

# Government to use Vaccine Taskforce model to tackle health challenges

- Funding for innovative research into improved treatments, including cancer immune therapies or vaccines and game-changing weight loss medication and technologies, to accelerate their development and rollout
- Prime Minister, Health and Social Care Secretary and Business Secretary will meet with key industry experts, global CEOs and NHS leaders to leverage further investment and ensure NHS patients benefit from cutting-edge new treatments
- Builds on £1 billion investment since publication of Life Sciences Vision and delivers on commitments to cement the UK as a life sciences superpower

NHS patients are set to benefit from cutting-edge new treatments and technologies as the government introduces a Vaccine Taskforce style approach to tackling some of the biggest public health challenges facing the UK.

The government has today announced over £113 million to fund research into four healthcare missions – cancer, obesity, mental health and addiction – to unlock the next generation of medicines and diagnostics to save lives, transform patient care and ensure UK patients are the first to benefit from medical breakthroughs.

Building on the Vaccine Taskforce model which led to one of the most successful vaccine roll outs in the world and ensured millions got a Covid jab, the government will continue to harness world-leading research expertise, remove unnecessary bureaucracy, strengthen partnerships and support the new healthcare challenges.

Since the [Life Sciences Vision](#) was first launched it attracted £1 billion investment to the UK and this further research funding is expected to gain investment from leading global companies.

In addition, tackling these healthcare challenges could save the NHS and the economy billions of pounds – it is estimated obesity costs the NHS £6.1 billion a year and poor mental health costs the economy £118 billion a year.

The Prime Minister, Health and Social Care Secretary and Business Secretary will today meet with key industry figures, including global CEOs, NHS leaders and industry experts at the Life Sciences Council to discuss how their support will deliver life-changing innovations to patients, boost NHS efficiency and ensure the UK remains a global life sciences superpower.

The Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, said:

The NHS faces real pressures, which is why we are investing over £100 million in the technologies and medicines of the future to address some of the biggest public health challenges facing our

country.

This funding will improve outcomes for patients, ease existing pressures on the system and ensure that we are amongst the first to benefit from medical breakthroughs. Importantly it will also help save the NHS millions of pounds that could otherwise be spent on patient care – for example by tackling obesity which costs the health service over £6 billion annually.

It is hugely welcome too that the highly successful Vaccine Taskforce, which procured millions of life-saving vaccines in record time during the pandemic, will now become a blueprint for how we harness the best talent and expertise from around the world and drive investment in research and development.

Health and Social Care Secretary Steve Barclay said:

Conditions such as cancer and obesity prevent people leading long, healthy lives and cost the NHS billions of pounds every year.

We're leading the way in cutting-edge research which can find new ways to speed up diagnosis, enhance treatments and ensure a better quality of life for patients – both now and in the future.

By harnessing the same spirit of innovation that delivered the vaccine rollout and working hand in hand with the NHS, industry and healthcare experts.

We're building a stronger, healthier NHS with record numbers of staff and record funding, to give people the security of knowing it will be there for them when they need it.

The research will focus on the top public health priorities, as identified by the NHS:

- Cancer: £22.5 million will go into cancer research to develop new immune-based cancer therapies, including cancer vaccines, which are targeted to a patient's specific cancer. Funding will also support the development of technologies that enable earlier, more effective cancer diagnosis. This will support progress towards the NHS Long Term Plan ambition to diagnose three-quarters of cancers at Stages 1 or 2 by 2028.
- Mental health: £40.2 million for research into mental health to develop and introduce digital technologies to support patients. This could include technology allowing patients to monitor their mental health at home and instantly report to their doctor if in need of help. Funding will be spent in the Midlands and the North to bolster services and ensure people across the UK can access support, helping level up health

across the country. With one in four adults experiencing mental illness, poor mental health costs the economy £118 billion a year.

