

Expert and Advisory Panel appointed for the Independent Review of Criminal Legal Aid

The Expert and Advisory Panel, appointed by the Lord Chancellor, will provide support by testing and challenging the review's emerging findings and recommendations.

Sir Christopher, who was appointed by the Lord Chancellor on 21 December 2020 will chair monthly meetings of the expert and advisory panel, beginning in February. Sir Christopher will submit his recommendations to the Lord Chancellor later this year and it is intended that the report will be published by the end of this year alongside the government's response.

The review will consider the criminal legal aid system in its entirety, specifically it seeks to ensure that it:

- provides high quality legal advice and representation
- is provided through a diverse set of practitioners
- is appropriately funded
- is responsive to user needs both now and in the future.
- contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System
- is transparent
- is resilient
- is delivered in a way that provides value for money to the taxpayer

This is the latest step in the Criminal Legal Aid Review, which has already led to up to £51 million per year for the sector. It forms part of wider work to ensure criminal defence remains an attractive career for practitioners now and in the future.

The Lord Chancellor, Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

I am grateful to Sir Christopher Bellamy and his esteemed panel for undertaking this vital piece of work which will play a crucial role in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the criminal legal aid market.

Chair of the Review, Sir Christopher Bellamy, said:

I look forward to undertaking my role as the chair and am very grateful to the panel members who have agreed to advise me on the analysis, findings and any proposed recommendations of the review.

Having a panel of experts with a range of backgrounds, skills and

legal experience is vital in ensuring a thorough review of the criminal legal aid system

Expert and Advisory Panel

The Expert and Advisory Panel will be composed of senior figures and experts with a variety of backgrounds and expertise relevant to the review. The appointed panel members are:

- Sir Christopher Bellamy QC – Panel Chair
- Professor Sue Arrowsmith QC
- Richard Atkinson
- Kate Aubrey Johnson
- Professor Chris Bones
- Dr Natalie Byrom
- Jo Cecil
- Anita Charlesworth CBE
- Professor Dame Hazel Genn DBE, QC (Hon), FBA, LL.D
- The Right Honourable Baroness Hallett DBE
- Neil Hawes QC
- Dr Vicky Kemp
- Professor Stephen Mayson
- Margaret Obi
- Crispin Passmore
- Professor Neil Rickman
- Bill Waddington
- Dr Kevin Wong

Notes to editors

A short profile of each panel member below:

Sir Christopher Bellamy QC (Chair):

Sir Christopher is a former judge with a wealth of legal experience. He has recently stepped down as Chairman of Linklaters global competition practice and joined Monckton Chambers to focus on mediation and arbitration. Sir Christopher will lead a dedicated review team within Government and will have close oversight of the work to ensure it meets these terms of reference and delivers robust, evidence-based recommendations.

Professor Sue Arrowsmith QC:

Sue Arrowsmith is Professor Emerita of Law at the University of Nottingham, where she was formerly Director of the Public Procurement Research Group and leader of the EU Asia Link project to establish procurement research centres globally. She was appointed Queen's Counsel (honoris causa) in 2019 and in 2007 received the CIPS Swinbank Medal for thought innovation in purchasing and supply. She is currently a member of the Government's Thematic Trade Advisory Group on procurement and also served on its recent Procurement Transformation Advisory Panel (2019-2020). She has served on expert reform

committees of the International Partnership against Corruption in Sport (2018-2019), World Bank (2012-2016) and UNCITRAL (2004-2012) and from 1994-2012 was on the European Commission's Independent Advisory Committee on procurement. From 1998-2012 she was non-executive Director of Achilles Information Ltd. She is currently working on books on allocation of rights and grants under EU law, foundations of EU procurement, Covid-19 procurement, and sport governance. She is also Editor of the international Public Procurement Law Review, which she founded in 1992.

