

# Build back better: £600 million to upgrade and refurbish NHS hospitals

- Part of £1.5 billion capital funding announced by the Prime Minister in the summer to help the NHS build back better
- Almost 1,800 projects across 178 trusts will tackle urgent maintenance issues by March 2021

NHS hospital staff, patients and visitors across all regions in England will benefit from refurbished wards, brand-new electrics and upgraded ventilation systems by next spring, the Health Secretary has announced, as the government invests £600 million to tackle critical maintenance work.

The funding has been released to 178 NHS trusts to cover almost 1,800 maintenance projects. The projects are now underway, and will be completed by March 2021.

Investment will be targeted towards a range of projects including:

- building new or refurbished buildings to deliver key services;
- upgrades to electrical infrastructure
- improvements to ventilation systems
- works to improve fire safety
- replacing hospital lifts

The investment is part of £1.5 billion capital funding which was announced in the summer to build an NHS fit for the future, which also includes plans to modernise mental health facilities, expand A&E capacity and improve infection control ahead of winter.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

“Alongside delivering on our manifesto commitment to build 40 new hospitals and 20 major hospital upgrades across the country, this investment will help our NHS build back better.

“These crucial maintenance projects will deliver immediate benefits and provide NHS staff with the facilities they need to provide world-class care to their patients this winter, helping ensure the NHS is always there for you when you need it.”

The projects include:

- £15.9 million for a new critical care centre at Northampton General Hospital
- £3.3 million to Croydon Health Services NHS Trust for a new paediatric integrated unit
- £6.5 million for the construction of a new MRI building at St George’s Hospital in London to house a new scanner
- £2.7 million to refurbish Firth Theatres at the Northern General

Hospital, which includes critical care, cardiovascular surgery and other surgical wards

Trusts were provided an initial allocation based on need and were asked to put forward suitable projects that would deliver maximum impact and the best value for money, and could be completed by March 2021. The successful projects are evenly distributed across England, with more than half of projects in the Midlands, North East and Yorkshire; and North West regions.

Today's announcement is on top of an additional £450 million investment from government to improve hospital A&Es this winter by expanding waiting areas and increasing the number of treatment cubicles, helping to boost A&E capacity by providing additional space, reducing overcrowding and improving infection control measures.

The government is committed to supporting the NHS to build back better, having confirmed a series of major investments in NHS infrastructure since August last year, including £850 million to upgrade 20 hospitals and £3.7 billion to help deliver 40 new hospitals by 2030.

Following last month's Spending Review, £1.2 billion has been ring-fenced for NHS new hospitals and upgrades in 2021/22, plus £4.2 billion for NHS operational capital funding.

The Treasury has also committed an additional £235 million for further hospital maintenance works for the next financial year beginning in April 2021. There will be a further boost for technology and digital projects including AI labs and remote GP appointments, diagnostic equipment and a science hub.

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## **800,000 trees set to be planted as Green Recovery Challenge Fund projects announced**

- Funding will create over 300 hectares of woodlands, restore hedgerows, and plant trees in cities as we build back greener from the pandemic
- Nearly £40 million allocated to projects across England in this first round, with second round of funding to open in early 2021

Projects that protect landscapes, connect people with nature and help create and retain thousands of green jobs across England have been awarded a share of almost £40 million, the government announced today.

The 68 projects will see over 800,000 trees planted and help restore damaged habitats such as moorlands, wetlands and forests. The projects will also

support conservation work and help to improve education about the environment.

This first round of funding from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund will award nearly £40 million. The second funding round will open for applications early next year. The Green Recovery Challenge Fund is a key part of [the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan](#) to kick-start nature recovery, create green jobs and tackle climate change while helping the country build back better and greener from the pandemic.

The fund will be delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

The winning projects include:

- The Woodland Trust, which is being awarded £3,860,200 to restore ancient woodlands and trees in 63 landscapes across England. The funding will also go towards helping increase skills and capacity within the wider forestry and conservation sectors and reinvigorate UK timber markets.
- A partnership led by the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) in England and Wales, who will receive £2,543,600 to connect young people to nature and build a new workforce for the green recovery, targeting young people from deprived areas through virtual, field or class based learning, day and residential trips, citizen science programme and volunteering with experienced environmental tutors across 200 diverse natural heritage sites, such as conservation areas, AONBs, national parks and more.
- The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare, which has been awarded £580,400 to improve access to green spaces at NHS sites across England, including by planting 10,000 trees at 50+ NHS sites, and providing outdoor ecotherapy sessions and even refurbishing a garden for a chemotherapy suite, which will allow patients to have treatment outside.
- The Conservation Education & Research Trust will receive £249,900 to help plant 12 'tiny forests' (the size of a tennis court) in urban areas across England.
- The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust's Owl Box Initiative is being awarded a grant of £123,700 to work with 100 farms and supply communities with Barn Owl boxes, monitoring their success and involving farming families in this process.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

These projects will drive forward work across England to restore and transform our landscapes, boost nature and create green jobs, and will be a vital part of helping us to build back greener from coronavirus.

