

£1.3 million in contracts awarded to fund telexistence technologies

- £1.3 million overall funding allocated to three innovative organisations to develop telexistence technologies
- Funding achieved through [Telexistence: Phase 2](#), run on behalf of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA)
- Telexistence: Phase 2 sought innovations to develop a complete telexistence system, integrating telepresence, robotic and haptic technologies on to a single platform

The [Defence Science and Technology Laboratory](#) (Dstl), the [Nuclear Decommissioning Authority](#) (NDA) and the [Defence and Security Accelerator](#) (DASA) are pleased to announce that three innovators have won a share of £1.3 million funding to develop cutting edge telexistence systems.

Telexistence technology has the potential to give those working in hazardous environments the capability to undertake tasks without physically being present, which can decrease risk and reduce the logistical burden associated with dangerous operations. Innovators were tasked with evaluating their innovations against use cases in:

- Specialist Nuclear Decommissioning Tasks
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)
- Defence and Security Medical applications

Mark Hodder, Project Manager, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory said:

The DASA Telexistence: Phase 2 competition has been a great success in finding the latest innovators to collaborate with Dstl and NDA to develop a complete system using science and technology to integrate and create a platform using Telepresence, Robotics and Haptics together to achieve results.

Andrew Gray, Innovation Delivery, Manager Nuclear Decommissioning Authority said:

We are excited to be working with DASA and Dstl on this competition. Advancing technologies in the area of telexistence will help us deliver our decommissioning mission more safely, securely and efficiently in enabling us to move humans away from harm. It's our aim to reduce decommissioning activities carried out by humans in hazardous environments by 50% by 2030. We are really encouraged to see such fantastic solutions being put forward by the supply chain.

Congratulations to the Telexistence: Phase 2 winners

Four projects from 3 innovators have been awarded Telexistence: Phase 2 funding to fast-track their novel ideas. The winners are:

TNO

TNO's innovation HaBiTS, (Haptic Bimanual Telexistence System), comprised of robotic arms and effectors, aims to provide NDA operators with a high sense of telexistence and with the critical visual, auditory, and haptic cues required for effective, efficient, and safe task execution.

Sheffield University

The University of Sheffield's MediTel (Medical Telexistence Platform) aims to deliver next generation medical telexistence technologies that integrate telepresence, robotics, and haptic technologies on one platform. This will help enable real time user interaction with remote environments and consultant interfaces to enhance Combat Medic Technician and Regimental Aid Post capabilities to reduce human risk of injury. The project is a collaboration between the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) and the Faculty of Engineering departments of Automatic Control and Systems Engineering (ACSE) and Sheffield Robotics.

Cyberselves Universal Ltd.

Cyberselves are undertaking two projects aligned to different use cases, but using similar system components. Project one, TEL-ND, aims to design a cutting-edge telexistence solution that removes NDA operators from risk. The innovation enables operators to carry out their tasks remotely from a location remotely, utilising a robot, without adversely impacting performance.

Project two, TEL-MED, aims to design an innovative telexistence product that allows a thinly spread medical workforce to be present in multiple places at once while also removing them from radioactive, chemical or biologically compromised environments.

Telexistence: Phase 2 funded projects will run over the next 10 months and be placed through a series of representative trials, with results delivered in summer 2023.

What happened in Telexistence: Phase 1

Telexistence: Phase 2 follows on from Phase 1, where £570K worth of contracts was awarded to:

- Veolia Nuclear Solutions
- Cyberselves Universal Ltd.
- Createc

- L3Harris Technologies, Inc – Robotics Division
- Holoxica Limited
- University of Leeds
- TNO
- Centre of Excellence in Terrorism, Resilience, Intelligence and Organised Crime Research (CENTRIC) at Sheffield Hallam University
- Digital Kinematics Ltd

Telexistence: Phase 1 aimed to understand the technical possibilities and potential applications of a telexistence capability for the defence and security community.

[Learn more here.](#)

[Contacting the Patient Safety Commissioner for England](#)

News story

Dr Henrietta Hughes began her role as the Patient Safety Commissioner for England on 12 September 2022.



Dr Henrietta Hughes was appointed as the [first ever Patient Safety Commissioner for England](#) in July. She began her role on 12 September.

Dr Hughes is an independent point of contact for patients so that patients' voices are heard and acted upon. She will use patients' insight to help the government and the healthcare system in England listen and respond to patients' views and promote patient safety, specifically with regard to medicines and medical devices.

For more information on the role of the Patient Safety Commissioner see the [fact sheet](#) and the [government's response to a consultation regarding the post](#).

The [privacy notice](#) sets out how the Patient Safety Commissioner collects and uses personal data to fulfil the role.

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[Over 30 million people urged to take up 'vital' flu and COVID-19 vaccines](#)

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is urging everyone [eligible](#) for a free flu vaccine and a COVID-19 booster to take up the offer as soon as possible ahead of what could be a difficult winter with respiratory viruses circulating widely.

International surveillance shows that H3N2 – a subtype of influenza type A – is currently the most-commonly detected flu virus worldwide. H3N2 has recently caused waves of infection in southern hemisphere countries such as Australia, which has also experienced flu circulating earlier than usual in their winter season.

