

One month left to join VAT Deferral New Payment Scheme

Businesses that deferred VAT payments last year have one month left to join online to pay in monthly instalments under the [VAT Deferral New Payment Scheme](#), HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has said today (20 May 2021).

The online portal for the new payment scheme closes on 21 June 2021.

Over half a million businesses deferred £34 billion in VAT payments due between March and June 2020 under the VAT Payment Deferral Scheme. Businesses had until 31 March 2021 to pay this deferred VAT or, if they could not afford to do so, they could go online from 23 February to set up a new payment scheme and pay by monthly instalments to spread the cost.

Jim Harra, HMRC's Chief Executive, said:

Businesses that deferred paying their VAT last spring have until 21 June to join the VAT Deferral New Payment Scheme online. They should act now to avoid missing out on this opportunity to spread payment of their deferred VAT across monthly, interest-free, instalments.

The new payment scheme is part of the government package of support worth over £350 billion to help protect millions of jobs and businesses during the pandemic and as we emerge on the path to recovery.

HMRC will continue to do all we can to help businesses as they reopen and rebuild.

Jesse Norman, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

Thanks to the government, more than half a million businesses were able to defer their VAT payment last year. This provided support at a critical time, protecting millions of jobs and businesses during the pandemic and injecting £34 billion into the UK economy.

The VAT Deferral New Payment Scheme means businesses can now manage their cashflow by paying their deferred VAT more gradually, continuing to protect jobs across the UK as we emerge from the pandemic and build back better.

The March, April and May joining dates have passed, but businesses can still spread their payments across up to eight equal monthly instalments, interest-free, if they join by 21 June 2021. Payments can easily be set up via the [VAT](#)

[Deferral New Payment Scheme portal.](#)

HMRC data to 30 April 2021 shows 228,850 businesses that deferred their VAT last year have already paid their VAT in full. This, along with instalments already made under the new payment scheme and other payment plans, totals £15.1 billion. Since the online service opened on 23 February 2021 another £11.5 billion has already been committed to future instalment payments by 134,627 businesses.

Eligible businesses that are unable to use our online service by 21 June 2021 can call the HMRC Coronavirus Helpline on 0800 024 1222 to join the scheme until 30 June 2021.

Businesses may be charged a 5% penalty and/or interest if they don't join up to the scheme online by 21 June, or pay in full by 30 June, or contact HMRC to make an arrangement to pay by 30 June 2021. Businesses should also contact HMRC by 30 June 2021 if they need to agree extra help to pay.

The scheme launched on 23 February 2021 and is open to businesses that deferred VAT due from 20 March to 30 June 2020 (under the VAT Payment Deferral Scheme) and still have payments to make.

Businesses can:

- join the VAT Deferral New Payment Scheme online between 23 February and 21 June 2021
- pay the deferred VAT in full by 30 June 2021
- contact HMRC by 30 June 2021 if they need to agree extra help to pay

The penultimate joining date was 19 May 2021. Businesses can pay their deferred VAT in 2 to 8 consecutive instalments without adding interest if they join online by 21 June 2021. The first payment is made when they join.

The joining stage is slightly longer for those unable to use our online service due to the way payments are processed.

Details of [what businesses must do before they join](#), including ensuring their VAT returns are up to date.

[Cornwall's major road upgrade aims to be otter-ly wildlife friendly](#)

Highways England's upgrade of the A30 in Cornwall is not just about improving safety, journey reliability and connectivity for local communities – it also goes for otters and other wildlife too.

The A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross improvement scheme will unlock one of the

last major bottlenecks in the county by creating an 8.7-mile section of dual carriageway to help promote economic growth, improve journey times and increase safety.

The new route has also been designed to protect the environment and as part of that work, a total of 33 multi-species crossing points are being constructed to assist the habitats and journeys of animals such as otters, badgers, bats and reptiles.