I look forward to working with environmental organisations as these projects develop and help address the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change, while creating and retaining jobs as part of the green recovery.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

Reaching net zero and achieving the government's 25 Year Environment Plan goals for nature can only be done by employing the right skills. The Green Recovery Challenge Fund will deliver on the ground benefits for local communities, and wildlife, by supporting jobs in the environmental sector.

This has been a tough year for everyone, but these projects give us reason for optimism and will help develop the skills needed to tackle the climate emergency, protect biodiversity and build back greener.

Natural England Chair Tony Juniper said:

Having opportunities to experience wildlife-rich natural environments has never been more essential for the nation's health and wellbeing as it has been this year. Today we celebrate the tangible benefits for people and wildlife this fund will soon deliver, as we emerge from the coronavirus crisis.

It is inspiring to see how the fund will help aspiring ecologists take their first roles toward building careers in Nature recovery and the sustainable economy it is essential we now build. It is another step toward securing the wonderful landscapes and habitats upon which we all depend.

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive, National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:

Supporting our natural environment is one of the most valuable things we can do right now. All these projects are of huge benefit to our beautiful countryside and wildlife, but will also support jobs, health and wellbeing, which are vitally important as we begin to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis.

Exchequer Secretary, Kemi Badenoch, said:

This investment will support growth right across England, creating and supporting thousands of new jobs and helping people develop valuable new skills.

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund is a vital part of our efforts to support decarbonisation and restore biodiversity, as part of our transition to a green economy.

21 projects will receive the larger grants (over £250k – £5m) and 47 projects

awarded funding for the smaller grants (£50 – £250k).

The fund will also drive progress on the government's wider [25 Year Environment Plan commitments](#), including plans to increase tree-planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025. This is alongside the forthcoming [Environment Bill](#) which puts the environment at the centre of policy making to ensure that we have a cleaner, greener and more resilient country for the next generation.

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## [Sunbeam report and safety flyer published](#)

News story

Fatal accident in an enclosed space on board the fishing vessel Sunbeam in Fraserburgh, Scotland.



Our accident investigation report into the fatal accident on board the pelagic trawler Sunbeam on 14 August 2018, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, the subsequent actions taken and recommendations made: [read more](#).

A [safety flyer](#) to the fishing industry summarising the accident and detailing the safety lessons learned, has also been produced, along with our [safety bulletin](#), published in 2018, which provides an urgent safety warning to those working in enclosed spaces.

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## The continuing challenges facing Central Africa

Thank you, Mr President.

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I want to express our thanks to SRSF Fall for his continued efforts to support and promote peace, stability, and security in Central Africa, particularly under the difficult circumstances engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We welcome the recent progress in the region, particularly the establishment of the new ECCAS Commission. But as SRSF Fall has set out, Central Africa continues to face serious political, economic, and security challenges, which have been exacerbated by the impacts of COVID-19. As ever, it remains important that the countries of the region work with the support of the UN, and together, to strengthen regional peace and security, protect civilians in conflict, and promote human rights and resilient to economic recovery.

In this regard, I commend UNOCA's ongoing work on conflict prevention and mediation efforts across Central Africa. And I would encourage greater coordination between UNOCA and UN country teams in the sub-region, with a particular focus on strengthening early warning.

Mr President, the United Kingdom remains deeply concerned by the ongoing crisis in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, which SRSF Fall described. The impacts on civilians continue to be profound. The conflict in this region has driven around 770,000 people from their homes and forced 60,000 people to seek refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. Only 30 percent of schools are currently open.

This conflict, compounded by the effects of COVID-19, has exacerbated humanitarian needs across the country. In September, the United Kingdom announced a further \$6 million to fund humanitarian actors in Cameroon. This funding will provide vital assistance, including food, medical supplies, and sanitation provisions to tens of thousands of vulnerable people and brings our total humanitarian support to Cameroon in 2020 to \$18 million.

We remain deeply concerned by reports of human rights violations and abuses committed by both security forces and separatists in the North-West and South-West regions. Among the many reported acts of violence against civilians, the killing of seven children by unidentified gunmen in Kumba in October was particularly shocking. We continue to support the Secretary-General's call on all actors not to attack civilians, and we call for an end to violence and for unhindered humanitarian access.

