

# Thousands more patients to access second ground-breaking antiviral

- Paxlovid reduced the risk of hospitalisation or death by 88% in clinical trials and is already available directly through the NHS to highest-risk patients
- The UK has procured more antivirals per head than any other country in Europe with over 4.98m courses ordered so far

Thousands more vulnerable people in England are now eligible to receive the UK's second oral antiviral treatment for Covid.

Paxlovid has been added to the PANORAMIC national study, the UK's fastest-ever recruiting clinical trial of its kind, which is run by the University of Oxford in close collaboration with GP hubs. It is already available directly through the NHS to those whose immune systems mean they are at higher risk of serious illness who test positive for the virus – including those who are immunocompromised, cancer patients, or those with Down's Syndrome.

The PANORAMIC study makes antivirals available to a large number of patients, whilst collecting further data on how the antivirals work where the majority of the adult population is vaccinated. It ensures antivirals are being used in the most effective way and is crucial in ensuring clinicians have the full information to prescribe antiviral treatments to patients in future.

The study is open to adults over the age of 50 or those aged 18 to 49 with an underlying health condition that can increase the risk of developing severe Covid, who have received a positive Covid test result, and who are experiencing symptoms that started in the previous five days.

In just over three months, more than 20,000 patients have joined the nationwide study to help generate vital data on molnupiravir, the first oral antiviral to be made available. The introduction of Paxlovid will allow a further 17,500 patients to enrol to access this ground-breaking treatment, which has been shown to reduce the relative risk of death or hospitalisation by 88% in clinical trials.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

As we learn to live with Covid, the UK continues to lead the way in using cutting-edge treatments which have already saved the lives of many of the country's most vulnerable patients.

The addition of Paxlovid to the ground-breaking PANORAMIC study is an important milestone and will help us understand who benefits most from these treatments.

If you're aged 50 and over or have an underlying health condition and test positive for Covid, I urge you to participate in this

study by signing up as soon as you can.

Antivirals are treatments used to either treat those who are infected with a virus or protect exposed individuals from becoming infected. The government, through the Antivirals Taskforce, has procured 4.98 million courses of antivirals in total – more per head than any other country in Europe.

Whilst vaccines remain the most important first line of defence, antivirals target the virus at an early stage, preventing progression to more severe, or even critical, symptoms.

Chris Butler, from the University of Oxford and Clinical Trial Lead, said:

It is early on in the illness, when people are still being cared for in the community, that treatments for Covid could have their greatest benefit. The PANORAMIC trial is testing whether novel, promising antiviral treatments help people suffering from Covid in the community to recover faster and reduce the need for treatment in hospital.

It is critically important that new treatments are tested on people and in the situation where they are intended to be used. Joining the PANORAMIC trial will help ensure people with Covid, and indeed the NHS, get the maximum benefit from these precious treatments.

Professor Paul Little, from the University of Southampton and Co-Chief Investigator, said:

The PANORAMIC trial is one of the most ambitious ever undertaken in the community worldwide. The inclusion of Paxlovid in the trial is an exciting addition that will provide vital information about treatments to help the most vulnerable people in the ongoing fight against Covid.

Professor Nick Lemoine CBE, National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), said:

The addition of Paxlovid into the NIHR-supported PANORAMIC trial represents an exciting development. While smaller-scale studies have already shown this new antiviral treatment to be highly effective against Covid in the early stages of infection, additional evidence from much larger cohorts is needed to enable clinicians and health services to make best use of these exciting new treatments.

With over 23,000 participants having taken part in PANORAMIC so far – the world's largest platform trial into new antiviral treatments

against Covid – collectively the UK is providing vital additional data which will enable rapid deployment and best use of these new potentially life-saving treatments to patients who will benefit from them the most.

The government has secured 2.75 million courses of Paxlovid (PF-07321332 and ritonavir), made by Pfizer. Those who enrol in the PANORAMIC study will be randomly allocated to receive either an antiviral treatment in addition to standard NHS care, or standard NHS care only.

The study is UK-wide, although initially recruitment will only be available in England for Paxlovid. The Department of Health and Social Care is working with counterparts in the Devolved Administrations to develop plans for how this arm could be started in all four nations in due course.

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## [Youngster's winning logo will be on UK's historic first space launches](#)

Callum Wilkinson's winning design, announced on the International Day of Human Spaceflight (12 April) includes a satellite orbiting the Earth, with surrounding images themed around the role of space technology in monitoring and tackling climate change.

