

GARDP welcomes additional funding from UK to develop new treatment for gonorrhoea

This investment, on top of £3.5 million committed in 2019, will support the Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership (GARDP) in the development and availability of zoliflodacin, a novel antibiotic, which is currently being assessed as part of a global phase 3 trial for safety and effectiveness as a treatment for gonorrhoea.

This new antibiotic has the potential to treat drug resistant gonorrhoea and is one of the few antibiotics in development specifically for the disease, an important consideration to ensure the treatment remains effective for generations to come.

Lord Bethell, Minister for Innovation, said:

Our investment to develop one of the few antibiotics to treat gonorrhoea shows our commitment to deliver medicines today which will change lives tomorrow. Supporting the fantastic work of GARDP shows our commitment to drive forward global health goals and cements the UK's place at the forefront of the fight against antimicrobial resistance.

Seamus O'Brien, GARDP Director of Research and Development, said:

We thank the UK for their increased contribution to GARDP and our work to develop a new treatment for gonorrhoea that is available to every person who needs it. Their support for our STI programme is critical for preventing the dire scenario of untreatable gonorrhoea and for the successful control of this infection.

Gonorrhoea is among the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs), with an estimated 87 million new cases occurring globally every year, and has been identified as posing a significant threat to global health by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Resistance to recommended treatments for gonorrhoea has emerged globally, including in the UK. Addressing drug-resistant infections is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goal 3 to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all. There is now an urgent need for new treatment options, particularly for people in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), who are hit hardest by the burden of this disease. GARDP will develop a strategy for access and appropriate use within LMICs that have a high number of cases of gonorrhoea.

Gonorrhoea can have severe consequences on public health and, when left untreated, serious consequences for reproductive health as well as increased risk of transmission of HIV and other STIs. Women and vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected.

About the Global AMR Innovation Fund (GAMRIF)

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) is the UK government department which is responsible for helping people to live more independent, healthier lives for longer. The partnership with GARDP is part of DHSC's [Global Antimicrobial Resistance Innovation Fund \(GAMRIF\)](#).

GAMRIF was established to provide seed funding for innovative research and development, specifically in neglected and underinvested areas, in the field of AMR. GAMRIF is a £50 million UK Aid investment, which means all projects funded must support research primarily and directly for the benefit of people in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

The fund takes a 'One Health' approach, seeking to invest in potential solutions to reduce the threat of AMR in humans, animals, fish and the environment. The fund seeks to leverage additional global funding through interaction with international government bodies, public-private partnerships, product development partnerships, global funding mechanisms and global fora.

About GARDP

The Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership (GARDP) is a Swiss not-for-profit organisation developing new treatments for drug-resistant infections that pose the greatest threat to health.

GARDP was created by the WHO and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) in 2016 to ensure that everyone who needs antibiotics receives effective and affordable treatment. It aims to develop 5 new treatments by 2025 to fight drug-resistant infections.

GARDP is funded by the governments of Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom, as well as Médecins Sans Frontières and private foundations. GARDP is registered under the legal name GARDP Foundation.

[New Chair of the Commission on Human Medicines](#)

Press release

Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care as Chair of the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM).



The CHM provides independent expert advice to ministers on the safety, quality and efficacy of medicines. It is an advisory non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

I am pleased to confirm Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed as Chair of the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM).

He provides a wealth of clinical experience and expertise in pharmacology, genetics and the safety of medicines. He will lead the CHM at a time when its role and profile continues to be critically important in its independent and scientific assessments of the safety, quality and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, as well as all other vaccines and medicines, to protect public health.

Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed said:

I am delighted to be appointed Chair of the CHM. The Commission is widely respected internationally for its work in licensing new medicines and monitoring their safety. Patient and public safety remains at the forefront of our work and I will make sure that the vital role we play in ensuring the medicines we take continue to meet the highest standards of safety, quality and efficacy.

Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed is a clinical pharmacologist and geneticist who currently holds the David Weatherall Chair in Medicine at the University of Liverpool and is a Consultant Physician at Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Sir Munir holds the only NHS Chair of Pharmacogenetics in the UK, is Director of the Medical Research Council Centre for Drug Safety Sciences and Director of the Wolfson Centre for Personalised Medicine. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and was until recently a CHM Commissioner and Vice Chair.

Notes to Editor

- Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed has been appointed as Chair of the Commission on Human Medicines for 4 years from 12 February 2021. He replaces Professor Stuart Ralston whose appointment ended on 11 February 2021.
- This appointment is made in accordance with the Cabinet Office Code of Governance for Public Appointments. The regulation of public appointments against the requirements of this Code is carried out by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.
- The appointments are made on merit and political activity played no part in the decision process. However, in accordance with the Code, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if any declared) to be made public. Sir Munir has not declared any political activity.
- The appointment will involve a time commitment of 33 days per year, including 11 meetings and any ad-hoc meetings based on need. Remuneration for the role will be up to £500 for the preparation required and attendance at each meeting.
- Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed will continue in his role as chair of the CHM's COVID-19 Vaccines Benefit Risk Expert Working Group.
- [More information on the Commission for Human Medicines.](#)

Published 12 February 2021

[New UK Government Covid testing site opens in Kirkcaldy](#)

The UK Government has today, Friday 12 February, opened a new walk-through coronavirus testing centre at Overton Community Centre in Kirkcaldy (KY1 3JP).

The test centre is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. In Scotland, this comprises of seven drive-through sites, 30 walk-through sites, 35 mobile units, plus the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab which is working round the clock to process samples.

In Scotland, the UK Government is providing all Covid testing and test processing outside of the NHS. Around two thirds of all daily tests are provided by the UK Government, in support of Scotland's health services.

Tests must be booked in advance at [NHS Inform](#) or by calling 0800 028 2816. People should only book at test if they have coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste).

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

To respond to the coronavirus, we have built a major testing and tracing system from scratch. We are constantly working to expand and improve it with new technologies and innovations so everyone with symptoms can get a test.

New walk-in sites like this one makes it even easier to get a test no matter where you live. If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted to protect others and stop the spread of the virus.

Baroness Dido Harding, Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection, said:

Walk-through sites offer communities better access to coronavirus testing, so everyone with symptoms can get a test. This new site is part of our ongoing work to expand our testing network across the UK which now has the capacity to process more than 700,000 tests a day. We will continue to expand capacity to improve test turnaround times and push forward testing innovations to make sure anyone who needs a test can get one.

Please book a test if you have coronavirus symptoms: a new continuous cough, a high temperature and a loss or change in sense of smell or taste, and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart said

The UK Government is doing everything it can to support people in all parts of the UK through the pandemic.

Testing continues to play an important role how we manage the virus alongside the roll out of vaccines, helping to identify local outbreaks, slow down the rate of transmission and protect communities. I would like to thank the public for continuing to do the right thing and come forward to be tested when they display symptoms.

The UK Government continues to provide the bulk of testing in Scotland, with this new walk-through centre in Kirkcaldy just the latest in our extensive network. We have also secured and paid for millions of doses of the Pfizer and Oxford vaccines for all parts of the UK.

Hope is on the horizon, but we can't let up on our efforts to

contain the virus.

NHS Fife Deputy Director of Public Health, Dr Esther Curnock, said:

Testing is vital in helping us to identify those who have contracted COVID-19, enabling us to break the chains of transmission by preventing from people from passing the virus on to others.

The new UK Government site in Kirkcaldy is part of a growing network of testing facilities in Fife and will improve access for local people with symptoms of COVID-19.

It remains crucial that anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of how mild, isolates immediately and arranges to get tested as soon as possible.

Simon Venn, Mitie Chief Government & Strategy Officer, said:

Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the UK Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Fife, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.

