

# HRH The Princess Royal opens new UKHSA lab at Colindale

The National Collection of Type Cultures (NCTC) is one of the largest and oldest collections in the world of bacterial samples, housing over 6,000 strains made up of over 900 bacterial species. They are used by scientists and researchers around the world to develop new medicines and understand more about new infectious diseases.

The collection includes samples from Alexander Fleming and from the site of the battle of the Somme. The Princess Royal officially opened the new facility named in honour of the NCTC's first Deputy Curator, Mabel Rhodes.

The NCTC Mabel Rhodes Centenary Laboratory is a molecular biology laboratory. It will be utilised mainly to extract and analyse DNA from NCTC strains and will be extremely beneficial to the collection.

The NCTC is one of 4 culture collections operated by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), along with National Collection of Pathogenic Viruses (with 500 viruses, including Zika virus), the National Collection of Pathogenic Fungi (including 4,000 fungi of clinical significance) and the European Collection of Cell Cultures (containing animal and human cell lines).

Together, these collections form one of the world's largest biological resources, and they are uniquely placed to draw on a wealth of expertise throughout the organisation to ensure that the collections can continue to further scientific advancement.

Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency, said:

It was a privilege to welcome The Princess Royal to UKHSA today and officially open the Mabel Rhodes lab which will be used to learn even more about the DNA from the NCTC strains we have.

The bacterial samples we hold are responsible for many monumental scientific discoveries over the past century such as the addition of the Oxford Staphylococcus strain which helped develop penicillin, the first modern antibiotic.

The work we undertook has resulted in penicillin still being used to this day. It is still widely used as an antibiotic sensitive control, which helps to ensure that penicillin can fight the bacteria it is being taken for.

Dr Sarah Alexander, NCTC Curator said:

It was an honour to commemorate the centenary of the NCTC by

hosting a visit from The Princess Royal. NCTC is one of the oldest bacterial strain collections in the world and having the opportunity to showcase its historical legacy alongside the opening of our new state of the art laboratory was magnificent.

Mabel Rhodes was the NCTC's first deputy curator. The collection grew during Mabel's tenure, where she focused on bacteria of medical importance and oversaw the first freeze drying experiments on strains, a technique still used today. Rhodes' scientific paper in 1950 gave an early insight into the survival of freeze-dried bacterial strains. These studies, along with countless other contributions, ensures the NCTC's relevance, survival, and value to the scientific community to this day.

The most notable 21st century development came from a collaboration between NCTC and the Wellcome Sanger Institute, working to decode and understand the DNA of more than 3,000 bacteria strains between 2013 and 2018. The long-read, whole genome sequencing work enabled scientists to better understand deadly diseases and learn how they become resistant to antibiotics.

The publicly available genomic maps can lead to the development of new diagnostic tests, vaccines or treatments and will help researchers for years to come.

The future looks bright as we move into NCTC's second century of providing vital information for scientific studies and developments that will help us all stay healthier and safer.

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## **International travel update, 9 November 2021**

This statement provides an update on developments on international travel.

From 4am on Monday 22 November, the government will recognise vaccines on the [World Health Organization's Emergency Use Listing](#) (WHO EUL) at our border.

In practice, this means that Sinovac, Sinopharm Beijing and Covaxin will be added to our [list of approved vaccines](#) for inbound travel, benefitting more fully vaccinated people from countries around the world.

The WHO EUL process includes a review of quality, safety and efficacy data performed by WHO experts, and many countries including the United States, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Iceland are already recognising the WHO EUL vaccines. These vaccines are in addition to the existing vaccines we recognise at the border, namely Oxford/AstraZeneca, Moderna, Pfizer BioNTech and Janssen (Johnson and Johnson).

As such, from 4am on 22 November, travellers who have [proof of vaccination](#) with a full course of these approved vaccines will be treated the same as those fully vaccinated in the UK, and so will not have to self-isolate on arrival or take a pre-departure test, and only need to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test post-arrival (with confirmatory PCR if positive). This will benefit passengers with proof of vaccination from the over 135 [countries and territories in scope of the policy](#).

Further, all [under-18s coming to England from non-red list countries](#) will be treated as fully vaccinated at the border and will be exempt from self-isolation requirements on arrival, day 8 testing and pre-departure testing.

Whilst public health is a devolved matter, the government works closely with the devolved administrations on any changes to international travel and aims to ensure a whole UK approach.

The government continues to keep our measures under review and will not hesitate to act if we perceive a risk to public health.

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## [3,000 new apprenticeships created in Swansea Bay City Region](#)

Following the UK Government and Welsh Government approval of the Swansea Bay City Deal's Skills and Talent programme, Minister Davies met students at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Gower College Swansea to hear how it will benefit young people across Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, County of Swansea, and Neath Port Talbot.