More than 10,000 primary school children aged between 4 and 11 years old entered the competition, which was run by the UK Space Agency in collaboration with Hopscotch Consulting to help inspire the next generation to consider a career in the space sector. While Callum was the overall winner, there were also 13 regional winners.

The winning entries from each region of the UK.

The UK is set to become the first country in Europe to host [small satellite launches](#) this year, as set out in the [National Space Strategy](#). As well as monitoring climate change, satellite data can be used to help provide essential daily services, such as television broadcasting and navigation systems, and to improve connectivity. The UK already employs more than 45,000 people in space jobs and having our own domestic launch capability will create new opportunities to benefit people and businesses across the UK.

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

Thousands of people across the UK already work in our growing space sector, and there will be even more high-value jobs created as

satellite launches begin from British spaceports this year.

To support this exciting and important industry, we must inspire talented young people to consider future careers in science and engineering. The Logo Lift Off competition has uncovered fantastic ideas from children like Callum, right across the UK and given them an opportunity to learn how satellite data is helping to tackle global challenges such as climate change.

Congratulations to the winners, and all those who took part.

The UK's first small satellite launch is set to take place from Spaceport Cornwall later this year, followed by vertical launches from Scotland at both Space Hub Sutherland in the Highlands and SaxaVord Spaceport in Shetland.

Logo Lift Off winner, Callum, a pupil at Blackrod Primary school, in Bolton, said:

My design shows orbits made of string and has pictures on to show what the satellites are going to be used for.

I went on the internet and learnt loads of things about satellites and climate change and then the idea just burst into my brain, and I planned it out on the computer before making it. I feel very proud of myself and really, really on top of the world!

As well as seeing his design on the rocket, Callum will be invited to visit the first launch from the UK. He will also receive a goody bag, a framed certificate, a picture of his designed artwork as it will appear on the rocket, and a Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) learning kit.

Logo Lift Off competition judges included TV presenters Maddie Moate, Martin Dougan, Michael Underwood and Greg Foot, as well as UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Maya Ghazal. They described Callum's design as "immensely creative".

The judges looked through entries from over 10,000 primary school children!

Thirteen other entries were crowned regional winners in the Logo Lift Off competition and will receive goody bags, STEAM kits, personalised certificates and the opportunity for their class to attend an online talk with a UK Space Agency representative.

The 13 regional winning entries are:

- Christian Swinn, age 4, from Caernarfon in Wales
- Alina and Ilya Moore, both age 6, from York
- Bluebelle Paul, age 11, from Bath
- Adam Mohammed, age 6, from Birmingham

- Rushabh Sutar, age 4, from Norwich
- James Bambrook, age 10, from Southend-on-Sea
- Aiden Roach, age 10, from London
- Daniel and Sophie Lah-Anyane, age 10 and 7, from Northampton
- Annabel Earp, age 7, from Nottingham
- Michael Cunningham, age 10, from Castlewellan in Northern Ireland
- Ariadni Constantinidou, age 11, from Glasgow
- Emily Frankland (11), Freya Brown (10) and Alice Stobbart (11) from Chester-le-Street
- Inara Kell, age 6, from Saltburn-by-the Sea

Around half of the different types of data needed to accurately monitor the Earth's climate are currently collected from space. Satellites are used routinely to monitor the polar ice caps and changing sea levels, measure the temperature of the oceans and deserts, and even to count endangered animals such as whales and walrus. The UK is playing an important role in three new missions to measure carbon emissions from space ([MicroCarb](#)), improve climate data ([TRUTHS](#)), and monitor the health of forests ([Biomass](#)).

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## [Over 314,000 homes better protected due to flood protection work](#)

A £2.6 billion, six-year programme of work dedicated to improving flood and coastal defences has exceeded its original targets by 14,000 – with over 314,000 homes now better protected from flooding since 2015.

More than 850 new flood and coastal erosion defence projects have been completed during this period. Over 580,000 acres of agricultural land, as well as thousands of businesses, communities and major infrastructure – including more than 8,000 kilometres of roads – also benefited from improvement schemes. Analysis in a new report published today shows this work is estimated to have reduced national flood risk by 5%.

Alongside delivering on its headline target, Defra's capital investment programme from 2015-2021 has also brought wider benefits to both the environment through the creation and enhancement of natural habitats, and also local communities, through better protecting nationally important infrastructure and wider contributions to economic recovery. Early analysis suggests the programme of work over the last six years has saved the economy more than £28 billion in avoided damages to properties, businesses and more over the lifetime of these defence assets.