Extensive ecological surveys identified otter, badger and bat habitats to the north and south of the new route and, as well as the construction of a 'green' bridge at Marazanvose, the crossing points include 11 underbridges, two overbridges, five drainage culverts and two dry tunnels – all allowing for the safe passage of animals.

An artist's impression of one of the 33 multi-species animal crossings to be constructed under the A30

There will be nine crossing tunnels specifically for otters, and a new and specially designed sett for badgers. Otter ledges are being created in two of the culverts, 21 of the crossings are designed to protect connectivity for bats, while 12 miles of wildlife-proof fencing is being constructed to guide animals toward these crossing points.

Josh Hodder, Highways England Senior Project Manager, said:

We're really proud of the work we are undertaking to protect and enhance the ecology and environment in the area, and we're currently forecasting a net gain of over 10% in biodiversity as part of the work we're doing on the scheme.

We've worked with and listened to local communities throughout the consultation and planning process, and informed by a wealth of feedback, the design of the road has been carried out in the most sympathetic way for both local people, the travelling public, wildlife and the environment.

Highways England has also funded a number of environmental projects around the location of the scheme and this is something we're also proud to be involved with and which will have long-lasting benefits for Cornwall.

With construction scaling up this year, work will start this summer to build the animal crossing points and existing environments are being sensitively replaced to limit the impact on any wildlife.

In terms of environmental mitigation, the scheme will also see:

- over 28 miles of new drainage constructed to protect the local area and

water courses

- ponds constructed to store and control the flow of surface water and address pollutants from the road
- the construction of eight miles of Cornish hedge, representing a net gain of nearly seven miles of Cornish hedges
- the planting of species rich grassland and trees native to Cornwall, blending the new with the old
- no artificial lighting on the main route or at junctions, removing any light pollution from the new road
- the construction of earth barriers and sound-absorbing fencing at key locations to reduce noise impact of the new road

As part of Designated Funded environmental projects in the first roads investment period, Highways England has also worked closely with Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Cornwall Council and The Environment Agency to create 'green ribs' in the central Cornwall area, which extend out from the A30 to connect core habitat areas and achieve continuous landscape corridors.

The Highways England-funded work has been undertaken close to the route of the new scheme to create three green ribs between Ladock and Gwills, Benny Mill to Boswiddle and Benhaven to Lambourne Mill.

The environmental enhancements have included:

- tree works (woodland creation and management, wet woodland management, feature tree introduction, orchard creation and restoration, and veteran tree management)
- planting of species rich grassland and wet meadow
- pond and wet habitat restoration
- boundary works (creation and restoration of Cornish hedge, stock-proof fencing and stock-proof thorny hedge planting, and hedgerow enhancement)

Cherilyn Mackrory, MP for Truro and Falmouth, said:

It is great to see the work continue on this important piece of transport infrastructure for Cornwall and I am looking forward to visiting again soon to see the progress for myself, much of it carried out by local contractors.

I am particularly looking forward to seeing the work being carried out to preserve and enhance the local environment, as well as the animal crossings. While there will be some short-term disruption to the local environment while the construction is under way, I know that the overall net gain will be a positive one, both environmentally and ecologically, for Cornwall.

The construction methods of contractors Costain will also protect the environment as a cut-and-fill earthworks method is being employed to improve sustainability and reduce the amount of import and export of earth and other material and in terms of its carbon footprint, low-temperature asphalt is being sourced locally.

Highways England and contractors Costain have been engaging with Cornwall Council and the Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Costain Environmental Lead Ali Thomas said:

Protection of the local environment is imperative. We're working to ensure that the local wildlife and their terrestrial and aquatic habitats are protected and we're working with local stakeholders to minimise the project's environmental impact and to realise opportunities for environmental improvement and enhancement.

We are also working with our supply chain to promote low carbon and innovative solutions for implementation to reduce the carbon footprint of our operations, reduce material consumption and improve air quality.

The £330 million upgrade is scheduled to be open to traffic in 2023. Further information on environmental mitigation and other details are available on our [A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross web page](#).

