

Getting the most from Learning at Work 2021

News story

A unique annual event to make the most of all the ways to learn at work.



Learning at Work Week 2021 aims to celebrate lifelong learning at work and build learning cultures everywhere. The theme this year is 'Made for Learning'. It encourages us to focus on our human capacity to learn, how we can be great lifelong learners and the importance of connection and community.

The Government Skills and Curriculum Unit has worked with colleagues across government and our external partners to share a selection of ideas to help you get the most from this year's [Learning at Work Week](#) and to become a lifelong learner:

- These handy guides for [learners](#) and [managers](#) provide a selection of suggestions on what to do during Learning at Work Week and beyond
- This [guide](#) to Coffee Roulette shows how this great tool can help people connect, and develop by swapping ideas and learning from others
- Take a look at [Civil Service blogs](#) during Learning at Work Week and you'll see blogs from Pamela Dow, Executive Director of the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit with external partners from our Learning Frameworks on why lockdown is a wakeup call for better virtual training and how you can build your skills, nous and networks in 5 ways
- Read these fascinating articles on [why we never really stop learning;](#) and [learning in the flow of work.](#)
- Check out the full range of training and services available through the Learning Frameworks in the [Overview of offer.](#)

Listen while you learn

As COVID-19 means that many of us are still working remotely, the Learning at Work week team have curated a collaborative playlist, 'Sounds of Learning' to bring everybody together during Learning at Work Week. The playlist is

currently [live on Spotify](#).

Hopefully you are able to take some time during Learning at Work Week to start to become a lifelong learner, if you aren't already!

To get regular updates on the news and developments across the Government Campus, [sign up to Campus News](#).

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[UK companies partner with Thailand MDES to unlock Smart City opportunities](#)

Monday, 10 May 2021 – The UK's Minister for Exports, Graham Stuart MP co-launched the "UK-Thailand Tech Export Academy", a virtual trade mission, alongside Thailand's Minister of Digital Economy and Society (MDES), H.E. Mr Chaiwut Thanakamanusorn, that has led to over 200 business matching sessions between British and Thai businesses.

The programme was facilitated by industry leaders including Deloitte, EY and KPMG, who provided advice and guidance to firms about doing business in the APAC region.

The Tech Academy was launched last year by Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade, The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, as part of a plan to support UK companies post Covid-19. From a strong field of 108 companies who applied, only 30 were carefully selected to join the nine-month programme in preparation for the final trade mission to Thailand.

The mission was amongst many other collaborative efforts in smart cities between the UK and Thailand, spear-headed by the initial launch of the UK-Thailand Smart City Handbook, in partnership with Thailand's Digital Economy and Promotion Agency (DEPA). The UK's partnership with DEPA continued with a series of Smart City Workshops, where the British Embassy Bangkok met with local authorities in Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen and Chonburi to explore potential areas for smart city collaborations.

The UK and Thailand is also working to deepen and strengthen its trading relationship across all sectors following the completion of a Joint Trade Review. In March 2021, the UK and Thailand signed an MoU which commits us to further strengthening trade and investment ties through a new joint trade dialogue. The Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) offers a significant new opportunity for the UK and Thailand to work together to improve bilateral

trade, including by addressing market access barriers affecting businesses. The first meeting of the new UK Thailand JETCO will take place later this year.

Minister for Exports at the UK Department for International Trade, Graham Stuart MP, said,

Our first JETCO with Thailand is testament to our desire to increase trade with friends like Thailand. We will build business-to-business connections between our two countries, as the whole business world recovers together from the effects of the pandemic.

Smart city technology has the potential to revolutionise the way we design urban environments, and how we live within them, the better to suit modern society. The businesses chosen for the Tech Export Academy are changing the world of tomorrow – from commuting to work, to powering public facilities.

Minister for Digital Economy and Society, H.E. Mr Chaiwut Thanakamanusorn said,

The Ministry has been proactive in shaping smart city development in Thailand through robust means, measures and mechanisms. One of which is building synergy and long-term relations with trusted international partners...our Ministry and the UK partners have indeed accomplished quite a few meaningful collaborations, such as the bilingual Thailand Smart City Handbook and stakeholder mapping workshops in three different regions, namely in the northern region (in Chiang Mai), the north-eastern region (in Khon Kaen) and the eastern region (in Chonburi).

British Commercial Counsellor to Thailand, Mr Richard Porter, said,

This initiative represents the deepening trade links that the UK is forming with Thailand. Our £184bn Tech Sector – the largest in Europe – sees fantastic opportunities for partnership with Thai companies and organisations. In the past year alone, total trade between the UK and Thailand exceeded £5bn. The overwhelming reception of the UK-Thailand Tech Export Academy's trade mission reflects strong buy-ins from both UK and Thai businesses to forge partnerships in driving cities of the future.