- Obesity: £20 million to trial how best to deliver new medicines and technologies for people living with obesity, particularly in deprived communities across the UK. This will help new medicines coming to market – some of which have the potential to reduce a person's weight by more than 20% – to better support people to achieve a healthy weight. The mission will explore how these medicines can be combined with cutting-edge technologies and digital tools to improve long-term health outcomes. Obesity costs the NHS £6.1 billion a year and helping people lose weight and lead healthier lifestyles could lead to significant savings.
- Addiction: £30.5 million, including funds contributed through collaboration with Scottish Government, will be deployed to accelerate the development of new technologies to prevent deaths from overdoses across the UK. This could include wearable devices which can detect the onset of a drug overdose and signal to first responders to prevent deaths, and better support people with substance use disorders to manage and combat their addiction. Funding will also help grow research capacity and capability across the UK to better understand addiction and the most effective ways to treat it as a chronic healthcare condition.

The new funding follows the [launch of the dementia mission](#) in August 2022 in memory of the late Dame Barbara Windsor – backed by £95 million – to develop innovative research tools and boost the number and speed of clinical trials in dementia and neurodegeneration. This contributes to the commitment to double funding for dementia research to £160 million a year by 2024/25.

In line with the Vaccines Taskforce, the four healthcare missions will be led by an independent chair – an expert in that field – to accelerate the development and introduction of the latest treatments and technology into the NHS, as well as drive collaboration across partners. This will not only ensure better care for patients, but also improve the accuracy of diagnosis and free up clinician time, helping tackle the Covid backlog and ease pressure on health services.

The chairs will be appointed by an expert panel dedicated to each mission – this includes Kate Bingham who headed up the Vaccine Taskforce. The process will be completed soon so the research projects can get underway as quickly as possible.

The government is committed to ensuring patients benefit from the latest treatments and NHS England has also announced today that that around 9,000 men with one of the most advanced forms of prostate cancer will be eligible for a new life-extending treatment as the NHS becomes the first in Europe to roll out darolutamide to patients whose prostate cancer has spread to other parts of the body. The deal was approved through Project Orbis, an

international collaboration with top regulators around the world which enables quicker patient access to breakthrough cancer medicines.

Today also sees Innovate UK launch a new £30 million fund to advance life-changing cancer therapeutics delivered through the Biomedical Catalyst (BMC) programme. This new programme directly supports the UK government's cancer mission, combining expertise in immuno-oncology and the vaccine capabilities developed throughout the pandemic.

Minister of State for Health Will Quince said:

We have made immense strides in health research over the past year and it's crucial we continue to harness this enthusiasm and innovation.

These new healthcare missions commit to putting the lessons we've learnt into action to drive the UK forwards as a life sciences superpower.

By bottling up this scientific brilliance our Life Sciences Vision puts this innovation at the heart of our health service, helping to solve major health challenges – such as cancer and obesity – and enabling the NHS to continue delivering world class care.

Business Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The UK is a leading light in life sciences and more generally a science superpower. This funding builds on this reputation to create jobs and growth while serving as a catalyst for an avalanche of additional private investment.

These healthcare missions will drive innovations with the potential to transform the landscape of healthcare and save millions of lives, by tackling some of the greatest health issues facing Britain and indeed the world.

NHS England Chief Executive, Amanda Pritchard said:

We have already seen the incredible ways that new technology and innovation can transform NHS care and the lives of patients across the country – from glucose monitors for people living with diabetes, laser therapy for those with epilepsy to genetic life-saving testing for severely ill children and babies.

Just today, we fast tracked a new drug deal for men with prostate cancer that can boost their survival – showing that the NHS is already at the forefront of delivering the latest treatments for patients.

Working with partners, we want to build on this work even further so we can work to tackle the country's biggest healthcare challenges.

Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services Welsh Government said:

Last year, the UK government set out a bold and ambitious vision for life sciences that promises to deliver better healthcare outcomes for all patients across the UK. Wales has a proven track record in many of the key areas identified – dementia, mental health, genomics, cancer research and linked data – all of which play a very significant role in improving clinical outcomes and driving innovation both nationally and around the world. To maximise the potential of the Life Science agenda for the UK it is important that any investment is fully committed to delivering on 'levelling up' and it is incumbent upon all partners to work together so that our common objectives are realised across the four nations.

Professor Dame Anna Dominiczak, Chief Scientist for Health in Scotland said:

The missions launched today cover conditions that have a huge impact on people's lives. Bringing together academia, industry and the NHS offers exciting possibilities for the development of new approaches to their prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

Drugs Policy Scottish Minister Angela Constance said:

In Scotland, we are experiencing an ongoing public health crisis of drug-related deaths, and finding solutions in innovation and new technology to inform future strategy is one way in which we can help prevent deaths and improve lives.

