

# Record numbers of doctors and nurses working in the NHS

Professionally qualified clinical staff including paramedics are at record levels, as are scientific, therapeutic and technical staff.

Responding to today's NHS workforce statistics, Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

This winter will be challenging as we continue to fight this deadly virus, and I'm hugely grateful to all our staff who continue to save lives and provide care to those who need it.

I'm delighted that record numbers of doctors and nurses are working in our NHS, plus a record pipeline of future talent in nursing, medicine and general practice.

We are backing our NHS and thanks to their unrelenting dedication, we will not only beat COVID but secure the future of our health service and deliver on our manifesto commitment of 50,000 more nurses.

The final figures from this year's admission cycle show there were 29,740 acceptances to nursing and midwifery courses in England, 6,110 more than last year and an increase of over a quarter (26%). The number of new nursing applicants to English providers between 15 January and 30 June was 68% (4,600) higher than the same period last year.

In addition, recent figures for this year show the highest ever number of GPs entering training with 3,793 posts accepted, exceeding the mandated target of 3,250. Health Education England has increased GP trainee acceptances year on year for the last 7 years.

Over the summer the [NHS People Plan](#) set out how the NHS will put staff wellbeing at its heart with a new recruitment, retention and support package. It sets out practical support for wellbeing such as safe spaces to rest and recuperate, wellbeing guardians and support to keep staff physically safe and healthy.

The NHS recently announced £15 million to strengthen mental health support for nurses, paramedics, therapists, pharmacists and support staff. Staff will get rapid access to expanded mental health services that are being rolled out across the country as part of efforts to deal with the second wave of coronavirus.

Today, NHS Digital has published its [monthly NHS workforce data for September 2020](#).

## Table summarising NHS workforce statistics in England

|                             | Sept 2019 | Sept 2020 full-time<br>equivalent (FTE) | Annual FTE<br>change | Annual<br>change (%) |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| All staff                   | 1,114,473 | 1,164,729                               | 50,256               | 4.5%                 |
| Professionally<br>qualified | 591,712   | 618,858                                 | 27,146               | 4.6%                 |
| Doctors                     | 116,416   | 122,446                                 | 6,030                | 5.2%                 |
| Nurses                      | 285,871   | 299,184                                 | 13,313               | 4.7%                 |

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## DBS Christmas and New Year Opening Times 2020

Our Contact Centre will be closed at certain times over the Christmas and New Year period.

We will be open as usual until December 24th (Christmas Eve).

| Date           | Opening hours |
|----------------|---------------|
| Christmas Eve  | 8am to 3pm    |
| Christmas Day  | Closed        |
| Boxing Day     | Closed        |
| 27th December  | Closed        |
| 28th December  | Closed        |
| 29th December  | 8am to 3pm    |
| 30th December  | 8am to 3pm    |
| 31st December  | 8am to 3pm    |
| New Year's Day | Closed        |

We return to business as usual on January 2nd.

Our social media accounts will not be monitored between December 24th and January 4th.

Online services such as the [Update Service](#) and [online tracking](#) are available as usual over Christmas.

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# Defra update on GB-NI authorised trader self-identification

News story

Defra are working to compile a list of businesses that can take advantage of the authorised GB-NI trader 3 month grace period



## Defra update

Defra are working to compile a list of businesses that can take advantage of the authorised trader 3 month grace period, as outlined in the [Command Paper](#) last week. The grace period will only cover certain goods: products of animal origin (POAO), composite products, food and feed not of animal origin, and plants and plant products.

If you move these goods from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI), please continue reading to assess whether your business can be added to the list.

- 'Authorised traders' are supermarkets and their trusted suppliers
- The UK government will not discriminate against smaller suppliers or between different companies in recognising traders as authorised for the purpose of this grace period

A trusted supplier is one that independently moves its end product from GB to NI, for sale in NI.

- For example, a meat pie manufacturer that moves its own products from GB to NI, which delivers its products directly to a store for sale solely within NI would be in scope.

However, where a meat pie producer delivers products to a supermarket distribution centre in GB, which is then moved by the supermarket to NI, the producer would not qualify (but would not need to – the supermarket would be the authorised trader for that movement into Northern Ireland).

## **Self-identification by traders**

Defra are compiling a list of authorised traders who can benefit from the 3 month grace period. Once identified the traders will be added to Defra's list of authorised traders that will be sent to the European Commission.

### **You can also self-identify to apply for inclusion on the authorised traders list.**

If you self-identify as an authorised trader, complete the [authorised traders form](#). The form must be completed fully.

Make sure you provide your:

- business name
- company affiliation (if a supplier)
- Economic Operators Registration and Identification number (EORI)
- head office address
- NI distribution address (if relevant)

**The form will ask further information on your operations. This information will be required to determine whether you are eligible for inclusion on the list.**

Please email the completed authorised traders form to [nisupermarketandsupplierlist@defra.gov.uk](mailto:nisupermarketandsupplierlist@defra.gov.uk) by 17.00 pm (GMT) on 28 December 2020. They will attempt to respond to all emails within 2 working days.

