



# Office for Life Sciences

## Office for Life Sciences Bulletin – 10 May 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 – UFS Jobs and Skills Dashboard published**

[UFS Jobs and Skills Dashboard](#) and accompanying [Supply of skills for jobs in science and technology data release](#) was published this week. This provides an assessment of the supply of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) workforce to 2030 and the education pathways into STEM jobs. This data release describes: the 2023 STEM workforce, multiple growth scenarios for the UK STEM workforce required in 2030, common education pathways into STEM jobs. It also looks specifically at the jobs deemed most important across the five critical technologies and occupations most relevant to digital and computing.

#### **New – Nucleic acid medicines manufacture receives £4.5m in funding**

Five projects will receive funding to develop and commercialise innovative solutions for the manufacturing of nucleic acid medicines. Innovate UK announced the winners of a funding competition to create and bring to market inventive approaches while enhancing the resource effectiveness, output and expandability for producing nucleic acid medications.

Read more [here](#).

#### **NEW – New 5-year plan to combat antimicrobial resistance**

The government has announced its new national action plan on antimicrobial resistance to protect people and animals from the risk of drug-resistant infections. The national action plan will commit the UK to reducing its use of antimicrobials - such as antibiotics, antifungals and antivirals - in humans and animals, strengthen surveillance of drug-resistant infections before they emerge and incentivise industry to develop the next generation of treatments.

Read more [here](#).

#### **NEW – MHRA launches AI Airlock to address challenges for regulating medical devices that use Artificial Intelligence**

Last month, the MHRA set out its strategic approach to AI in response to a white paper published in 2023 by Government. This pilot project is a key part of that approach. It will help the Agency to identify and address the challenges for regulating standalone AI medical devices (AIaMD), initially seeking

out and supporting 4-6 virtual or real-world projects through simulation. This will allow us to test a range of regulatory issues for these devices when they are used for direct clinical purposes within the NHS.

Read more [here](#).

### **NEW –Update on pioneering initiative on regulation and evaluation of digital mental health technologies**

An MHRA and NICE partnership, funded by Wellcome, is addressing key challenges for regulating and evaluating digital mental health technologies (DMHTs) with input from patients, the public and mental health professionals. The long-term objective of this three-year project, which began in 2023, is to formulate guidance and other sources of information for developers, healthcare professionals, patients and the public to clarify the regulatory and evaluation requirements for DMHTs.

Read more [here](#).

### **NEW –NHS patients to access world-leading laser beam surgery to prevent epileptic seizures**

The NHS is to roll out a “game-changing” new laser beam therapy next month to help reduce seizures for patients with epilepsy. The cutting-edge fibre optic laser therapy, known as Laser Interstitial Thermal Therapy (LITT), targets the part of the brain causing seizures without the need for invasive surgery. The treatment will now be rolled out for eligible patients across England from June, being offered at King’s College Hospital in London and The Walton Centre in Liverpool as specialist national hubs.

Read more [here](#).

### **NEW –Tests could lead to fewer people having unnecessary chemotherapy after surgery for early breast cancer**

NICE’s independent diagnostic advisory committee reviewed the evidence behind tumour profiling tests which are designed to provide information on the genetic makeup of breast cancer tumours. This information can be used to guide the treatment of women who have been through the menopause, and men, with oestrogen receptor (ER) or progesterone receptor (PR)-positive, human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2)-negative early breast cancer with 1 to 3 positive lymph nodes.

Read more [here](#).

### **NEW –New vaccine could protect against possible future coronaviruses**

Researchers have developed a vaccine that has been shown in mice to protect against a broad range of coronaviruses with potential for future disease outbreaks. This is a new approach to vaccine development called ‘proactive vaccinology’, where scientists build a vaccine before the disease-causing pathogen even emerges. The new vaccine works by training the body’s immune system to recognise specific regions of eight different coronaviruses, including SARS-CoV-1, SARS-CoV-2, and several that are currently circulating in bats and have potential to jump to humans and cause a pandemic.

Read more [here](#).

### **NEW –BBSRC invests £48 million in lifelong health research at Babraham Institute**

The £48 million strategic investment will advance research on the mechanisms that maintain the health of our cells, tissues and organs across the life course. Following a five-year review by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), the Babraham Institute will receive £48 million to support core research across epigenetics, immunology and cell signalling. Over the next four years, BBSRC’s investment will drive key research on the mechanisms that maintain the health of our cells, tissues and organs across the whole life course.

Read more [here](#).

### **Vacancy – NICE committee vacancies for health, social care and other professionals and practitioners**

In support of NHS proposals for a world-first Antimicrobial Products Subscription Model we’re looking for members to join our brand new Antimicrobials Evaluation Panel. This is an exciting opportunity to contribute to a world-first approach to incentivising development of new antimicrobials that offer significant value to patients and the NHS. It has been devised in response to the UK Government’s national action plan for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) which included the commitment to lead the

way in testing solutions that address the market failure of companies not investing in developing new antimicrobials.

Closing date: Midnight on Monday 20 May 2024. **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 use the contact details below:
  - Email: [MHRACustomerServices@mhra.gov.uk](mailto:MHRACustomerServices@mhra.gov.uk)
  - Phone: 0203 080 6000