

Over £100 million cash boost to manufacture millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccine

- New state-of-the-art centre to scale up COVID-19 vaccine and gene therapy manufacturing gets £100 million investment
- additional £4.7 million for new training facilities and an online learning platform to boost vaccine and cell and gene therapy skills
- new centre and skills vital for the UK's ability respond to diseases like coronavirus, and potential future pandemics

The UK's capability to manufacture vaccines has received a substantial boost today (Thursday 23 July), as the government announces an additional £100 million to ensure that any successful COVID-19 vaccine can be produced at scale in the UK.

The investment will fund a state-of-the-art Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult Manufacturing Innovation Centre to accelerate the mass production of a successful COVID-19 vaccine in the UK. Due to open in December 2021, the Centre will have the capacity to produce millions of doses each month, ensuring the UK has the capabilities to manufacture vaccines and advanced medicines, including for emerging diseases, far into the future.

Located in Braintree, Essex, the government initiative will upgrade an existing facility to create a fully-licensed manufacturing centre. Doing so will increase the UK's ability to respond to diseases like coronavirus and to prepare for potential future pandemics while creating new, high-skilled jobs to fuel the UK's economic recovery.

The new centre will complement the [Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre](#) (VMIC), which is currently under construction in Oxfordshire thanks to a £93 million investment from the government. Once complete next year, the facility will have the capacity to produce enough vaccine doses to serve the entire UK population at scale.

While the centre is under construction, the government has invested an additional £38 million to establish a rapid deployment facility, opening later this summer, that will support efforts to ensure a successful vaccine is widely available to the public as soon as possible.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

We are taking all necessary steps to ensure we can vaccinate the public as soon as a successful COVID-19 vaccine becomes available.

This new Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult Manufacturing Innovation Centre, alongside crucial investment in skills, will support our

efforts to rapidly produce millions of doses of a coronavirus vaccine while ensuring the UK can respond quickly to potential future pandemics.

To support these enhanced vaccine manufacturing capabilities, the government will invest an additional £4.7 million for the [Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult](#) to ensure that the UK has the best skills and expertise through the development of virtual and physical national Centres for Advanced Therapies Training and Skills, in partnership with industry.

The facilities and online training platform will provide industry-standard skills and experience in advanced gene therapy and vaccine manufacturing, including sterile techniques for Good Manufacturing Practice which is the minimum standard that a medicines manufacturer must meet in their production processes.

Employment in the cell and gene therapy sector is predicted to reach over 6,000 jobs by 2024, with over 3,000 in manufacturing and bioprocessing.

Matthew Durdy, CEO, Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult commented:

This commitment from government through the Vaccines Taskforce will enable continued growth and productivity in the cell and gene therapy sector, as well as providing vital resource for vaccine manufacturing and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are delighted to be able to deploy the specialist capabilities of the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult in such an important initiative. Accelerating the availability of COVID-19 vaccines, increasing skills and employment, and facilitating growth of the advanced medicines industry will make a valuable contribution to the recovery of the economy.

Kate Bingham, Chair of the Vaccines Taskforce said:

Today's announcement is another important milestone for us. The work of the Vaccines Taskforce is focused on protecting the UK against COVID-19 through vaccination as quickly as possible.

In order to vaccinate our high-risk populations at the earliest opportunity, the government has agreed to proactively manufacture vaccines now, so we have millions of doses of vaccine ready if they are shown to be safe and effective. The acquisition of this state-of-the-art manufacturing centre will not only help us with this, but also ensures we are well-placed as a country to be able to cope with any pandemics or health crises in the future.

As well as addressing the immediate need to produce a COVID-19 vaccine, the

new Cell and Gene Therapy Centre, developed with [Innovate UK](#) and the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, will be at the forefront of the growing UK cell and gene therapy industry. Scientists and researchers based in the centre will accelerate the time taken for new treatments to be delivered to patients by developing cutting-edge therapies to treat life changing diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

The UK is at the forefront of international efforts to research and develop a COVID-19 vaccine and has provided £131 million funding to University of Oxford and Imperial College London to accelerate their work on 2 vaccine candidates.

This follows news on Monday (20 July) that the government secured early access to 90 million vaccine doses from the BioNTech/Pfizer alliance and Valneva as part of its strategy to build a portfolio of promising new vaccines to protect the UK from COVID-19. In addition, treatments containing COVID-19-neutralising antibodies have been secured from AstraZeneca to protect those who cannot receive vaccines.

Notes to editors

About the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult

The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult was established as an independent centre of excellence to advance the growth of the UK cell and gene therapy industry, by bridging the gap between scientific research and full-scale commercialisation.

With more than 230 employees focusing on cell and gene therapy technologies, it works with partners in academia and industry to ensure these life-changing therapies can be developed for use in health services throughout the world. It offers leading-edge capability, technology and innovation to enable companies to take products into clinical trials and provide clinical, process development, manufacturing, regulatory, health economics and market access expertise. Its aim is to make the UK the most compelling and logical choice for UK and international partners to develop and commercialise these advanced therapies.

The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult works with Innovate UK. For more information please visit the [Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult](#) or [Innovate UK](#).