

# £10 million boost to improve patient care with new technologies

- Government backs researchers with £10 million to develop innovations that will transform patients' lives and significantly boost UK life sciences sector
- investment to support and speed up new treatments and cures for life-threatening diseases, from cancer to strokes
- funding comes as new visa route for overseas scientists and researchers becomes law

A new £10 million scheme will give leading researchers and businesses, based in the UK, the chance to work together to develop treatments and cures for those facing life-threatening conditions like cancer and dementia.

The UK is home to one of the strongest, most productive health and life sciences industries globally. The sector is worth £75 billion a year and employs 250,000 people across the UK.

Launched Today (20 February) by the Life Sciences Minister Nadhim Zahawi, the new Innovation Scholars Scheme, will support secondments for academics to develop new technologies and techniques to help NHS patients as soon as possible.

The scheme offers investment to support collaboration in life sciences between researchers and industry.

It will include developing new healthcare wearable technologies such as smartwatches and monitors, diagnostic devices like mobile health units, and new personalised medicines based on patients' genetic information.

Today, the government also announced 6 new locations that have been awarded the prestigious designation of Life Science Opportunity Zone (LSOZ). These zones will be able to attract investment from national and international businesses linking research expertise with business skills.

Life Sciences Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

The UK is home to one of the strongest, most vibrant health and life science industries globally, with discoveries and improvements in health diagnosis transforming people's lives.

Collaboration is vital to growing this sector and this new £10 million scheme will support the exchanging of ideas, knowledge and skills between researchers and businesses while encouraging strong collaboration with them, the NHS and the government.

This comes as the Home Secretary hosts a reception at No. 10 for the science

community today alongside the Immigration and Sciences Ministers, marking the opening of the new [Global Talent route](#) which will incorporate a brand new fast-track scheme for top scientists and researchers. Those in attendance include leading universities, students and the British Mathematical Olympiad team, royal societies, public sector and independent research organisations, and endorsing bodies.

Through the new immigration route, top scientists, mathematicians and researchers from around the world will be given fast-tracked entry into the UK. Investing in talent and cutting edge research will enable Britain to remain at the forefront of scientific discovery, from life sciences to climate change.

## **Life Science Opportunity Zones**

Today, the government also announced 6 new locations that have been awarded the prestigious status of Life Science Opportunity Zone (LSOZ), helping raise their profile at a national and international level. These zones will be able to attract investment from national and international businesses linking research and business expertise.

These zones highlight the opportunities of the such as vacant lab space, land to build new facilities, or links with higher education. Their special designation will help them attract investment and deliver jobs, drive economic growth and deliver improved health based on the UK's expertise in life sciences.

The new LSOZs are:

- Stevenage Advanced Therapies Campus, Hertfordshire
- Birmingham Life Sciences Park, West Midlands
- Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Oxfordshire
- Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Cambridgeshire
- Porton Science Park, Wiltshire
- Discovery Park, Sandwich, Kent

Experts working in the 6 new Life Science Opportunity Zones will have government support to promote their life sciences parks, through government officials working with the zones to attract investment from national and international businesses.

Researchers in the industry have already made huge advances in areas including early diagnosis, genomics, data, digital pathology and radiology, clinical research and manufacturing. These new zones will play a vital role in driving progress, economic growth and jobs and further supporting improving health outcomes.

## **Notes to editors**

UK Research and Innovation will fund post-doctoral secondments at biomedical firms of up to 3 years to boost collaborations between academia, industry and the NHS among other organisations.

Life Sciences Opportunity Zones were originally launched in November 2016 with Charnwood Campus. The LSOZ designation lasts for 10 years.

The Life Sciences sector has a history of high performance, with turnover and employment growing by 3% and 8% respectively between 2009 and 2018 and turnover growing by almost £1 billion (£0.8 billion) in the last year alone.

The [Life Sciences Industrial Strategy](#) was published 3 years ago. The government's Sector Deals in 2019 set out a strong commitment to the sector. The government has invested around £1 billion in attracting and delivering a host of ambitious life sciences initiatives, with around a further £3 billion leveraged from industry, including as part of the [2 Life Sciences Sector Deals](#).

Applications to the first round of the Innovations Scholars scheme close on 15 April. [Find out how to apply](#).

The Global Talent route replaces the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route and for the first time UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will endorse applicants from the scientific and research community.

