



Office for Life Sciences

Office for Life Sciences Bulletin – 09 February 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.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please email:

sonia.davies@officeforlifesciences.gov.uk



News

NEW – Publication of the Science and Technology Framework

Biotech driving medical breakthroughs and cuts to red tape lead major science and tech package to spark UK innovation and growth. Today, the Science and Technology Secretary unveils a raft of new announcements to drive innovation in science, which comes alongside rallying cry to entrepreneurs, businesses, researchers, and government to put science and technology at the very top of the UK's priorities – or risk failing to secure long term growth. The Science and Technology Department also marks its first anniversary, at the end of a week of significant announcements that will achieve a strategic advantage for the UK in all five of its critical technologies.

Read more [here](#).

NEW – Children and Young People Cancer Taskforce Launched to Save Lives

Top clinicians, leading cancer charities, patient groups and the government are on a joint mission to combat childhood cancer through a new taskforce launched on 6th February. The taskforce will explore how to improve treatment, detection, and research for cancer in children, and unite groups with the common goal of saving lives and reducing the long-term impact of cancer.

Read more [here](#).

NEW – Minister Caulfield Statement on COVID-19 Spring Vaccine Programme

Following the announcement by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation on the COVID-19 autumn booster programme, Health Minister Maria Caulfield made a statement regarding people at greatest risk of serious illness from COVID-19's eligibility for a vaccine.

Read more [here](#).

NEW – UK Research Investment to Boost UK Semiconductor Industry

Two new 'Innovation and Knowledge Centres (IKC)' will receive £11 million each to help bring new chip technologies to market. Each focus on an area of British leadership on the world stage – silicon photonics and compound chips – as DSIT delivers £1 billion semiconductor strategy and announces £4.8 million funding for semiconductor skills projects.

Read more [here](#).

NEW – UK Signals Step Change for Regulators to Strengthen AI Leadership

The UK is on course for more agile Artificial Intelligence (AI) regulation, as the government published its response to the AI Regulation White Paper consultation on the 6th February. This comes alongside over £100 million to support regulators and advance research and innovation on AI, including Hubs in healthcare and chemical discovery. Key regulators have also been asked to publish plans by end of April for how they are responding to AI risks and opportunities, as the UK government makes case for introducing future targeted, binding requirements for most advanced general-purpose AI systems. **Read more [here](#).**

NEW – Unlocking the Potential of Quantum: £45 Million Investment

The government is investing a total of £45 million in the UK's quantum sector - as part of its commitment to transforming into a quantum-enabled economy by 2033 - to drive breakthroughs in brain scanners, navigation systems, and quantum computing and seize this technology's potential to overhaul healthcare, energy, transport and more. Winners of the £15 million Quantum Catalyst Fund have also been announced to accelerate the adoption of quantum solutions by the public sector, on projects from optimising power grids through to improving diagnosis of dementia **Read more [here](#).**

NEW – New Drug Could Prevent Diabetic Eye and Kidney Disease

New research has shown a new type of inhibitor drug could prevent microvascular diabetic complications, such as diabetic eye and kidney disease. The study, conducted in a mouse model, is published in Cardiovascular Diabetology, and was funded by the Medical Research Council. **Read more [here](#).**

NEW – Network Launch for Immersive Digital Mental Health Therapeutics

Innovate UK's £20 million Mindset programme is driving the growth of immersive digital mental health solutions in the UK. By funding projects that develop therapeutic interventions, Mindset is establishing a supportive ecosystem to facilitate the market entry of these innovations. **Read more [here](#).**

NEW – Latest Measles Statistics Published

The latest number of laboratory confirmed measles cases in England have been published in an updated epidemiological overview published by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). **Read more [here](#).**

NEW – Flu and COVID-19 Surveillance Report Published

The latest Flu and COVID-19 surveillance report, which includes respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) data and the national norovirus and rotavirus surveillance report have been published along with the latest public health advice. **Read more [here](#).**

NEW – UKHSA and ONS Release Latest Winter COVID-19 Infection Study Data

The latest data from the Winter COVID-19 Infection Study, from the UKHSA and the Office for National Statistics (ONS), suggests that COVID-19 prevalence in England and Scotland has remained steady over the 2 weeks to 24 January. **Read more [here](#).**



Funding Opportunities

NEW – Funding all for Cancer Immunotherapy Response Research Platform

The Office for Life Sciences and the Medical Research Council are delighted to announce that the opportunity to establish a £9m Cancer Immunotherapy Response Research Platform (CIRRP), has opened for applications. This as part of the Cancer Healthcare Mission, will support a single consortium to develop a sustainable, broad utility platform that can provide deep phenotyping and genotyping capabilities to deliver actionable insights around patient response and adverse reactions to cancer based immune therapies. The application window will close on 9th May. **Read more and apply [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 use the contact details below:
 - Email: MHRACustomerServices@mhra.gov.uk
 - Phone: 0203 080 6000



Feedback

- ☑ We would love to hear about your experience with the OLS Bulletin to help us make improvements and prioritise new features.
- ☑ The survey should only take 5 minutes, and your responses are completely anonymous. You can only take the survey once, but you can edit your responses until the survey is closed on February 16th.
- ☑ **Please access the survey by scanning the QR code or via this link:** <https://forms.office.com/e/3fU7KNKXns>
- ☑ If you have any questions about the survey, please email: officeforlifesciences@officeforlifesciences.gov.uk

