

# Additional £58 million to help Scotland tackle coronavirus

Press release

The UK Government has today announced an additional £58 million to help the devolved administration in Scotland respond to the challenge of the coronavirus.



This comes on top of the existing £3.5 billion package given to Holyrood to help it tackle the crisis.

This additional funding follows the announcement of a new Infection Control Fund in England to reduce the spread of coronavirus in care homes.

Welcoming the announcement, Scotland Secretary Alister Jack said:

No one part of the UK will face this pandemic alone, and today's announcement of a further £58 million of UK Government funding for the devolved administration in Scotland demonstrates how we continue to tackle coronavirus together.

While different parts of the UK are beginning to move at slightly different speeds, we remain fully committed to getting through this crisis as one United Kingdom.

This latest cash boost for Scotland is a result of additional funding being announced for the care homes across England. Our frontline carers are heroes in this crisis, going above and beyond and putting their own lives on the line, and it is right we do everything we can to protect them.

This package is the latest in a range of UK-wide support for businesses and individuals in Scotland. This includes a £330 billion of loans and guarantees for businesses, access to the Job Retention Scheme and support for the self-employed. The UK military is providing both the Scottish Government and the

NHS with additional specialist skills and expertise and our UK-wide PPE strategy meaning our heroic front-line workers in Scotland have the protection they need to tackle the coronavirus pandemic. The UK Government has also expanded testing capacity right across the UK with centres opened recently at Glasgow and Aberdeen airports.

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## COVID-19 detection dogs trial launches

- ‘COVID dogs’ to be trialled as potential non-invasive detection approach for the virus in the future
- The dogs, who successfully detect certain cancers, will undergo intensive training to see if they can spot coronavirus before symptoms appear
- Clinical trial backed by half a million pounds of government funding for innovative schemes

Trials for specially-trained ‘COVID dogs’ that may be able to detect coronavirus in humans, even before symptoms appear, are set to begin as part of new research. This will establish whether they could be used as a potential new non-invasive, early warning measure to detect coronavirus in the future.

World-leading researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) will carry out the first phase of a trial in collaboration with the charity Medical Detection Dogs and Durham University, backed by £500,000 of government funding. This aims to determine whether dogs are able to detect coronavirus in humans from odour samples.

The trial brings together leading disease control experts from the universities with Medical Detection Dogs, who have already successfully trained dogs to detect the odour of many different diseases in humans, such as cancer, malaria and Parkinson’s disease.

This new trial will look at whether the dogs, a mixture of labradors and cocker spaniels, can be trained to detect coronavirus in people too, even if they are not showing symptoms.

Minister for Innovation Lord Bethell said:

“Bio-detection dogs already detect specific cancers and we believe this innovation might provide speedy results as part of our wider testing strategy.

“Accuracy is essential so this trial will tell us whether ‘COVID dogs’ can reliably detect the virus and stop it spreading.”

If successful, these dogs could provide a fast and non-invasive detection method alongside the government's robust 5-pillar testing strategy. It is one of a number of testing measures being explored in order to ensure the government's response to the virus is as extensive as possible.

The initial phase of the trial will see NHS staff in London hospitals collect odour samples from people who are infected with coronavirus and those who are uninfected. The 6 bio detection dogs will then undergo thorough training to identify the virus from the samples.

More than 10 years of research gathered by Medical Detection Dogs has shown that the dogs, which could each screen up to 250 people per hour, can be trained to detect the odour of disease at the equivalent dilution of one teaspoon of sugar in 2 Olympic-sized swimming pools of water.

Professor James Logan, lead researcher for the work and Head of the Department of Disease Control at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said:

Our previous work has shown that malaria has a distinctive odour, and with Medical Detection Dogs, we successfully trained dogs to accurately detect malaria. This, combined with the knowledge that respiratory disease can change body odour, makes us hopeful that the dogs can also detect COVID-19.

I would like to thank the UK government for their support of this pioneering research through this funding. We're excited to do this trial, and confirm whether these bio detection dogs can be used to screen for COVID-19.

If successful, this approach could revolutionise how we detect the virus, with the potential to screen high numbers of people.

Medical Detection Dogs and the universities put forward a proposal for the clinical trial to the government, which has been accepted following strong evidence that the dogs can detect other diseases in humans with a high level of accuracy.

The dogs will only be deployed if backed by strong scientific evidence and is part of the government's approach to explore all possible options to tackle coronavirus.

Dr Claire Guest, Co-founder and CEO of Medical Detection Dogs, said:

We are delighted that the government has given us the opportunity to demonstrate that dogs can play a role in the fight against COVID-19. They have the potential to help by quickly screening people, which could be vital in the future

We have already demonstrated our expertise in canine disease

detection by successfully training dogs to detect diseases like cancer, Parkinson's and malaria, and we apply that same science to train life-saving Medical Alert Assistance Dogs to detect odour changes in individuals caused by their health condition.