Richard Atkinson:

Richard Atkinson is a very experienced criminal law practitioner, he is a solicitor with higher rights of audience. He has specialised in criminal law for over 25 years and has been a duty solicitor since 1991. He is a member of the Law Society's Council (2016- present) and is a past Chair of its Criminal Law Committee (2011-14 & 2017-20) and is the Past President of the Kent Law Society (2018-19). He is a member of the National Disclosure Forum, the PACE Review Board, and the National Implementation Team for Transforming Summary Justice and Better case Management. Richard was a member the reference group for Sir Bill Jeffrey's Review into Independent Criminal Advocacy (2014) and a member of the Review group of Sir Brian Leveson's Review of Efficiency in Criminal Proceedings (2015). He was a winner of the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year special award 2020.

Kate Aubrey Johnson:

Kate Aubrey Johnson is a child rights and youth justice specialist barrister and mediator at Garden Court Chambers and is recognised for her expertise in youth justice. She chairs the Ministry of Justice Youth Justice Working Group on Quality of Advocacy and recently worked with Professor Kathryn Hollingsworth to provide guidance to the Judicial College on sentencing children for the Crown Court Compendium. She established the Youth Justice Legal Centre, a national organisation which provides expert legal advice, guidance and training on children's rights in the criminal justice system. She also sits on a number of Advisory Boards and is currently helping to devise a national youth advocacy course with the ICCA. She is co-author of the leading textbook Youth Justice Law and Practice (LAG, 2019) and is consultant editor for Halsbury's Laws on criminal procedure involving children.

Professor Chris Bones:

Chris Bones is Chair of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives, now in his second term of office he is the only non-lawyer to lead one of the larger legal professional bodies in England and Wales. He is Dean Emeritus of Henley Business School, Professor Emeritus at Alliance Manchester Business School, an Honorary Professor at the University of Exeter and a previous winner of the UK's Management Book of the Year Prize for his analysis of the contribution of private and public sector leadership to the financial crisis in 2008 – The Cult of the Leader (2011). Before moving to business education, he had an international career as a senior executive at Diageo and Cadbury Schweppes. He is co-founder and Chairman of the e-commerce consultancy Good

Growth and currently a Non-Executive Director of the Royal Devon & Exeter Foundation Trust. He is co-author of two books on e-commerce: Leading Digital Strategy (2015) and Optimizing Digital Strategy (2019).

Dr Natalie Byrom:

Dr Natalie Byrom is Director of Research at The Legal Education Foundation where she leads work on their Smarter Justice programme including the development of a new research centre- the UK Access to Justice Lab. From 2018-2020 she was seconded to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service as Expert Advisor on Open Data. Her final report to government sets out a series of recommendations for the ways in which the data architecture underpinning the courts and tribunals system should be developed to ensure that reformed justice system processes uphold access to justice. She is part of the BBC Expert Women Network and her writing has been featured in the national and legal press.

Jo Cecil:

Jo Cecil was called to the Bar in 2005 and practices from Garden Court Chambers. She has a mixed serious crime and public law practice, encompassing civil litigation in the civil liberties sphere, including inquiries. She is ranked as a leading junior in crime and civil liberties and human rights. In 2019 she was awarded Legal Aid Barrister of the Year. In 2018 she was awarded the Rising Star in Youth Justice Award by the Youth Justice Legal Centre and shortlisted by Legal 500 for Crime Junior of the Year. She is Chair of the CBA Remuneration Committee. Jo has a particular specialism in children and criminal justice and is a Trustee of Just for Kids Law, the Standing Committee for Youth Justice and formerly ROLE UK. She is a lead facilitator for the Advocacy and the Vulnerable and sits on the Ministry of Justice's Working Group on Youth Advocacy. She was also appointed as an independent commissioner on the 'Bach' Access to Justice Commission, is the Secretary of the Bar Human Rights Committee and is appointed as a Recorder in crime and family.

