

Start Me Up: Countdown to first UK satellite launch

The countdown to the first satellite launch from UK soil is on, with Virgin Orbit's carrier aircraft, ground support equipment, and rocket set to arrive in Cornwall this week.

Made possible by funding from the UK Space Agency, the mission, which is on track for a November launch from Spaceport Cornwall, has been named Start Me Up in tribute to the iconic British band, the Rolling Stones.

Start Me Up will mark the first orbital launch from the UK, meeting a key ambition of the Government's National Space Strategy, as well as the first commercial launch from Europe and the first international launch from Virgin Orbit.

Spaceport Cornwall is at the heart of a growing aerospace and space cluster and expects to create 150 jobs in the local area.

Science Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

As we move ever closer to the first satellite launch from UK soil, it's excellent to see the progress being made by Virgin Orbit, Spaceport Cornwall and those across government in delivering this historic mission, the first of its kind in Europe.

With 47,000 jobs across the UK, our growing space industry is a vital part of the economy and has an important role to play in catalysing investment, generating growth and prosperity. I'm looking forward to working with this innovative sector and delivering on our National Space Strategy.

The flight manifest includes payloads from seven customers, based in the UK and internationally, with companies from England, Scotland and Wales involved in their development and manufacture.

These satellites will demonstrate advanced technologies, with applications ranging from in-space manufacturing of specialist materials, space weather research and satellite positioning, to the prevention of illegal trafficking and smuggling.

Ian Annett, Deputy CEO at the UK Space Agency, said:

Seeing Virgin Orbit's aircraft take off is an exciting reminder that we are close to the first launch from UK soil and first launch of a satellite from Europe. This will be an iconic moment in the history of UK space endeavours, so it is fitting that the mission

has been named after a song from the Rolling Stones, one of the UK's most iconic bands.

Developing new launch capabilities will build on the strengths of our space sector and attract companies from around the world to benefit from these commercial opportunities. This will catalyse investment, bring new jobs to communities and organisations right across the UK, as well as inspiring the next generation of space scientists and engineers.

The UK Government's [National Space Strategy](#) sets out how the UK will become the first country in Europe to launch satellites into orbit in 2022 and build a sustainable, commercial launch market. Spaceport Cornwall is one of seven spaceport sites being developed across the UK which will help unleash a wave of innovation and create hundreds of new jobs across the country.

Dan Hart, CEO of Virgin Orbit, said:

What an incredible honor it is for us to be part of something as monumental as bringing Britain into the business of launch. Working with our partners across the UK government, we're starting up a new capability that will serve the people, the economy, and the security of the UK.

Melissa Thorpe, Head of Spaceport Cornwall:

It's time to Start Us Up! This is a huge moment for us all in Cornwall as the journey to UK space launch has officially begun. The mission name and patch reflect and embrace the incredible partnerships between our two countries and teams.

The first launch from Spaceport Cornwall is just the beginning, with vertical launch spaceports in Scotland expected to come online in 2023. All UK launches are subject to receiving a licence from the Civil Aviation Authority.

[Exports Minister brings EdTech delegation to Thailand to unlock fast growth Southeast Asian markets](#)

UK Exports Minister Marcus Fysh is joining a delegation of 18 British

companies visiting Thailand this week to showcase innovative methods of delivering quality education. They offer services in AI, real-time data, teacher training and language learning.

The delegation will exhibit at BETT Asia, Asia Pacific's leading EdTech summit. Participants will hear from leading academic institutions, education ministers, and cutting-edge tech businesses on the future of learning.

The DIT UK Pavilion at BETT Asia will be the centre point during the event, with 12 UK EdTech companies exhibiting under the UK Pavilion and another 6 at the wider show including companies from the Northern Power House.

The UK has much to offer as an established and fast-growing hub for emerging EdTech. It is home to over 1,000 innovative EdTech and educational supply companies.

Two countries in Southeast Asia – Vietnam and Indonesia – have been named in the five priority countries and regions in the UK's International Education Strategy. This aims to increase education exports to £35 billion per year and to boost the number of international students in the UK to 600,000 per year by 2030.

Southeast Asia is an important partner for the UK in education. The region has contributed more than £800m in education exports in the last 5 years, making it the 3rd global education export performer after China, and the Middle East and North Africa.

Marcus Fysh, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Exports), Department for International Trade said:

The UK's education sector is one of the jewels in the crown of our service exports, and I'm pleased to see so many British businesses on display here at BETT Asia. The education services that UK firms can provide around the world hugely benefit student outcomes and inclusivity, as well as strengthening partnerships with schools, colleges, universities and industry in the ASEAN region.