[Defra's final post-programme assessment](#) shows that the original commitment of 300,000 homes was revised upwards by more than 4.5% after extra funding was allocated across the period.

The programme's original £2.3 billion budget was expanded to a total £2.6 billion to allow for additional work to be carried out. Alongside the current record £5.2 billion investment, from 2021-2027, the government's long-term policy statement on flood and coastal erosion risk management is the most comprehensive in a decade with five ambitious policies and over 40 supporting actions to accelerate progress to better protect and prepare the country for future flooding and coastal erosion.

Investment during 2015-2021 was spread across every region of England and included targeted funding for areas where it was needed the most, pushing forward regeneration in communities at high risk of flooding – many of whom suffered from significant flooding during the winter of 2015.

One example is Yorkshire, with the government investing more in flood defences for Yorkshire and the Humber than any other region, better protecting more than 83,000 homes since 2015.

Investment was also targeted at areas likely to be hardest hit by the impact of a flood, with new flood schemes in the most deprived parts of the country continuing to qualify for funding at 2.25 times the rate of other areas.

£40 million of funding was announced in 2018 specifically aimed at boosting regeneration in some of these areas. As a result, more than 46,000 homes in areas from Cornwall to Northumberland are now better protected from flooding – including 800 residential properties around Rochdale and Littleborough following a £5 million of investment injection into the River Roch Flood Alleviation scheme. More than £10 million was awarded to protect communities in the St. Austell Bay area of Cornwall.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

Our programme of work has protected over 314,000 properties, defending people, communities, and businesses from flooding and coastal erosion. We know that there is still more to do, so we are doubling our investment with a record £5.2 billion over the next six years.

Over 1,700 homes were also better protected through more than 80 property flood resilience schemes – aimed at reducing the amount of damage experienced by property owners, occupiers and businesses and enable them to recover faster after flooding. More than 280 homes in Kent were upgraded with adaptive measures including flood doors, flood gates and air brick covers thanks to the Middle Medway flood resilience scheme.

The report also reveals many of the schemes across the programme looked to enhance or provide additional environmental benefits including improving access to rivers, wildlife sites and the creation of new green spaces as well as increasing our use of natural flood management to reduce flood risk.

Approximately 12,000 acres of natural habitat were created or improved, and approximately 700 kilometres of rivers enhanced during this period. This

includes new habitat the size of more than 90 football pitches created for local wildlife, thanks to the Port Clarence and Greatham South project in County Durham.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

The Environment Agency's six year flood defence building programme has better protected over 314,000 homes and businesses from the cost, pain and disruption of flooding. There are very few national infrastructure programmes that come in on time, on budget, and on target: I am very proud that the EA has achieved this. That is all down to the expertise, dedication and commitment of the EA teams and our partners across the country: they deserve the nation's thanks.

Flood defence works. While we can never protect everyone against all flooding all the time, we can reduce the risk of it happening and the impact when it does. In February – for the first time – we had three named storms in a week, and rivers rose to record heights. While some 400 properties sadly flooded, over 40,000 homes and businesses were protected by our defences.

The climate emergency is bringing greater risks. Our response must be to protect our communities as best we can, make them more resilient, using natural flood management as well as hard defences, and to tackle both the causes and consequences of climate change. The EA is doing all that in our new £5.2bn flood defence investment programme. We will stay focused on delivering it for the people and places we serve.

Other notable schemes that also benefited from this investment include:

- Humber: Hull Frontage scheme: A £42 million flood defence upgrade of the defences along the edge of the Humber Estuary to protect the city of Hull from tidal flooding. The scheme will reduce the risk of flooding from the estuary for 113,000 homes and non-residential properties.
- Ipswich Barrier: One of the most significant defences that the Environment Agency has constructed in recent years, costing £67 million, protecting 1,600 homes and 400 businesses from flooding and the impacts of climate change over the course of the next century.
- Boston Barrier gate: Now fully ready and working, giving an enhanced level of flood protection to over 13,000 homes and businesses in the town. As the centrepiece of the flood scheme, the barrier gate can be raised in just 20 minutes, responding quickly to threats of North Sea tidal surges.
- Ulverston Town Beck flood scheme: This £9.5 million flood scheme was completed in May 2018. It includes raised flood walls and a maze of underground culverts and protects more than 500 homes and businesses in Cumbria will be better protected from flooding.
- Cannington flood defence scheme: This created a new flood bypass channel

capable of moving flood water away from the village. The scheme was completed in 2017 and was a partnership project costing a total of £4.5 million. It saw 200 properties better protected.

