

What is the UK Government Ventilator Challenge?

On 16 March 2020, the Prime Minister asked companies to help manufacture, design and build thousands of NHS ventilators in the fight against COVID-19.

The Prime Minister's vision aimed to ensure that patients with impaired lung function had access to vital breathing equipment. He appealed to businesses across the UK to design, build and manufacture new, safe, easy-to-use ventilators at scale to increase capacity across the NHS.

The response

The response surpassed expectations, with the government receiving more than 5000 offers of support.

The challenge has been operating on a number of fronts, including the manufacture of existing ventilators, teaming up larger manufacturers with smaller bespoke ventilator makers to scale up production, as well as asking renowned engineers to design new ventilators.

Additionally, on 13 March the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) published a [specification](#), with subsequent revisions, on the minimum clinical standards acceptable for ventilator use in UK hospitals during the COVID-19 outbreak.

It is important that clinicians and engineers continue to work closely with one another as we begin to understand more about the nature of this virus.

All offers of support specifically relating to ventilators have been reviewed against the MHRA specification. A shortlist of organisations have taken designs to a Technical Design Authority, comprised of clinicians, regulators and engineers, where experts have reviewed the devices.

Next steps

Government is now working with a number of organisations and consortia on the accelerated production and distribution of different types of ventilators. Manufacturing of prototypes, both new designs and modified existing designs, is commencing. Once this is completed extensive testing to demonstrate they are safe, and meet clinical requirements, will follow.

In the short term, production and distribution of ventilators across the UK is expected to ramp up significantly, with thousands of new ventilators making their way to hospitals across Great Britain and Northern Ireland. If you have any queries relating to the ventilator challenge please email ventilatorchallenge@cabinetoffice.gov.uk