Anita Charlesworth CBE:

Anita Charlesworth is the Director of Research and the REAL Centre (Research and Economic Analysis for the Long term) at the Health Foundation, and Honorary Professor in the College of Social Sciences at the Health Services Management Centre (HSMC) at the University of Birmingham. She previously worked as Chief Economist at the Nuffield Trust (2010-14), as Chief Analyst and Chief Scientific Advisor at DCMS (2007-10), Director of Public Spending at the Treasury (1998-2007), as an Economic Advisor at the Department of Health and for SmithKline Beecham pharmaceuticals. She was specialist advisor to the House of Lords' Select Committee on the long-term sustainability of the NHS in 2016/17 and was recently appointed as an expert adviser for the Health and Social Care Select Committee. She has an MSc in Health Economics from the University of York. She is a Trustee for Tommy's, the baby charity, and also a Trustee for the Office of Health Economics. She was awarded a CBE in The Queen's 2017 Birthday Honours List for Services to Economics and Health Policy.

Professor Dame Hazel Genn DBE, QC (Hon), FBA, LLD:

Dame Hazel Genn is Professor of Socio-Legal Studies in the Faculty of Laws at UCL. She was Dean of the Faculty 2008-2017 and is currently UCL Vice Provost International & Advancement. She is an expert on access to justice – author of *Paths to Justice: What People Do and Think About Going to Law* (1999) a seminal empirical study of public access to justice, which has since been replicated in 27 jurisdictions around the world. Her work has had a global influence on policymakers in relation to the provision of legal aid and the social and health effects of unmet legal need. In 2013, she founded the UCL Centre for Access to Justice, which delivers free social welfare legal advice to low income and vulnerable people in East London. She has been appointed to the Judicial Appointments Commission (2006-2011) and the Committee on Standards in Public Life 2003-7. In recognition of her contribution to the justice system, she was appointed CBE in 2000 and DBE in 2006. In 2006, she was appointed Queen's Counsel Honoris Causa and in 2008, she was elected Honorary Bencher of Gray's Inn.

The Right Honourable Baroness Hallett DBE:

Baroness Hallett was called to the Bar 1972. In 1989 she became a QC and a Recorder of the Crown Court. She specialised in criminal work both prosecuting and defending. She was elected Chairman of the Bar Council for England and Wales in 1998. In 1999 she was appointed to the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court and in 2005 she was appointed to the Court of Appeal. She was also made a Privy Councillor in 2005. She was elevated to the position of Vice President of Court of Appeal Criminal Division in 2013. In October 2019 she retired from the bench and was made a Cross Bench Life Peer.

Neil Hawes QC:

Neil Hawes Q.C. was called to the Bar in 1989 (Inner Temple) and appointed a Queen's Counsel in 2010. He is Head of Chambers at Crucible Law, a member of the Bar Council and Co-Chair of the Bar Council Remuneration Committee dealing with criminal legal aid fees. He specialises in business related criminal and regulatory work usually prosecuted by the Serious Fraud Office and Financial Conduct Authority and has appeared in a number of high-profile cases including: Tom Hayes (Libor), BA/Virgin (airline price fixing), Goldshield Ltd & Others (pharmaceuticals), XYZ and Guralp Systems (both bribery prosecutions following Deferred Prosecution Agreements). Nominated for Crime Q.C. of the Year in 2019 he has consistently been recommended in legal directories for his business crime and corporate investigations work (Band 1). He also has extensive experience acting in serious organised crime cases and has represented numerous individuals charged with murder. He is a former Trustee and Chair of Governors at a state school.

Dr Vicky Kemp:

Vicky Kemp is a Principal Research Fellow in the School of Law and Co-Director of the Criminal Justice Research Centre, University of Nottingham. She is also a member of the International Legal Aid Group. Throughout her career, she has been involved in criminal legal aid, acting as a policy

adviser in the former Legal Aid Board and, subsequently, as a principal researcher in the Legal Services Research Centre, the independent research unit of the Legal Services Commission. Having published extensively, her research interests are on legal aid and access to justice, particularly for vulnerable people drawn into the criminal justice system. She is currently working on a Nuffield funded research project to examine the impact of legal safeguards on the detention and questioning of young suspects, which includes developing digital resources to provide child-friendly information on suspects' legal rights.