The route will:

- provide for a brand new fast-track scheme, managed by UKRI which will enable UK-based research projects that have received recognised prestigious grants and awards, including from the European Space Agency and the Japan Science and Technology Agency, to recruit top global talent, benefiting higher education institutions, research institutes and eligible public sector research establishments – this will enable an individual to be fast-tracked to the visa application stage
- double the number of eligible fellowships, such as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, the European Research Council and Human Frontier Science, which also enable individuals to be fast-tracked
- continue to ensure dependants have full access to the labour market
- preserve the route's flexibility by not requiring an individual to hold an offer of employment before arriving or tying them to one specific job
- provide an accelerated path to settlement for all scientists and researchers who are endorsed on the route
- provide for an exemption from our absences rules for researchers, and their dependants, where they are required overseas for work-related purposes, ensuring they are not penalised when they apply for settlement

The funding comes after the government announced a £300 million major boost for mathematics funding in the UK.

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# Marylebone Cricket Club Tour – A Sign of Enduring UK-Pak Dosti

Dr Christian Turner, CMG, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, paid a warm tribute to the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for a successful tour to Pakistan. MCC, one of the world's oldest cricket clubs, has been on a week-long tour to Pakistan.

The High Commissioner hosted a reception in Lahore on Saturday to celebrate the collaborative efforts to bring international cricket back to Pakistan. The reception was an opportunity to show the warmth of enduring UK-Pakistan ties and the power of sport to strengthen people-to-people connections.

At the reception on Saturday, the High Commissioner showcased his cricketing skills by batting, bowling and keeping wickets with the cricket legend and MCC President Kumar Sangakkara. Senator Faisal Javed attended the reception on behalf of Prime Minister Imran Khan, and presented a bat signed by the PM to Sangakkara.

British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner, CMG, said;

To welcome the world's oldest and most famous cricket club is a sign of confidence in Pakistan, and of the improved security situation that led to the change in UK travel advice.

Cricket is in our blood and one of the many bonds that binds us together. I hope it is a step to welcoming an England cricket team back to Pakistan.

Commenting on the tour, MCC President Kumar Sangakkara said:

We were thrilled to be here in Pakistan. The Pakistan Cricket Board has done a tremendous job in rebuilding the international cricketing landscape here, and for MCC to be touring the country is a momentous occasion for everyone involved.

The aim of the tour is to encourage international teams to visit Pakistan and we hope that this trip goes a long way to achieving that aim.

Also present at the reception on Saturday were the MCC squad, Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, members of the parliament, senior members of the PCB, Pakistan's cricketing stars and the artists and influencers from the media industry.

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### **Notes to editors**

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### **Further information**

- The Pakistan cricket team is scheduled to tour England from July to September 2020 to play three Tests and three Twenty20 International (T20I) matches.
- Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) is a cricket club founded in 1787 and based since 1814 at Lord's Cricket Ground, which it owns, in St John's Wood, London.
- MCC are the custodians of the Laws of Cricket and are responsible for the debating, decision making and drafting of the Laws. It is one of the Club's most important roles, having carried it out since formation.
- MCC plays more matches than any other cricket club – around 480 per year against schools, universities and clubs in the UK, and between 20 and 30 fixtures annually as part of its overseas touring programme, which aims to develop cricket abroad.
- On the international stage, MCC has a World Cricket Committee, currently chaired by Mike Gatting that contains eminent current and former players and administrators. It has a remit to act as an independent think tank debating issues and making recommendations about the health and state of the game, as well as to commission research.

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## **[British High Commission brings The Great Debate to Faisalabad](#)**

The British High Commission's fifth annual GREAT Debate competition continued with a regional round at the Faisalabad Medical University in Faisalabad.

The regional round in Faisalabad followed previous rounds in Lahore, Quetta, Peshawar and Islamabad. The competition featured 21 students from universities across Faisalabad. At the end of an intense competition, Aimen Anwaar Pannu and Syeda Darain ul Hibba from Faisalabad Medical University were declared the winner and runner-up respectively.

The GREAT Debate competition is taking place from December 2019 to March 2020

in six cities across Pakistan.

Fouzia Younis, Director of Communication at the British High Commission said:

I am delighted that our GREAT Debate competition has returned to Faisalabad which is one of Pakistan's most important business cities. The aim of our GREAT Debate competition is to support the next generation of Pakistan discover the value of debate, persuasion and discourse. Over the last five years we have engaged thousands of debaters in 12 cities across Pakistan.

I have seen first-hand the culture of debating in universities and I am pleased that the GREAT Debate gives debaters and future leaders of this country a platform to showcase their skills

I look forward to seeing the winner and runner-up do well in the final.