The cost of developing the scheme is being partly funded by an £8 million contribution from the European Regional Development Fund, with an additional £12 million for the construction phase. The remainder of the cost of developing and delivering the scheme is being funded by central Government.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Foreign flagged ships detained in the UK during April 2021

During April, there were two new detentions of foreign flagged vessels in a UK port.

1. In response to one of the recommendations of Lord Donaldson's inquiry into the prevention of pollution from merchant shipping, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) publishes details of the foreign flagged

vessels detained in UK ports each month.

2. The UK is part of a regional agreement on port state control known as the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MOU) and information on all ships that are inspected is held centrally in an electronic database known as THETIS. This allows the ships with a high risk rating and poor detention records to be targeted for future inspection.
3. Inspections of foreign flagged ships in UK ports are undertaken by surveyors from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. When a ship is found to be not in compliance with applicable convention requirements, a deficiency may be raised. If any of their deficiencies are so serious, they have to be rectified before departure, then the ship will be detained.
4. All deficiencies should be rectified before departure.

Notes on the list of detentions:

- Full details of the ship: The accompanying detention list shows ship's International Maritime Organisation (IMO) number which does not change throughout the ship's life and uniquely identifies it. It also shows the ship's name and flag state at the time of its inspection.
- Company: The company shown in the vessel's Safety Management Certificate (SMC) or if there is no SMC, then the party otherwise believed to be responsible for the operation of the ship at the time of inspection.
- Classification society: The list shows the classification society responsible for classification of the ship only.
- Recognised organisation: Responsible for conducting the statutory surveys and issuing statutory certificates on behalf of the flag state.
- White (WL), grey (GL) and black lists (BL) are issued by the Paris MoU on 01 July each year and shows the performance of flag state.
- Deficiencies: The deficiencies listed are the ones which were detainable. Further details of other deficiencies can be provided on request.

SHIPS DETAINED IN APRIL 2021

Vessel Name: BULKER BEE 20

GT: 15545

IMO: 9586588

Flag: Malta (white list)

Company: Q-Shipping BV

Classification society: RINA

Recognised organisation: RINA

Recognised organisation for ISM Doc: RINA

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: RINA

Date and place of detention: 1st April 2021 at Hull

Summary: Eight deficiencies with one ground for detention

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
15150 – ISM	Not as required	Yes

This vessel was released 10th April 2021

Vessel Name: RIVER ELBE

GT: 1951

IMO: 8602945

Flag: Panama (white list)

Company: Wakes & Co. Ltd

Classification society: Polish Register of Shipping

Recognised organisation: Dromon Bureau of Shipping

Recognised organisation for ISM Doc: Dromon Bureau of Shipping

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: Dromon Bureau of Shipping

Date and place of detention: 12th April 2021 at Sheerness

Summary: Nineteen deficiencies with six grounds for detention

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
07108 – Ready availability of firefighting equipment	Not properly stowed	Yes
10133 – Bridge Operation	Lack of familiarity	Yes
10116 – Nautical publications	Expired	Yes
10135 – Monitoring of voyage or passage plan	Not as required	Yes
11104 – Rescue Boats	Damaged	Yes
15150 – ISM	Not as required	Yes

This vessel was still detained 30th April 2021

DETENTIONS CARRIED OVER FROM PREVIOUS MONTHS

Vessel Name: SIRIUS 1

GT: 211

IMO: 8964161

Flag: Nigeria (Unknown)

Company: Ambrey Limited

Classification society: Phoenix Register of Shipping

Recognised organisation: Phoenix Register of Shipping

Recognised organisation for ISM Doc: N/A

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: N/A

Date and place of detention: 7th November 2020 at Southampton

Summary: Eleven deficiencies with two grounds for detention

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
01213 – Evidence of basic training	Expired	Yes
01220 – Seafarers' employment agreement (SEA)	Not as required	Yes

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2021

Vessel Name: SIRIUS 2

GT: 211

IMO: 8977699

Flag: Nigeria (Unknown)