The programme will provide opportunities for thousands of people and businesses across the Swansea Bay Region to access skills and training, focusing on industries with high demand for workers. Working in partnership with training providers such as local authorities, schools, colleges, universities and businesses, the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership will lead the delivery of the programme to identify skills, find training solutions and develop education and training projects to meet these demands.

Carmarthenshire County Council is the lead Local Authority responsible for the programme that will benefit the whole of the Swansea Bay City Region. The programme will create at least 3,000 new apprenticeships and deliver an additional 2,200 development opportunities as well as creating centres of excellence within sectors including digital, energy, construction, and well-being.

During the visit to Gower College Swansea, Minister Davies met apprentices who are working with EV Wales learning to install electric car charge points. He also spent time learning about the work of Elite Aerial Services and

talking to their apprentices about working with robots in fibre infrastructure and communications.

At the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Minister Davies also met students from Ysgol Bro Myrddin and Ysgol Maes Y Gwendraeth Comprehensive Schools who are already benefiting from a pilot project, which will be rolled out more widely in the future. The students, who are currently undertaking BTEC Level 2 and 3 in Engineering, were able to demonstrate their skills using the facilities at the university. The pilot scheme was set up to encourage the exchange of expertise and resources across training providers in the region.

UK Government Minister for Wales David TC Davies said:

I am thrilled to meet the young people set to benefit from the £30 million Skills and Talent programme and hear their exciting plans for the future.

The UK Government is committed to providing excellent development opportunities for people in Wales and helping firms to retain local talent. I look forward to seeing people across south west Wales take these opportunities to develop their skills and move into well-paid jobs in growing sectors such as engineering, renewable energy and digital innovation.

Barry Liles OBE, Senior Responsible Owner for the Skills and Talent programme and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Skills & Lifelong Learning) at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David said:

The success of securing the funding for the skills & talent initiative will be transformational for the region and will leave a significant legacy of high-level skills occupations and clearly defined career pathways for young people. The RLSP is a mature and proven collaboration of providers who will support the needs of the city deal projects whilst also signposting individuals into sustainable employment.

Dr Llinos Jones, Head Teacher at Ysgol Bro Myrddin, and Wyn Evans, Head Teacher at Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth whose pupils took part in an apprenticeship pilot scheme added:

We, as two schools in the region, are delighted to be part of the Swansea Bay City Deal Skills and Talent Programme. The programme aims to provide a regional solution to identify and deliver the skills and training required for City Deal projects. This investment will allow schools like ours to develop courses that will ultimately support projects and people across the region. Through the program we have developed a Welsh Medium learning

pathway in Engineering and IT for over 120 pupils in year one.

Cllr Emlyn Dole, leader of Carmarthenshire County Council said:

We are delighted to welcome the Minister to the region and look forward to rolling out the Skills and Talent programme following the success of our pilot scheme. This approval is very important to us so that we can provide education and training solutions for young people to learn and gain employment locally.

This programme, along with the other parts of City Deal portfolio will help raise the entire regions profile by attracting inward investment, and coupled with creating highly skilled individuals, it will ensure that South West Wales is the perfect place to live and work for generations to come.

Cllr Rob Stewart, Chairman of the Swansea Bay City Deal's Joint Committee, added:

Minister Davies' visit will help further raise the profile of the City Deal's Skills and Talent programme. This programme is key to the overall City Deal investment portfolio as it will equip thousands of local people with the skills they'll need to access well-paid jobs being created by the other City Deal projects in coming years.

Many of the other City Deal projects are already in delivery, with the investment set to play a key role in accelerating our regional economic recovery from the pandemic.

The Swansea Bay City Deal, with eight of its nine programmes and projects now approved, is in a very strong position to further benefit as many regional residents and businesses as possible in the near future.

Mark Jones, Principal of Gower College Swansea said:

We are delighted to welcome Minister Davies and the City Deal officers to the College today. Over a number of years we have been preparing for the City Deal by investing in the development of innovative curriculum to meet key City Deal requirements. In partnership with industry we have developed new programmes in digital, green energy, advanced manufacturing and health and social care, which has led to a 25% increase in apprentices we support in these areas. In 2021-22 we plan to support over 3,500 apprentices including 2,200 apprentices developing skills in key City Deal sectors.