About the Department for International Trade (DIT): The UK's Department for International Trade (DIT) has overall responsibility for promoting UK trade across the world and attracting foreign investment to our economy. We are a specialised government body with responsibility for negotiating international trade policy, supporting business, as well as delivering an outward-looking

trade diplomacy strategy.

Our services we offer:

- Bespoke Information on key commercial considerations including company registration, financing, labour and skills, research and development, real estate, transport, utilities and regulatory issues.
- Comprehensive regional and local location analysis to help overseas companies choose the right place to set up. • introductions to sector networks including industry leaders, chambers of commerce, service providers, universities and centres of R&D excellence.
- Assistance to develop innovative UK business opportunities through our Global Entrepreneur Programme (GEP).
- Continued support through our investor Development network, which offers assistance to companies once they are established in the UK.

Learn more about the Tech Export Academy [here](#)

[The cycle of violence must end for Israelis and Palestinians alike](#)

Mr President, the ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning and must stop.

This week has seen the worst violence Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories have experienced for several years. I repeat my Prime Minister's call that both sides step back from the brink and show restraint. This cycle of violence must end.

The UK offers our deepest condolences to the families of those civilians killed. Each one of those deaths is a tragedy.

Mr President, we are deeply concerned that the current trajectory in Gaza will only lead to further violence and more civilian casualties. We want to see an urgent cessation of hostilities and calm restored. We value the continued UN, Egyptian and Qatari efforts to broker a ceasefire and improve the humanitarian situation. We urge the parties to work with mediators, to cease hostilities and prevent further humanitarian impact.

Let me be unequivocal, Mr President: the UK condemns the firing of rockets at civilian populations. There is no justification for targeting civilians. The death toll seen in the last week is unacceptable, and the images we have all seen are truly harrowing.

We strongly condemn these acts of terrorism from Hamas and other terrorist groups, who must permanently end their incitement and rocket fire against

Israel and Israeli civilians.

Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend its citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that Israel makes every effort to avoid civilian casualties. We are gravely concerned by UN reports that medical installations, 23 schools, over 500 houses in Gaza, and buildings housing media organisations have been destroyed or seriously damaged. Israel's actions must be proportionate and in line with International Humanitarian Law. We are also concerned by reports that Hamas is again using civilian infrastructure and populations as cover for its operations.

Mr President, we hold this special session of the Council today during the holy days of Eid, and as we approach the Jewish festival of Shavuot.

The UK is clear, Mr President, that violence against peaceful worshippers is unacceptable and must stop. The right to freedom of worship must be upheld.

The historic Status Quo in Jerusalem is important at all times, but especially during religious festivals. We continue to support the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's important role as custodian of the holy sites.

Mr President, let me also reiterate that the UK has made its positions on evictions, demolitions, and the settlement enterprise clear in this Council, and I will do so again today. We oppose these activities. Settlements are illegal under international law, and an obstacle to peace. We urge the Government of Israel to cease its policies related to settlement expansion immediately, and instead work towards the establishment of a Palestinian state along 1967 lines, with its capital in East Jerusalem.

Mr President, the situation on the ground demonstrates the urgent need to make progress towards peace. The UK remains committed to the two-state solution as the best way to permanently end the occupation and bring peace and stability to the region. We urge all sides to show maximum restraint and refrain from taking actions which endanger civilians and make peace more difficult.

These next hours and days are critical, Mr President. The United Kingdom will continue to do all it can to bring an end to this violence and work towards a more peaceful future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Thank you.

[More than 20 million UK adults receive both doses of COVID-19 vaccine](#)

- Public urged to take up their second doses as soon as they are eligible

to get fullest possible protection

Health services across the UK have now administered a total of 56,677,012 million vaccines between 8 December and 15 May, including 36,573,354 million people with their first dose (69.4%) and 20,103,658 million with their second (38.2%).

The government met its target of offering a vaccine to the most vulnerable by 15 April, and remains on track to offer a first dose to all adults by the end of July.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We have more great news about the vaccination rollout and are making extraordinary strides as 20 million people now have the fullest possible protection from this virus – huge thanks to the team for hitting this milestone.

The latest real-world data has once again demonstrated how effective the vaccine is at providing life-saving protection, with 2 doses of the Pfizer vaccine providing 97% protection against mortality.

Receiving a second dose is vital to ensure you have the ultimate protection from this deadly virus – I encourage everyone to book their jab as soon as they are offered it.

Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

20 million people have received the strongest protection from this virus – another incredible milestone.

It is inspiring to see the incredible public response to our call to arms to get the jab. We have one of the highest vaccine uptake rates in the world, but our work is not done yet.