Company: Ambrey Limited

Classification society: Phoenix Register of Shipping

Recognised organisation: Phoenix Register of Shipping

Recognised organisation for ISM Doc: N/A

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: N/A

Date and place of detention: 12th November 2020 at Southampton

Summary: Twenty deficiencies with five grounds for detention

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
01329 – Report of inspection on MLC, 2006	Missing	Yes
01804 – Electrical	Unsafe	Yes
01199 – Other (certificates)	Other	Yes
10126 – Record of drills and steering gear tests	Not as required	Yes
01326 – Stability information booklet	Not approved	Yes

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2021

Vessel Name: LIVA GRETA

GT: 851

IMO: 8801072

Flag: Latvia (white list)

Company: Regulus SIA

Classification society: RINA

Recognised organisation: RINA

Recognised organisation for ISM Doc: RMRS

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: RMRS

Date and place of detention: 11th January 2020 at Birkenhead

Summary: Nine deficiencies with two grounds for detention

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
11113 – Launching arrangements for rescue boats	Inoperative	Yes
15150 – ISM	Not as required	Yes

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2021

Vessel Name: POSEIDON

GT: 1412

IMO: 7363217

Flag: Iceland (White list)

Company: Neptune EHF

Classification society: NA

Recognised organisation: NA

Recognised organisation for ISM Doc: DNV-GL

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: N/A (SMC issued by Flag)

Date and place of detention: 19th July 2018 at Hull

Summary: Ten deficiencies with two grounds for detention

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
02106 – Hull damage impairing seaworthiness	Holed	Yes
07113 – Fire Pumps	Insufficient Pressure	Yes

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2021

Vessel Name: TECOIL POLARIS

GT: 1814

IMO No: 8883290

Flag: Russian Federation (Grey list)

Company: Tecoil Shipping Ltd

Classification society: RMRS

Recognised organisation: RMRS

Recognised organisation for ISM DOC: RMRS

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: RMRS

Date and place of detention: 6th June 2018 at Immingham

Summary: Twenty-seven deficiencies with six grounds for detentions

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
10104 – Gyro compass	Inoperative	Yes
10127 – Voyage or passage plan	Not as required	Yes
15150 – ISM	Not as required	Yes
11104 – Rescue boats	Not properly maintained	Yes
11101 – Lifeboats	Not ready for use	Yes
01117 – International Oil Pollution Prevention (IOPP)	Invalid	Yes

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2021

Vessel Name: CIEN PORCIENTO (General Cargo)

GT: 106.

IMO No: 8944446.

Flag: Unregistered.

Company: Open Window Inc.

Classification society: Unclassed.

Recognised organisation: Not applicable.

Recognised organisation for ISM DOC: Not applicable.

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: Not applicable

Date and place of detention: 4 March 2010, Lowestoft

Summary: Thirty deficiencies including seven grounds for detention

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2021

Notes to Editors

- The MCA is a partner in the Sea Vision UK campaign to raise awareness and understanding of the sea and maritime activities. Sea Vision promotes the importance and economic value of the sector and works to highlight the exciting range of activities and career opportunities available to young people within the UK growing maritime sector.

- Follow us on Twitter: @MCA_media

For further information please contact Maritime and Coastguard Agency Press Office, on: +44 (0) 2380 329 401 Press releases and further information about the agency is available [here.](<https://www.gov.uk/government>

Education Secretary addresses Centre for Social Justice

Good afternoon,

It is a pleasure to be here at the CSJ, and while it is a pity not to be joined by others, I am just glad to have the opportunity to talk about a subject that is all too often neglected by politicians in Westminster.

As the Cabinet Minister responsible for our public education system, can I start by saying a huge thank you to everyone who has worked so tirelessly throughout the pandemic supporting schools and colleges.

A key part of my role is also responsibility for family, and it is family that I have come to the CSJ, perhaps the home of family policy, to discuss.