## Notes to editors:

- The Swansea Bay City Deal is an investment of up to £1.3 billion in a portfolio of nine major programmes and projects across the Swansea Bay City Region, which are together worth over £1.8 billion and 9,000 jobs to the region's economy in coming years.
  - Funded by the UK Government, the Welsh Government, the public sector and the private sector, the City Deal is being led by Carmarthenshire Council, Neath Port Talbot Council, Pembrokeshire Council and Swansea Council, in partnership with Swansea University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea Bay University Health Board and Hywel Dda University Health Board.
  - The Skills & Talent programme works with a wide range of stakeholders including:
    - Coleg Sir Gar; Gower College; Neath and Port Talbot College and Pembrokeshire College
    - University of Wales Trinity Saint David; Swansea University and the Open University.
    - National Training Federation of Wales and private training providers School Leaders and Local Authority Education Departments
    - Local Authority Regeneration Departments
    - Private Sector Cluster groups with connections to 2000 businesses across the region
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## [Health Secretary statement on Vaccines as a Condition of Deployment](#)

Mr Deputy Speaker, with permission, I'd like to make a statement on further steps we're taking to keep this country safe from Covid-19.

We head into the winter months in a much stronger position than last year.

Of all the reasons for this progress, the greatest is unquestionably our vaccination programme.

Across the UK, the overwhelming majority of us have made the positive choice to accept the offer of vaccines against Covid-19.

Almost 8 in every 10 people over the age of 12 have chosen to be double jabbed and over 10 million people have now received their boosters or third jabs.

I'm grateful to colleagues across this House for their steadfast support of our national vaccination programme.

Despite the fantastic rates of uptake, we must all keep doing our bit to

encourage eligible people to top-up their defences and to protect themselves this winter.

I understand that vaccination can of course be an emotive issue.

Most of us have taken this step to protect ourselves, to protect our families and to protect our country.

We have all seen, sadly, how Covid can devastate lives.

But we've also seen how jabs save lives and keep people out of hospital.

Our collective efforts have built a vast wall of defence for the British people helping us to move towards the normal way of life we've all been longing for.

The efforts of the British public have been phenomenal and those working in health and social care have been the very best of us.

Not only have they saved lives and kept people safe through their incredible work but they've done the same by choosing to get vaccinated.

And I want to thank NHS Trusts and Primary Care Networks for all the support and the encouragement that they have given their staff to take up the vaccine.

The latest figures show that 90 percent of NHS Trust staff have received at least two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine although in some Trusts, the figure sits closer to 80 percent.

But Mr Deputy Speaker, while our health and social care colleagues are a cross-section of the nation at large there's no denying that they carry a unique responsibility.

They have this responsibility because they are in close contact with some of the most vulnerable people in our society people that we know that are more likely to suffer serious health consequences if they get Covid-19.

So whether it's in our care homes, or in our hospitals – or any other health or care setting the first duty of everyone working in health and social care is to avoid preventable harm to the people that they care for.

And not only that, they have a responsibility to do all they can to keep each other safe.

These twin responsibilities – to patients, and to each other they underline, once again, why a job in health or care is a job like no other.

So it cannot be business as usual when it comes to vaccination.

It's why, from the very beginning of our national vaccination programme, we put health and care colleagues at the front of the line for Covid jabs.

And it's why we've run two consultations exploring some of the other things

that we might need to do.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the first consultation looked at whether we should require people working in care homes to be vaccinated – what’s called the “condition for deployment”.

After careful consideration, we made vaccination against Covid-19 a condition for deployment in care homes from the 11th of November.

Since we announced this in parliament, the number of people working in care homes who have not had at least one dose has fallen from 88,000 to just 32,000 at the start of last month.

Our second consultation looked at whether we should extend this requirement to health and other social care settings including in NHS hospitals and independent healthcare providers.

Our six-week consultation received over 34,000 responses – and of course a broad range of views.

Support for making vaccination a condition for deployment was tempered with concerns that some people may choose to leave their posts if we went ahead with this.

I have carefully considered the responses and the evidence and I’ve concluded that the scales clearly tip on one side.

The weight of the data shows how our vaccinations have kept people safe and they have saved lives and this is especially true for vulnerable people in health and care settings.

And I’m mindful, not only of our need to protect human life but our imperative to protect the NHS and those services upon which we all rely.

Having considered the consultation responses the advice of my officials and NHS leaders – including the Chief Executive of the NHS – I have concluded that all those working in the NHS and social care will have to be vaccinated.

We must avoid preventable harm and protect patients in the NHS, protect colleagues in the NHS, and of course protect the NHS itself.

Only those colleagues who can show they’re fully vaccinated against Covid-19 can be employed or engaged in those settings.

There will be two key exemptions:

1. for those who don’t have face-to-face contact with patients and the second for those who are medically exempt.

These requirements will apply across health and the wider social care settings that are regulated by the Care Quality Commission.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we’re not the only country taking such steps: there are



similar policies for specific workers in other countries around the world including the United States, France and Italy.

