



Office for Life Sciences

Office for Life Sciences Bulletin – 19 January 2024



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.

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News

NEW – Science, Innovation and Technology Secretary Michelle Donelan's speech at Plexal

Secretary of State Michelle Donelan delivered a speech at Plexal on her top priorities for the year ahead. Read more [here](#).

NEW – MHRA update on new study on risk in children born to men taking valproate

As part of our ongoing monitoring of the safety of valproate, MHRA continues to rigorously review all emerging data. This includes a new study on outcomes in children whose fathers took valproate at the time of conception commissioned by the European Medicines Agency, which has now been resubmitted. Read more [here](#).

NEW – NHS helps tens of thousands of people with mental health problems into work

More than 40,000 people with mental health problems are being supported back into employment thanks to an NHS programme, new data shows. The figures come alongside a new campaign launching today urging more people to sign up for help they might need through the NHS Talking Therapies service. As part of a pilot programme across the country, currently 40,000 people are being linked up with employment advisors to support them back into work. Read more [here](#).

NEW – 1.4 million more people at risk of severe COVID-19 to have access to antiviral Paxlovid

A further 1.4 million people who have an increased risk for progression to severe COVID-19 will be eligible for Paxlovid if they test positive following updated NICE final draft guidance published on Thursday 11 January. Following a partial review NICE has published updated final draft guidance which increases the number of people eligible to access Paxlovid to an estimated 5.3 million. Read more [here](#).

NEW – Andrew Taylor announced as Chair of new Independent Patient Choice and Procurement Panel

NHS England has announced the appointment of Andrew Taylor as Chair of the new Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Independent Patient Choice and Procurement Panel. The Provider Selection Regime came into force on 1 January 2024 and is a new set of rules that relevant authorities must follow when procuring healthcare services. Read more [here](#).

NEW – Waiting list falls again as NHS staff treat more patients than ever before in one month

The covid backlog has fallen for a second month in a row thanks to the huge efforts of NHS staff. Monthly performance data shows that the overall waiting list fell by more than 95,000 – down to 7.6 million in November from 7.7 million in October. Read more [here](#).

NEW – Health Secretary announces new women's health priorities for 2024

Top priorities will be tackled under the Women's Health Strategy in 2024 include menstrual problems and menopause, maternity care and birth trauma support. Support for domestic and sexual abuse victims and women in the criminal justice system will also be improved. 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.