We want to see more British businesses entering the global education market, of all sizes, and it's through tradeshow like BETT Asia that businesses can really thrive and sell their services to the world. When more businesses export it generates, jobs and growth for the economy.

Natalie Black, His Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific said:

I am delighted to welcome a delegation of fantastic British EdTech companies to Thailand to discover opportunities for growth and explore new markets.

The UK is recognised across the world for its high-quality

education and research. COVID-19 has transformed teaching and learning around the world, including in Asia Pacific. We are keen to play an active part in supporting recovery in all levels of education.

For media enquiries, please contact: Yun Xuan Poon yunxuan.poon@fcdo.gov.uk

Appendix 1:

UK Exhibitors:

The Northern Powerhouse (NPH): NPH is the UK government's vision for a super-connected, globally competitive northern economy with a flourishing private sector and highly-skilled population ready to take its place on the world stage. It brings together people from across the North of England, encompassing the cities of Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield, Hull and Newcastle to create a fast-growing economy, accounting for almost £329 billion GVA – greater than the economies of Austria or Norway. In 2021 alone, businesses based in the region exported £56.5 billion worth of goods to every corner of the globe, yet there remains massive potential for future international growth.

Appendix 2:

List of companies attending:

3t Transform:	3t Transform is part of the 3t Energy Group. The group is comprised of 3 operating companies focused on providing learning solutions in high hazard, high consequence sectors. Transform supplies the software and learning content as a set of digital, SaaS based solutions. We're relatively new (4 years old) however we service some of the world's largest companies such as bp, Shell and Aramco. In addition to core learning, compliance, and competence solutions we have had significant success in virtual reality.
AppsEvents Ltd:	AppsEvents is a Google for Education Partner working with schools worldwide. We offer Google technical support and consulting, resell software and offer training services to schools.
Best Practice Network:	Best Practice Network is a leading training organisation, providing high quality continuing professional development for education professionals worldwide.
BOFA maths:	BOFAmaths is the latest addition to the family of online formative learning products from Planet BOFA Ltd. BOFA is created by teachers, for teacher to supply bespoke, adaptive AI formative learning, which accelerates pupil understanding and is fully automated.

British Council:	<p>Founded in 1934. Every year we train over 400,000 learners across 47 countries in our centres and connect with a further 80 million online. We combine this with a world-leading reputation in assessment and deliver assessment to over 2 million people a year.</p>
CENTURY Tech:	<p>An award-winning AI education technology company. CENTURY's scalable technology provides teachers with real-time rich data insights to make effective targeted interventions. Our powerful SaaS platform is used by leading schools around the world, and has been implemented by ministries of education on a national and regional scale.</p>
Everybody Counts:	<p>Everybody Counts pledge to equip you with engaging and effective resources to help you support your child's Maths learning. We have developed a motivating, interactive learning platform to engage your child's imagination and Maths curiosity, as well as providing detailed guidance for you as a parent.</p>
Glean:	<p>Glean helps students to overcome common challenges with classroom and lecture learning, improving self-confidence and academic outcomes. Our inclusive learning technology empowers students of all abilities to take meaningful audio notes in class with a proven note taking process based on learning science.</p>
Language Solutions International Ltd:	<p>The Language Solutions companies offer tech-enabled, specialist language assessments and specific purposes language training. Since we were founded in 1991, we have helped over 40,000 professionals to improve and certify their language and communication skills for work, including major UK government departments such as the FCD0, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Defence and Home Office.</p>
Learning Possibilities:	<p>Learning Possibilities, the Hertfordshire-based edtech company, has secured an Asian Development Bank funded project for Technology-Enabled Innovation in Education in Southeast Asia.</p>
Morphun:	<p>Morphun (a Thinkplay brand) has a core belief in the growing importance of STEM in education. Manipulative and construction toys are an essential way to develop creative play, hand eye co-ordination, team-work and problem-solving skills in children and are essential to a full 21st century education.</p>
Oxford University Press:	<p>Oxford University Press advances knowledge and learning. We are a department of the University of Oxford and share the objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide.</p>
Picture News:	<p>Picture News teaches young people all about the world. Through using a current, global news story, our team of educators put together a visual and engaging ready-made pack for teachers to use. The resources are used by 4,500 schools and centres every week.</p>