I therefore welcome this collaboration between the Scottish Government's Chief Scientist's Office and the UK Government Office for Life Sciences which focusses on rapid detection, response and intervention to potential overdoses. This ensures immediate action, helping people who use drugs and their support networks to work together to save lives.

## Background

- As well as launching the Missions, the Health and Business Secretaries announced a suite of additional measures to further cement the UK's global leadership in Life Sciences. This includes:

- Ensuring NHS patients can access new medicines rapidly through Ministerial engagement with the pharmaceutical industry to ensure access safe, ground-breaking new medicines rapidly, whilst guaranteeing value for money for the NHS. This will build on flagship agreements which have already enabled NHS patients to access a new cancer drug before any other European country and enabled children in the UK to be amongst the first in the world to access a new medicine to treat Spinal Muscular Atrophy.
  - Dedicated new Life Sciences Investment Envoy: with the Business Secretary appointing Dan Mahony, Chair of the BIA and Entrepreneur in Residence at Evotec, to the role last week. The new Envoy will champion access to finance for the UK Life Sciences sector by bridging the UK's Financial and Life Science industries. Last week's Investor Roadshow kicked this off, convening over 90 world-leading investors.
  - Through [Project Orbis](#), the UK's medicines regulator, the MHRA, has teamed up with regulators in the US, Canada, Australia, Switzerland, Singapore and Brazil to review and approve applications for promising cancer treatments quickly so patients can benefit earlier.
- 

## New obesity treatments and technology to save the NHS billions

- Obesity costs the NHS £6 billion annually, a figure which is expected to rise to over £9.7 billion each year by 2050
- Funding will fast-track treatments, enabling the NHS to reallocate the money to vital front line services

Cutting-edge obesity treatments and technologies which can help people shed 20% of their weight could soon be offered to NHS patients thanks to a £20 million research boost, the government has announced.

Obesity costs the NHS a massive £6 billion annually and this is set to rise to over £9.7 billion each year by 2050. The new investment, announced today, is expected to save the NHS billions over time and ensure that vital funds are spent on key frontline services.

The fund could lead to promising medicines and digital technologies being made available to patients, such as apps and online portals to encourage lifestyle changes, which have been shown in clinical trials to be safe and lead to a significant reduction in weight.

Health and Social Care Secretary Steve Barclay said:

Having a fit and healthy population is essential to reducing pressure on the NHS and supporting the economy with obesity,

currently estimated to cost the NHS nearly £10 billion per year by 2050.

We are fast-tracking the most promising treatments and technologies to NHS patients to help them achieve a healthy weight, save the NHS billions of pounds and increase life expectancy.

We are determined to harness the full potential of innovative medical breakthroughs to level up the health of the nation.

An open competition will be run in early 2023 to identify sites to deliver this research, exploring how new and potentially transformative medicines can be combined with technologies such as digital tools to improve long-term health outcomes for people living with obesity. Research will be focused outside of London and the Greater South East, in the areas where obesity rates and health disparities are highest.

On Monday 28 November, the government will announce a Vaccine Taskforce approach to tackling some of the leading public health issues which damage the economy and drain NHS resources.

Four healthcare missions will be launched, covering obesity, cancer, mental health and addiction to quickly develop and deliver new treatments, technology and support to patients to help them lead longer, healthier lives.

This builds upon the UK Life Sciences Vision published in July 2021 which sets out a 10-year strategy to harness the successes of the Covid response and accelerate the delivery of innovation to patients.

---

## **UK Minister travels to Australia for talks on the Indo-Pacific**

The UK's Indo-Pacific Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan starts a visit in Australia today (Sunday 27 November – Canberra) in her first trip to the country in her new role, focused on joint efforts to promote peace and security in the region.

The Minister will meet Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Penny Wong, and Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Secretary Richard Marles, to discuss how the UK and Australia can deepen their defence and security partnerships to support a stable, prosperous Indo-Pacific.