It's time to redouble our efforts on the second dose, so please come forward for the second jab as it could be a life-saving extra boost of protection.

The milestone comes as government announces that appointments for a second dose of a vaccine will be brought forward from 12 to 8 weeks for the remaining people in the top 9 priority groups yet to receive their second dose.

This is to ensure people across the UK have the strongest possible protection from the virus at an earlier opportunity.

It is part of government's plans to tackle rising cases of the B.1.617.2 variant of concern (VOC) first identified in India, as well as strengthened

surge testing, genome sequencing and enhanced contact tracing measures deployed across the North West to control the spread.

Vaccinated people are far less likely to get COVID-19 with symptoms. Vaccinated people are even more unlikely to get serious COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital or to die from it. There is growing evidence that vaccinated people are less likely to pass the virus to others.

Data from Public Health England's real-world study shows the vaccines are already having a significant impact in the UK, reducing hospitalisations and deaths, saving more than 11,700 lives and preventing 33,000 hospitalisations in England by the end of April.

New PHE analysis shows that individuals who receive a single dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine have approximately 80% lower risk of death with COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated individuals. The report also shows protection against death from the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine rises from approximately 80% after 1 dose to 97% after 2 doses.

A separate new PHE report provides further evidence that the vaccine is highly effective in reducing the risk of hospitalisation, especially in older ages. For the over 80s, it is estimated that 2 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine reduce the risk of hospitalisation by 93%.

ONS data published on 6 May found that more than 9 in 10 (93%) adults reported positive sentiment towards the vaccine.

All vaccines being used in the UK have met the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) strict standards of safety, effectiveness and quality.

Rolling reviews are underway by the MHRA to assess the Janssen and Novavax vaccines.

Approved vaccines are available from thousands of NHS vaccine centres, GP practices and pharmacies. Around 98% of people live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre in England and vaccinations are taking place at sites including mosques, community centres and football stadiums.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

This milestone underscores the incredible progress we are making right across the country in our fight against COVID-19.

The UK government is supplying vaccines for people in all parts of the United Kingdom, and our fantastic NHS is working tirelessly to administer first and second doses.

This is just one way the UK government is supporting every part of the country through the pandemic.

ENDS

Background information

- You can view [the latest UK-wide vaccination statistics](#) and NHS England's [vaccine statistics for England](#).
- PHE's real-world data on the efficacy of Covid-19 vaccines is available [here](#). Their latest study on household transmission can be found [here](#).
- The ONS survey on 'Barriers to Covid-19 vaccination' can be found [here](#).
- JCVI's final advice for phase 2 of the vaccination programme is available [here](#).
- To date, the government has invested over £300 million into manufacturing a successful vaccine to enable a rapid roll out.
- The UK has secured early access to 517 million doses of eight of the most promising vaccine candidates. This includes agreements with:
 - Pfizer/BioNTech for 100 million doses
 - Oxford/AstraZeneca for 100 million doses
 - Moderna for 17 million doses
 - Janssen for 30 million doses
 - Novavax for 60 million doses
 - Valneva for 100 million doses
 - CureVac for 50 million doses
 - GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur for 60 million doses
- The UK government is committed to supporting equitable access to vaccines worldwide. The UK is the largest donor to the COVAX facility, the global mechanism to help developing countries access a coronavirus vaccine, and has committed £548 million in UK aid to help distribute 1.3

billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to 92 developing countries this year.

[Workforce wellbeing in the spotlight at LLWR](#)

News story

Company unveils series of initiatives during Mental Health Awareness Week.



Officials from Prospect trade union visited LLWR in 2019 to advise members during Mental Health Awareness Week.

LLW Repository Ltd (LLWR) has been working hard during Mental Health Awareness Week to ensure its workforce is best equipped to deal with wellbeing issues as the pandemic restrictions begin to ease.

The company unveiled an extensive new Employee Assistance Programme, with help on offer for everything from moving home to family crisis, illness and retirement, and of course, mental health.

Features during the week have included a photographic competition to 'Connect with Nature' (the theme for the week), information about the company's Wellness Action Plans for individuals returning to work following absence, and blogs from staff members, praising the benefits of the one to one counselling service, available free of charge through LLWR.

The twice weekly lunchtime virtual Tea and Chat sessions with the organisation's volunteer Mental Health First Aiders were another key element.

Mark Edgar, HR Manager, said: "We realise that given the 14 months we've had, with prolonged lockdowns and many members of our workforce continuing to work from home, we had to put great care into our communications around this week.

“Due to COVID 19 the stresses and strains on some have been greater than they might have been. I think we’ve struck the right tone in our communications, with helpful wellbeing information available every day, including the many routes to help for those who might need it.”

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