We are sure our dogs will be able to find the odour of COVID-19 and we will then move into a second phase to test them in live situations, following which we hope to work with other agencies to train more dogs for deployment. We are incredibly proud that a dog's nose could once again save many lives.

- [Find out more about the trial.](#)
  - Access [photos and videos of the dogs.](#)
  - LSHTM are finalising the ethics approvals for the sample collection to begin, and will likely have confirmation in the next week. The basic training with the dogs has started.
  - The COVID dogs are in early stage training so are not yet working with COVID-19 samples. Therefore, at this stage it is not possible to arrange filming opportunity of them training with COVID-19 samples.
  - LSHTM is a world-leading centre for research, postgraduate studies and continuing education in public and global health. LSHTM has a strong international presence with over 3,000 staff and 4,000 students working in the UK and countries around the world, and an annual research income of £180 million.
  - LSHTM is one of the highest-rated research institutions in the UK, is partnered with 2 MRC University Units in the Gambia and Uganda, and was named University of the Year in the Times Higher Education Awards 2016.
  - Their mission is to improve health and health equity in the UK and worldwide, working in partnership to achieve excellence in public and global health research, education and translation of knowledge into policy and practice. [Find out more.](#)
  - Medical Detection Dogs is the world-leading organisation for research into canine olfactory diagnostics. They train dogs to detect the odour of disease with the aim of developing faster, more efficient and less invasive diagnostics that lead to better patient outcomes.
  - Their bio detection research includes cancer, neurological disease and bacterial infections and has the potential to benefit millions. They apply what they know about the science of canine olfaction to benefit people by training medical alert assistance dogs, which help individuals manage complex, life-threatening medical conditions. [Find out more.](#)
  - Durham University is a globally outstanding centre of teaching and research based in historic city of Durham in the UK.
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# Kate Bingham appointed chair of UK Vaccine Taskforce

Kate Bingham has today (16 May) been appointed chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce – the group set up by the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Business Secretary and Health Secretary to lead UK efforts to find and manufacture a COVID-19 vaccine.

This is a cross-government role and Kate Bingham will report directly to the Prime Minister.

Kate Bingham is a leading figure in the life sciences sector and her appointment will enable the Vaccine Taskforce to accelerate the development of a safe and effective vaccine, one of the long-term solutions to controlling the coronavirus pandemic and saving lives without social distancing or contact tracing in place.

Kate will co-ordinate the work already underway across Government, academia and industry to rapidly develop vaccines, and ensure that as and when a viable one becomes available, it can be produced in mass quantities and safely administered to the public – both in the UK and around the world.

The Taskforce is ensuring the work being done to find a vaccine in the UK complements and supports global efforts. The UK is a leader in the global response, committing £250 million to the international drive to develop a coronavirus vaccine through the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and hosting the upcoming global pledging conference for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, on June 4th.

Kate is uniquely qualified for the role, having worked in the biotech sector in the UK and internationally for 26 years – most recently as Managing Partner at SV Health Investor. Her work has led to the launch of six drugs for the treatment of patients with inflammatory and autoimmune disease and cancer.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma, who has been tasked with ministerial responsibility for the government's work on vaccines said:

Discovering a vaccine is going to be vital in the plan to defeat COVID-19. Kate's appointment as chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce will give us exceptional leadership and focused energy as we seek to make this essential breakthrough.

We stand firmly behind the work of Kate and the Taskforce as they lead efforts to discover and mass produce a COVID-19 vaccine that could save millions of lives in the UK and around the world.

Chair of the Vaccine Taskforce Kate Bingham said:

Our immediate aim on vaccines is two-fold: to ensure everyone in the UK that needs to be vaccinated against COVID-19 can be as soon as practicable. Secondly, to ensure adequate global distribution of vaccines to bring the quickest possible end to the pandemic and the economic and social damage it causes.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We are determined to harness the UK's world leading scientists and institutions to discover and develop a vaccine to tackle this global virus.

Kate's work will be critical to this effort. She has an excellent track record in the biotech industry, and brings vast experience working with drug and therapeutic discoveries which gives us a head start in finding and manufacturing a COVID-19 vaccine.

Government Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance said:

All vaccines that come into development are long shots and to stand the greatest chance of making a crucial breakthrough we need we need great leadership. That is exactly what Kate Bingham will bring.

There are many vaccines worldwide in development and its vital that the UK continues to play its leading role in trialling potential vaccines and stands ready to get behind any viable vaccine candidates.

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## **Notes to Editors**

The Taskforce is supporting efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible by providing industry and research institutions with the resources and support needed. This includes working with regulators and scaling up manufacturing, so that when a vaccine is identified, it can be produced quickly and at scale.