This H3N2 strain circulated in the UK last winter but was held largely in check by COVID-19 restrictions when people mixed a lot less and worked from home. This helped to protect people from catching flu but has also led to lower levels of natural immunity to this strain building up within the population.

There was record uptake of the flu jab in people aged 65 and over in 2021 and 2022 (82%), though there was lower uptake among people in clinical risk groups and pregnant women and these groups are particularly encouraged to come forward this year.

All primary school children and some secondary school children are eligible for the flu nasal spray this year, which is usually given at school. GP surgeries are also inviting children aged 2 and 3 years old (age on 31 August) for this nasal spray vaccination at their practices.

Most young children will not have encountered flu yet. This means they will not have built up any natural immunity to this virus, so it is particularly important for them to take up the flu vaccine this year.

In addition to the predicted flu wave, we have early indications that COVID-19 rates are beginning to rise ahead of winter, increasing the threat to people's health.

[Study results](#) from early in the pandemic show individuals who catch both flu and COVID-19 at the same time, known as co-infection, are around twice as

likely to suffer death compared to those who only have COVID-19.

For all those who are eligible, taking up both the COVID-19 booster and the flu jab is an essential form of protection against the most severe respiratory viruses in circulation this winter.

As well as taking up the vaccines, everyone is encouraged to help stop the spread of respiratory viruses this winter by practising good hand hygiene, wearing masks in crowded or enclosed public spaces and covering your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze.

Dr Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Advisor at UKHSA, said:

Flu and COVID-19 are unpredictable but there are strong indications we could be facing the threat of widely circulating flu, lower levels of natural immunity due to less exposure over the last three winters and an increase in COVID-19 circulating with lots of variants that can evade the immune response. This combination poses a serious risk to our health, particularly those in high-risk groups.

The H3N2 flu strain can cause particularly severe illness. If you are elderly or vulnerable because of other conditions you are at greater risk, so getting the flu jab is a sensible, potentially life-saving thing to do.

We are extremely fortunate to have vaccines against these two diseases. Most eligible groups have been selected because they are at higher risk of severe illness.

Younger children are unlikely to have built up any natural immunity to flu and therefore it is particularly important they take the nasal spray vaccine this year. So, if you are offered a jab, please come forward to protect yourself and help reduce the burden on our health services.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Dr Thomas Waite said:

Vaccines have saved many lives over the years for both flu and more recently COVID-19. But we must not be complacent – infections will rise once again this winter, so it's really important people get both their COVID-19 and flu vaccines if eligible.

Vaccines are the best way to protect yourself from serious illness and will help reduce pressure on the healthcare system.

NHS director for vaccinations and screening Steve Russell said:

This winter could be the first time we see the effects of the so

called 'twindemic' with both COVID-19 and flu in full circulation, so it is vital that those most susceptible to serious illness from these viruses come forward for vaccines in order to protect themselves and those around them.

If you have been offered a flu vaccination or COVID-19 booster you should book in as soon as possible and with more vaccination centres than ever before this year, they are quick, convenient and will provide vital protection this winter.

[HMT response to Bank of England financial stability intervention](#)

Government response

HM Treasury responds to the Bank of England's intervention to support financial stability



The Bank of England, in line with its financial stability objective, carefully monitors financial markets and any potential risk to the flow of credit to the real economy, and subsequent effects on UK households and businesses.

Global financial markets have seen significant volatility in recent days.

The Bank has identified a risk from recent dysfunction in gilt markets, so the Bank will temporarily carry out purchases of long-dated UK government bonds from today (28 September) in order to restore orderly market conditions. These purchases will be strictly time limited, and completed in the next two weeks. To enable the Bank to conduct this financial stability intervention, this operation has been fully indemnified by HM Treasury.

The Chancellor is committed to the Bank of England's independence. The

Government will continue to work closely with the Bank in support of its financial stability and inflation objectives.

Further information

- There has been significant repricing of UK and global financial assets, which has become more significant in the past days such that it is now affecting the functioning of core financial markets.
- This is particularly true of long-dated UK government debt.
- This intervention has been undertaken by the Bank Executive, having carried out engagement with the Financial Policy Committee and Monetary Policy Committee, in line with their respective Concordats regarding the Sterling Monetary Framework.
- The Chancellor authorised the Governor's request for an indemnity for the operation, which will in turn ensure that financial conditions remain accessible for households and businesses.

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[New OPSS call for data](#)

Interested parties are invited to submit any scientific information relevant to the safety assessment of cosmetic ingredients in the list below:

- Propylparaben (CAS 94-13-3)
- Resorcinol (CAS 108-46-3)
- Benzophenone (CAS 119-61-9)
- Benzyl salicylate (CAS 118-58-1)
- Genistein (CAS 446-72-0)
- Daidzein (CAS 486-66-8)

OPSS would like to evaluate the safety of these ingredients in cosmetic products due to their suspected endocrine disrupting properties.

Data on each individual ingredient must be provided as a separate submission.

[Respond to this call for data online](#) – Citizen Space website

Please note that the deadline for the submitting of data has been extended until 30 November 2022. If you have already submitted files, you do not need to re-submit them.

Deadline for submission: 30 November 2022