There is no doubt that the last 12 months have put enormous pressure on home life and families.

But they have also reminded us of an eternal truth, that our families are almost always the best support mechanisms any of us have to fall back on.

Many people moved home during lockdown, to either look after their parents and grandparents, or be looked after by loved ones.

Many of us made a concerted effort during quarantine, to check in with our siblings, cousins and relatives who we otherwise speak with all too infrequently.

I saw first-hand as Education Secretary how parents juggled work and home schooling, so that their children could get the very best education.

This Government undoubtedly took the steps necessary to combat the virus and protect as many people as possible from both the public health and economic fall-out. That included supporting families through the furlough schemes that protected incomes and therefore household budgets.

Our teachers and frontline care workers were heroic, along with many volunteers manning queues at vaccine centres, supermarket staff, delivery drivers and so many people who worked throughout... I do not for one minute want to gloss over their achievements...

But we need to take a moment to celebrate and champion our mums, dads, brothers, sisters, children, grandparents and grandchildren... because so often they provide the helping hands, the shoulders to cry on and the kind words of encouragement at our lowest points.

Throughout the pandemic, we were not able to see our relatives, to hug those closest family members.

There will have been many reunions in the recent days, reminding us of the strength at the heart of our families.

So it is perhaps now, after this difficult time for so many, that you could argue that we have never valued the concept of family as highly as we do now.

We need to take this moment now, because I don't believe we talk about family enough in Westminster... we have perhaps lost the confidence to talk about family in a positive way and the positive contribution families make to our national life.

Too often we have surrendered to the language of statism, stuck in the tired

pathology that Government intervention has all the answers to societies woes.

This could not be further from the truth.

Families have many of the answers and we must give families, in all their shapes and sizes, the chance to thrive without the need for state intervention.

This means breaking down barriers like allowing adoption for mixed race parents, encouraging flexible working hours, and working from home now a lasting change for many.

Let me start by asking: what does family mean to you?

I ask that, in full knowledge that the answers will differ, but every answer will emphasise how special family is even though it looks different to every one of us.

Since the 1970s fewer of us are getting married, the number of children growing up in single parent households has risen, and divorce continues to increase.

The structures of families have changed but the importance of family has not.

Marriages between same-sex couples have risen since it was legalised by a Conservative Prime Minister in 2014. We continue to be a nation of foster carers and adopters, providing loving families to children who have faced great trauma in their young lives.

Traditional family roles have also changed and adapted since our grandparent's generation: mums going back in to work and dads are expected to share childcare responsibilities.

We can certainly be proud that we have reached a new, more modern age of family life.

What has not changed – has never changed and will never change – is that being part of a stable, loving family is one of the best mechanisms for boosting life chances.

There is no substitute for the safety net and love that a family provides.

I know this first-hand, not just from having a loving wife and two amazing daughters, but from my parents who did the most generous thing anyone can do by becoming foster carers. In doing so, my parents gave my foster siblings a house to call home, support, and love, transforming their lives in a remarkable way.

And on a wider scale, the evidence is clear that if we are to increase social mobility and make this a country that works for all, we need to champion the institution of family at every opportunity.

Our own analysis of children in the care system found that children placed

into adoptive families performed better at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 than those who remained looked after by the state.

Let me be clear, I am not saying that all families should be or need to be headed by two parents of the opposite sex.

The 20th century stock image of Mum and Dad with 2.5 children is now far less relevant as a model.

Whatever shape, size, or type of family you find yourself in, it needs to be supported, parents need to be empowered, and children must be given every opportunity to grow up in a happy and healthy home.

That is because while the family unit may have changed, reflecting society around it, families remains the first and most lasting influence on who we become in the world – driving our values, our passions, our pursuits. It is where we first experience the feelings of belonging and love.

And raising a family, whatever shape or size it comes in, should be the most fulfilling experience of any person's life.

I know that it can be filled with struggles and anxiety at times. I know how hard people work to make ends meet and provide for their families.