The assessment of this 2015-2021 programme comes as the government is one year into a £5.2 billion investment in around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences between 2021 and 2027.

These upcoming schemes will help to reduce the national flood risk by up to 11 per cent and help to avoid £32 billion of wider economic damages along with a range of other benefits for local communities and the environment.

It will better protect 550 kilometres of road and rail infrastructure, create or improve 13,000 acres of natural habitat, and enhance 830 kilometres of rivers.

## Background

- The [post-programme assessment](#) will be available on gov.uk.
- Alongside the policy statement, the Environment Agency's National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England guides the activities of those involved in flood and coastal erosion risk management.
- Taken together, this policy statement and strategy will ensure that our country is more resilient to flooding and coastal erosion and climate change in the long term.

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## [Russia's illegal war on the women and children of Ukraine – UK at UN Security Council](#)

May I begin first of all in joining others in thanking the insightful and expert and deeply thoughtful contributions of our briefers. My thanks go to Sima Bahous from UN Women, to Mr Manuel Fontaine from UNICEF, and of course, Ms Kateryna Cherepakha who gave us a direct insight of the situation, on the ground, in Ukraine.

And in doing so, it reminds me that the Geneva Conventions contain numerous provisions that afford special protections to women and girls, as civilians, in conflict zones.

Yet, what we see today with our own eyes, and as today's detailed briefings testify, is harrowing evidence of how women and girls are suffering.

Mr Putin's invading forces are absolutely oblivious to even the most basic

tenet of the Geneva Conventions – the distinction, the absolutely essential distinction, between civilians and combatants.

Today, sadly, we've once again heard Russia trying to deflect from the facts, the reality on the ground – muddy the waters – by what can only be described as quite extraordinary statements, and even lies. Yet, what is true, what is fact, is that Russian attacks on civilians and residential areas have been truly barbaric.

Yet, what we've seen shine through this, as a real beacon, is the Ukrainian people themselves. Ukrainian women have demonstrated incredible fortitude, and demonstrated the real resilience of the Ukrainian people.

Indeed, that was reflected in the engagement our own Prime Minister had in Ukraine recently. And, I myself – as we heard from the representatives of UNICEF, from UN Women and, indeed, the Representative of the United States – I've also had the opportunity, and I'm pleased we're joined by Poland, when I visited Poland, I saw the strength and support of the Polish people. The incredible welcome being given to fleeing refugees. But also the resilience of Ukrainian women, predominantly women, as we've heard from many statements today, who are crossing the border. They're being forced across the border because they want to protect their children who are accompanying them.

We've also met and seen female Members of Parliament who have resorted, because they can't sit as Parliamentary Members, to take up firearms to defend themselves, to defend their people.

We've seen incredible courage from civic leaders refusing to leave their communities.

To the countless, and absolutely incredible, untold stories of heroism across Ukraine, as women have stood up to Russian forces – many armed with little more than patriotism, their own sense of courage and resilience, and a fierce sense of injustice.

Emerging reports paint a deeply disturbing picture, including alleged rapes and sexual violence within Ukraine's borders.

The violence and exploitation does not end there – beyond the borders, displaced Ukrainian women and girls, as we've heard again today, face heightened risks of trafficking, a point made by UNICEF, and also sexual exploitation by criminal gangs.

The mounting evidence of war crimes in Ukraine compels us, surely, as the international community, to come together to stand and do more and stand with Ukraine – and stand with those who have faced such unspeakable violence.

The vote recently to suspend the Russian Federation from the Human Rights Council was proof of our collective will to do just that.

We must now work ceaselessly to investigate these crimes, and to hold Mr Putin, Russia and the forces of Russia to account.

And that is why the United Kingdom has worked closely with partners to refer this illegal invasion to the International Criminal Court, to establish a Commission of Inquiry through the Human Rights Council, and to establish an OSCE Mission of Experts.

Ukraine's women, like many women around the world, as they continue to do today, helped build that open, democratic, free Ukraine – a society that for some reason, Mr Putin fears. And Ukrainian women's participation at all levels, as we heard today from colleagues from Ireland and Kenya, amongst others, will be central if we are to build a sustainable and lasting peace.