Professor Stephen Mayson:

Stephen Mayson is currently an honorary professor in the Faculty of Laws at UCL. He is also an emeritus professor at the University of Law and was previously Director of the Legal Services Policy Institute. He was called to the Bar in 1977 by Lincoln's Inn, where he is now a Bencher and chair of its Regulatory Panel. As well as more than 35 years' experience of advising law offices of all sizes around the world on matters of strategy, ownership, governance and finance, he has also served as a non-executive director and chair of a number of law firms and law-related businesses. In 2014-15, he chaired the cross-regulator review of the Legal Services Act 2007, which resulted in the submission to the Ministry of Justice of options for legislative change. In July 2018, the Centre for Ethics & Law at UCL announced that he would be carrying out an independent review of legal services regulation in England & Wales, and his final report and recommendations were submitted to the Lord Chancellor and published in June 2020.

Margaret Obi:

Margaret Obi is a solicitor and former partner in a leading criminal defence practice. She has extensive experience of a wide range of criminal allegations including murder, complex fraud and grave sexual offences and was a supervisor for Very High Cost Case legal aid work. In 2014 she became an independent legal adviser. She advises various international organisations, Legal 500 firms and undertakes independent reviews on behalf of large companies, banks, and other financial institutions under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office, National Crime Agency, Financial Conduct Authority and Competition and Markets Authority. She also advises international legal teams defending allegations of war crimes in the International Criminal Court and intergovernmental disputes in the International Court of Justice. She is an independent reviewer, legal assessor, and Chair for various statutory bodies. She is a former member of the Law Society's Criminal Law Committee (2006-2015) and is the author of two practitioner books on prison law. In 2018 she was appointed as a Deputy High Court Judge.

Crispin Passmore:

Crispin Passmore is the founder and principle of Passmore Consulting where he works with a select group of high-profile legal businesses and law firms in the UK and US, offering strategic and regulatory advice to Boards, CEOs and General Counsel. He also works with regulators around the world that are

modernising or reforming their regulatory approach. He is a non-executive Council member and Chair of the Audit at the General Dental Council which regulates the UK's dental professions. His non-executive portfolio also includes Citizen Housing where again he Chairs the Audit & Risk Committee. Previously, Crispin was Executive Director at the Solicitors Regulation Authority where he led the regulatory reform programme. Prior to that Crispin helped set up the Legal Services Board as the deputy to the CEO. Crispin's deep and broad knowledge of the legal market has been built over more than 25 years in the legal market in a number of roles including running the UK's largest Law Centre and as Executive Director at the Legal Services Commission.

Professor Neil Rickman:

Neil Rickman is a Professor of Economics at the University of Surrey. He has also held posts at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies and Pembroke College, Oxford and a visiting position at Erasmus University Law School, Rotterdam. He is the author of a number of articles, chapters and reports on various aspects of the economics of the legal system and has also acted as an advisor to the Clementi Review, the Ministry of Justice (and its predecessors), the Legal Services Commission, the Law Society, several committees of the Civil Justice Council (including those established to advise on the setting of Guideline Hourly Rates in 2013/4 and 2020/21) and the Department of Health. In 2002/3, he was responsible (with Paul Fenn) for advising on the setting of Fixed Recoverable Costs for RTA Claims, the forerunner of the subsequent Jackson reforms.

Bill Waddington:

Bill Waddington is currently a Consultant Solicitor specialising in Criminal, Road Traffic and Regulatory law. He was, until January 2020 the Managing Director of Williamsons Solicitors based in Hull, where he remains as a Consultant. He qualified as a Solicitor in 1980 and has spent 40 years at the coal face specialising in legal aid work and as a Departmental head , equity partner , then Managing Director . He is a former Chair of the CLSA (2012-2015 and 2017 -2020) and is still an active member of the Committee. He is also a Law Society Council member and a member of the Law Society's Criminal Law Committee. In 2015, he was nominated for and won the prestigious Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Award. He was a member of the Bach Commission and has appeared before the Justice Select Committee on two occasions and has also appeared before the All Party Parliamentary Group.

Dr Kevin Wong:

Kevin Wong has over twenty-five years' experience in the criminal justice sector as a researcher, practitioner, policy advisor, trainer and commissioner. He is currently Reader in Community Justice and Associate Director of the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) at Manchester Metropolitan University, leading PERU's criminal justice research and evaluation work. Prior to this, he held senior leading roles as: The Deputy Director then Acting Director of the Hallam Centre for Community Justice Sheffield Hallam University: and in the voluntary sector as Assistant

Director for Nacro, one of the largest social justice charities in the UK. He is Co-Editor of the British Journal of Community Justice and a member of the Advisory Panel on Probation Learning. He is the chair of the board of trustees of the Criminal Justice Alliance, a membership organisation with over 160 agencies operating across all aspects of the criminal justice system. He is a trustee of the Manchester charity Back on Track which provides employment and training support for people with complex needs. Prior to working in criminal justice, he was a practitioner and developed standards and shaped policy in the community legal advice sector.

Travel bans extended as United Arab Emirates, Burundi and Rwanda added to red list to prevent spread of new variant

- entry to the UK is banned for visitors arriving from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Burundi and Rwanda from 29 January 2021 at 1pm – British, Irish and third-country nationals with residence rights in the UK will be allowed to enter
- from 4am on Friday morning all arrivals who have, in the 10 days before their arrival in the UK, been in these destinations, and their households, will have to self-isolate immediately, and will not be eligible to use Test to Release
- move is in response to new evidence showing the likely spread of a coronavirus variant first identified in South Africa

The government has taken the urgent decision to ban travel to the UK from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Burundi and Rwanda to prevent the spread of the new variant originally identified in South Africa into the UK.

From 1pm on Friday 29 January, passengers who have been in or transited through the United Arab Emirates, Burundi and Rwanda in the last 10 days will no longer be granted access to the UK.

This does not include British and Irish nationals, or third-country nationals with residence rights in the UK, who will be able to enter the UK but are required to [self-isolate](#) for 10 days at home, along with their household. Passengers returning from these countries cannot be released from self-isolation through Test to Release.

There will also be a flight ban on direct passenger flights from the UAE.

The decision to ban travel from these destinations follows the discovery of a

new coronavirus variant first identified in South Africa, that may have spread to other countries, including the UAE, Burundi and Rwanda.

Any exemptions usually in place will not apply, including for business travel.

British nationals currently in the UAE should make use of the commercial options available if they wish to return to the UK. Indirect commercial routes that will enable British and Irish nationals and residents to return to the UK continue to operate.

British nationals should check [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office \(FCDO\) travel advice](#) and follow local guidance. The FCDO will continue to offer tailored consular assistance to British nationals in country in need of advice on a 24/7 basis.

Today's (28 January 2021) action follows new measures announced by the government yesterday to minimise travel across international borders and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, including managed isolation in hotels and the need to declare a reason for travel. More details on these measures will be set out next week.

Brexit taskforce meets to ensure businesses get the support they need

- Brexit Business Taskforce meets to identify challenges facing traders and find solutions to outstanding issues;
- Government will “pull out all the stops” to help businesses adjust to new rules;
- Compliance with border rules remains high and there are still no queues at ports as flows approach normal levels.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, will chair a meeting of the Brexit Business Taskforce today with leaders of the UK business community from the CBI, FSB, IoD, BCC and Make UK. He will reaffirm the government's commitment to help companies adjust to new trading rules with the EU that have been in effect for nearly a month.

Overall businesses have adapted well to the changes. The latest data shows that border traffic is increasing day by day and there is no disruption at UK

ports. The level of compliance is also very high with turnbacks stable at less than 5% of total traffic – either for failing to meet customs requirements or lack of a negative COVID test. Over the past week (19-25 January) there have been 371 enforcement notices issued either for failure to have a KAP or to comply with traffic management requirements.

