

Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre to open 12 months ahead of schedule

- Up to £93 million government investment to open the UK's first dedicated Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre 12 months early
- A further £38 million will establish a rapid deployment facility this summer
- The new Centre is a key component of the government's coronavirus programme in boosting the UK's capacity to develop and mass produce vaccines

The race to manufacture millions of doses of a coronavirus vaccine has been boosted with a multi-million-pound government investment, Business Secretary Alok Sharma has announced today.

The government will invest up to £93 million to accelerate construction of the new Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (VMIC) which, when completed, will have capacity to produce enough vaccine doses to serve the entire UK population in as little as six months. The funding will ensure the centre opens in Summer 2021, a full 12 months ahead of schedule.

The new Centre, which is already under construction, is a key component of the government's coronavirus vaccine programme – ensuring that once a vaccine is available it can be produced quickly and in mass quantities.

To be located on the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus in Oxfordshire, the new Centre will be the UK's first not-for-profit organisation established to develop and advance the mass production of vaccines. This will boost the UK's long-term capacity against future viruses. The centre will also accelerate the production of vaccines for existing illnesses such as the flu virus.

While the Centre is being built, the government will establish a rapid deployment facility thanks to a further investment of £38 million to begin manufacturing at scale from Summer 2020. This facility will support efforts to ensure a vaccine is widely available to the public as soon as possible.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

As the biggest contributor to the international coalition to find a vaccine, the UK is leading the global response. Once a breakthrough is made, we need to be ready to manufacture a vaccine by the millions.

The new Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre and temporary facility will build 'fill and finish' capacity, bringing the UK

vaccine programme together from discovery to distribution.

The Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre's Chief Executive Dr Matthew Duchars said:

Today's announcement by the Business Secretary is an important endorsement for the work the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre will deliver in shoring up future domestic supply of vaccines in response to a pandemic.

This investment will rapidly accelerate the construction of the facility, enabling us to bring it online a year sooner. In addition, the capacity will be significantly increased, so that enough vaccines could be made for everyone in the UK within a matter of months of opening.

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive Sir Mark Walport, said:

The Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre is an essential new weapon in the UK's arsenal against diseases and other biological threats, ensuring sufficient vaccines get to the public in the fastest possible time.

The UKRI-funded teams at the University of Oxford and Imperial College London have developed potential coronavirus vaccines at unprecedented speed. By working with partners including government, VMIC and the Vaccines Taskforce to fast-track the manufacturing capability, we are ensuring that momentum will continue all the way from lab to patient.

The UK is at the forefront of international efforts to research and develop a vaccine. The government has already pledged £250 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the highest contribution of any country, and the UK is hosting the upcoming global pledging conference for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, on 4 June. This is part of the UK committing £388 million to the international drive to develop vaccines, tests and treatments.

The announcement follows the government appointing leading figure in the life sciences sector Kate Bingham as chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce – the group set up by the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Business Secretary to lead UK efforts to find and manufacture a COVID-19 vaccine.

Notes to Editors

1. Plans for the Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre have received a total public and private sector funding of £207 million, including today's new £131 million investment.

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2. The Vaccines Taskforce is supported by an Expert Advisory Board, led by Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance and Deputy Chief Medical Officer Jonathan Van Tam, to coordinate efforts to accelerate the development and manufacture of a COVID-19 vaccine.