Planet Pop:	A new primary level ELT digital blended learning solution. Our modern online platform features 400+ high quality videos, 80+ original songs & music videos, accompanied by lesson plans, student video workbooks and a broadcast TV show.
SimVenture:	Specialising in the development of high quality business simulations and entrepreneurship learning tools, SimVenture is a leading supplier of advanced education technology all over the world.
Tes:	Turn to us for education news, teacher training, safeguarding training and CPD, staff wellbeing surveys and software to help with behaviour and SEND management, intuitive timetabling, safeguarding reporting, and staff management.
The Safeguarding Company:	The Safeguarding Company provides the only total safeguarding approach available today through our range of solutions that prevent, reduce and eliminate abuse, harm, and neglect; while empowering organisations of all types and sizes to protect the wellbeing, health, and human rights of the children, young people or adults in their care.
luTalk:	uTalk is a leading language learning platform from the UK. Our structured content helps students improve their language competence through interactive resources and assessment in key verbal skills. We partner with schools, education boards and offer a very wide range of world languages as well as English as a foreign language. We have localised our platform in all the languages of the ASEAN region so that the barriers to use uTalk are kept to the minimum.

Significant milestone reached as extra 2 million scans, tests and checks delivered to bust the Covid backlogs

- Community diagnostic centres across the country have now delivered over two million vital tests, checks and scans since July 2021, helping to bust the Covid backlogs and speed up access to services for patients
- Landmark milestone comes as Health and Social Care Secretary approves 10 new sites which will deliver CT scans, MRIs and x-rays across England
- This forms part of the government's ambition to roll out up to 160 centres across the country by 2025 to deliver millions more vital checks

Community diagnostic centres (CDCs) have delivered more than two million vital tests, checks and scans for patients, with a further 10 centres now approved, the Health and Social Care Secretary has announced today October 11. These centres are busting the Covid backlogs by speeding up access to

lifesaving tests.

The one-stop shops, backed by £2.3 billion in government funding, offer a range of services in the heart of communities, making tests more accessible for patients.

Based in community settings such as shopping centres and football stadiums the hubs house a range of cutting-edge equipment, including MRI, CT, X-ray and ultrasound scanners and offer services including blood tests or heart rhythm and blood pressure monitoring. They are designed to speed up diagnosis of conditions from cancer to heart or lung disease.

As set out in 'Our Plan for Patients' published in September, the government will prioritise rolling out up to 160 of these centres across England by 2025 to help bust the Covid backlogs and enable the health service to deliver up to nine million additional tests, checks and scans a year.

Later today, the Health and Social Care Secretary, Thérèse Coffey will officially open a new community diagnostic centre in a shopping centre in North London. It will be open for seven days a week and deliver an additional 40,000 tests by spring 2023.

Health and Social Care Secretary Thérèse Coffey said:

My number one priority is delivering for patients and we're getting on with the job of tackling the issues that affect people most – ambulances, backlogs, care, doctors and dentists.

Today I'm announcing the approval of 10 new community diagnostic centres which are helping to bust the Covid backlogs by delivering vital tests, checks and scans in local areas.

They have delivered over two million checks over the past year, diagnosing conditions from cancer to lung disease – and we're on track to open up to 160 centres across the country by 2025, delivering an additional 17 million checks.

NHS medical director for transformation, Vin Diwakar, said:

It is testament to the hard work of staff across the NHS that we have now delivered more than two millions tests and checks at our one stop shops and latest figures show we have the lowest number of patients waiting for tests and checks since we published our elective recovery plan in February.

We know that rapid diagnosis saves lives, and it is great news that more of these centres have been approved to provide checks and scans in the heart of local communities, making services more accessible and convenient while also helping to improve outcomes for patients with cancer and other serious conditions.

The 10 approved new centres will be rolled out across the country, including in the Isle of Wight, Burnley and Medway in Kent. Once referred by a GP, pharmacist or hospital, patients can access CDCs in their local area and get any concerning symptoms checked out.

Thanks to these innovative approaches, significant progress has already been made on tackling waiting lists, with the NHS virtually eliminating waits of over two years for routine treatment as part of the first milestone in the Elective Recovery Plan. The NHS plans to go further, including eliminating waits of over 18 months by April 2023, over 15 months by March 2024, and over a year by March 2025.

Background

The full list of approved new CDCs is as follows:

- Island CDC (Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICS)
- Burnley General Hospital spoke (Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS)
- Southport and Ormskirk CDC (Cheshire and Merseyside ICS)
- Newmarket CDC (Suffolk and North East Essex ICS)
- Merry Hill Health Centre (Black Country and West Birmingham ICS)
- Castle Hill Institute of Technology (Black Country and West Birmingham ICS)
- Rotherham Spoke CDC (South Yorkshire ICB)
- Warrington and Halton CDC (Cheshire and Merseyside ICS)
- Medway CDC Hub (Kent and Medway ICS)
- Swale CDC Spoke (Kent and Medway ICS)

The total number of tests carried out per region in England is below.