Prof. Dr Zafar Ali Choudhry (T.I), Vice Chancellor, Faisalabad Medical University said:

Strong communication and argumentation is the need of the hour. Debate transforms us as individuals. I express gratitude to the British High Commission for providing such a platform.

This is the fifth annual edition of the British High Commission's GREAT Debate competition. Since 2015, the competition has taken place across 15 universities and 12 cities in Pakistan. The previous winners of the GREAT Debate competition have included: Gaudhan Aslam from Forman Christian College in Lahore, Taha Ahmed from Aga Khan University in Karachi, Mohiba Ahmed and Haris Ali Virk from Government College University in Lahore.

### **Further information**

The GREAT Debate is a debating competition for university students. There will be six events – in six different cities (Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and Faisalabad) involving students from leading universities across Pakistan – and the winner and runner-up of each round will compete in the grand final in Islamabad.

The regional rounds have taken place in Lahore, Quetta, Peshawar, Islamabad and Faisalabad. The last regional round is in Karachi in February.

The winner and runner-up of the overall competition will receive a scholarship reward to contribute towards their tuition fees.

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## Notes to editors

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# Students participate in Singapore's first #SgGirlsTakeover

- Girls from Springfield Secondary School stepped into the shoes of an ambassador, a theatre company founder, TV news anchor, and a chief commercial officer, among others, for a day.
- Seven women who hold prominent positions of leadership in Singapore mentored the students as they experienced the nuances, challenges and opportunities of their selected careers.

## Singapore, 6th February 2020

14 upper secondary school girls from Springfield Secondary School participated in the first #SgGirlsTakeover programme today – a unique opportunity for young girls to get a first-hand experience of leadership from women breaking boundaries in various sectors in Singapore.

Jointly organised by the British High Commission and the High Commission of Canada in Singapore, the programme saw the upper secondary students spend a day with an assigned mentor – each a woman at the top of her profession in sectors including government, business, the media, civil society and the arts.

The mentors for this year's programme are: Her Excellency Kara Owen (British High Commissioner to Singapore), Her Excellency Lynn McDonald (High Commissioner of Canada), Georgette Tan (President of United Women Singapore), Dr Sun Sun Lim (NMP and Faculty Head at SUTD), Christina Gao (Chief Commercial Officer at Connected Freight Shell, and Women of the Future Southeast Asia award winner), Sharanjit Leyl (News Presenter and Producer at BBC) and Tracie Pang (Artistic Director at Pangdemonium Productions).

The programme, inspired by Plan International's #GirlsTakeover movement held on International Day of the Girl each year, is aimed at building self-confidence in young girls and empowering them to aspire to taking on leadership roles themselves.

A recent study found that only 29% of senior management roles globally were held by women. In 2018, only 16.8% of CEOs in the Asia Pacific region were

women and one of the main reasons for this was found to be the lack of female representation in still male-dominated career paths and sectors.

The #SgGirlsTakeover is designed to help girls aspire to leadership roles in their future careers by exposing them to strong and positive female role models. Each of the mentors invited to participate in the programme were selected not only for being at the top of their profession but also for being strong advocates of breaking gender-based stereotypes to achieve success.

Her Excellency Lynn McDonald, High Commissioner of Canada, said:

We are thrilled to work with Springfield Secondary School and the British High Commission on this landmark initiative.

Canada is deeply committed to the empowerment of women and girls globally and we hope that through #SgGirlsTakeover, these 14 young women will be inspired by a sense of possibility and feel empowered to become leaders as they choose their career paths.

Mrs Mabel Leong, Principal of the Springfield Secondary School, said:

SgGirlsTakeover programme is a great opportunity to expose our Springfielders to, especially in places of work where as a teenager, they will not have the opportunity to see nor experience.

The programme matched 7 pairs of girls with 7 mentors allowing them to get a glimpse of their hosts' profession. The girls had the chance to not only learn about the technical aspects of their hosts' work but also took the time to understand the personal leadership journey of their mentor, the challenges they had to overcome to reach where they are today, and the importance of authentic leadership.

Over the course of the day, the students stepped into the shoes of their mentors and got a first-hand experience of what it takes to play that role on a daily basis – from making executive decisions as High Commissioners for the Day to understanding the ticketing processes for theatre productions.

Some were tasked at making posters for display at the United Women Singapore display at the Singapore Science Centre while others tried their hand at designing tools for eldercare at SUTD and understanding the logistics operations over at Shell.