I make no apologies for thinking there is a positive role for Government to play for parents and their children at these points in their lives- because support is often too fragmented just when it is most needed. We should be doing everything in our power to support parents in carrying out the most important job they will ever have.

Government should be here to empower and equip parents, not to strip them of their role and responsibility. The last thing any child needs is for Government to take away a parent's rights to decide and responsibility to provide for their child.

So today I want to update you on what we are doing at the Department for Education and what my colleagues are doing in other Government Departments to help parents, support families and give children the best start in life.

I can announce today that we are pushing ahead with plans to support the growth of Family Hubs England. I have instructed officials in the Department to draw up plans to increase the number of Family Hubs currently in operation.

A Family Hub is a place for parents to go, with their children and access help that might otherwise be too hard to find. They could meet health visitors, get access to classes on parenting and receive wider support.

I can report that we are already investing £14 million to champion family hubs, including launching a National Centre for Family Hubs, whose role will be to champion family hubs and spread best practice and evidence on integrated family service models.

I am pleased to announce today that the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families will run this national centre, and we expect it to be up and running shortly.

As well as making progress on Family Hubs, I have recently launched the Independent Review into Children's Social Care, appointing Josh MacAlister to Chair it.

Despite the incredible dedication of Social Workers, our care system too often breaks families up, splits parents from children and doesn't deliver the outcomes children deserve. Josh and his team will report back to the Government with plans to fix this.

I have also appointed Krish Kandiah as Chair of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board. Krish is a real leader in the field of adoption and fostering, and I know he will bring fresh ideas to this area.

Too many children find themselves waiting for an adopter family, far too many children never find a placement. We need to do more to fix this.

I have already signed off continued support for Adoption Support Fund, and I hope to release the Department's strategy on adoption later this year as well.

We are not the only ones in Government doing our best to help families. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and Andrea Leadsom published The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days.

Andrea has been a superb voice for young mums, dads, carers, and their babies, with a huge appreciation for how important these 1001 critical days – from conception to age two – are in creating happy and healthy children.

I look forward to working with Andrea to deliver the six action areas outlined in The Best Start for Life which I think will have a transformational impact for babies and their families.

My friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has done fantastic things with the new Reducing Parental Conflict Programme and leads on the Family Test. The Family Test was introduced back in the years of the Coalition and requires every Government Department to help assess the impact of plans for new or amended policies across government on family relationships.

What we all agree on, is that vulnerable families deserve to receive the right support, at the right time, to help them thrive. I was hugely pleased to see my friend the Housing Secretary re-launch Supporting Families earlier this year.

Supporting families demonstrates the way public services should work – with services joining up to ensure that more families get access to early, coordinated support to help them overcome their problems before they escalate.

Robust analysis shows that it is already working to reduce the number of families where children are needing to enter care, interacting with the criminal justice system or parents are unemployed. I look forward to seeing the programme build on its achievements in this new phase.

We do this because all families in this country matter.

Because while we can invest record amounts in education, as we have done and will continue to do, it means little if children and young people go home to a chaotic and turbulent household.

I hope one of the lessons we can take away from the pandemic is a reminder of how important families are in helping people achieve the most in life. In the history of human civilisation, no invention has better prepared our young people for the world and challenges life bring.

Every time Government legislates, spends, taxes, and regulates, we should think how this impacts families up and down the country. How does it strengthen the family and how does it support family life?

There is some way to go, but we have made a promising start.

I asked before what family is for you.

For me, family means being there for loved ones no matter what is happening in life.

It is this view that I want to take forward in my role as Cabinet Minister responsible for family. I hope you and others across Westminster and the country will join me.

Thank you.

[Oxford to play host to crucial G7 health talks](#)

- In-person events to provide springboard for global collaboration on key areas to stop future pandemics
- Discussions will inform Leaders' Summit the following week in Cornwall

The 2021 G7 Health Ministers' Meeting will be held in-person in Oxford on 3-4 June and will bring together health leaders from the world's leading democracies to agree life-saving action in critical areas of global health.

