyst – £5 million to expand the 'Confidence in Concept' business catalyst scheme and boost treatment for mental health. This scheme has already produced 26 business spin-outs, 70 patents and £277 million of follow on funding from the private sector

25 new jobs were also announced today by GammaDelta Therapeutics, a British company founded by scientists from the Crick, King's College London and Cancer Research UK. The company recorded £100 million worth of investment earlier this year to develop the drugs of the future.

The UK is a world-leader in the life sciences. The UK represents just 0.9% of the global population but produces 15.2% of the world's most highly-cited articles. Research productivity in this sector is twice as great as the United States and almost three times greater than in Germany. We have an internationally-recognised life sciences cluster in the South East of England, comprising Oxford, Cambridge and London and the area between them. It houses four of the world's top twenty universities (three in the top ten), four of the top ten medical sciences faculties in the world and some of the world's largest research institutes – the Sanger Institute, the Francis Crick Institute and Harwell. The government is supporting the sector by [increasing investment in R&D by an extra £2 billion a year](#) by the end of this Parliament.

The [Life Sciences Industrial Strategy](#) was published in August. It is an industry led project bringing together businesses, from across the medical technology, biopharmaceutical, and digital sectors, as well as charities, academia and the NHS.

[Press release: Are you aware of what](#)

you're burning this Guy Fawkes night?

Burning certain types of waste and setting fire to treated wood, tyres, plastics, rubber and oil can seriously harm health and pollute the environment.

Every year on November 5, bits of old furniture are used to build up bonfires and stuff the Guy with scraps of used foam or old clothing.

Organisers are being asked to be vigilant about the materials deposited on their bonfire, while preventing others from dumping illegal waste on them by keeping the location secure. People will also use Bonfire night as an excuse to burn old furniture, mattresses or even household rubbish.

Organisers and households should only burn clean, non-commercial waste, so if you're organising a bonfire night make sure you know where the bonfire material has come from and that it is suitable.

People face a fine of up to £50,000 for illegally managing waste. More information and guidance on materials which are safe to burn on a bonfire and further information for organisers of bonfire and firework events can be found on the GOV.UK website.

If the Environment Agency suspects illegal waste is to be burnt at an event, or there is a harm to the environment, they are able to issue a stop notice which will prevent an event from taking place.

Marc Lidderth, Environment Manager in the West Midlands, said:

We want people to enjoy themselves but the uncontrolled and excessive burning of the wrong waste can cause pollution and damage people's health.

We encourage people to make sure they dispose of their waste legally and safely, and be aware that their community bonfire could be targeted by unscrupulous waste businesses who want to find somewhere to dispose of waste, resulting in the illegal burning of commercial waste.

Organisers should ensure that they know where the bonfire material has come from and it is suitable. If anyone sees any suspicious activities they should contact us on 0800 807060 or report it anonymously to Crimestoppers.

[News story: Top LA directors show dangers of using mobiles while driving](#)

The directors behind the video for Pharrell Williams' hit song Happy have teamed up with THINK! for its latest road safety campaign, aimed at cutting the numbers of people killed or injured by drivers using mobile phones.

'We Are From LA' directed the new video, which will run online, in cinemas and on social media from today (25 October 2017). It uses innovative filming, is shot in the style of a music video with an edgy soundtrack from celebrated musician Aphex Twin and numerous pink kittens to highlight how much drivers miss if they are distracted by looking at their handheld phone.

[Pink kittens](#)

If a driver travelling at 30mph glances at their phone for just 2.3 seconds, they miss 100 feet of road – the length of a Boeing 737.

Jesse Norman, Road Safety Minister, said:

We have some of the safest roads in the world, but we are always looking at ways to make them even safer.

But the awful truth is that tens of thousands of drivers are still flouting the law and endangering others by using a handheld mobile phone at the wheel.

This eye-catching advert demonstrates how dangerous looking at your phone for just 2 seconds can be, and the devastating impact it can have on other road users.

On 1 March 2017 penalties for using a handheld mobile while driving were doubled to a £200 fine and 6 penalty points. Meaning drivers caught twice face a lengthy ban – which could also then lead to a £1,000 fine. While new drivers – those who have passed within the last 2 years – face having their licence revoked if caught just once. More than 15,000 fines have been issued to drivers using a handheld phone since the new penalties were introduced.

Following the March THINK! campaign, awareness of the penalties increased by 89%, and 47% of those that had seen the adverts said they were less likely to use their phone when driving as a result.

The approach is a break from the normal hard-hitting THINK! campaigns as it is proven to be more effective at influencing the target audience – those aged 17 to 34. This age group is 3 times more likely than over 35s to use a handheld mobile while driving. The current 4-week campaign also includes 2 radio adverts.

THINK! is urging Android smartphone users to download the Car Mode app or if using an iPhone, its drive safe mode, which automatically detects when you're driving, and silences incoming calls and messages.

RAC road safety spokesman Pete Williams said:

The RAC's latest research reveals that the problem is still at epidemic proportions with a hard core of drivers persisting in texting, talking, tweeting and even taking photos at the wheel.