And any peace settlement must also reflect the disproportionate impact of this conflict, this war, on the girls and women of Ukraine.

In conclusion, today's UN Security Council discussion and meeting is a rallying call to us all, the international community, to recognise the impact of this illegal war. The impact of this illegal war on the very basis and foundations of international law. On the very basis and attack – on the very foundations on which this institution, the United Nations, is based. The actual Charter of the United Nations itself. And, it is an illegal war on the women and children of Ukraine – and ultimately we must come together, and act together, to hold Russia to account for these crimes.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

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## [Ensuring delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to people living through conflict and humanitarian crises](#)

Colleagues,

May I first thank our briefers, Ted Chaiban, Dr Martiniez, and Dr Ojwang for their insightful and detailed briefings and for reminding us all that we are not out of the woods. The COVID-19 pandemic is still very much a reality for all of us. Together we have been battling the COVID pandemic for a little over two years.

It has been a time of great pain for all of us, but also a real expression of how far humanity has come on this journey together.

We have moved from having no vaccine at all, to having a steady supply of multiple vaccines.

The UK has committed £1.4 billion of UK aid to address the impacts of the COVID pandemic and to help end the pandemic as quickly as possible.

This also includes £829 million on global development, manufacture and delivery of COVID vaccines, treatments and tests.

Another good example was the UK-India partnership on vaccines has enabled over a billion people to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, saving lives and mitigating the spread of the pandemic globally. The Oxford University, AstraZeneca, and Serum Institute of India partnership combined the UK's leadership in Research and development and India's manufacturing capacity as the "pharmacy of the world".

Last month, the UK hosted the Global Pandemic Preparedness Summit which raised US\$1.5 billion funding for the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) to develop vaccines against new health threats in 100 days and rapidly scale-up regional manufacturing for affordable global supply.

The UK plays its part, through the COVAX Facility, to give access to vaccines, wherever they are needed.

We are among the largest donors to the Advance Market Commitment, committing half a billion pounds so far.

COVAX itself has now delivered over 1.4 billion vaccines to 144 countries, the majority of which are low- and lower-middle income.

Vaccination rates are also steadily increasing. But as we have heard already from our briefers, they continue to lag in many low-income countries, and in particular, communities in conflict and humanitarian crisis risk being left behind.

After more than a year of steady vaccine production, the challenge has moved from being one of supply, to a challenge of roll-out.

OCHA report that less than four percent of the populations of DRC, Yemen, Haiti and Burundi are vaccinated.

This, frankly put, is a staggering inequity that is bad for us all.

The delivery of vaccines to marginalised and conflict-affected communities is being obstructed by under-resourced and overstretched health systems, and by curtailed humanitarian access.

Last year this Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2565, calling for the provision of vaccines to areas in conflict. It gained the highest ever number of co-sponsors for a Council resolution.

What is clear: full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, and the protection of health workers in line with International Humanitarian Law, remain vitally important, but elusive – a point amplified by Dr Martinez. So what more can we do to ensure the most vulnerable are not left behind?

First, we can help ensure that COVID vaccination is prioritised by governments in countries in conflict.

We can offer support through the COVAX humanitarian buffer: a measure of last resort to target individuals in fragile regions not included in national vaccination plans.

We can also support efforts to strengthen international cooperation. COVAX has recently set up a new Vaccine Delivery Partnership to improve coordination at global and country level, including with the African Union, for COVID vaccine delivery and support, including in the most vulnerable countries, most of which are in Africa – and our expert briefers again outlined this very point.

Second, we can spell out to all parties to conflicts, their obligations under International Humanitarian Law to provide unhindered humanitarian access, including for vaccinations. This must happen.

Third, we must work together, and as the United Nations, to overcome obstacles to delivery, and to advance Sustainable Development Goal 3 and our collective efforts to build stronger health systems worldwide. Dr Ojwang also stressed the importance of leveraging networks in country through his own experience in South Sudan. I welcome the important role, as Dr Ojwang highlighted, of faith leaders who have also been brought on board.

In conclusion, resolution 2565 continues to be an important roadmap for our discussions on vaccines and health in conflict zones.

COVID-19 has showed us that the best way to achieve success is by collaboration and working together. This resolution represents an investment in stability and global health, not just for individual countries but for the world – and as such, must remain a top priority for us all.