The UK urges respect by all parties for human rights, including freedom of expression, association, and assembly. We continue to urge full cooperation

by the Government of Cameroon with the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

I commend the steps taken by the Government of Cameroon to address the crisis and respond to the recommendations, throughout the dialogue on October 2019, including the holding of regional elections on the 6th of December. These elections were an important step towards decentralisation. Inclusive dialogue remains and achieving a just, peaceful, and durable resolution to the North-West, South-West crisis, which meets the reasonable demands of the moderate majority. All parties should remain engaged in good faith, in dialogue and peacebuilding efforts, including the Swiss-led efforts to facilitate talks between the Government of Cameroon and separatist groups. I hope that Cameroon's international and regional friends and partners will also continue to support efforts to restore peace and security in the North-West and South-West regions.

Mr President, The United Kingdom also strongly condemns the terrorist attacks on civilians in Cameroon's Far North and across the wider Lake Chad Basin area. We express our condolences to the innocent lives lost, including the 70 civilians killed in Nigeria's Borno state on the 28th of November. We welcome the efforts of the Multi-National Joint Task Force to tackle Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa in the region. We urge the Governments of the Lake Chad Basin countries, with the support of international partners, to redouble their efforts to tackle the root causes of conflict. This should include efforts to improve governance, demobilise, and reintegrate former combatants, and mitigate the impacts of climate change on regional security.

Mr President, I would like to end with a few words about the Central African Republic. The upcoming presidential and legislative elections on the 27th of December will be an important milestone in the Central African Republic's journey towards lasting peace. We urge the Central African Republic Government and all political actors in the country to ensure the elections are inclusive, peaceful, free, and fair. The UK has committed \$640,000 to fund the elections through the UN and support the participation of women, youth, and marginalised groups. But elections are, of course, only one element of democratic governance. We hope to see continuing efforts by all stakeholders in the Central African Republic, to strengthen political inclusivity, protect and promote human rights, and meet the needs of the population, including with respect to basic security and humanitarian needs.

Thank you, Mr President.

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**[Confirmation of guidance to](#)**

# vaccination centres on managing allergic reactions following COVID-19 vaccination with the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine

Dr June Raine, Chief Executive of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), said:

“We have this evening (Wednesday 9 December 2020) issued updated guidance to COVID-19 vaccination centres about the management of anaphylaxis, following two reports of anaphylaxis and one report of a possible allergic reaction following immunisation. This guidance confirms the precautionary advice to healthcare professionals which we issued yesterday evening.

“Today we convened an Expert Group of the Commission on Human Medicines’ (CHM), attended by experts in Allergy and Clinical Immunology, to robustly review these reports to consider any possible mitigation on the rare risk of anaphylaxis.

“Any person with a history of anaphylaxis to a vaccine, medicine or food should not receive the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine. A second dose should not be given to anyone who has experienced anaphylaxis following administration of the first dose of this vaccine.

“Anaphylaxis is a known, although very rare, side effect with any vaccine. Most people will not get anaphylaxis and the benefits in protecting people against COVID-19 outweigh the risks.

“Anyone due to receive their vaccine should continue with their appointment and discuss any questions or medical history of serious allergies with the healthcare professional prior to getting the jab.

“You can be completely confident that this vaccine has met the MHRA’s robust standards of safety, quality and effectiveness. The safety data has also been critically assessed by the government’s independent advisory body, the Commission on Human Medicines. No vaccine would be approved unless it meets these stringent standards – on that you can be sure.

“We have in place a robust and proactive safety monitoring strategy for COVID-19 vaccines which allows for rapid, real-time safety monitoring at population level. The fact that these incidents were picked up and reviewed shows that to be the case.

“Members of the public and healthcare professionals are encouraged to report suspected side effects through the Yellow Card scheme. We supplement this form of safety monitoring with analysis of data on national vaccine usage and anonymised GP-based electronic healthcare records, linked to other healthcare



data, to proactively monitor safety.”

The MHRA’s updated advice is:

- Any person with a history of immediate-onset anaphylaxis to a vaccine, medicine or food should not receive the Pfizer BioNtech vaccine. A second dose of the Pfizer BioNtech vaccine should not be given to those who have experienced anaphylaxis to the first dose of Pfizer BioNtech vaccination.
- Vaccine recipients should be monitored for 15 mins after vaccination, with a longer observation period when indicated after clinical assessment.
- A protocol for the management of anaphylaxis and an anaphylaxis pack must always be available whenever the Pfizer BioNtech vaccine is given. Immediate treatment should include early treatment with 0.5mg intramuscular adrenaline (0.5ml of 1:1000 or 1mg/ml adrenaline), with an early call for help and further IM adrenaline every 5 minutes. The health professionals overseeing the immunisation service must be trained to recognise an anaphylactic reaction and be familiar with techniques for resuscitation of a patient with anaphylaxis.
- The individuals concerned received prompt treatment and are recovering well.
- Like all medicines and vaccines, this vaccine can cause side effects. Most of these are mild and short-term, and not everyone gets them.
- [Link to Yellow Card scheme COVID-19 reporting site](#)