We therefore welcome THINK!'s thought-provoking video, which highlights the dangers of a 2-second glance at your phone while driving. Motorists risk a collision with potentially fatal consequences which could change their life, and the lives of others, forever.

We hope that this will help persuade more drivers to put away their handheld mobile phone for good when driving and be phone smart.

Chief Constable Anthony Bangham, National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Roads Policing, said:

Driving while distracted by a mobile phone is completely unacceptable and puts everyone on the roads at risk of serious harm. Police are making use of the tougher penalties to clamp down on this dangerous behaviour – but we have to be clear that when you get behind the wheel it is your responsibility to stay focused and alert.

As this campaign makes clear, it only takes a few seconds of distraction to change lives forever.

Directing duo 'We Are From LA' are also the brains behind the Evian's Babies as well as the current Samsung's Galaxy S8 and Converse adverts.

Speech: "Russia's action will not stop us from working with our partners to find justice for the victims of chemical weapons."

Thank you Mr President. A little over four years ago in this very chamber, a

member of the Security Council proudly declared, and I quote, "The use of chemical weapons by anyone will have to be carefully investigated by the Security Council, which will stand ready to take action under Chapter 7 of the Charter."

"By anyone." Wise words indeed. Does anyone know who, four years ago, uttered those lines? Any guesses?

It was the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Today those words have lost all meaning. They ring hollow in this Chamber today, drowned out by Russia's veto – its ninth on Syria in six years.

Today we should have been extending the investigation that Minister Lavrov called for; allowing the Joint Investigative Mechanism another year to conduct its vital work. Instead, because of Russia alone, that investigation is destined to come to a premature and unnecessary conclusion next month. Unless Russia changes its mind, as I hope it does, the JIM report on Khan Sheikhoun will be its last, despite the continuing evidence from the OPCW of other cases of chemical weapons use in Syria.

I've often expressed my disappointment at Russia's actions on Syria in this Chamber. I've often expressed my frustration at their refusal to allow the Security Council to respond to the most heinous crimes committed in Syria.

But today, all I will ask is: Why?

Why has Russia alone stopped an investigation whose work is not yet complete?

Why has Russia brought an end to a mechanism that they initiated, and we all created and mandated, when there are still questions to answer about Sarin in Al Latiminah?

Russia called for the formation of the JIM, they negotiated its terms, they agreed its mission. And yet when faced with the prospect of the JIM revealing the truth, why has Russia alone chosen to shoot the messenger?

It seems that, not content with spuriously questioning the JIM's methods and conclusions, Russia has now sought to silence them. Instead of respecting the professional and impartial work of the JIM, whose tireless efforts I pay tribute to today, Russia alone has chosen to abuse its veto to support a regime that has no regard for international treaties, no regard for the most basic rules of war, no regard for its own people.

Mr President we have worked hard – together – to build the international norms and conventions that have long prevented the use of chemical weapons. For decades it seemed as though the international community had reduced these weapons to a historical footnote from the First World War; no longer used, no longer a part of a modern, humane society.

But now what kind of message does this veto send to those who might consider using such weapons? What kind of message does it send to groups like Daesh, the very groups that Russia says it is committed to defeating? We've heard a lot about breaking the unity of the Security Council. Well it's not the

eleven members of the Security Council who voted in favour of this resolution who are breaking the unity. It's not the eleven members of the Security Council who did not support the Russian procedural shenanigans this morning who are breaking the Security Council's unity. It is Russia, that is protecting the Syrian regime, that has broken the Security Council's unity.

The United Kingdom cannot, and will not, let Russia's actions today erode the norms that we have worked so hard to create. Russia's action will not stop us from working with our partners to find justice for the victims of chemical weapons. And we will not let up in our efforts to prevent the use of these weapons by anyone, anywhere.

The work of the JIM will not go to waste; we have their findings, we have their reports. And whatever Russia's actions today, the use of chemical weapons by anyone in Syria – to quote Minister Lavrov again – will be investigated and those who used them will be held into account. We owe it to the victims to ensure justice.

Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on UN Joint Investigative Mechanism vote

Speaking following the Security Council vote, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

We are deeply disappointed that the mandate for the UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), which is impartial and independent, has not been renewed.

Last year the JIM found that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons against its people on no fewer than three occasions. The JIM will be reporting in the coming days on responsibility for a further two chemical weapons attacks, including in Khan Sheikhou in April.

Russia's veto at the UN Security Council means that in a month the JIM will cease to exist. It will no longer be able to do its work to investigate who is responsible for use of chemical weapons in Syria. The veto suggests that the Syrian regime has something to hide and risks letting both Asad forces and Daesh off the hook for these heinous crimes. In 2013, Russia said it had secured Syria's agreement to destroy all its chemical weapons. Since then, the JIM has found the Syrian regime used chemical weapons three times. Russia's response is not to redouble its efforts to ensure disarmament, but to shut down the investigation.

While we are deeply disappointed, the United Kingdom will not let Russia's

actions stop us from working with international partners to seek justice for victims and to prevent the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere.