

UK Government awards £10 million for vaccines research to combat potential epidemics in developing countries

Research into vaccines to tackle some of the world's deadliest diseases in low and middle income countries has been backed by £10 million of UK aid funding, the government has announced today (Wednesday 16 February).

The funding provided by the government's UK Vaccine Network (UKVN) and to be delivered by Innovate UK has been awarded to 22 research projects, supporting development of vaccines for diseases that have the potential to become epidemics. This includes Ebola, Lassa Fever, Zika, Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) and Chikungunya virus.

Some of the projects are also looking at ways to tackle 'Disease X' – a hypothetical future pathogen – to ensure the world is equipped for future epidemics or pandemics.

The UKVN has already funded 78 projects with over £115 million worth of UK aid funding, as part of the government's commitment to defeat poverty, tackle instability and create prosperity in developing countries.

For example, earlier work on a Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) vaccine by the University of Oxford, funded in part by the UKVN, allowed them to develop the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine more quickly, which has since protected tens of millions of people across the world.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

COVID-19 has shown us first-hand just how important it is that we work together to keep everyone across the world safe.

I am delighted that these innovative projects – tackling serious and deadly diseases – will receive the funding they need to take their research to the next stage.

Thank you to the expert scientists behind these vital projects for their efforts that will continue to save millions of lives.

Indro Mukerjee, Chief Executive of Innovate UK, said:

Innovate UK is proud to deliver this vital work on behalf of the UK Vaccine Network. This will build on the crucial delivery of vaccines and vaccine platform technologies.

These projects will help to prevent future outbreaks of viral

diseases in the developing world and may offer utility against future pandemics, as previously realised with the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine for COVID-19.

Some of projects that have been awarded the funding include:

- £462,462 to the University of Nottingham for a vaccine to prevent infection by viruses such as Dengue or Zika;
- £498,357 to DIOSynVax for their vaccine candidate able to combat Lassa Fever, Ebola and Marburg viruses;
- £449,946 to the UK Health Security Agency for a vaccine for Chikungunya virus.

The projects will be able to use the new funding from 1 April 2022. Grants took into consideration:

- the ease and speed of manufacturing the vaccine;
- the ease of use in low to middle income countries – for example, ensuring they're needle-free or looking at other forms of administration;
- temperature stability;
- single dose or a low number of boosters needed;
- length of protection;
- vaccine platforms that can be rapidly adapted for new or re-emerging diseases;
- vaccines that protect against several strains of a single pathogen, or against several pathogens.

The UK is committed to supporting the rest of the world in protecting people from COVID-19 and future diseases. It has invested more than £88 million to support the development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine and, to date, has donated 32.2 million COVID-19 vaccine doses. 26.7 million of these doses have gone to COVAX, a global scheme to get vaccines to developing countries.

This builds on the £1.3 billion in UK aid committed to the international health response early in the pandemic, supporting vaccines, health systems and economic recovery in developing countries.

[New guidelines to support disabled children to be more active](#)

- New guidelines to support disabled children and young people to be more active
- Guidelines advise 20 minutes of exercise per day and strength and balance activity 3 times a week

- Supports wider work to tackle health disparities across the UK helping everyone lead healthier, happier lives

Disabled children and young people will be supported to be more physically active following the publication of new guidelines from the UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs).

The guidance, which recommends daily levels of physical activity, will support disabled children and young people to improve their physical and mental health throughout their lives.

The guidelines are underpinned by research from Durham University, University of Bristol and Disabilities Rights UK, and the infographic they are presented in is the first of its kind to be co-produced with disabled children, young people and their families.

The new guidelines recommend disabled children and young people:

- Undertake 120 to 180 minutes of aerobic physical activity per week at a moderate-to-vigorous intensity. This can be achieved in different ways (for example 20 minutes per day or 40 minutes 3 times per week) through activities such as walking or cycling.
- Complete challenging, but manageable, strength and balance activities 3 times per week which are particularly beneficial for muscle strength and motor skills. For example, indoor wall climbing, yoga, and modified sports such as basketball or football.
- When first starting to exercise, build up slowly to avoid injury
- Break down their exercise into bite-size chunks of physical activity throughout the day to make it more manageable

The UK Chief Medical Officers, Professor Sir Chris Whitty, Professor Sir Michael McBride, Professor Sir Gregor Smith and Sir Frank Atherton, said:

We are delighted to present this report and infographic which are an important step forward in addressing the gap in physical activity guidelines for disabled children and disabled young people.

We encourage schools, parents, carers and healthcare professionals to communicate and promote these guidelines across their wider professional networks to enable appropriate physical activity opportunities for disabled children and disabled young people in their communities.

Regular physical activity has physical and mental health benefits for people of all ages. However, children and young people with disabilities are less likely to be active than non-disabled children, which can lead to health disparities, and these may widen as they become older.

The evidence found physical activity can be equally beneficial for disabled children and young people as non-disabled children, tackling misinformation about the risk. Ensuring children and young people, regardless of their disability status, are as physically active as possible is crucial to their health and wellbeing – both now and in the long-term.

Specific benefits that disabled children and young people can gain from physical activity include improved confidence and concentration, meeting new people and stronger muscles and improved motor strength.

Professor Brett Smith, Director of Research, Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences at Durham University, said:

The UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines for disabled children and disabled young people are a UK first.

The scientific evidence is clear that physical activity is safe and has multiple health benefits for disabled children and disabled young people.

The infographic, that has been co-produced with over 250 disabled children and disabled young people, their parents and carers, aims to communicate these guidelines in an accessible and meaningful way.

Together, the guidelines and infographic are a vital stepping stone to improving the health and wellbeing of disabled children and disabled young people.

Dr Charlie Foster, Professor of Physical Activity and Public Health at the University of Bristol, said:

This process has shown me that public health messages will have more impact if they are co-created in genuine partnership with their target audience and users.

This is a vital lesson for all those tasked with tackling current public health challenges as our existing resources are not as relevant and may not speak to or for certain groups.

I'm most delighted that this infographic and the evidence review are accessible for all users and again this is another lesson

learnt for our public health communities. My thanks to all those children, young people, carers and parents for making sure that this infographic speaks with and for them.

I look forward to taking this process into future development of public health resources and messages and see the impact of this work making physical activity more inclusive.

This guidance will support wider work by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) to get more children and young people physically active and tackle health inequalities.

Work already underway includes OHID working with stakeholders to update the National Physical Activity Framework and enable national and local action to support everyone to be more active.

Kamran Mallick, CEO of Disability Rights UK, said:

At Disability Rights UK we are really pleased to have worked with Durham University on the development of the UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines for disabled children and young people.

This is an essential resource to demonstrate the health benefits disabled children and young people can achieve through regular physical activity.

Disabled people have a right to get active in ways that work for them, and these guidelines show how important this is. The evidence-based infographic is not only a highlight of the project but a positive example of co-production in practice.

Disabled children and young people, their parents and carers, health and social care professionals, and key disability and sports organisations have all been involved in co-producing the infographic. The final version results from their involvement and input into this project.

Since 2013 the Department for Education has funded a series of grant programmes to increase and improve access to physical education, school sport and physical activity for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

This includes Inclusion 2024 which is helping pupils with SEND engage more in school sport, backed by £300,000 of government funding.

Foreign Secretary statement on Russia's failure to turn up to OSCE military build-up meeting

Press release

Liz Truss statement on Russia's failure to send a representative to an OSCE meeting about its military build-up on the border with Ukraine.



Responding to Russia's failure to send a representative to an OSCE meeting about its military build-up, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Russia is patently failing to live up to the international commitments it has made around transparency.

If the Kremlin is serious about a diplomatic resolution, then it needs to show up to diplomatic meetings and commit to meaningful talks. Russia's refusal to engage with the OSCE process demonstrates its contempt for the commitments it freely signed up to.

It is Russia that is the aggressor here. The troops stationed on the border are clear threat to Ukraine. The UK and our allies urge the Kremlin to withdraw its troops and enter discussions based on the proposals put forward by NATO to improve transparency and reduce risk.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Ukraine triggered Chapter 3 of the OSCE Vienna Document on 11 February, calling on Russia to explain its unacceptable military activity along the Ukrainian border and in illegally-annexed Crimea. Russia had 48 hours to respond but did so eight hours late and without engaging on the substance.
- Ukraine triggered the next step, a technical meeting with Russia and all OSCE States today (Tuesday 15 February) to ask Russia to address its concerns. No Russian representative attended.

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Rapid completion of credible elections crucial for Somalia

Thank you Madam President, and can I start by thanking SRSW Swan, Special Representative Madeira and Ambassador Skoog for their briefings.

Madam President, I want to focus my remarks today on four topics: elections, security transition, piracy and the humanitarian situation in Somalia.

On elections, firstly, the UK welcomes the recent increase in the pace of elections to the Lower House. Completing the electoral process will avoid prolonged political uncertainty, avoid increased risks to Somalia's security and stability, weaken Al-Shabaab, and help pave the way for Somalia to access much-needed international funding.

So we therefore urge all Somali political leaders to put the national interest first, prioritise the conclusion of a peaceful, credible electoral process, and ensure that security forces are not used as political instruments. We hope to see the conclusion of the Lower House elections by 25 February, and the achievement, as a minimum, of the target of 30 percent of parliamentary seats won by women.

Secondly Madam President, on the security transition, I want to underline the importance of reaching swift agreement on a reconfigured African Union mission in Somalia which is realistic, effective and affordable, and which can support implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan.

We welcome the positive progress made in recent weeks by the UN, the African Union, the Somali government and other stakeholders towards this end. It is critical that this process continue at pace.

We also encourage the Federal Government of Somalia to provide clarity on how it will generate the forces and capacity required to implement the Somalia

Transition Plan. This is the best way to protect AMISOM's successes – won by AMISOM Somali forces at such great cost – and to address the evolving threat of Al-Shabaab.

Thirdly Madam President, on the subject of piracy, the UK commends the successful efforts of the Somali, and international efforts, to counter piracy off the Somali coast.

We have no objection, in principle, to the Federal Government of Somalia's desire to move to a bilateral maritime cooperation framework. However, we support an extension of resolution 2608 until such a framework is in place to avoid any operational gaps, which includes ensuring that the EU's Operation Atalanta can continue to function.

Finally Madam President, on the humanitarian situation, I want to say a few words about the backdrop of severe humanitarian need – against which these other challenges are unfolding.

The UK has recently announced an \$18.3 million in additional support to address the effects of the current drought, on top of the \$47.5 million of humanitarian assistance already committed. But more funds are needed. It is vital that we, the international community, learn the lessons from 2017. We need to act fast to improve access to affected populations, as well as helping to build longer-term resilience to climate shocks.

In conclusion, Madam President, there is no overnight solution to these complex peace, security and humanitarian challenges. However, the rapid completion of credible elections, as agreed by the National Consultative Committee last month, will be a critical step towards keeping vital economic, security and constitutional reforms on track.

I thank you.

[Health and Social Care Secretary sees how North East and Yorkshire is improving lives across the country on visit to region](#)

- Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid visits state of the art facilities at Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies in Teesside
- Also visited Doncaster Royal Infirmary to see upgraded facilities

The Health and Social Care Secretary today visited two key sites in the North East and Yorkshire that are helping to improve the lives of patients and

protect the country and the world's health.

On Tuesday February 15, Sajid Javid toured Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies, a biopharmaceutical manufacturing site, following the announcement of £400 million that will see them expand their facilities and which is expected to create up to 350 jobs.

This is part of the company's vision for the Teesside site to be the beating heart of the rapidly expanding North East life sciences ecosystem.

Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies expects to be up and running by late 2023, and will further build on the North-East's reputation as a leader in life science developments – spearheading advancements in medicines, treatments and vaccines to bolster preparations against future domestic and global health threats.

It will be vital in powering the country's response to some of today's most urgent global health challenges and deliver life-changing medicines and vaccines to patients in need.

Later in the day, the Health and Social Care Secretary visited Doncaster Royal Infirmary, part of the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals Trust.

While there, he toured the extension to the women's and children's building which opened in November 2021 and includes two inpatient areas and a theatre unit. He also heard first-hand what the Trust is doing to improve the lives of patients including their consultation on a £17.6 million Urgent and Emergency Care Village at Bassetlaw Hospital in Worksop which would see the return of 24/7 inpatient paediatric care to the site.

They also discussed plans to increase diagnostic capacity to help reduce the COVID-19 backlogs and meet rising demand. In early 2020, a £4.9 million new CT suite opened at Doncaster Royal Infirmary. At the time of its construction, local demand for CT tests had increased by 70% over the previous five years and the new facility will see them deliver an extra 36,000 scans a year across Doncaster and North Nottinghamshire.

The Trust was also chosen to host one of two community diagnostic centres in South Yorkshire, after the region received £3 million of funding. Based in their Montagu hospital, the centre is one of 100 the government and NHS are rolling out across the country to help millions of patients get earlier access to tests, diagnoses and treatment. Phase one of the project is now complete with the installation of a CT scanner and MRI scanner, and it is estimated that by the end of March almost 4,000 patients will have been seen.

Last week the NHS and government published a blueprint to tackle the COVID-19 backlogs with a massive expansion in capacity for tests, checks and treatments, as part of the new elective recovery plan. Alongside this the government published an Integration White Paper setting out a vision for an integrated NHS and adult social care sector which will better serve patients and staff.

This is part of plans to recover and reform health and care services and ensure everyone can get the treatment and care they need, when and where they need it.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

Visiting Teesside and Doncaster, I've seen and heard prime examples of what makes this country one of the best in the world at not only improving the lives of patients, but also developing my innovative medicines and treatments to protect us and our international partners.

The expansion of the Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies site will not only benefit the local economy through the creation of hundreds of jobs – the development of medicines and vaccines means we will be continue to be prepared for potential future health threats.

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals are taking excellent strides to improve the lives of patients in the area – especially through expanding capacity for cancer diagnosis which is a vital part of our national war on cancer, that will be underpinned by a new 10-year-plan.

Seeing the excellent innovations in the North East and Yorkshire, it is no wonder the UK is the envy of the world in treatments and health innovations.

Martin Meeson, Chief Executive, FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies said:

The Secretary of State's visit demonstrates the crucial role of Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies across health, science and innovation in the UK.

It was great to introduce him to our talented team and showcase how we're spearheading many different advances in medicines and vaccines – not only for Novavax – but also the hundreds of other projects we're working on across our global manufacturing network.

We also talked about the future and how Fujifilm is investing £400 million to develop the Billingham site – this is a really significant investment in British biotechnology, one of the biggest ever, and will create around 350 new jobs.

Richard Parker Chief Executive of Doncaster and Bassetlaw teaching Trusts said:

The past two years have been incredibly challenging, and we have welcomed the opportunity to show the Secretary of State for Health

and Social Care around our hospital.

We've been proud to highlight the tireless work of our colleagues, as well as underlining the benefits investment has brought to our site throughout this time, how it will help us in our recovery and how we can further improve in the future.

Like the rest of the NHS, we have a significant amount of work ahead of us to catch-up with the backlog of activity which has accumulated since 2020, whilst also ensuring we have the appropriate capacity available to care for those who are in need of urgent care – however I believe our team at DBTH are more than up to the challenge.