If you have any questions about your eligibility, please email [nisupermarketandsupplierlist@defra.gov.uk](mailto:nisupermarketandsupplierlist@defra.gov.uk). The emailed response will either:

- confirm that your business is included on the authorised traders list and detail your business's unique registration number

or

- contain a rejection letter with reasoning and steps to resolution. Businesses can challenge rejection decisions via email until 28 December

2020

If you have any queries relating to authorised trader requirements or the grace period, email [nisupermarketandsupplierlist@defra.gov.uk](mailto:nisupermarketandsupplierlist@defra.gov.uk).

We ask that you share this communication with colleagues or business associates who may be eligible for the authorised trader list.

Published 22 December 2020

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## Veterans step up to support those in need during COVID pandemic, new research finds

The study, carried out by King's College London, found that 60% of veterans have volunteered in their community to help individuals affected by the pandemic.

Of those veterans already volunteering, 66% reported as having increased their time spent helping others, as a result of COVID.

The initial finding from the OVA sponsored study underlines the contribution that ex-service personnel make to society at large. Many use their skills learnt from the armed forces, as well as their public service ethos, to play an important role in their communities.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

These findings show the huge contribution that veterans make to their communities.

Their commitment to serving this country does not end when they leave the military.

It's humbling to see that so many have stepped up to help those in need during this extraordinary year.

As we approach Christmas, Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer is also urging veterans struggling with their mental health to reach out for support.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

Christmas can be a difficult time for many, particularly this year with the effects of COVID.

But help is available and I urge any veteran who may be struggling with their mental health or loneliness to access the range of support that is available.

A range of support is available for those struggling with their mental health over the Christmas period, including:

- The Veterans' Gateway, a first point of contact which puts veterans in touch with local support services. Anyone can call 0808 8021212 to reach their helpline, which is running 24/7 over Christmas and New Year, or text 81212.
- The Veterans' Welfare Service, part of Veterans UK, is trained to provide free, confidential advice and support on a wide range of issues. Anyone in need of support can call 0808 1914218 and ask for contact from the Veterans Welfare Service. Read details of the helpline's Christmas opening hours.
- Veterans can also call the free Samaritans helpline on 116 123, which is running 24/7 over Christmas and New Year.

Support for loneliness for veterans includes:

- Mind is a leading mental health charity that offers wide ranging support for a number of issues. Their befriending service can help veterans feel connected to others through frequent conversation and companionship. Find out more about Mind's services to prevent loneliness.
- The Royal British Legion offer localised support to prevent isolation in the veteran community, including a telephone buddy service and a home visiting service. Contact the Legion to find out more.

As well as the increased time spent volunteering, the King's study, called Veterans-CHECK, has today found that 88% of veterans gave to charity in the last 12 months. The study also found that 20% have given more to charity this year, because of their desire to help more during the pandemic.

Professor Sir Simon Wessely, Director, King's Centre for Military Health Research, King's College London said:

What this study shows is that our veterans have been affected by the COVID pandemic in similar ways to all of us.

But they have also continued to contribute to this country, much as they did during service, with so many of them now employed as key workers or volunteering.

I am sure everyone will want to acknowledge and thank the veteran community for all they are doing to support the nation at this time. The spirit shown by Cpt Tom Moore continues through the generations.

The Veterans-Check study will continue into the New Year, where it will report on the health effects on veterans during the pandemic.

In England, mental health services now includes:

- The Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS), an enhanced service for veterans which helps tackle early signs of mental health difficulties
- The Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment service (CTS), which helps veterans who have complex mental health problems emanating from their military service
- Over 800 accredited 'veteran friendly' GP surgeries, which have been specially equipped to care for ex-forces personnel
- Over 50 Veteran Aware hospitals

The work of the OVA includes:

- Pulling together all functions of government, and working closely with the charity sector, in order to ensure this nation's life-long duty to those who have served
- Ensuring that every single veteran and their family knows where to turn to access support when required
- Helping to generate a 'single view of the veteran' by making better use of data to understand veterans' needs and where gaps in provision exist
- Improving the perception of veterans

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## [Next steps in Government's £5 billion gigabit broadband plan](#)

A consultation has been launched on the draft procurement strategy for the UK Gigabit Programme setting out plans to connect the first one million homes and businesses with gigabit speed broadband and maximise coverage in the hardest to reach 20% of the UK by 2025.

Homes and businesses that do not yet have access to superfast broadband will be prioritised. Their speeds will rocket from less than 30 megabits per second to more than 1,000 megabits per second, or one gigabit per second.

Gigabit-capable broadband connections offer the fastest and most reliable speeds available. They will pave the way for new and unexpected social benefits alongside jobs and economic growth over the coming decades, and revolutionise rural communities by giving people the freedom to live and work more flexibly. The strategy details a broad range of interventions to deliver gigabit broadband: contracts for a record £5 billion in public funding, broadband vouchers and other innovative solutions across all nations of the UK.

The accelerated approach to awarding contracts for the £5 billion will mean every telecoms provider – from the very small to very large – can take part.