They will convene at Oxford University – a global centre of clinical, scientific and academic excellence – which has been at the heart of the global fight against COVID-19, with world-leading clinical trials and its

not-for-profit partnership with AstraZeneca on COVID-19 vaccines already saving thousands of lives across globe.

The G7 health meetings represent a unique opportunity to demonstrate the commitment of the world's major economies to protect lives across the world from current and future global health threats. Attendees will come together to address the issues of global health security, antimicrobial resistance, clinical trials, and digital health.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

Oxford is the birthplace of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine and at the heart of British life sciences. Oxford is a perfect location to stage pivotal meetings on how the world readies itself to combat future health threats.

We should not underestimate how far dreadful viruses can reach and the devastating impact they can have. The UK has long recognised that global problems require global solutions and I look forward to hosting health leaders for discussions in June.

Collectively we can build back better from this virus and, as I gather with my Ministerial counterparts from the major democratic nations, we have an opportunity to learn from this pandemic and take measures that will develop global health security.

The announcement comes on the eve of International Clinical Trials Day (Thursday 20 May 2021), with Oxford University boasting the highly-beneficial RECOVERY trial, involving over 40,000 participants, and helping to discover dexamethasone – which cuts deaths by up to a third – as a crucial tool for tackling the virus.

The pandemic has demonstrated the need for, and value of, robust clinical trials and the ability to share data, methods and standards. G7 cooperation is critical to accelerating and expanding efforts and ensuring that in the future, we can better share and compare trial results on both therapeutics and vaccines, both during the pandemic and beyond.

Professor Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, said:

Oxford University is honoured to host the G7 Health Ministers. This past year has demonstrated just how much can be accomplished when universities, business and government work together to advance global health.

We hope that in the course of this meeting insights and information will be shared, ideas generated, and lasting partnerships forged. In particular, we hope that as a result of this meeting plans will be developed to ensure that we are never again caught unprepared for a pandemic.

G7 countries account for two thirds of the world's pharmaceutical markets and the three vaccines licensed for use in the UK were all developed in G7 nations – the UK, US and Germany. As host of this year's G7 Presidency, the UK is determined to work with its partners to build back better from coronavirus and strengthen global preparedness for potential future pandemics.

The events will take place over two days, and provide a valuable opportunity to discuss not only the four health track themes but also live issues and to engage virtually with the G7 Presidency's guest countries: Republic of India, Republic of Korea, Australia and Republic of South Africa.

Oxfordshire County Council Leader, Councillor Liz Leffman, said:

As a county with a world-class reputation for cutting-edge research and innovation in life sciences and healthcare, we look forward to welcoming our guests and hope that their time here contributes to strengthening partnerships and boosting collaboration in managing current and future global health threats.

Oxford City Council Leader, Councillor Susan Brown, said:

Oxford is proud to host this international gathering of ministers and life science leaders, to plan a global approach to ending the COVID-19 pandemic. Our city has rightly become synonymous with excellence in life science research and manufacturing. We are proud that Oxford's name is carried by the vaccine used most widely across the world.

There is a real opportunity for those gathered to step up international support for the vaccination programmes still only in their early stages in many developing countries, particularly in Africa.

There will be a working Ministerial dinner on the evening of June 3 attended by senior representatives from the life sciences industry, who are planning to convene concurrently in Oxford to discuss the themes under the Prime Minister's Pandemic Preparedness Partnership between public and private sectors and key issues on the health agenda for the Summit.

- The Health Ministers' Meeting on 3-4 June will precede and inform health discussions at the Leaders' Summit, hosted by the Prime Minister on 11-13 June.
- As with all major events this year, extensive contingencies will be in place to minimise any risks and steps taken to ensure the events are COVID-secure.
- Every delegate arriving in the UK will be required to take a COVID-19 test up to three days before departure with a negative result and will subsequently undergo daily testing prior to attending any of the venues.