While traders on the whole are managing the changes well, the government knows that some businesses are facing challenges with some of the new rules that are now in place. That's why the government is:

- Meeting businesses from specific sectors across all parts of the UK weekly through the Brexit Business Taskforce chaired by Michael Gove;
- Managing dedicated HMRC exporting telephone and online helplines. The number is 0300 322 9434 and businesses can also speak to an adviser online at tax.service.gov.uk.
- Running regular webinars with policy specialists;
- Providing the [Brexit Checker Tool](#) on gov.uk which gives businesses a personalised list of actions that they need to take;
- Offering face-to-face support for exporters in delivered via a network of around 300 International Trade Advisers (ITAs);
- Setting up a taskforce with businesses and the devolved administration in Scotland to understand and address any practical issues facing Scottish businesses, including the seafood sector; and
- Offering support to businesses moving goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland through its Trader Support Service.

The above is in addition to a range of other support schemes available to businesses which include a guarantee scheme aimed at SMEs which means the government can provide an 80% guarantee on financial support from lenders to help with general exporting costs, up to the value of £25 million.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, said:

I would like to thank traders and hauliers for the preparations they made for the changes that came into force at the beginning of the year. There is currently no disruption at UK ports and goods continue to flow effectively.

However, some businesses are facing challenges with specific aspects of our new trading relationship with the EU, and I want to let them know that we will pull out all the stops to help them adjust. To this end, we have set up export helplines, invested millions in the customs intermediaries market, and continue to direct them to the [Brexit Checker Tool](#) to see exactly what actions they need to take.

We will continue to work hand in hand with the businesses community through the Brexit Business Taskforce to get them the tailored support to tackle any outstanding issues. Together we will seize new opportunities open to a fully independent global trading United Kingdom.

Ahead of the Brexit Business Taskforce meeting, BCC Director General Adam Marshall said:

As firms navigate new trading arrangements, Accredited Chambers of Commerce – through our network of trade experts – are uniquely positioned to feed in to government the on the ground challenges businesses in every region of the UK are facing.

Supporting and encouraging businesses to trade with Europe, and indeed the rest of the world, must be at the heart of our economic recovery. This taskforce represents an important opportunity to engage constructively with business to help develop solutions to keep trade flowing smoothly and ensure Britain remains truly global.

[Clinical evaluation confirms high accuracy of highly mobile LamPORE test](#)

- Evaluation carried out by NHS trusts and universities finds test to be highly effective in detecting the virus in people with and without symptoms
- LamPORE technology is highly mobile, with pop-up laboratories being piloted in Aberdeen, Telford, Brent and Newbury

A technical and clinical evaluation conducted by NHS trusts and universities has confirmed the LamPORE COVID-19 test, produced by Oxford Nanopore, to be accurate and sensitive enough to detect the virus in people with and without symptoms.

LamPORE test technology is a highly mobile and scalable solution – it can be operated in traditional laboratory settings, as well as smaller spaces. This means the technology can be quickly deployed to areas to provide additional testing capacity where it is needed for large numbers of people, alongside existing PCR testing capacity and community testing using lateral flow tests.

LamPORE uses swab samples in the same way as a traditional PCR test, but also shows high performance with saliva samples. The LamPORE test was assessed on saliva and swab samples from symptomatic and asymptomatic participants. With samples from asymptomatic participants, the LamPORE test was found to have an overall sensitivity of 99.57% and specificity of 99.4%, meaning the test is highly effective for testing people without symptoms in the community.

As well as detecting SARS-CoV-2, LamPORE is in development for the detection of other respiratory viruses at the same time, including flu and respiratory

syncytial virus (RSV).

LamPORE technology is currently being piloted for use in mobile laboratories. In these pilots, pop-up laboratories which can process tests on-site using LamPORE technology have been set up in trucks which can travel to areas where there is a need for testing, processing up to 2,000 tests a day.