Region	Total tests
London	260,043
South West	293,015
South East	396,757
Midlands	370,543
East of England	198,196
North West	300,885
North East and Yorkshire	200,422
Total	2,019,861

[Tony Blair backs fusion for energy security and climate change](#)

Former prime minister, Sir Tony Blair, underlined his continued support for fusion energy and its role in addressing energy security and climate change

for generations to come.

During a recent visit to UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) in Oxfordshire, Sir Tony was briefed by fusion leaders on the progress of STEP – the UK's prototype fusion plant being built at West Burton, Nottinghamshire, to demonstrate the ability to put net electricity on the grid.

Sir Tony said: "Fusion promises to be a safe, low carbon and sustainable part of the world's future energy supply and it is critical that we keep striving forwards to tackle one of the greatest scientific and engineering challenges of our time.

"It was fantastic to see and hear about the progress being made by UKAEA today and to meet the people who are working towards making fusion energy an environmentally responsible part of the world's future energy mix."

Fusion energy has the potential to provide 'baseload' power, complementing renewable and other low carbon energy sources as a share of many countries' energy portfolios.

[Tony Blair Institute For Global Change](#) has previously championed pivot-support-programmes to harness the technology transfer from fusion to adjacent sectors.

Ian Chapman, UKAEA CEO, said: "The UK has a huge opportunity to become a global exporter of fusion technology, which promises to be a part of the low carbon energy mix in the second half of the century.

"Sir Tony was very interested in discussing the work we are doing at UKAEA, which will help address global challenges as well as create jobs and drive economic growth in fusion-focused and adjacent fields."

As part of the visit, Sir Tony experienced a close-up of UKAEA's Joint European Torus (JET) facility which produced landmark results announced earlier this year.

He also met with scientists and engineers for a behind-the-scenes tour of materials science and robotics facilities.

[Agreement to progress development of new UK small modular reactors](#)

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) has today announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Cwmni Eginio to support their development of a new small scale nuclear project in North Wales.

The MoU enables the NDA to share information and expertise around the

characteristics of its land at Trawsfynydd, to align the decommissioning plans and site activities with the new nuclear project, and to support Cwmni Eginio with stakeholder engagement and developing socio-economic plans.

This follows the announcement earlier this year from BEIS that the NDA would work alongside stakeholders, including Cwmni Eginio, to enable engagement on potential future nuclear developments in the UK.

The British energy security strategy published in April this year made several new commitments to secure, clean, and affordable British energy for the long term, including delivering new and advanced nuclear power.

Minister for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility, Lord Callanan, said:

This new working relationship announced today has the potential to greatly benefit our country's economy and energy security. It would ensure more homegrown energy as part of our wider mix, and contribute to our ambition to be generating 24GW of nuclear capacity by 2030.

But this will also be of huge benefit to the people living around Trawsfynydd, who are set to benefit from the skilled jobs this could create in the coming years.

NDA Chief Executive, David Peattie, said:

We are engaging with several stakeholders to explore potential uses of our estate, using our capability and expertise to support the Government in delivering its energy security strategy.

This is an important step, formalising our support to Cwmni Eginio, and enabling the NDA to deliver its mission to safely decommission our sites and free up the land for future use.

The success of the project at Trawsfynydd will also benefit the community neighbouring our North Wales site.

The NDA is charged, on behalf of government, with cleaning up the UK's earliest nuclear sites safely, securely, and cost-effectively, with the aim of benefiting local communities and the environment.

It has a history of engagement and land transfer across its estate, and currently owns 950 hectares of designated land across 17 nuclear licensed sites.

Cwmni Eginio Chief Executive, Alan Raymant, said:

Our relationship with the NDA is critical to the successful

delivery of our vision for the development of new nuclear at Trawsfynydd.

We're very pleased that the MoU is now formally in place. We look forward to working with the NDA as we continue to develop our proposals which will bring significant benefits to local communities, as well as help achieve energy security and net zero targets.

Cwmni Eginio is the development company established by Welsh Government in 2021 to drive future development at the Trawsfynydd site and to promote regional economic and social regeneration.

Economy Minister Vaughan Gething said:

The MOU between Cwmni Eginio and the NDA is very good news. We established Cwmni Eginio to maximise the potential of the Trawsfynydd site to benefit the economy of the surrounding area. I'm pleased to see this further step forward in the project.

The NDA site at Trawsfynydd is home to a Magnox station which is being decommissioned by Magnox Ltd, a subsidiary of the NDA. The NDA also owns land outside the Magnox site boundary which could be used for a new nuclear development.

Cwmni Eginio is currently developing a business proposition for the development in Trawsfynydd, with a target for construction to start in 2027.

Any formal commitment of NDA land, or other support, would require government approval via NDA's sponsoring department BEIS.