We also consulted on flu vaccines, but having considered views that we should focus on Covid-19 we will not be introducing any requirements on flu jabs at this stage – but we will keep this under review.

Of course Mr Deputy Speaker, these decisions are not mine alone.

As with other nationally significant Covid legislation, Parliament will have its say and we intend to publish an Impact Assessment before any vote.

We plan to implement this policy through powers in the 2008 Health and Social Care Act which requires registered persons to ensure the provision of safe care and treatment.

I will shortly bring forward a draft statutory instrument amending these regulations before the House – just as we did with Care Homes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this decision doesn't mean that I don't recognise concerns about workforce pressures this winter and indeed beyond as a result of some people perhaps choosing to leave their job because of the decision we've taken.

Of course I recognise that.

It's with this in mind that we've chosen for the condition not to come into force until 12 weeks after parliamentary approval allowing time for remaining colleagues to make the positive choice to protect themselves and those around them and time for workforce planning.

Subject to parliamentary approval, we intend the enforcement of this condition to start on the 1st of April.

And we will continue to work closely across the NHS to manage workforce pressures.

More than that, Mr Deputy Speaker: we'll continue to support and encourage those yet to get the vaccines, to do so.

At every point in our programme, we've made jabs easily accessible and worked with all communities to build trust and boost uptake.

That vital work will continue including engagement with communities where uptake is the lowest and 1-2-1 conversations with all unvaccinated staff in the NHS and using the capacity of our national vaccination programme, like the walk-in centres and pop-up centres, all making it as easy as possible to get the jab.

And Mr Deputy Speaker, allow me to be clear: that no one, no one, in the NHS or care that is currently unvaccinated should be scapegoated, singled-out, or shamed.

That would be totally unacceptable.

This is about supporting them to make a positive choice to protect vulnerable people, to protect their colleagues and of course to protect themselves.

The Chief Executive of the NHS will write to all NHS Trusts today to underline just how vital these vaccination efforts are.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I'm sure that the whole House will join me in paying tribute to the heroic responses across health and care.

They have been the very best of us in the most difficult of days.

Care, compassion, and conscience continue to be their watchwords and I know that they will want to do the right thing.

Today's decision is about doing right by them and doing right by everyone that uses the NHS.

So we protect patients in the NHS.

We protect colleagues in the NHS.

And we protect the NHS itself.

I commend this statement to the House.

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## [Captain Sir Tom Trophy Awarded to Army Instructor](#)

Press release

A British Army soldier who turned Santa to save Christmas for many families in lockdown has been awarded the Captain Sir Tom Moore trophy for his charitable efforts.



Corporal Robert Chamberlain received the newly created award for going above and beyond after delivering Christmas presents to the families of strangers who would otherwise have missed out on receiving them.

Robert was in a predicament leading up to Christmas as lockdown restrictions meant he was in Harrogate and his children's presents were stuck with family in Kent. He then realised that there would be other people in similar situation, so he researched ways to overcome this problem.

He realised that unless you were an official delivery driver you were not able to travel, so he researched how to set up his own business as a deliver driver and then did so, purchasing business insurance, hiring a van and going above the health and safety requirements for delivery drivers.

Robert used his own time and petrol during his leave from the Army Foundation College, Harrogate to drive hundreds of miles around the UK delivering presents to lots of different families. He set up his own delivery business, a Just Giving page and social media page to track his progress and garnered support to raise over a thousand pounds for the Trussell Trust.

**Corporal Robert Chamberlain Robert said:**

Forty-one hours of delivery driving, hundreds of miles have been covered, £1,125 has been raised for the Trussell Trust, I have drunk eight cans of energy drinks and seen lots of smiles from families, now I have finally completed all my Christmas deliveries.

His role at the Army Foundation College is that of a Section Commander who delivers the basic military training and leadership development to Junior Soldiers, preparing them for a career in the British Army. He received the trophy in front of the Junior Soldiers he had trained at their graduation parade.

**Company Commander, Major Julian Russell said:**

Corporal Chamberlain was humbled to receive the trophy and it reflected not only his charitable efforts but also his continued efforts and commitment to deliver world-class training to the Junior Soldiers that he commanded

He has worked at the Army Foundation College for over 18 months and has consistently been an excellent role model to all of the Junior Soldiers he has trained.

The Captain Sir Tom Moore trophy was created to reflect the connection between the late Captain Sir Tom Moore being the Honorary Colonel of the Army Foundation College, Harrogate and his own charitable endeavours to raise

money for the NHS.

The next Capt Sir Tom Trophy will be awarded at the next graduation parade in February 2022.

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