There are currently 4 mobile LamPORE units, deployed in Aberdeen, Telford, Brent and Newbury, being piloted to provide local testing services. This week, the first LamPORE mobile laboratory to arrive in Scotland started testing in Aberdeen, where it will move around to provide testing for those in remote locations. Pilots will continue into next month, followed by an evaluation of the mobile units.

LamPORE technology combines loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP) and nanopore sequencing to provide highly scalable detection of COVID-19. The test is CE marked for usage with the Oxford Nanopore GridION device, which can process thousands of tests a day.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

With one in three people not displaying symptoms of COVID-19, broadening asymptomatic testing is critical to protect those at highest risk. Oxford Nanopore's LamPORE test is another example of British innovation leading the way, and is an incredibly useful addition to our COVID-19 testing toolkit – delivering accurate results to people with and without symptoms.

The LamPORE mobile laboratories provide a new way in which we can respond to testing demand where there is most need. I am hugely grateful to Oxford Nanopore for their efforts in producing this technology.

Professor Dame Sue Hill, Chief Scientific Officer for England in NHS Test and Trace, who led the evaluation of Oxford Nanopore LamPORE test, said:

The LamPORE test shows very high sensitivity, so can be used for the full range of diagnostic and other use cases. This study showed it to be effective when using saliva samples from people without symptoms and it has the additional advantage of being able to detect other winter viruses, such as flu, increasing the scenarios in which it could be deployed.

Minister for Public Health Mairi Gougeon said:

I welcome the arrival of this unit, which will significantly decrease turnaround times for people being tested at mobile testing units (MTUs) and drive-through testing centres in the north east.

This follows the expansion of our community testing programme through the national MTU fleet, which is operated by the Scottish Ambulance Service. In partnership with the UK government, and through additional funding of £800,000 from the Scottish government, this fleet will grow from 18 to 42 by March 2021, with capacity to reach 84 communities.

We will continue to work with the UK government and local partners to improve access to COVID testing. However, it's important to remember testing is only one layer of protection – all others, including vaccination and the [FACTS guidance](#) work to greatest effect when they work together, so it is essential people continue to follow the restrictions currently in place to suppress COVID to the lowest possible level in Scotland.

Dr Gordon Sanghera, CEO of Oxford Nanopore, said:

This remarkable study is a testament to the scientific teams who worked so hard over the summer to validate a new generation of diagnostic test.

We believe there are phenomenal opportunities here: not only to deliver high quality COVID testing, but to catalyse the development and delivery of real-time, data-rich clinical testing using nanopore sequencing. This has the potential to tackle infectious disease and to reach into cancer, rare disease, and tissue typing/immunology.

Background information

Read the full [LampPORE evaluation report](#).

A brief summary of key findings from the pilot studies:

- on swab samples from symptomatic patients, the LampPORE assay with RNA extraction returned a sensitivity of 100% and a specificity of 100%
- on swab samples from asymptomatic patients, the LampPORE assay with RNA extraction returned a sensitivity of 99.6% and specificity of 99.4%
- on saliva samples from asymptomatic patients, the LampPORE assay with RNA extraction returned a sensitivity of 98.9% and specificity of 99.4%

The Technical and Validation Group was established under NHS Test and Trace, inclusive of NHS and PHE experts and working closely with MHRA and research bodies. The technical and validation function considers manufacturers of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) tests for viral detection and registers their interest

in the national procurement process if their test meets, or are intended to meet the requirements of the relevant Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) target product profiles.

The asymptomatic pilot study recruited 1,200 healthcare workers across 4 hospital sites:

- University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals Southampton NHS Foundation Trust
- Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Manchester Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

A total of 3,966 swab and 18,435 saliva samples were collected as part of this study.

[UK statement on detention of Guyanese fishing vessels](#)

News story

UK calls for release of Guyanese fishing boats and crew detained by Venezuelan vessels.



The UK is concerned at reports that Venezuelan vessels have detained Guyanese fishing vessels and crew. We call for their early release.

The UK is clear that the 1899 Arbitral Award settled the border between Guyana and Venezuela. We encourage a bilateral resolution to the controversy and support the efforts of the UN Secretary General.

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