This will drive competition, boost regional economic growth and create new jobs.

**Matt Warman, Minister for Digital Infrastructure, said:**

Today we've set out our bold programme of national infrastructure projects to future-proof the UK's internet networks so we can build back better from coronavirus and create new jobs and economic opportunities.

We will begin these procurements rapidly so broadband providers big and small can move quickly to get the job done and level up communities with this much faster, next generation broadband.

[Planning for Gigabit Delivery in 2021](#) includes a series of maps of large and small areas covering the whole of England where government intervention and subsidy is likely to be required to deliver gigabit-capable networks. It also shows the areas expected to be delivered through normal commercial rollout.

The consultation anticipates up to 26 large regions of England that are most likely to attract commercial investment but require subsidy to reach the hardest 40,000 to 80,000 premises in each area. The government expects larger broadband suppliers, including challengers to incumbents, to bid for these areas and prioritise people with slow speeds.

This includes areas of Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Devon, Dorset, Sussex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire.

In addition there will be smaller contracts to connect around 1,000 to 8,000 premises, to stimulate competition across a wider range of small, medium-sized and rural specialist telecoms providers and help them to scale up.

This could include areas of Cumbria, Westmoreland, Yorkshire, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Herefordshire, Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire, Kent and Sussex, depending on where these providers wish to compete.

In Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, the R100, Project Stratum and Superfast Cymru projects respectively are rolling out large scale superfast contracts which will deliver gigabit connections over the coming years.

The UK Government will work closely with the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland from early 2021 to develop plans to complement these contracts and extend gigabit coverage across the UK.

DCMS is also exploring how to make available a small number of contracts covering very large areas that are the least commercially attractive to build

in. This would help make sure that no areas are left behind – even those where there is a limited prospect of competition.

As well as these supply side market interventions, the government is also seeking industry views on how to extend its successful Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme from April 2021. The scheme allows people in rural areas to request a gigabit connection with the government subsidising the installation costs. This would help broadband suppliers respond to increasing consumer demand for gigabit broadband while the new procurements get up and running.

The government will also continue its programme to connect public and community buildings – such as council houses, schools, libraries and GP surgeries – so they act as full fibre ‘hubs’ off which industry can build their networks and connect surrounding homes and businesses.

These new procurements for gigabit infrastructure are set to begin in Spring 2021. The government will now seek industry and local authority views on the strategy to define small and large procurement boundaries, as well as ensuring that priority areas are served.

The recent Spending Review set out the timeline for how the first tranche of £1.2bn of funding will be made available to industry over 4 years. The commitment to spend £5 billion stands, and the government will accelerate this investment if industry can demonstrate it has the capacity to deliver further and faster.

## **ENDS**

### **Industry quotes:**

#### **Clive Selley, CEO of Openreach, said:**

This is a big step towards levelling-up the UK. Whilst private investment will pay for the vast majority of broadband upgrades across the country, we’re keen to help Government reach more isolated communities.

At Openreach, we’ve got the biggest and best team of engineers in the industry, with unrivalled experience connecting rural homes and a huge ambition to match.

We’ve all seen the importance of having decent broadband this year, so we’re keen to crack-on and do the lion’s share. We’re also convinced that Full Fibre technology can be a huge catalyst for the UK’s future prosperity so there’s no time to delay.

#### **Greg Mesch, CEO of CityFibre, said:**

We welcome this announcement about the first stage of the Government’s £5 billion rural broadband programme, which will

enable every corner of the country to access the digital infrastructure needed to support a new agile, green and balanced economy.

It is in everyone's interest to ensure Britain's consumers and businesses get connected as quickly as possible, regardless of where they are. We are pleased that Government is committed to making this a truly competitive process. This will deliver value for money, unlock additional private investment and speed up rollout.

At CityFibre, our UK-wide full fibre rollout to 8 million premises is well underway. We are creating up to 10,000 new jobs, and as we enter our second decade, we are ideally placed to deliver this vital infrastructure across the UK, ensuring nowhere is left behind.

**Lloyd Felton, County Broadband CEO, said:**

Continued growth in the rollout of full-fibre broadband is much-needed, as a recent Ofcom report revealed, only 18% of the UK can access 'full-fibre' services. It is vital that we take the opportunities to invest in full-fibre infrastructure now, to ensure Britain's broadband is future-proofed and accessible to all UK properties.

Local providers, like County Broadband will continue to be the frontline driving force to realise the new targets for connecting more properties to future-ready broadband networks, supported by the private funding we have in place.

Like other full-fibre broadband providers, County Broadband remains committed to delivering a major programme to enable thousands of properties in harder-to-reach, deeper rural areas, access to full-fibre, gigabit-capable broadband.

However, we are supportive of any Government funding which will assist in the overall delivery of full-fibre broadband to the hardest-to-reach areas. We are looking forward to understanding more about the Government's plan to support the delivery of full-fibre networks across the United Kingdom.

**Notes to Editors:**

- The [National Infrastructure Strategy](#) outlined how the Government is working with industry to target a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage by 2025, and will seek to accelerate rollout further to get as close to 100% as possible.