This includes progress on AUKUS, which will see Australia equipped with nuclear-powered, conventionally-armed submarines featuring world-leading UK technology. The initial 18-month scoping phase of the project is ongoing and

expected to conclude by the spring. Beyond AUKUS, she will also discuss the two countries' wider efforts to maintain stability and prosperity in the region, boosting bilateral trade opportunities, tackling climate change, and continued support for Ukraine.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Minister of State for the Indo-Pacific, said:

I'm pleased to be back in Australia for the second time this year to strengthen defence and security ties with one of our closest partners.

Strong, ambitious partnerships with nations like Australia are at the core of our commitment to deepening our engagement with the Indo-Pacific and becoming the European nation with the broadest, most integrated presence in the region.

Vicki Treadell, British High Commissioner to Australia said:

I'm delighted to welcome back Anne Marie Trevelyan in her new role as the UK's Minister for the Indo-Pacific to Australia. This visit affirms the UK's ongoing commitment to Australia and the Indo-Pacific region, and follows on from a busy 18 months of UK engagement in the region, including the visit of the Carrier Strike Group, AUKUS agreement, our Prime Ministers meeting at the G20 in Bali and our forthcoming Free Trade Agreement.

Trevelyan will also meet Senator Jenny McAllister, Assistant Minister for Climate Change, and Shadow Climate Change and Energy Minister Ted O'Brien.

In addition to meetings with the federal government, she will also discuss UK priorities with key Australian parliamentarians, including members of the Defence and Trade, and Intelligence and Security committees.

Her other engagements in Australia will include giving a speech at the Australian National Press Club on Monday 28th, and attending an event at the Australian National Security College on Thursday 29th, where she will record a podcast with Professor Rory Medcalf on the geopolitical challenges facing the Indo-Pacific.

Trevelyan begins her visit in Brisbane, receiving a 'Welcome to Country', which honours the traditional owners of the land. The Minister will meet with representatives across government and civil society about the ongoing work that both state and federal governments are doing with First Nations communities across Australia.

The Minister's extensive programme of engagement with Australia – at a State and Federal level – reflects both the strength of the UK-Australia



relationship and the importance of the Indo-Pacific to the UK, in the face of increasing regional geopolitical competition.

Trevelyan's visit to Australia is part of a wider nine-day trip to the Pacific, following a visit to Vanuatu earlier this week to attend the Conference of the Pacific Community and promote UK support for countries on the front line of climate change.

---

## [Social housing tenants put at the heart of government reforms](#)

Over 250 tenants will meet today (26 November) to launch the group that will directly influence the government's plans on improving social housing conditions and bringing about sector change.

Members of the Social Housing Quality Residents will share their experiences with ministers, inform policy change and ensure resident voices are properly heard as the government drives forward its social housing reforms.

The launch follows the Housing Secretary's action, announced this week, against Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) after it failed to treat hazardous mould leading to the tragic death of Awaab Ishak.

In a crackdown on poor standards, Michael Gove has stripped the housing association of new taxpayer funding for housing – until the Regulator of Social Housing has concluded its investigation and RBH can prove it is a responsible landlord.

This serves as a warning to other housing providers, with Gove prepared to take robust action against those that are letting down tenants.

Housing Secretary Michael Gove said:

This government will not stand for any tenant being mistreated and we are acting to ensure they get the safe and decent homes they deserve.

For too long, tenants have been denied a proper voice – this ends today. Our new residents panel will ensure that tenants are at the heart of reforms to social housing.

I look forward to working with the panel to drastically raise the standard of social housing across the country.

Housing Secretary Michael Gove and Minister for Social Housing Baroness Scott

of Bybrook will attend the launch event to thank residents for their important contribution in the government's work to improve social housing for tenants. Ahead of the launch, panel members from across the country have shared their views and hopes for the panel:

Emma from East of England said:

I would like to bring back the stronger relationships between tenants and their housing association.

Quality of repairs has also become an issue, things being replaced for a lesser quality and the tenant is supposed to accept it in their home.

Social landlords need to become more involved with their tenants and rebuild the fractured relationships.

Roy from the East Midlands said:

I have been an involved resident for nearly 12 years, and have worked tirelessly to improve the services provided by our landlord.

