



Office for Life Sciences

Office for Life Sciences Bulletin – 05 January 2024

Happy New Year from all of us at the Office for Life Sciences!



OLS Introduction

The Office for Life Sciences (OLS) is a joint unit between the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) and Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

This bulletin aims to keep the life sciences sector up to date on the latest government announcements and wider opportunities in policy areas which may be of interest to the sector.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please email sonia.davies@officeforlifesciences.gov.uk



News

NEW – National Apprenticeship Week – February 2024

National Apprenticeship Week takes place between 05 to 11 February 2024 and is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of apprentices across the country and the positive impact they make to communities, businesses, and the wider economy. **Read more [here](#) on how to take part.**

NEW – The Advanced British Standard consultation is live

This consultation is seeking views on the design of the Advanced British Standard and is live until 20 March 2024. Over the next decade, the Department for Education are seeking to introduce the Advanced British Standard (ABS), a new Baccalaureate-style qualification framework for 16 to 19-year-olds. The introduction of the ABS is designed to improve the quality of post-16 education, so that all qualifications prepare young people for their next step and ultimately a successful career and adult life. **Find out more and feed in your views [here](#).**

NEW – MHRA's new International Recognition Procedure goes live

From 01 January 2024, developers of new medicines can now submit applications via the MHRA's new International Recognition procedure (IRP). The IRP will help bring life-saving medicines to UK patients and has been developed by the MHRA following the UK's departure from the European Union. It allows the Agency to take into account the expertise of trusted regulatory partners in other countries when authorising medicines. **Read more [here](#).**

NEW – Former UKRI leaders recognised in New Year Honours

Two former UKRI leaders have been recognised for their services to research and innovation in the 2024 New Year Honours including Professor John Iredale, former Interim Executive Chair of the Medical Research Council (MRC), who has received a knighthood for services to medical research. **Read more [here](#).**

NEW– Opdualag licensed for patients with advanced melanoma

The MHRA has approved the advanced melanoma medicine Opdualag (nivolumab-relatlimab) for patients from the age of 12. This is a cancer medicine used to treat advanced melanoma, a type of skin cancer that can spread to other areas of the body. **Read more [here](#).**

NEW – New research into expansion of life-saving HIV testing programme

A new research project to evaluate an expansion of the hugely successful HIV opt-out testing programme to new sites across England, has been announced. Given the success of the existing testing programme, this new initiative is expected to save, and improve the quality of, thousands of lives. Backed by £20 million of NIHR funding, the research will evaluate the testing programme in 47 new sites across England. **Read more [here](#).**

NEW – NHS patients benefit from six million more checks at centres across England.

The diagnostic centre hubs play an important role in cutting waiting lists, speeding up diagnoses and treatments. The programme, backed by £2.3 billion, is the largest central cash investment in MRI and CT scanning capacity in the history of the NHS. **Read more [here](#).**

NEW – Millions more people receive GP appointments compared to before the pandemic

Four million more GP appointments a month are being delivered for patients compared to the same month before the pandemic, as part of the NHS primary care access recovery plan. New NHS data published shows more than 31.4 million appointments (excluding vaccinations) were delivered by GP practices in November 2023, making it the busiest November on record for GP teams. **Read more [here](#).**



Useful Links

- The [Office for Life Sciences](#) homepage provides the latest updates and information on the governments work with the life sciences sector.
- Information around Horizon Europe funding can be found [here](#).
- Guidance for businesses on Brexit can be found [here](#).
- Access the 'Check How to Export Goods' tool [here](#) for the information you need to export goods out of the UK market.
- If you're a UK business selling goods or services to Europe, you can contact the UK government [export support team](#) by phone or online.
- Access the 'Check How to Export Goods' tool [here](#) for the information you need to export goods out of the UK market.
- Click [here](#) for more information and advice on exporting.
- In England, [Growth Hubs](#) can advise on local and UK Government business support.

- Register for HMRC's free [Trader Support Service](#) if you are moving goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Click [here](#) to view the latest weekly Trader Support Service (TSS) bulletin.
- The most up-to-date guidance on the [Windsor Framework](#) is on GOV.UK, including information on moving goods into, out of, or through Northern Ireland.
- If you need to get in touch with the MHRA, please email MHRACustomerServices@mhra.gov.uk or phone 0203 080 6000.