

PM call with ventilator manufacturers and suppliers: 26 March 2020

The Prime Minister spoke to a number of British suppliers and manufacturers yesterday evening (26 March 2020) about rapidly scaling up ventilator production for patients with coronavirus. The Health Secretary and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster also joined the call.

To date, there are more than 8,000 ventilators available to NHS patients, with another 8,000 expected from existing UK and international manufacturers in the next few weeks. The Prime Minister has been clear that the UK must step up production of ventilators even further to support the UK's response to the virus and save lives.

The Prime Minister's call to manufacturers last week had an overwhelming response, with a wide range of UK and international businesses offering to help provide services, including designing and building new devices, manufacturing components or transporting them to NHS hospitals.

Following this, the government has partnered a number of the UK's leading technology and engineering firms with smaller manufacturers to rapidly build existing, modified or newly designed ventilators at speed, with seven priority projects underway. They are working to improve the speed at which current UK ventilator manufacturers can produce their devices, with larger companies changing their existing operations to help provide the UK with the equipment and personnel it needs for this effort.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister spoke to a dozen of the companies involved to thank them for all their work so far and to discuss ways that the government could support them to build ventilators more quickly and in greater quantities for the frontline in the coming weeks. This included how to accelerate the manufacturing of particular components needed for this equipment. The Health Secretary assured the companies involved that his Department will ensure that regulatory bodies are able to process the new devices and approve those that meet the requirements as soon as possible.

Numerous companies are involved in these critical projects, including among others:

- High Value Manufacturing Catapult
- Meggitt
- Ford
- GKN Aerospace
- Babcock
- Plexus
- Siemens PLC & Siemens Healthineers
- McLaren
- Rolls Royce
- Airbus

- Renault F1
- PA Consulting
- Renishaw
- GE Healthcare Systems

Additionally, the government is also working with many other UK manufacturers to build, design and develop new effective, safe and easy-to-build ventilators.

Government officials are currently working with expert clinicians and health regulators to test all new machine designs, as patient safety is of paramount importance. Any new orders are all dependent on machines passing regulatory tests, but the government, manufacturers and regulators are working at pace to drive this work forward.