It's not always been easy and on many occasions it has been very frustrating. But we saw a chink of light with the publication of the Social Housing White Paper, as we might at least be able to make the services supplied by our landlord fit for purpose

Abbey from the South East said:

I am passionate about improving social housing. I'm a scrutiny panel member and a block rep, but this initiative had the possibility to create change on a larger and less local scale. I would like to make sure that voice is heard.

Karen from the South West said:

I want to help improve the condition of social housing and also help remove the stigma attached to social housing.

The panel forms part of the government's commitment in the Social Housing White Paper to rebalance the relationship between tenants and landlords.

Residents will shape the direction of the panel, with options to cover topics like how to raise awareness of the complaints process, or improving tenants' access to information about their landlords.

Further information:

- Panel members will be involved a series online sessions and focus groups over the next year – with the full panel convening every 4 months for an update on progress.
  - More information on the Social Housing Residents Panel is available [here](#).
- 

## **Boost for UK fishing industry with funding for new infrastructure projects**

Funding to expand processing facilities for popular British fish like Scottish salmon, mackerel and herring are some of the projects which will modernise infrastructure across the UK seafood sector following a £20 million Government investment.

Part of the £100 million UK Seafood Fund, the announcement comes as a further £30 million is being made available today (25 November 2022) for infrastructure projects as the latest round of funding opens for bidding.

The UK Seafood Fund is a landmark government investment supporting the long-term future and sustainability of the UK fishing and seafood industry, with the infrastructure strand of the Fund helping to pay for upgrades to ports, processing and aquaculture facilities so they can meet future demand whilst also boosting jobs and economic growth.

The infrastructure scheme also supports businesses to become more environmentally sustainable, with successful bidders in Round 1 investing in greener technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to more reusable materials.

Successful bidders from the first round of infrastructure funding include:

- Denholm Seafoods who with almost £3 million funding will install new equipment to increase production of mackerel and herring landed at Peterhead.
- In the West Highlands, Mowi Scotland – an aquaculture processing facility for salmon – has been awarded £2 million funding to invest in new, modern equipment that will vastly speed up both the processing and despatch of their products.

Fisheries Minister Mark Spencer said:

Fishing communities are an important part of the UK's heritage and they make a valuable contribution to our economy so we are backing them with funds to boost growth and opportunities across the industry.

This funding will ensure seafood businesses throughout the supply chain are well-equipped to keep pace with increasing demand at home and abroad, boosting production and sustainability and building a resilient sector for the future.

UK Government Minister for Scotland John Lamont said:

It's fantastic to see Scottish expertise securing a share of this multi-million pound UK Government funding. From substantially increasing the production of mackerel and herring in Peterhead, to speeding up the processing and sale of salmon from the West Highlands, the investment will boost innovation and sustainability.

Scotland's seafood, aquaculture and science sectors are world renowned. I look forward to continuing to work closely with them to ensure that this funding – and future allocations – helps deliver a sustainable and profitable future.

Allan Stephen, Director at Denholm Seafoods, said:

We are delighted with the support we have received from Defra, which from the outset has been highly productive. Securing the Defra grant will enable Denholm Seafoods to invest in our new freezing and production facilities which will maintain our high quality product.

Scott Nolan, Mowi Scotland Operations Director Processing & Sales (UK and Ireland), said:

The upgrade to our salmon processing plant in Fort William, Scotland, is vital to ensuring the UK remains competitive in a very global seafood market. The UK Seafood Fund Infrastructure Scheme comes at an important time, helping to safeguard and grow our domestic food supply as well as securing local jobs in rural communities.

The UK has a thriving seafood sector with exports of salmon – one of the UK's

most important exports – worth around £600 million annually and other abundant fish stocks such as Cornish sardines in demand on the continent for their quality.

For the second round of the UK Seafood Fund infrastructure scheme, which is worth £30 million and opens today, businesses will have until March 2025 to deliver their transformational projects meaning a wider range of organisations will be able to apply.

Defra will also shortly announce successful applicants from the Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP) scheme, part of the UK Seafood Fund, which funds data collection and research to support sustainable fisheries management. The final FISP round will launch in December 2022.

More information on the UK Seafood Fund can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-seafood-fund>

The list of successful Round 1 projects will be available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-seafood-fund-infrastructure-scheme-projects>

You can find more information on the FISP scheme here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-seafood-fund-fisheries-industry-science-partnerships-scheme>