British High Commissioner, Her Excellency Kara Owen, shared her own leadership journey with the girls accompanying her for the day. Ms Owen said:

It was a privilege to have such smart, funny and brave girls with us today – we put them in the position of being High Commissioner and asked them to make decisions and give their opinions. No small



ask for two 15 year olds!

It was great to see our world through their eyes and learn what's important to them. I hope that by showing the range of work we do in government – whether for the UK or Singapore, we gave them food for thought on the multiplicity of opportunities that lie ahead for them.

Participants of the #SGGirlsTakeover programme held on Feb 6, 2020

The day wrapped up with a tour of Singapore's Parliament House where the teenagers learnt about the history and traditions of the Parliament, its functions as well as about the women and men who helped shaped the nation.

The students came away from the programme inspired to follow their dreams. Said one of the participating teenagers:

I'm not the kind of person who is comfortable stepping into the limelight because it scares me but after meeting the mentors, who showed me how it can be done, I want to be like them. Someday, I also want to be a role model to others and tell them that no one can stop you from what you are doing or what you want to do someday. You just have to go for it!

Mrs Mabel Leong said:

I am sincerely grateful to all the volunteers of this programme whom despite their busy schedules have taken time to take our girls under their wings for a day to let them observe how women can lead a team or helm a project and confidently enjoying it.

This will definitely open up a broader view of how women can lead shoulder to shoulder with their team making the society a better place for all. All can and will contribute when we put our mind and will to it. Thank you for inviting Springfield to come on board #SgGirlsTakeover!

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**UK to attract top global talent,**

# including from Singapore

**Singapore, 20th February 2020**

There are an estimated 40,000 Singaporeans in the UK. In the academic year 2017-2018, there were nearly 8,000 Singaporean students enrolled for full-time study at UK universities. In the reverse direction, Singapore is the gateway for UK business to East Asia with over 4,000 UK companies having a presence here.

The two nations have several bilateral cooperation agreements in place that foster collaborations in fields such as digital governance, data protection regulation, financial cooperation as well as research and development.

The deep-rooted and forward-focused ties between the UK and Singapore are set to further strengthen as the UK announces new routes and opportunities for the brightest of minds from around the world to work and live in the country.

On 19 February, the UK's Home Secretary Priti Patel announced a new points-based immigration system that will take effect from 1 January 2021.

Under the revised system, points will be assigned for specific skills, qualifications, salaries or professions with the points' threshold carefully set to attract the talent that the UK needs. Anyone who meets the required number of points will be eligible to apply for a UK visa.

Student visas will also implement this points-based system to ensure that the brightest minds from around the globe have access to the UK's world-class universities. Those wishing to study in the UK will need to demonstrate that they have an offer from an approved educational institution, evidence of financial support and proficiency in English.

This new single global system will give top priority to those with the highest skills and the greatest talents from around the world, including Singapore.

This follows the changes to the UK's Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa and a new immigration route for graduates that was announced last year. This enables international students to remain in the UK for two years after completing their studies in order to look for top jobs in their chosen fields.

Following the latest announcement, British High Commissioner to Singapore, Kara Owen, said:

By attracting the best talent from around the world, the new points-based system supports an increase in people to people exchanges and knowledge partnerships – both of which are key focus points for us in Singapore.

We are committed to working together on trade, investment, science and research that will help ensure the continued prosperity of both our nations and to invest in the futures of our younger generations.

### **About the UK's Global Talent Visa:**

Launched today [20 February 2020] the Global Talent visa, formerly known as the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa, has been expanded to include a new fast-track scheme arranged by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) for world-leading scientists, top researchers and mathematicians to come to the UK. The Global Talent visa will continue to be open to talented applicants within the digital technology and arts and culture sectors.

Additionally, under the reformed Global Talent visa route, there will now be no cap on the number of people able to come to the UK, demonstrating the UK government's commitment to supporting top talent from around the world.

### **About the UK's Graduate Immigration Route:**

A new immigration route will also enable international students to remain in the UK for two years after they have completed their studies.

This will be available to those who have completed a degree at undergraduate level or above at a Higher Education Provider with a track record of compliance and who have a valid Tier 4 visa at the time of application.

Successful applicants on this route will be able to stay and work, or look for work, in the UK at any skill level for a maximum period of two years after their graduation. Graduates will be able to switch into skilled work once they have found a suitable job.

This new route will be launched in the summer of 2021 and eligible students who graduates in the summer of 2021 or after will be able to apply for the route. This includes students who have already started their courses.