

[Press release: Highest impact investor recognition for Innovate UK](#)

The OBN Awards 2017 celebrate the best of UK life sciences and Innovate UK was judged the winner of the Highest Impact Investor award for its work in supporting innovative companies in the industry over the past year.

The announcement comes as [Innovate UK confirmed that a further 46 projects in the health and life sciences sector](#) will share £15 million in funding from its latest competition.

Innovate UK's Director of Health & Life Sciences Ian Campbell attended the ceremony, and said:

This was awarded unanimously by the judging panel and based on the special contribution that Innovate UK is making to growing and scaling SMEs.

As we celebrate Innovate UK's tenth anniversary, we are grateful for the recognition that this award gives us as a funder and supporter of high value UK businesses working in health and life sciences.

We were also encouraged to see so many Innovate UK supported businesses nominated or winning awards at the OBN ceremony.

Innovate UK is at the forefront of supporting UK business as they seek solutions and new approaches to healthcare, food production and quality. We committed to spend up to £117 million (21% of our core budget of £561 million) on health and life sciences in 2016/17.

The projects Innovate UK funded that have had success in the past year include:

The OBN Awards, which are in their 9th year, were presented in a ceremony at Oxford Town Hall (October 5) and recognise outstanding scientific innovation within biotech, medtech, digital, synthetic biology, the companies that support the industry and the fundraisers that make it happen.

Innovate UK

Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency. Innovate UK drives productivity and growth by supporting businesses to realise the potential of new technologies, develop ideas and make them a commercial success.

Innovate UK is the trading name of the Technology Strategy Board, which is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and incorporated by Royal Charter in

England and Wales with company number RC000818. Registered office: Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1FL.

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About the [OBN Annual Awards](#)

The OBN Awards, now in its 9th year, celebrate innovation and achievement across the UK life sciences industry.

About [OBN](#)

OBN is the membership organisation supporting and bringing together the UK's emerging life sciences companies, corporate partners and investors.

[Press release: Bradford rapist will spend longer behind bars](#)

A rapist from Bradford will spend longer in prison after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Lee Duffy, 26, was aged between 19 and 22 when he carried out his violent attacks against 3 separate women aged between 16 and 19.

Duffy was convicted of 4 counts of rape and 3 counts of causing actual bodily harm at Bradford Crown Court in June this year. He was originally sentenced to 8 years in prison, but the Court of Appeal quashed that sentence and he will now serve 13 years.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

“These crimes deserved a tougher punishment and I am pleased the Court has seen fit to increase the prison term. This demonstrates our commitment to victims of sexual offences that they will be taken seriously.

“I hope the increased sentence brings some closure to the victims, and they can begin to move on from what will have been a traumatic time.”

Press release: More than £3m invested in space exploration

A further £230,000 of funding has been awarded to studies into experiments that could be built and flown to the International Space Station (ISS), which could potentially support future human exploration of space.

The £3 million from the UK Space Agency Aurora Science programme, which is exploiting the data from robotic exploration, including our major investment in ESA's ExoMars mission, will target questions of past and present life on Mars, investigating the presence of water and the geochemical environment as well as atmospheric trace gases and their sources.

Science Minister, Jo Johnson, said:

"Science enables and shapes the UK's future in space exploration. This government funding will play a vital role in ensuring UK academics can continue to study the secrets of our solar system, from the polar regions of the Moon to the potential of life on Mars.

"Research and innovation are at the core of our Industrial Strategy, and by investing in these types of projects, we are reinforcing our position as a world leader in these important and exciting areas."

The £3 million has gone to 17 academics and individual scientists working at UK research organisations. The scientific objectives of the first mission in the Aurora programme, ExoMars, are to understand Mars's environment and its atmosphere.

In addition, £230,000 of funding has been awarded to the UK microgravity and space environments community in academia and industry. Four proposals have been funded, which will study concepts and designs for experiments which will deliver high quality science on the ISS as part of a national science programme.

British ESA astronaut Tim Peake was involved in many experiments during his sixth-month mission on the ISS from December 2015 to June 2016, including several with contributions from UK scientists.

Libby Jackson, Human Spaceflight and Microgravity Programme Manager at the UK Space Agency, said:

"Microgravity science in the UK has grown rapidly since we joined the ISS programme back in 2012. Any future mission to the ISS represents a really exciting opportunity to build on this and to ensure that the UK science community is properly placed to capitalise on the research opportunities that such a flight would offer."

The studies undertaken will address how high quality science can be implemented within the constraints of the ISS and provide an accurate cost

for the full flight experiment.

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[News story: RAF football team play Irish Defence Forces](#)

The Royal Air Force Ladies football team travelled to Dublin to play an Irish Defence Forces team and promote defence relations between Ireland and the UK.

In wet and blustery conditions in late September, the Royal Air Force team started well, dominating possession and creating chances. However, a shot from the Irish side caught the RAF goalkeeper off guard to make it 1-0. The second half brought a flurry of chances for the visitors, but the Irish Defence Forces team put away another goal to end the match 2-0. A well-disciplined match, with strong and competitive performances from both sides, it was fantastic preparation for the Royal Air Force team in their campaign to retain their Inter-Services title in March 2018.

Following the match, the Irish Defence Forces team hosted their Royal Air Force visitors to dinner where the teams exchanged gifts, and Senior Aircraftwoman Rachael Rutherford was awarded player of the match.

Government response: Cancer Research UK's campaign about the Early Diagnosis Workforce

The Department of Health's response to the Cancer Research UK campaign.

In September, Cancer Research UK (CRUK) started [a campaign](#) urging the government to train and employ more NHS diagnostic staff.

This is the government's response:

Cancer is a priority for this government and survival rates are at a record high, with 7,000 more people surviving cancer compared to 3 years ago. This is thanks to great efforts to diagnose cancer earlier and the incredible care cancer staff provide patients day in and day out.

The government knows it needs to get the right staff in place. This is why Health Education England will publish a comprehensive cancer workforce plan by the end of the year. NHS England will continue to drive forward implementation of the independent Cancer Taskforce's recommendations, as the department strives to save an extra 30,000 lives a year by 2020.