[HMCTS telephone numbers being used by tax scammers](#)

News story

Scammers using Royal Courts of Justice telephone numbers to demand tax payments.



An increasing number of concerned individuals are contacting offices across the Royal Courts of Justice following emails or phone calls by scammers.

The scammers allege that payment is owed to HMRC and that warrants for arrest have been issued. Scammers tell individuals to look up contact details for the Royals Courts of Justice to verify the number being used for the call.

These calls include:

- previous mistakes in tax returns
- National Insurance numbers being used fraudulently

HMCTS is separate from HMRC and is not involved with tax payments and will not contact individuals about tax matters. HMRC does not use any Royal Courts of Justice phone numbers.

The Royal Courts of Justice will not call or email you about a tax matter.

If you receive a call or email, or any type of contact, do not provide any personal details or make any payment.

Check HMRC's [scams checklist](#), find out [how to report tax scams](#) and get information on [how to recognise genuine HMRC contacts](#).

If you are suspicious about a call or text, follow the checklist and contact HMRC.

If you have paid money, report the matter to [Action Fraud](#).

Published 12 February 2021

[Official Warning issued to trustees](#)

over 49 undocumented loans agreed on behalf of Manchester charity

The Charity Commission has concluded its inquiry into the Bersam Trust, issuing three trustees with an Official Warning for placing the charity at risk by borrowing £1.9 million via inadequately documented loans.

The Bersam Trust has objects to raise funds for charitable causes including the support of the Orthodox Jewish religion and education. The charity also leases a building to a faith school and funds some of its support costs. It is based in Salford, Greater Manchester.

The Commission opened an inquiry into the charity in January 2019, due to ongoing concerns about its financial arrangements and governance.

The inquiry has found the trustees, who will receive the warning, oversaw borrowing of £1.9 million, via 49 separate loans, not documented within loan agreements. The loans were taken from various sources such as individuals and other charities.

Many were only agreed orally and whilst there is no evidence money was lost by the charity in this way, the Commission says the trustees exposed the charity to significant and unnecessary risk by their actions.

The Commission also found the charity was administrated in a way that failed to reflect that the school and charity were separate organisations, with one loan secured on the basis that the school achieved a satisfactory Ofsted rating, a matter the charity had no control over and which could have led to significant financial loss to the charity were the school to perform poorly.

The inquiry concluded that the failures in relation to these loans amount to misconduct and/or mismanagement by three of the charity's trustees. Other actions that led to the Official Warning include their failure to:

- manage conflicts of interest appropriately during meetings, for example a trustee who worked at the school participated in decisions about the charity's building being leased to the school, without this being identified or managed as a conflict
- hold regular meetings in line with their governing document
- document meetings adequately, even when significant decisions were taken
- follow an agreed action plan to address earlier failings identified by the Commission

Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations at the Charity Commission, said:

Good governance is not a bureaucratic detail, it's essential in ensuring a charity delivers on its charitable purpose and isn't exposed to unnecessary risk.

The trustees of The Bersam Trust failed to ensure this and instead, through their lack of financial management and basic governance, agreed a significant number of undocumented loans that risked their charity's future. Our inquiry has exposed these failures and it's right the trustees have been issued with an Official Warning requiring them to act to protect their charity. We expect the trustees to comply with these actions.

The regulator has taken the significant step of exercising its power under section 75A of the Charities Act 2011 to issue an Official Warning to three of the trustees, specifying the action they should take to improve the governance and financial practice of the charity. Failure to rectify the failings set out in the Official Warning may lead to further action by the regulator.

The Commission's inquiry into Bersam Trust has concluded, but it will continue to monitor the charity's compliance with the actions set out in the Official Warning.

Ends.

Notes to Editors:

1. [The Official Warning](#) was issued to the trustees in place at the charity at the time most of these decisions were taken.
2. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.
3. Read [the inquiry report into the Bersam Trust](#)