The Bioindustry Association is working closely with the Taskforce, bringing together a whole range of businesses keen to use their expertise to mass-produce vaccines, as soon as one is ready.

## **About Kate Bingham**

Kate is temporarily stepping back from her full time role as Managing Partner at SV Health Investors, a leading international life sciences venture capital firm to take on this role as Chair of the Taskforce. At SV she is responsible

for biotech investments and activities in the UK and serves or has served on the boards of companies in the UK, US, Ireland, Sweden and Germany. Her investments include small-molecule drug discovery and development projects, biotherapeutic development projects, and drug discovery platforms in a broad range of clinical areas.

Kate played a leading role in setting up the UK's Dementia Discovery Fund (DDF) and serves on the DDF Investment Committee. The DDF was created by six leading pharmaceutical companies (Biogen, GSK, Johnson & Johnson, Eli Lilly, Pfizer, Takeda), together with the UK Department of Health and Alzheimer's Research UK. Launched with initial commitments of £70m it now has £250m to invest in new potential disease modifying therapeutics for dementia.

Prior to joining SV, Kate worked in business development for Vertex Pharmaceuticals, a biotechnology company in Cambridge, MA and at Monitor Company, a strategy consulting firm. She has an MA in Biochemistry from Oxford University (First class) and studied on a Kennedy Scholarship at Harvard Business School (MBA Baker Scholar).

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## **Clare Chapman appointed Chair of Acas**

Business Secretary Alok Sharma has announced the appointment of Clare Chapman as the new Chair of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) Council.

She formerly served as Group People Director at BT Group and prior to that, Director General of Workforce at the Department of Health.

Clare will take up her new role on 27 July, replacing Sir Brendan Barber, who served two terms as Acas Chair. Sir Brendan has been in the post since 2014.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Clare has a long track record of managing relationships between employers, workers and their trade unions, in both the private and the public sectors.

Clare's experience will be vital as Acas continues to support both employees and employers through this difficult period and beyond.

I also want to extend my thanks to Sir Brendan Barber for his hard work and dedicated leadership of Acas over the last six years.

Clare Chapman said:

I am delighted to be taking on this role. Given the uncertainty created by the Covid-19 crisis, Acas is proving its strength not just in dispute resolution but its role in helping employees and employers face the extraordinary workplace challenges that are still unfamiliar and evolving.

The appointment was made in line with the governance code for public appointments.

## **Notes to editors**

### **Clare Chapman biography**

Clare currently serves on the Board of the Weir Group Plc, G4S Plc and Heidrick and Struggles Inc. She has also been a Low Pay Commissioner since 2015 and is co-chair of The Purposeful Company with Will Hutton.

Prior to that Clare was the Group People Director of BT Group and Tesco Plc and Vice President of Human Resources for PepsiCo's operations in continental Europe. She also was the Director General of Workforce at the Department of Health where she was responsible to more than 2.2 million health and social care employees in England. Clare has also worked for Quaker Oats in the USA.

In her time at Tesco, the company partnered with The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) to establish a strong framework for progressive employee relations.

At the Department of Health, Clare was responsible for creating the Social Partnership Forum in Health, bringing Ministers, health service organisations and union leaders together to shape large scale operational change, prior to its implementation within the National Health Service (NHS). The NHS Constitution, still in use today, was developed during this time and was significantly shaped by the Forum.

Clare is a Trustee of the Reconciling Leaders Network, a registered charity established by the Archbishop of Canterbury to equip a generation to live out their calling as peacemakers and reconcilers for a just and flourishing society.

### **Acas and the role of the Acas Council**

Acas is an independent non-departmental public body (NDPB) and the Acas Council was established by statute to safeguard its independence. The Council consists of a Chair and eleven members who represent employer, worker or independent interests; all are appointed by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Acas aims to make working life better for everyone in Britain. It advises millions of people every year on how to resolve issues at work, through its website ([www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)), through its Helpline, and through workplace training. When things go wrong at work, Acas offers conciliation, both to individuals and to groups represented by trade unions.



## Links to government

Acas is independent of ministers, but is one of BEIS' key partners. Acas' services contribute to delivering a competitive, efficient and effective labour market which supports economic growth and employment.

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# [Foreign Office statement on Hong Kong](#)

## News story

Foreign Office statement in response to the report published today (15 May) by the Hong Kong Independent Police Complaints Council into unrest since June 2019



A Foreign Office spokesperson said:

Addressing police accountability remains essential for rebuilding trust in Hong Kong. We will consider the conclusions of this report carefully.

As we have consistently stated, we urge the authorities to facilitate a robust, independent inquiry.

## Media Enquiries

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